ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation: EGYPTIAN PAGANS THROUGH CHRISTIAN EYES

Heather Juliussen-Stevenson, Doctor of Philosophy, 2016

Dissertation directed by: Professor Kenneth Holum, Department of History

Construction of Christian identity in Egypt proceeded in pace with construction of the Egyptian pagan "Other" between the second and sixth centuries. Apologies, martyrdoms, apocalypses, histories, sermons, hagiographies, and magical texts provide several different vantage points from which to view the Christian construction of the Egyptian pagan "Other": as the agent of anti-Christian violence, as an intellectual rival, as an object of anti-pagan violence, as an obstacle to salvation, and—perhaps most dangerously—as but another participant in a shared religious experience. The recent work of social scientists on identity, deviance, violence, social/cultural memory, and religiosity provides insight into the strategies by which construction of the "Other" was part of a larger project of fashioning a "proper" Christian religious domain.

EGYPTIAN PAGANS THROUGH CHRISTIAN EYES

by

Heather Juliussen-Stevenson

Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of the
University of Maryland, College Park, in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
2016

Advisory Committee:
Professor Kenneth Holum, Chair
Professor Arthur Eckstein
Professor Hayim Lapin
Associate Professor Antoine Borrut
Associate Professor Maxine Grossman

Acknowledgements

Many thanks to Professor Holum, Professor Eckstein, Associate Professor Borrut, Associate Professor Grossman, and Professor Lapin for their support and guidance. My gratitude also goes to my brother and father, without whose support this project would have been impossible.

Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction

To any fan of gothic romance, it is a delightfully tragic tale. Osiris, god of Egypt, was murdered by his own wicked brother, Seth, and chopped into pieces, his body strewn across the countryside. Stricken with grief, Osiris' widow, Isis, searched for his remains, hoping to resurrect her husband with the aid of the magic in which she was adept. She succeeded, of course, and Osiris assumed his role as god of the Underworld while his son, Horus, eventually overthrew Seth.

Unfortunately, the fan of gothic romance will discover that many of the details in this story are disappointingly vague. The most complete versions of the narrative are found in Greco-Roman sources, not the Egyptian sources in which we would expect to find them.[1] And there are strange discrepancies. One Christian apologist, for instance, claimed that the pagans[2] celebrated a rite commemorating a search conducted by Isis, not for Osiris, but for her son, Horus. When I first came across this reference, I was pleasantly surprised, unfamiliar as I was with this version of the tale. Assuming that it was a new variation, I was reading avidly along, wondering what would happen next, when, much to my dismay, the story suddenly broke off with an angry denunciation of the rite and everything associated with it. The apologist, Minucius Felix (c. 3rd cent.), had no sympathy with what, to me, seemed such a captivating tale.[3] I could not help but be confused by his reaction. If I, so many centuries later, could appreciate the sublime nuances of this engaging narrative, why

[1] See chapter two.

[2] For the use of the term "pagan" as opposed to "polytheist," or "Hellene," of another variation see below.

[3] Minucius Felix, *Octavius* 23.

not Minucius Felix, especially living, as he did, in the very midst of the men and women for whom this was not simply a pretty story, but was ostensibly the object of genuine religious belief?[4]

Aside from a passing mention in school to pyramids and those fascinating animal-headed deities, I had had no real exposure to Egyptian pagan thought. Then, when I was an undergraduate student, I became intrigued by the Early Modern interest in hermeticism and so-called occult learning. As a result, I happened to come across some texts translated by Marsilio Ficino (1433-1499), a Platonist scholar who was partly responsible for the boom in circulation of ancient texts in the Renaissance. The text he had translated turned out to be from the Corpus Hermeticum, an amalgam of Greco-Egyptian thought that was infused with Platonism.[5] Thanks to the syncretic nature of the texts in question, the lines that struck my fancy were not necessarily evocative of what might be called a traditional brand of Egyptian paganism. Indeed, scholars debate the "Egyptian-ness" altogether of the paganism practiced in Egypt during the Greco-Roman period.[6] But did the hybrid elements of the discourse make it any less compelling? I thought not. If the Corpus Hermeticum and this story about Isis' search for her husband's remains—the latter known largely thanks to Greco-

[4] This and the following two paragraphs perform a self-analysis of researcher bias that is more common to anthropological studies than histories. Yet as chapter six will discuss at some length, subjective engagement with religion is central to the question of conversion under study here. So I beg the reader's patience as I briefly confess to the fascinations and horrors that have drawn to me to the subject of early Christian Egypt, a confession that I do not think is not entirely out of place, since I will argue that fascination and horror had more than a little to do with the attraction of converts to Christianity.

[5] Hermetic literature is an amorphous body of texts associated with (and often attributed to) the figure Hermes Trismegistus, produced over the course of several centuries in Egypt during the Greco-Roman period. For an introduction to the hermetica, see Garth Fowden, *The Egyptian Hermes: A Historical Approach to the Late Pagan Mind* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986). For the reception of this tradition and further elaboration by Arab-Muslims see Kevin Van Bladel, *The Arabic Hermes: From Pagan Sage to Prophet of Science* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009). For the Renaissance fascination with hermetic literature see Frances Yates, *Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964).

[6] See chapter two.

Roman rather than Egyptian sources—were anything to go by, Egyptian-Greco-Roman paganism was aesthetically pleasing in the extreme.

If a person had to choose a religion, Egyptian paganism (admittedly filtered through a Greco-Roman lens) seemed to me a fine religion to choose. It had pyramids to satisfy my Western love of the exotic,[7] animal-headed deities to replace the dull and all-too-human Greco-Roman megalomaniacs who passed as gods, and a comparatively positive treatment of the feminine divine to appease my feminist inclinations. Its attractive features were rounded out by a deviant mystique, born of Egypt's subordination to Greco-Roman authorities whom I could not help but resent, having endured years of indoctrination into American foundation myths about our Greco-Roman origins. If any aspects of Egyptian paganism struck me as being too outré, I could indulge my pseudo-Platonist sympathies and interpret it allegorically.[8] So how, I wondered, could people have preferred Christianity over all of this?

The following study endeavors to answer this question, focusing on a wide range of texts associated with Egypt, including martyrdoms, apocalypses, apologies, histories, sermons, hagiographies, letters, and texts devoted to divination and magic. These collections provide a diverse range of vantage points from which to view the Christian construction of the pagan "Other." Why focus on *Christian* views of pagans instead of letting the pagans speak for themselves? I will certainly allow the pagans to speak for themselves, but we are limited as to our evidence in this regard. We are also limited in terms of the timespan that can be reasonably studied. This project

[7] See chapter two on the degree of syncretism during the Roman rule of Egypt. See chapter five for the troubling implications of this fascination with the exotic, which in some ways can be just as problematic as horror of the exotic.

[8] See chapter two for whether or not Plato actually endorsed allegorical methodology.

concentrates on texts composed between the second and sixth centuries, these endpoints having been determined by, on the one hand, the limited number of reliably early Christian texts and, on the other hand, the dwindling number of pagans as Christianity became more widespread.

Does the world really need another book explaining the rise of Christianity? As suggested above, when I set out on this project, I was singularly disappointed by the explanations offered by scholars as to the success of the Christian initiative.[9] Anyone who supposes that Christianity fulfilled spiritual and emotional needs left unfulfilled by paganism clearly fails to appreciate the elements that I find so very appealing in Egyptian paganism. The Christian aspirations for union with the divine that flowered into the mysticism of Medieval Christianity were, in my opinion, just Neoplatonism in disguise and, what is more, were already hinted at and maybe even satisfied by hermetic Egyptian-Greco-Roman narratives and rituals.[10] If the injunctions of the Greco-Roman philosophers were not enough, anyone seeking a moral code had only to look to *Ma'at*, the Egyptian spirit of justice balancing man's relationship with the world.[11] Christian martyrs supposedly inspired conversion with the spectacle of their suffering and, for those who were uninspired, Christians allegedly utilized force to ensure conversion. But then why were the victims of Christian force—the pagan martyrs—unable to rally support using the same strategy?[12] Salvation? The Egyptians lived forever, safeguarded by the spells meant to

[9] For references and further discussion of the theories in this and the following paragraph see the final chapter.

[10] See chapter three for sexualized depictions of union with the divine. See chapters five and six on identification with the divine in Egyptian pagan and Greco-Roman theurgy.

[11] See chapters two and three.

[12] See chapter four.

protect the dead as they travelled through the dangerous byways of the afterlife.[13] Christians helped the poor. So what? This was clearly only one side of the equation. The elites who would have been drawn to the hermeticizing traditions of Egyptian-Greco-Roman paganism would not have been terribly interested in the welfare of the poor.[14]

I was no more impressed by bottom-down explanations for Christianization than bottom-up explanations. I was unconvinced by arguments claiming that conversion to Christianity was never anything more than a political maneuver meant to secure socioeconomic influence or that Christianity was transmitted via social links, like a contagion. Aside from the fact that some Christians appear to have converted despite every obstacle—including the threat of death—these theories, when carried to the extreme, demonstrate a limited sense of scope for religious life in antiquity.[15] At the worst, these theories imply the existence of what is essentially an anachronism: a plethora of individuals for whom so-called religion was simply a matter of cultural and social interaction,[16] more or less indistinguishable from the modern atheists who enjoy celebrating ostensibly Christian holidays because they get to see friends, receive presents, and eat good food. If not atheists, then these early Christian converts—being driven solely by socioeconomic and political considerations, and devoid, therefore, of any "real" Christianization—begin to look

[13] See chapters three and five.

[14] See chapter three.

[15] Assuming, for instance, that socioeconomics, politics, and religion were inherently separate spheres of activity/thought. It seems far more likely to me that conversions that appear to have taking place for cut-and-dry socioeconomic and political reasons were often taking place because religion was so bound up with socioeconomics and politics that inducements along these lines would have carried *religious* salience. For the distinction between religious and non-religious spheres, see chapter four. For discussion of the socioeconomic and political inducements for conversion see chapters three, four, and six.

[16] See chapters four through seven.

like pagans by default. Such a notion seems all too reminiscent of Reformation-era rhetoric critical of the so-called paganizing aspects of early Christian devotion. So while I did not quite understand the appeal of Christianity, *per se*, I nevertheless balked at the notion that conversion, as a rule, was somehow insincere. I thought that conversion deserved to be considered on its own terms, in earnest.

I do not doubt that each of the above theories offers some insight into the conversion of a portion of the population. No one theory alone seems capable of accounting for the diverse nature of belief in antiquity, if only because people are different, with different interests and different needs. This is important to point out, given that scholars continue to look for single, overarching explanations for the so-called triumph of Christianity.[17] Appreciation for a subjective engagement in religious experience on an individual level (as much as this is possible) is crucial to our understanding of the conversion process. Otherwise, we run the risk of not taking our subject seriously. And if we fail to do that, we are sure to lose touch with the true complexity of the situation.

My approach is both macro and micro. I am examining a broad range of genres, each of which is often studied on its own. These genres deserve to be studied in combination, for each sheds light on the other. Such a broad approach runs the risk of over-generalization, which is why I believe it is worthwhile to focus on a single region.[18] Why Egypt? Roger Bagnall has argued against viewing Egypt as a special

[17] Michael Simmons, *Universal Salvation in Late Antiquity: Porphyry of Tyre and the Pagan-Christian Debate* (NY: Oxford University Press, 2015), 210-26.

[18] The reader will also discover that I often tread a middle-path in the debates being carried on by scholars who have focused on particular genres. This is because, having focused less attention on each genre, I am not qualified to voice an opinion and because these debates are not integral to my arguments, the latter sometimes being contingent upon a recognition of the links between genres that are missed by scholars who focus on only one area.

case. He pushes for an approach that incorporates Egypt within the larger Greco-Roman world.[19] Egyptian religious belief should definitely be contextualized within the overall Greco-Roman milieu. For that matter, when considering the reasons for conversion to Christianity, it is important not to exaggerate the uniqueness of this faith, which is why I will be making frequent comparisons to Jewish and pagan beliefs and practices. Ample reasons could certainly be found for conducting the same study on a region other than Egypt. Clearly, personal whim has a great deal to do with my selection. However, a focus on this region is justified for many reasons. Christians often treated Egypt as an exemplar of either arch-sin or arch-piety.[20] The Egyptian patriarchs stood at the forefront of Empire-wide polemical debates.[21] Alexandria's schools were enormously influential and attracted students from all over the Empire.[22] Egypt served as a significant source of grain for the Empire, and control over the region was important to the ruling elite.[23] Finally, Egypt deserves special attention in light of its valence as a place of "difference." Traditional Egyptian paganism was admired for its well-known antiquity, even as its animal deities

---

[19] Roger Bagnall, "Models and Evidence in the Study of Religion in Late Roman Egypt," in *From Temple to Church: Destruction and Renewal of Local Cultic Topography in Late Antiquity*, ed. Johannes Hahn, Stephen Emmel, and Ulrich Gotter (Boston: Brill, 2008), 30.

[20] On Egypt's association with arch-sin see for instance Tertullian, *De speculatis* 3. On Egypt's association with arch-piety note how the popularity of Egypt's monks drew pilgrims from all over the Roman Empire. See chapter five.

[21] See chapter four.

[22] See chapter two.

[23] When this study picks up—the second century CE—Egypt had already spent several centuries under Greco-Roman rule. Legal, political, and socioeconomic aspects of Roman rule will be addressed as they arise in the course of the discussion. On the grain supply, see sources listed in the following chapter. On the administration of Roman Egypt see Livia Capponi, *Roman Egypt* (NY: Bristol Classics Press, 2011); Alan Bowman, *Egypt after the Pharaohs: 332 BC-AD 642, from Alexander to the Arab Conquest* (London: British Museum Press, 1986); N. Lewis, *Life in Egypt under Roman Rule* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983); P. A. Brunt, "The Administrators of Roman Egypt," *The Journal of Roman Studies* 65 (1975): 124-47; J. G. Milne, *A History of Egypt under Roman Rule* (London: Methuen & Co, 1924).

inspired disgust even among pagans;[24] its priests were thought to be uniquely gifted in communication with the divine and the operation of magic;[25] and Jewish and Christion versions of the Exodus treated Egypt as the home of depravity and wickedness.[26]

Egyptian paganism was often held up as the standard against which religions were judged. On the one hand, Egypt, as the supposed birthplace of religion, was the source of the most learned religious teachings. Egyptian priests were held up as paragons of sacred wisdom. On the other hand, Egypt was the disturbing Other, symbolic of the customs that were to be shunned, with charlatans masquerading as holy men and the people prone to irrational, licentious, and violent behavior. These two paradigms—Egypt as the learned, sacred Other and Egypt as the horrifying, dangerous Other—coexisted and were used alternately by Greco-Roman pagans and Christians, who turned this imagery against one another. Pagan apologists, for instance, accused Jesus of being no more impressive than an Egyptian street magician, deceiving his audience for the sake of money.[27] Christian apologists likened the persecution of their people at the hands of pagans to the persecution of Jews at the hands of the Pharaoh before the Exodus.[28]

Of course, every scholarly work on early Christianity in some way addresses the degree to which Christians and pagans viewed each other as the Other, but the emphasis is usually on Christianity in relationship to Greco-Roman forms of

---

[24] See chapter two.

[25] See chapters two, five, and six.

[26] See chapter two and Jan Assmann, *Moses the Egyptian: The Memory of Egypt in Western Monotheism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), 4.

[27] Origen, *Contra Celsum* 1.28.

[28] Eusebius, *Historia ecclesiastica* 9.9.5.

paganism. As we shall see, this has produced generalizations that are not necessarily applicable to an Egyptian context, for Egypt added a "turn of the screw," as it were, to the negotiation of religious identity. In some ways, Egyptian paganism seemed even more outré to Christians than Greco-Roman paganism. It was the more other Other.

Unfortunately, it is difficult to parse out just what it meant to be "Egyptian." Was the category ethnic, religious, linguistic, political, or merely a reference to a person's current or past geographic location?[29] The answer, I argue, is both all of the above and some assorted variations thereof. "Egyptian" was a malleable category, subject to manipulation. Avoiding the application of a concrete definition to "Egyptian identity" gives us space for maneuverability, and this project explores how the significance of the category shifted from context to context, with only the name, "Egyptian," remaining the same. This approach is in keeping with the scholarly consensus regarding the subject of identity, which, as discussed below, is thought to be elastic and negotiable.

Unfortunately, the scope of this project does not allow for the elucidation of regional distinctions, though some patterns do emerge. Alexandria is the focus for much of the discussion, since it is the site of so much religious violence, particularly in the fourth and fifth century. However, this should not be taken to mean that Alexandria was necessarily more violent than the rest of Egypt. The Fayum was the site of a particularly harsh anti-Christian persecution in the early fourth century, and if the hagiographies are to be believed, anti-pagan violence was carried out by various

[29] See chapter five in particular.

monks on a more or less ad hoc nature across the country. Alexandria's schools would have provided a perfect setting for the sort of apologetic debates explored in chapter two, but the wealthier inhabitants of smaller cities like Oxyrhynchus would have enjoyed access to a relatively high level of education.[30] Regular communication with Alexandria and travel to Alexandria for education, trade, politics, and simple pleasure would have ensured a certain amount of homogeneity, though scholars have argued that Alexandria, in particular, was prone to Hellenizing tendencies not necessarily traceable in Memphis, for instance, or Philae.[31] Other regional distinctions no doubt existed. Hagiographical evidence offers up such a vague and distorted portrait of paganism that most, if not all, regional distinctions retreat into the background. Nevertheless, some of these distinctions can be discerned, especially in connection to the influences that were exercised by contact with the Nubians and Ethiopians, thanks in part to the recovery of inscriptions and religious iconography. Since this study is predicated on the notion that there is no such thing as firm rules when it comes to the operation of identity, the reader should assume that a certain amount of ambiguity and negotiation was always in play. And despite the inevitable existence of regional variations, I do not believe that it is inappropriate to speak of an "Egyptian" identity, if only because Greco-Romans, Jews, and Christians certainly seemed to share notions about just what this meant.[32]

---

[30] Mohammed Abd-el-Ghani, "Alexandria and Middle Egypt: Some Aspects of Social and Economic Contacts under Roman Rule," in *Ancient Alexandria between Egypt and Greece*, eds. William Harris and Giovanni Ruffini (Boston: Brill, 2004), 161-178; Alan Bowman, ed., *Oxyrhynchus: A City and Its Texts* (London: Egypt Exploration Society, 2007).

[31] See chapter two.

[32] Unfortunately, Egyptian reactions to this portrait are harder to access. Much of my speculation in this regard is based on the assumption of a traditional Egyptian pagan normative view, inspired by pre-Greco-Roman and Greco-Roman period expressions of what appear to have been Egyptian attitudes or descriptions of the same.

Difficult though it is to define "Egyptian," the meaning of the term "pagan" is probably even more elusive. Scholars have criticized use of the word "paganism" and "pagan" in scholarly discourse, pointing out that it reflects a Christian bias, these terms having been employed as pejoratives by Christians against people who probably would not have self-identified as pagans. Popular alternatives to the term "pagan" include "polytheist," "gentile," and "Hellene."[33] The first of these alternatives is unsatisfactory; there is plentiful evidence for what looks very much like pagan monotheism, and Christians were themselves accused of polytheism.[34] The term "gentile" also reflects a Jewish-Christian bias. Pagans did self-ascribe as

[33] See for example Pierre Chuvin, *A Chronicle of the Last Pagans*, trans. B. A. Archer (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990), 7-10, 129; Elizabeth DePalma Digeser, *A Threat to Public Piety: Christians, Platonists, and the Great Persecution* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2012), 2n4; Christopher Jones, *Between Pagan and Christian* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2014), 2-6. For the argument that pagan identity only emerged (became self-conscious) through the conflict with Christianity, see for instance, Stephen Emmel, Ulrich Gotter, and Johannes Hahn, "'From Temple to Church' Analysing a Late Antique Phenomenon of Transformation," in *From Temple to Church: Destruction and Renewal of Local Cultic Topography in Late Antiquity*, eds. Johannes Hahn, Stephen Emmel, and Ulrich Gotter (Boston: Brill, 2008), 4; Christopher Haas, *Alexandria in Late Antiquity: Topography and Social Conflict* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), 136.

[34] Scholars currently debate just what is meant by the terms "monotheism" and "polytheism." The modern origin of the terminology suggests that it might be anachronistic to apply these labels to antiquity. The use of these terms may be teleological as well: The tendency to label pagans as polytheists originated not with pagans but with Christians, and thus implies a Christian bias. Scholars of Judeo-Christianity are themselves uncertain about applying the term "monotheism" to Judeo-Christianity. Critics of this terminology also point out that a straightforward division between the pagans and Jews and Christians based on the number of deities who received worship means ignoring pagans who questioned the existence of the gods or the validity of offering them worship. It also means ignoring pagans who appeared to hold monotheistic beliefs and Jews and Christians who appeared to hold polytheistic beliefs. Of course, Greco-Roman pagan and Christian apologists were well aware of this confusion and attempted to use it to their advantage. For instance, Julian accused Christians of polytheism. Julian, *Contra Galileaos* 159E. Cf. Sozomen, *Historia ecclesiastica* 2.18. And, as indicated above, Christian apologists accused pagan sages of promulgating a monotheism that they had learned from biblical teachings acquired via Egypt. Some apologists went so far as to claim that Socrates was executed for promoting monotheistic beliefs akin to Christianity (Justin Martyr, *Apologiae pro Christianis* 1.5, 2.10; Pseudo-Justin, *Cohortatio ad Graecos* 2; Tertullian, *Apologeticus* 14.7-8). Scholars seem to agree that, by the late first century CE, a large proportion of pagan intellectuals had come to accept the notion of an ultimate divinity concentrated in a single being and that the general masses were aware of this notion even if they had not embraced it. For this reason, some scholars have suggested that the Christians who were accusing pagans of polytheism were doing so merely as a rhetorical ploy to establish the boundaries between Christianity and paganism. If so, many pagans appear to have accepted the ploy, taking it as a given that the number of deities one worshipped was the primary distinction between pagans and Christians. Thus the labels "monotheist" or "polytheist" were adopted for the sake of convenience. See Stephen Mitchell and Peter van Nuffelen, eds., *One God: Monotheism between Pagans and Christians in Late Antiquity* (Leuven: Peeters, 2010); Polymnia Athanassiadi and Michael Frede, eds., *Pagan Monotheism in Late Antiquity* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999); M. Kahlos, *Debate and Dialogue: Christian and Pagan Cultures c. 360-430* (Burlington, Vermont: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2007), 143; Werner Jaeger, *Early Christianity and Greek Paideia* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1961), 40; John North, "Pagan Ritual and Monotheism," in Mitchell, 37, 40-41.

"Hellenes," but this term carries Greek connotations that are inappropriate for an Egyptian context. A neutral alternative might be "traditional religion," and I will employ that term occasionally, but, besides being a mouthful, it implies an effort to exclude converts to pagan cults, like the widespread cult of Isis, since a convert could hardly be said to following his traditional faith. For lack of a convenient and satisfying alternative, I prefer to use the term "pagan." As this project is devoted to understanding Christian views of pagans, it seems nonsensical to seek a term that entirely divests the category of its negative connotations, at least in Christian eyes. Moreover, for an objective scholar, the term "pagan" should be no less and no more negative than any other religious identifier. Since there are indeed so-called pagans in existence today, it is especially important that scholars reject the erroneously negative connotations of the term.[35]

Throughout this study, I speak of paganism as it was a "faith" from which a person could convert to Christianity. This approach could be criticized in light of scholarship arguing that paganism (particularly Roman paganism) was a religion of ritual rather than faith.[36] Scholars have also argued that a conscious religious commitment was not necessarily an element of pre-Christian pagan life.[37] Yet my

---

[35] The term "pagan" is still used today as a pejorative against people who would probably not self-ascribe as pagans and is tantamount to hate speech. Even if the faith of self-ascribed pagans today is a far-cry from anything that might have passed for paganism in antiquity, the rights of religious freedom dictate that they should not be damned on the basis of what they choose to call themselves. On the definition of hate speech and its link to accusations regarding paganism, see chapter four. For prejudice against modern self-ascribed pagans, see chapter four.

[36] See Clifford Ando, *The Matter of the Gods: Religion and the Roman Empire* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), x-xii. One might also argue that pagan religion was a matter of ethnicity rather than faith. This is problematic insofar as the definition of ethnicity is problematic (see chapter five) and insofar as syncretic tendencies would have undermined the boundaries separating one ethnicity/religion from the next. For this reason, I think that we should be wary of assuming that the association of ethnicity with religion implied the existence of a sort of "secular" pagan devoid of any actual faith. For discussion of the term "secular" see chapter four. For the definition of religion as ethnicity and Christian efforts to define Christianity as a new ethnicity, see chapter five.

[37] See chapter six.

decision to treat paganism as a faith seems justified on three grounds: First, the definition of faith invoked in chapter six—Daniel Dennett's "belief in belief"[38]—allows us to sidestep biases regarding the nature of this faith. That is, we need not worry if this belief involved faith in a supreme deity or deities or demons or an afterlife, *et cetera*. This approach seems appropriate, given the fact that scholars have yet to produce a universal definition of religion that is satisfying in every cultural context.[39] Moreover, I make no attempt to qualify pagan "belief in belief." It might have been a person's belief in the fact that he was devoted to Isis (and her reciprocal interest in his welfare), or merely this person's belief in his commitment to the preservation of the rituals of the imperial cult, or some other variation.[40]

Second, the argument that paganism must be treated as a religion of ritual rather than faith (and a presumed preference for the latter) suggests the projection of a Christian definition of proper religion upon paganism. Some elite pagans expressed distaste for sacrifice and other rituals,[41] their attitude suggesting a pre-Christian distinction between ritual and faith. But, as chapter six discusses, this stance was driven by the cultural biases of the elite, who, as Dale Martin has argued, sought to

---

[38] Daniel Dennett, *Breaking the Spell: Religion as a Natural Phenomenon* (NY: Penguin Group, 2006), 223-46.

[39] On the difficulty of developing a universal definition of religion that is applicable cross-culturally see for instance Talal Asad, *Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2003).

[40] Some Christian converts might have even been drawn towards conversion as A. D. Nock defined it: as a personal reorientation of the individual, associated with an internal consciousness of a change having taken place, anxiety being replaced by willing engagement and feelings of renewal and happiness at the perception of new truths. See Arthur Darby Nock, *Conversion: The Old and the New in Religion from Alexander the Great to Augustine of Hippo* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1933). In other words, some converts might have converted because they believed that Christianity offered a level of commitment that they did not believe they could experience otherwise and because they thought that this experience had intrinsic value. But this does not mean that Christianity was inherently superior to paganism in this regard; it merely means that *for these converts* it was superior in this regard. Regarding the argument that Christianity was appealing to pagans because monotheism itself was appealing, see chapter two for discussion of monotheistic tendencies in paganism. Also see North, 41.

[41] See chapters two and six.

demonstrate their status by distancing themselves from what they perceived as the excess religious devotions of lower status individuals.[42] For this reason, it is misguided to assume that elite interest was confined to orthopraxy. Their rejection of ritual and their disputes over matters like the role of allegory in religious narratives[43] inspired the assertion of what begins to look like pagan doctrine.[44] Werner Jaeger argues that the appeal to Roman custom as the foundation for religious truth in pre-Christian pagan discourse actually anticipated the faith-based belief of the Christians.[45] And a pagan tendency towards what looks like faith-based belief certainly caught the attention of Christians smarting from criticism on this point. Theodoret of Cyrus (393-c. 458/466), for instance, pointed out that the structure of the pagan mystery cult presupposed a faith-based acceptance of religious tenets.[46] Furthermore, the notion that all Christians inherently would have known or accepted the notion that Christianity was a religion of faith and not ritual seems both tendentious and impossible to prove. Some Christians were just as interested in external shows of faith—the avoidance of amulets, for instance[47]—as pagans who advocated these demonstrations via sacrifice, for example.[48] An institutional interest

---

[42] Dale Martin, *Inventing Superstition: From the Hippocratics to the Christians* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004).

[43] See chapter two.

[44] For interest, consider the doctrinal implications of the dispute over idolatry discussed in the following chapter. The debate over whether the images of the gods were merely representations of the deities, and not identical with them, looks very much like doctrinal Christian debates over Christology and transubstantiation of the Eucharist.

[45] Jaeger, 33-34.

[46] Theodoret of Cyrus, *Graecarum affectionate curatio* 1.114. Moreover, the Late Antique magical practices associated with Egypt often incorporated the use of seemingly nonsensical language and foreign terminology, the audience having to take it on faith that the non-human entities at whom this language was targeted would understand it. See chapter six.

[47] See chapter six.

[48] On the demand for universal sacrifice see chapter three.

in external shows of faith does not undermine the notion that some sort of belief is involved, for as Dennett points out, institutions cannot monitor belief. They can only monitor actions. So an institution committed to confirming "belief in belief" performs surveillance on members and uses observable actions to confirm its own belief in a member's belief in belief.

Third, even before the rise of Christianity, competition between rival religious experts prompted responses from prospective clients, these responses ranging from complete acceptance to utter rejection or simple disinterest. Insofar as these responses reflected varying degrees of acceptance, how is a person to characterize them if not as a demonstration of some sort of belief?[49] Though each of these arguments touches upon a highly controversial area in the study of antiquity and religion in general, taken as a whole, they seem to support a loose usage of the term "faith" with regard to paganism, even if Greco-Romans did not possess a term that would have directly corresponded to the notion of faith as it would eventually come to be conceptualized in Christianity.[50]

Unfortunately, the classification of all pagans under the single term "pagan," like the classification of all Christians under the single term "Christian," is imprecise as well as unfair;[51] particularly because I will argue, because simplification like this was one of the strategies by which religious rivals sought to undermine their

---

[49] Dennett, 223-46.

[50] For discussion of the debate over the role of faith in traditional Egyptian paganism see Maria Luiseli, "Personal Piety in Ancient Egypt," *Religion Compass* 8 (2014): 105-16.

[51] For an introduction to traditional Greek and Roman paganism see Mary Beard, John North, and Simon Price, *Religions of Rome* (NY: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Walter Burkert, *Ancient Mystery Cults* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1987); M. P. Nilsson, *Geschichte der griechischen Religion* (München: Beck, 1955). Care should also be taken not to assume lack of differentiation within the Jewish faith. See for instance Hayim Lapin, *Rabbis as Romans: The Rabbinic Movement in Palestine, 100-400 CE* (NY: Oxford University Press, 2012); S. Cohen, *From the Maccabees to the Mishnah* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1987).

opposition and to justify violence. Nonetheless, some sort of simplification is necessary if we are going to discuss the topic at all. Since the degree of syncretism witnessed in paganism during this period is a matter of some debate,[52] when I refer to a traditional Egyptian pagan, it should be understood that I mean anyone on the scale from the most traditionally Egyptian of Egyptian pagans to pagans with Egyptianizing tendencies for whom—based on the situation under discussion—this predilection for Egyptianizing beliefs and customs emerges to the forefront. Otherwise, I will attempt to be as specific as possible in distinguishing between different forms of paganism and different forms of Christianity without, I hope, becoming overly tedious.

A moment of tedium—as no doubt some readers will think it—is required, however, to lay the groundwork for just what is meant here by the "Other." It is a truism that when we are talking about someone else, the Other, we are also talking about ourselves, everything we are or are not.[53] The division between "same" and "other"—"them" versus "us"—is inherent to the human condition.[54] The Other can simultaneously represent, contradictorily, what we want and what we abhor. Authority over the Other is exercised via the construction of its image, its

---

[52] See chapter two. On the negative connotations of "syncretism" in scholarship—to which of course the current project claims to be exempt (correctly or not)—a hostility which can be traced to sixteenth century Christian disputes, and the difficulty of defining the term see Anita Leopold, "Syncretism and the Interaction of Modes of Religiosity: A Formative Perspective on Gnostic-Christian Movements in Late Antiquity," in *Theorizing Religions Past: Archaeology, History and Cognition*, eds. Harvey Whitehouse and Luther Marti (NY: Altamira Press, 2004), 105. Also see Clifford Ando, "Pagan Apologetics and Christian Intolerance in the Age of Themistius and Augustine," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 4 (1996): 207.

[53] Judith Lieu, *Christian Identity in the Jewish and Graeco-Roman World* (NY: Oxford University Press, 2004), 269.

[54] More fundamentally, basic social organization is dependent upon the construction of difference. A division of labor is feasible only because one side is distinguished from the other, and the rhetoric that justifies behavior does so by investing these distinctions with meaning. For an introduction to the study of the "Other" that is dated but nevertheless thought provoking, see Jonathan Z. Smith, "What a Difference a Difference Makes," in *"To See Ourselves As Others See Us: Christians, Jews, 'Others' in Late Antiquity*, eds. Jacob Neusner, Ernest Fredrichs, and Caroline McCracken-Flesher (Chico, California: Scholars Press, 1985), 3-48.

classification as something apart from ourselves as we appropriate its most enviable traits and distance ourselves from what seems undesirable. In the process, we are exercising authority over ourselves, defining what we consider to be our most salient attributes. In its extreme form, this authority constitutes a declaration that those aligned with us can only enjoy our camaraderie if they distance themselves from the characteristics that we associate with the Other. Thus, construction of group identity reflects internal social competition as much as it reflects notions about interaction with outsiders.[55]

Just who is identified as the Other naturally shifts, for an Egyptian pagan might have represented the Other to a Greek pagan or to a Greek Christian, but in the eyes of this Egyptian pagan, the Greek would have represented the Other, if only as a separate individual, but also, perhaps, in terms of markers such as ethnicity and religion. Otherness is in the eye of the beholder. Nevertheless, we are conscious of our own Otherness vis-à-vis an idealized social norm as dictated by the political hierarchy. The hierarchy in antiquity was such that an Egyptian, particularly one of low socioeconomic status, would have probably enjoyed a special appreciation for his identity *as* the Other in the eyes of high status Greco-Romans.[56] Before the fourth century C.E., Christians, too, were well aware of their relatively subordinate status

[55] J. Lacan, "*Le séminaire sur 'La Lettre volée,'*" in *Écrits* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1966), 11-61. Also see chapter five.

[56] Despite inequities, subordinate parties are not necessarily powerless. Green and Searle-Chatterjee have called attention to the use of labeling by both dominant and non-dominant parties as a strategy for gaining distance from the opponent. Nile Green and Mary Searle-Chatterjee, "Religion, Language, and Power: An Introductory Essay," in *Religion, Language and Power*, eds. Nile Green and Mary Searle-Chatterjee (NY: Routledge, 2008), 13. See chapter five for further discussion.

and their concomitant identity as the Other in the eyes of pagans, especially Greco-Roman pagans.[57]

The period under study here is particularly enlightening with regard to the construction of religious identity because it witnessed a shift in this paradigm, as Christians went from being the deviant out-group to the dominant in-group. Christians used the Egyptian pagan Other to navigate this transition, articulating Christian identity in terms of differences and similarities to this paragon of strangeness. For this reason, Christian discourse about the pagan Other can be read as discourse about the Christian self, reflecting the efforts of Christians to situate themselves within their social, religious, and political worlds.

If it is not already evident, I hope the reader will soon see that the identities being articulated via this discourse were constructions, not objective reality. Boundaries blurred. It was here, in the margins, that people identified the characteristics that were most crucial in classifying one another. Consequently, we must pay close attention to this area if we hope to understand the construction of identity.

As of late, scholarship on antiquity has taken quite an interest in these issues, exploring how groups and individuals constructed their identities via their interactions with the Other.[58] While the current project will not be investigating the theoretical

---

[57] By self-identifying as *different*, a subordinate party can stake out a territory within which he is the authority, that is, within his own community, separate from the dominant community. Clement of Alexandria used the negative experiences of ostracism, that is, ridicule and persecution, to solidify the boundaries of a unique Christian identity. See for instance Clement of Alexandria, *Stromateis* 1.8. See the following chapter on the use of elitist discourse (cryptographic hieroglyphs, allegory, and secrecy) to exclude outsiders.

[58] See, for instance, Isabella Sandwell, *Religious Identity in Late Antiquity: Greeks, Jews, and Christians in Antioch* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007); Simon Goldhill, ed., *Being Greek under Rome: Cultural Identity, the Second Sophistic and the Development of Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001); Ben Meyer and E. P. Sanders, eds., *Jewish and Christian Self-Definition*, vols. 1-3 (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980). For sources on the ethnic Other see chapter five. Why are the subjects of identity and the Other in

implications of "identity" to the same extent as, for instance, Andrew Jacobs' recent project on early Christianity,[59] a working definition will provide us with a useful starting point. For that, let us follow the lead of Andrew Smith, whose study of Roman-Palmyran relations defines "identity construction" thus: as an elaboration of group membership (within the context of a negotiation for power) via the recognition of similarities and differences defined using a catalog of characteristics, the significance of which were subject to negotiation.[60] For our purposes, this means that when early Christians were rejecting or embracing characteristics associated (constructed as being associated) with Egyptian paganism, this rhetoric was linked to a struggle for power between Christians and Greco-Roman pagans. This was a three party negotiation, even if some of the parties (Egyptian pagans particularly) might not have had an equal say.[61] During the course of this negotiation, Christians did not simply assert their supremacy but also sought to rewrite the rules for defining

---

antiquity attracting so much attention? At least in part, this is no doubt because scholars—as members of multicultural, pluralistic societies—are themselves forced to struggle with clashing impulses towards inclusion and exclusion. Contingent though pluralism is upon the acceptance of some degree of difference, since no society could possibly absorb every possible human variation, some level of intolerance is inevitable. The tolerance that is required to absorb difference in a multicultural society is not conducive to the absorption of, for instance, cultural intolerance. That is, a society that is only able to absorb difference because it is tolerant must, contradictorily, express some intolerance of intolerance. For intolerance and violence related to the construction of boundaries see chapter four. For discussion of the multiculturalism of Late Antiquity see chapter five.

[59] Andrew Jacobs, *Christ Circumcised: A Study in Early Christian History and Difference* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012).

[60] Andrew Smith, *Roman Palmyra: Identity, Community, and State Formation* (NY: Oxford University Press, 2013), 10-11.

[61] Were we to concentrate solely on competition between Christians and Greco-Roman pagans, we would lose sight of what this meant for Egyptian pagans. If we have any hope of gaining a handle on the true complexities of life in a multicultural population, then we have to take into consideration not only interactions between the two dominant parties (or one dominant party and another soon to be dominant party), but also interactions with (relatively) subordinate parties such as Egyptian pagans. (See chapter five on the degree to which Egyptians might have been subordinate.) This does not mean that we should go too far in the opposite direction though. If we concentrated solely on Christian views of Egyptian pagans, we might exaggerate the significance of our findings, having forgotten that these views have to be calibrated against Christian attitudes towards Greco-Roman pagans as well as other players, such as Jews and Persians. As we shall see, some scholars question the vitality of Egyptian paganism during this period. If they are right, then our attempt to trace Egyptian paganism is doomed to fail. However, the lack of evidence for Egyptian paganism coincides too neatly with Christian triumphalist claims for me to be entirely comfortable with rejecting the possibility that Christians were simply ignoring the evidence for Egyptian pagans. See chapters four and five.

difference. This posed a basic challenge to the classification system, the categories of knowledge that, according to Michel Foucault, are so central to the exercise of authority.[62] Therefore, the efforts of Christians to undermine the fundamental structure of traditional identity formation can be seen as one of the strategies by which they secured their dominance.

When we conceptualize identity, we should not be imagining a static entity, though it will become clear that authority figures endeavored to impose static identities in order to facilitate the exercise of their power. Instead of giving pride of place to these fellows, whose power was never as secure as they would have liked—meaning that their efforts to impose static identities never entirely succeeded—we should conceive of identity as a dynamic entity, made up of multiple negotiable and sometimes conflicting features. Following Guy Halsall, let us modify our definition of "identity construction" to imagine the process as a kind of card game. The deck of cards is Andrew Smith's catalogue of characteristics. Each card (characteristic) can be either "played" or withheld from "play" at any given time. We are sometimes constrained by circumstances—the hand we are dealt—but a certain amount of maneuverability, conscious or not, is often possible. Thus, we shift our behavior as the situation demands, presenting ourselves as one thing here and another thing there, playing and withholding cards.[63] The process applies for groups as well, with Christian hagiographers, for instance, emphasizing the Egyptian-ness of Christian

[62] Michel Foucault, *L'archéologie du savoir* (Paris: Gallimard, 2000). On the challenge that these conversions posed see especially chapter five.

[63] Guy Halsall, "Social Identities and Social Relationships in Early Merovingian Gaul," in *Franks and Alamanni in the Merovingian Period: An Ethnographic Perspective*, ed. Ian Wood (San Marino: The Boydell Press, 1998), 141. For recent sociological texts on the subject see Steph Lawler, *Identity: Sociological Perspectives* (Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2008); Richard Jenkins, *Social Identity* (Hoboken: Routledge, Taylor and Francis Group, 2014). For the degree of maneuverability enjoyed in particularly constrained situations see below.

monks to imply Christianity's access to the unique divine insight that Egyptian pagans were thought to enjoy, while distancing Christians from Egyptians in other instances to imply that Christianity was free of the irrationality attributed to these Egyptians.[64]

With identities blurring so thoroughly, it is no surprise to find that "conversion"—ostensibly the crossing of a boundary from one identity to another—is just as difficult to define as "Egyptian," "pagan," "identity," and the "Other." Theoretically, conversion should be a very marked step in self-determination, when a person declares his disassociation with one religious vocation and his attachment to a new one. But if identity is really as complicated as I have suggested above, then conversion cannot have been this clear-cut, for boundaries between Christians and pagans were inherently blurred. As Christians and pagans disputed their differences, both internally and externally, their identities *as* Christians and pagans came under question. Therefore, we have to exercise caution when trying to determine which activities should be taken to indicate movement across a boundary—conversion—especially in light of recent scholarship challenging the degree to which conversion can be thought of as a single, self-contained point in time that distinguishes a past identity from a future one. Instead of thinking of conversion as a one-time occurrence, this scholarship suggests that we ought to think of it as an ongoing process.[65] This seems to be in line with evidence from antiquity, where injunctions to

[64] See chapters two and five.

[65] Thomas Brown, "Mystical Experiences, American Culture, and Conversion to Christian Spiritualism," in *The Anthropology of Religious Conversion*, eds. Andrew Buckser and Stephen Glazier (NY: Bowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2003), 142; Jack Sanders, "Conversions in Early Christianity," in *Handbook of Early Christianity: Social Science Approaches*, eds. Antony Blasi, Jean Duhaime, Paul-André Turcotte (NY: Altamira Press, 2002), 626-27. Lewis Rambo and Charles Farhadian argue for a non-precise definition of conversion to take

convert were sometimes directed towards people who probably already considered themselves Christian. The celebrated preacher Augustine of Hippo (354-430), for example, would customarily end his sermons with a "conversion," his parishioners being invited to turn (convert) to God.[66] As we shall see, there are also good reasons for suspecting polemical incentives were sometimes behind the claim that a particular holy man had secured the conversion of clientele. So when I refer to "conversion" and the decision to "convert," it should be understood that I might be referring to a person's decision to self-ascribe as a Christian for the first time,[67] but I might also be referring to a person's continuation of an already existing commitment to the Christian faith, including the decision to deepen his commitment in the form of an entrée into the monastic life or to a transition from one brand of Christianity to another.

Of course, treating conversion as if it was always a matter of choice might seem somewhat anachronistic. The religious freedom necessary to exercise absolute choice on this issue is very modern. Depending on their status, ancient men and women sometimes faced limited options, and given the presence of physical force or socioeconomic pressure, it might not be appropriate to speak of conversion as if it was always a choice.[68] In doing so, I do not mean to imply that I disregard a person's limitations in this regard. Yet I am by no means enamored by scholarship that charts

---

into account the variable nature of the phenomenon. Lewis Rambo and Charles Farhadian, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Religious Conversion* (NY: Oxford University Press, 2014), 10.

[66] Neil McLynn, "Seeing and Believing: Aspects of Conversion from Antoninus Pius to Louis the Pious," in *Conversion in Late Antiquity and The Early Middle Ages: Seeing and Believing*, eds. Kenneth Mills and Antony Grafton (NY: University of Rochester Press, 2003), 259.

[67] For discussion of just what this commitment might look like see chapter six.

[68] Averil Cameron, "Christian Conversion in Antiquity: Some Issues," in *Conversion in Late Antiquity*, eds. Arietta Papaconstantinou, Daniel Schwartz, Neil McLynn (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company 2015), 14. Also see chapter four.

these limitations but goes no further than that. In seeking to elucidate the means by which people were deprived of their autonomy, scholars who ignore how people *did* act merely re-inscribe the subjugation that deprived these people of autonomy in the first place.[69] A person might not have been provided with good alternatives in a particular scenario, but an action—even non-action—*is* a choice, even if it is an unconscious one.[70] Thus, I will speak of conversion as though it was a choice, with the understanding that this might not have always been a conscious choice, that it might have sometimes been a result of (social, economic, or political) force, and that factors such as cognitive pre-closure might have impeded the degree to which alternatives were considered.[71]

Moreover, I will argue that these so-called choices might not have always been based on what we would consider rational decision-making, instead being inspired by emotional or physical factors that are not usually included under the umbrella of items that are thought to contribute to a decision today. By suggesting that the decision to convert might not have been rational, I do not mean to imply that converts were foolish. Rather, I simply mean to avoid an anachronistic application of modern notions of rationalism or thinking based on the scientific method.[72] While pagan critics might have accused Christians of descending into madness,[73] for want of an objective (non-culturally specific) scale of judgment to confirm this claim, it

---

[69] See chapter five for debates surrounding the subaltern.

[70] Cicero, *Tusculanae disputations* 1-5.41 (1-121); Jean-Paul Sartre, *L'existentialisme est un humanism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007).

[71] Kent Greenfield, *The Myth of Choice: Personal Responsibility in a World of Limits* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011).

[72] See chapter six for further discussion of reasonable belief.

[73] See chapters two and three.

seems incumbent upon us to try to understand conversion insofar as it made *sense* to Christians, even if some of the evidence justifying the decision to convert would not hold up to the rigors of modern scientific testing.

This study is loosely organized according to the types of evidence that might have encouraged conversion: the sort of intellectual arguments that would have been more in line with what we think of as rational decision-making today; emotional arguments based on the push-pull attraction of the deviant, as well as fear, disgust, and anger; physical pressure; socioeconomic and political arguments; and awe in the face of what look like miracles. We will focus on one genre at a time, though there will be some overlap. Chapter two looks into the intellectual arguments for conversion, concentrating on apologetic literature. Chapter three moves on to the emotional and physical reasons for conversion, focusing on martyrologies and apocalypses. Chapter four continues to study the themes broached in the previous chapter, while shifting the emphasis to the socioeconomic and political factors for conversion. Looking at histories, sermons, hagiographies, and some archaeological and artistic evidence, it also explores the extent to which religious boundaries remained blurred even after Christians began to rise to dominance. Chapters five and six proceed to examine boundary maintenance in more detail, with complications arising in the form of ethnic conflicts and the logic-defying miracles that pose such a challenge to modern scholars who are trained to exercise skepticism in the face of such phenomena. Chapter seven reviews the reasons for conversion and concludes by summing up the ways in which an Egyptian perspective enhances our understanding of Christianization.

The various theoretical approaches employed in this project also proceed in step with the progression from chapter to chapter. Chapter two is something of an intellectual history, chapter three employs literary and cinematic theory, chapters four and five adopt a more traditional historical approach while—like chapters three and six—incorporating the work of social scientists to augment the evidence, and chapter six employs theories produced by philosophers of religion. Each approach has its drawbacks. Intellectual history can sometimes seem out of touch with how people actually lived their lives. The use of literary and cinematic theory might be taken to imply that a historian does not believe that the events described in a given text actually transpired. Historians relying on social science have been accused of importing the conclusions along with the theories. Traditional history could be accused of being too reductionist, placing too much trust in the written sources.[74] By combining approaches, I hope to compensate for the drawbacks and to suggest ways of moving forward in debates that appear to have come to something of a standstill in scholarly discourse.

The most significant contribution of this project is the light it sheds on the complication posed by Egyptian paganism in the project of Christian-pagan identity construction and conversion. Other contributions include:

[74] On the difficulty of interpreting archaeological and artistic evidence, evidence which this discussion employs somewhat sparingly, see chapter four. On the difficulty of interpreting papyri see Roger Bagnall, *Early Christian Books in Egypt* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009). For the debate over historians relying on the work of social scientists in particular see Roger Bagnall, *Egypt in Late Antiquity* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993), 10; Garrett Fagan, *The Lure of the Arena: Social Psychology and the Crowd at the Roman Games* (NY: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 39-48; Peter Brown, "Sorcery, Demons and the Rise of Christianity from Late Antiquity into the Middle Ages," in *Witchcraft Confessions and Accusations*, ed. Mary Douglass (London: Tavistock, 1970), 17-18. Also see T. P. Wiseman, "Lying Historians: Seven Types of Mendacity," in *Lies and Fiction in the Ancient World*, eds. Christopher Gill and T. P. Wiseman (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1993), 122-46.

1. Recognizing an occasional disinterest in Egyptian paganism on the part of Christians both as a reflection of competition with Greco-Roman pagans and as a rhetorical strategy, the operation of which undermines scholarly assumptions regarding the rapid decline of paganism (chapters two and five).
2. Reassessing the significance of competitive historiography for conversion (chapter two).
3. Advancing discussions regarding the conflation of early Christian martyrs with terrorists beyond recent scholarship that has neglected to consider this issue in light of revised theories regarding terrorism's deviant allure and the attraction it exercises over elite and semi-elite members of the very society at whom it is directed (chapter three).
4. Implementing literary and cinematic theories to consider the ways in which audience reception of a martyrology and an apocalypse might have predisposed this audience towards conversion (chapter three).
5. Reassessing the qualitative measures of violence in martyrologies, apocalypses, histories, and hagiographies (chapters three and four).
6. Employing the work of social scientists on the subject of torture to challenge Christian depictions of anti-Christian violence (chapter three).
7. Challenging the linear nature of accounts regarding religious violence to demonstrate the extent to which ambiguity itself might have been historically significant, reflecting contests over how to interpret events, both as they were transpiring and after the fact (chapter four).
8. Again, employing the work of social scientists, this time to sketch religious violence as it transpired in stages, thereby providing time and space to show how people, with dynamic and evolving identities, were brought to commit what were otherwise unthinkable acts of violence (as a correction to scholarship that tends to flatten the acts in question and thus typecasts the participants as arbiters of seemingly irrational violence) (chapter four).

9. Reconsidering scholarly views regarding a so-called “secular” sphere in light of transformations regarding boundary maintenance and Christian-pagan identity (chapter four).
10. Contextualizing the stereotype of the unlearned Christian monk of Egypt not just within intra-Christian competition (as scholars have already done) but also within the context of Egyptian and Greco-Roman competition (chapter five).
11. Considering the imperialistic implications of the Christian penchant for occupying pagan tombs and the evidence for discomfort over this very thing (chapter five).
12. Contributing some approaches in the debate over the presence of so-called racism in Christian views of blacks in Egypt (chapter five).
13. Defining what might have constituted “reasonable belief” in the absence of modern scientific methodology—to free scholars from what apparently continues to be a source of some embarrassment with regard to belief in miracles in antiquity—combined with a more systematic treatment of miracles than is usually the case in scholarship, especially with regard to the Egyptian evidence (chapter six).
14. Borrowing from social scientists and philosophers of religion to consider the mechanisms by which religion is “learned” (via subjective participation) and to define the nature of the resulting belief (not as the idealization of a particular preacher, perhaps, but nevertheless worthy of being taken seriously) to advance the ongoing debate in scholarship over just what constituted belief and conversion (chapter six).

Though many of these contributions represent merely a correction to existing scholarship, I hope the reader agrees that, on the whole, they are enough to justify yet another work on Christianization. This project should certainly produce a more nuanced portrait of conversion and identity formation than I believe has characterized most scholarship to date. It provides special insight into the strategies by which

construction of the Other was part of a larger project in fashioning a so-called proper religious domain. Conversion and the construction of Christian-pagan identity had no choice but to proceed in step, since a person's identification as a Christian (either by himself or others) naturally depended on how Christianity was defined as something separate from paganism. And Christianity would have looked different when viewed through an Egyptian as opposed to a Greco-Roman lens. By ignoring this, scholars underestimate the thorny nature of religious conflict and, in so doing, generate the sort of simplistic interpretations that in fact facilitate religious conflict both now and in the past.[75]

[75] On the role of simplification and generalization in religious violence see chapter four.

Chapter 2: Apologies: Making Christians Not Egyptians

The basic arguments of Christian apologetic discourse are well-known and would not bear repeating were it not for the fact that the arguments meant something slightly different when viewed through the lens of Egyptian rather than Greco-Roman paganism. In attacking Egyptian religion, the Christian apologists were following in a long line of Greco-Roman pagan and Jewish thinkers who had criticized rites and beliefs that, to them, seemed to invert accepted norms. The entrée of Christians into the polemic complicated the issue. To some Greco-Roman pagans, the Christians themselves looked like Egyptian pagans. While this might have been no more than a rhetorical strategy, it no doubt also reflected a lack of knowledge on the part of Greco-Roman pagan apologists regarding the targets of their attack. The same lack of awareness mars Christian treatments of Egyptian paganism. Instead of seeking common ground with the Egyptian pagans who, like Christians, occupied a subordinate status vis-à-vis Greco-Roman pagans, Christians joined the latter in mocking Egyptian pagan belief. When not attacking these Egyptian pagans, Christians appear to have merely ignored them, focusing instead on Greco-Romans paganism as the more dangerous threat. Either way, Christian views of the Egyptian pagan Other were distorted. If the discussion that follows seems somewhat labyrinthine, that is the point. The notion of a clear-cut identity free of ambiguity is an illusion. Christians and pagans could not but contradict themselves as they circled around each other in a doomed effort to draw straightforward boundaries.

Instead of providing an exhaustive catalogue of the evidence for traditional Egyptian paganism in Christian apologetic literature,[76] the current project means to turn a more skeptical eye to a few select areas of evidence. Rather than try to piece together pagan faith by tracing distorted references in the apologies back to seemingly authentic practices, I will be attempting to understand what these mistakes reveal about the Christian construction of a pagan identity and, by corollary, the Christian construction of a Christian identity.

The origins of Christianity in Egypt remain murky. Some ancient sources traced it all the way back to Jesus, who supposedly preached to the Egyptians during his stay in the country as a youth, while others attributed its arrival to the apostle Mark, who was supposedly martyred in Alexandria. These traditions notwithstanding, the nature of the earliest Christian communities remains the subject of speculation, scholars suggesting that it might have actually developed out of predominantly Jewish or Gnostic communities.[77] Whatever the case, by the late second century, prominent apologists who self-ascribed as Christians were emerging in Alexandria, and it is with these that I will begin.

---

[76] Readers in search of this should see Friederich Zimmermann, *Die ägyptische Religion nach der Darstellung der Kirchenschriftsteller und die ägyptischen Denkmäler* (Paderborn: F. Schöningh, 1912). Instead of focusing, as Zimmermann does, on the apologies as evidence for the preservation of traditional Egyptian paganism, my project focuses on what the apologists seem to have missed and seeks to understand what these distortions might reveal about identity construction during the period in question.

[77] Matthew 2; Acts 2:9-10, 18.24-25; Euseb., *Hist. eccl*. 2.16. Also see David Dawson, *Allegorical Readers and Cultural Revision in Ancient Alexandria* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 172; Birger Pearson, "Earliest Christianity in Egypt: Further Observations," in *The World of Early Egyptian Christianity: Language, Literature, and Social Context*, eds. James Goehring and Janet Timbie (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2007), 99-100; Bagnall, *Books*, 10; Everett Ferguson, *Clement of Alexandria* (New York: Twayne Publishers, Inc., 1974), 22-23; Janni Loman, "The *Letter of Barnabas* in Early Second-Century Egypt," in *The Wisdom of Egypt: Jewish, Early Christian and Gnostic Essays in Honour of Gerard P. Luttikhuizen*, eds. Antony Hilhorst and George van Kooten (Boston: Brill, 2005), 261; Stephen Davis, *The Early Coptic Papacy: The Egyptian Church and Its Leadership in Late Antiquity* (New York: The American University in Cairo Press, 2004); Idris Bell, *Jews and Christians in Egypt* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1924). For discussion of what is meant by the term "Gnostic" see below.

After defining the function of apologetic literature, I will move on to a discussion of the arguments in which an Egyptian perspective would have complicated the Greco-Roman pagan-Christian polemic, focusing on ethics, animal sacrifice, the nature of the divine, competitive historiography, and allegory. The evidence suggests that traditional Egyptian pagans were often ignored, and when they were introduced into the debate, it was only to serve as a foil against which to articulate the apologist's (non-Egyptian) position. Had Egyptian paganism been taken seriously (or properly understood), it would have undermined the efforts to draw clear-cut lines between paganism and Christianity, and Egyptian and non-Egyptian.

First, naturally, I should define what I mean by an "apology." Scholars as of late have come to favor a very loose definition. Apologetic literature was, at its heart, a defense of some position. It integrated discursive strategies associated with a wide range of oratorical subjects, including legal arguments, polemics, debates, and dialogues. Insofar as an apologist is, by definition, assuming a defensive position as he pens his text, the assumption might be that the apologists stood in minority positions vis-à-vis their "accusers." By this line of reasoning, Christian apologetic literature should have disappeared as Christianity rose to dominance in the Greco-Roman world. But this is not the case; further, apologetic literature certainly predated Christianity. The dialogue format of some of the apologies obscures the question of intent still further. Ostensibly, a dialogue is an even-handed exchange between equally balanced parties. Yet this is in part a ploy. A debate is more impressive if it does not appear to have been rigged. An author's self-deprecating claims to a

minority status and the appearance of "fair play" are themselves discursive strategies that stack the odds in the author's favor.[78]

To whom were these Christian apologies directed? Quite a few are addressed to pagans[79] and reliance on pagan rhetorical strategies suggests that the texts were meant to be read by pagans, presumably with the goal of securing converts.[80] However, scholars are hesitant to accept this thesis, doubting that a pagan audience would have been at all interested or impressed by what would have been perceived as the babbling of a suspect cult, especially before the development of imperial support in the early fourth century.[81] The anti-Jewish aspects of some early Christian polemics have led a few scholars to argue that these tracts were actually directed against Jews, not pagans. But since pagans were denigrating Christianity on the basis of its supposed similarity to Judaism, the anti-Jewish slant of these Christian

[78] The term "writer" or "author" is used here with the understanding that a person might be the attributed author of a text actually composed by someone else, and with the understanding that issues of orality and editing complicate the degree to which any text can be said to have been "written." While the effort to distinguish a separate apologetic genre might be somewhat anachronistic, identification of the apology as a unique form of discourse is nevertheless useful insofar as it facilitates comparison and analysis. A "loose" definition allows one to appreciate the apologetic elements of texts that would not normally be considered apologies, such as biographies. See Mark Edwards, Martin Goodman, and Simon Price, eds., *Apologetics in the Roman Empire: Pagans, Jews and Christians* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999). On the debate over the degree to which apologies reflected actual, fair debates see Averil Cameron, *Dialoguing in Late Antiquity* (Washington, D.C.: Center for Hellenic Studies, Trustees for Harvard University, 2014); Simon Goldhill, ed., *The End of Dialogue in Antiquity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009); Yannis Papadoyannakis, "Instruction by Question and Answer: The Case of Late Antique and Byzantine Erotapokriseis," in *Greek Literature in Late Antiquity: Dynamism, Didactism, Classicism,* ed. Scott Johnson (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2006), 91-106; Richard Lim, *Public Disputation, Power, and Social Order in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995); Ando, "Apologetics," 171-207; Kahlos.

[79] Athenagoras, *Legatio pro Christianis* Preface.

[80] Simon Price, "Latin Christian Apologetics: Minucius Felix, Tertullian and Cyprian," in *Apologetics in the Roman Empire: Pagans, Jews and Christians,* eds. Mark Edwards, Martin Goodman, and Simon Price (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 105.

[81] Ando, "Apologetics," 184; Laura Nasrallah, *Christian Responses to Roman Art and Architecture: The Second-Century Church amid the Spaces of Empire* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 27.

apologies might have been intended to demonstrate that any resemblance was superficial.[82]

Christians themselves no doubt formed a large part of the audience for apologetic literature. Athanasius (patriarch 328-373), an influential fourth century patriarch[83] of Egypt, seems to have considered apologies useful for confirming the faith of already converted Christians, implying that he was concerned about Christians in danger of lapsing.[84] If Christians were the chief targets of apologetic literature, this helps to explain the survival of the genre long after the empire was largely Christian, but the uniformity of faith this transformation implies is something of a deception. As paganism declined, disputes over so-called heresy continued to rage, and apologetic literature would have provided a valuable mechanism for delineating the features of the author's "orthodox" view of Christianity.[85] It is also possible that the author of a particular text might not have had a clear idea as to who was meant to make use of the final product.[86] Thus, it seems appropriate to imagine apologetic literature attracting an audience as loosely defined as the genre itself.

After all, once a text was composed it might be used in ways that its author never intended. Apologists were all too happy to use their opponents' work against

---

[82] Aryeh Kofsky, *Eusebius of Caesarea against Paganism* (Boston: Brill, 2000), 92.

[83] The "patriarch," or bishop, of Alexandria does not appear to have been formally recognized as the archbishop of Egypt until the Council of Nicea in 325. But see Philip Schaff, *Socrates Scholasticus* (Grand Rapids, MI: Christian Classics Ethereal Library, 1893), 145n338. For earlier usage of the term *papas*, which was the traditional designation of the bishop of Alexandria, see (Euseb., *Hist. eccl.* 7.7); H. Idris Bell, *Cults and Creeds in Graeco-Roman Egypt* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1953), 84; Tim Vivian, *St. Peter of Alexandria: Bishop and Martyr* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Fortress Press, 1988), 1n1. For the controversy over the whether or not Alexandria had a bishop prior to Demetrios I (d. 231) see Bagnall, *Books*, 4-5.

[84] Athanasius, *De incarnatione Verbi* 1. Also see E.P. Meijering, "Introduction," *Athanasius: Contra Gentes, Introduction, Translation and Commentary* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1984) 5; Ando, "Apologetics," 184.

[85] Ando, "Apologetics," 184; Price, 108. See chapter four for the construction of so-called "orthodoxy" and the accusation that so-called heretics were pagans.

[86] Michael Frede, "Eusebius' Apologetic Writings," in Edwards, 234.

them, for instance. While a given Christian apology might not have been consumed by the general pagan public, there is some reason to believe that it would have attracted the interest of rival pagan apologists. A genre that is theoretically intended to establish boundaries—detailing the differences between competing faiths and justifying the maintenance of separation—actually encouraged overlap, as pagan, Jewish, and Christian apologists responded to one another, answering criticisms in kind and increasingly coming to resemble one another.[87] The discussion below is devoted, in part, to revealing the extent to which boundaries were blurred. Consequently, the presentation may give a false impression that the thinkers in question were all writing at the same time and in the same place, or at least in direct response to one another. While that was not necessarily the case, they were nevertheless part of the same general milieu and the current approach is meant to paint the Christian-pagan (and to some degree Jewish) images generated within this milieu.

Who were the apologists? This discussion begins with the convert Justin Martyr (c. 100-165), who was executed in Rome for professing Christianity. I have classified him as one of the non-Egyptian apologists, but some of his writing was inspired by the execution of three Christians, one of whom went by the Greco-Egyptian name of Ptolemaeus, an execution linked to a divorce case involving a woman who lived in Alexandria.[88] Justin was also credited with the composition of a

---

[87] Henry Chadwick, "Introduction," in *Origen: Contra Celsum* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1953), ix; Arthur Droge, *Homer or Moses? Early Christian Interpretations of the History of Culture* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1989), 101; Price, 113; R. Joseph Hoffman, *Celsus on* The True Doctrine*: A Discourse Against the Christians* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 23; Ando, "Apologetics," 171.

[88] Justin, *Apol.* 2.2-3. Thomas Falls, "Introduction," in *Saint Justin Martyr The First Apology, the Second Apology, Dialogue with Trypho, Exhortation to the Greeks, Discourse to the Greeks, the Monarchy, or the Rule of God* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1965), 9-14, 115. Also see Henry

late second or early third century *Exhortation to the Greeks*,[89] the author of which seems to have visited Egypt (Pseudo-Justin Martyr, *Cohort.* 13). Like the other apologists in this discussion, Justin's apparent lack of familiarity with Egypt itself did not necessarily mean that he was utterly ignorant of Egyptian paganism. Cults of the Egyptian deities Isis and Serapis were extremely widespread and could found in Rome itself, though their priests were ejected from the city now and then.[90]

Whatever Justin's actual interest in Egyptian paganism, his anti-pagan polemic appears to have stirred up the ire of quite a few pagans. One of these, Celsus (fl. 177), penned a response that, among other things, sought to conflate Christianity with Egyptian paganism in order to malign the former. If it is true that Celsus was writing in Alexandria,[91] then his interest in Egyptian paganism might be attributable to direct contact. Alexandria seems to have been particularly conducive to the composition of apologetic literature, which is not very surprising given the heady atmosphere of debate that must have been associated with the city's renowned institutions of learning. Here it is speculated that the relatively unknown Christian apologist Athenagoras (c. 133-c. 190) composed his own anti-pagan tract. While

---

Chadwick, *Early Christian Thought and the Classical Tradition; Studies in Justin, Clement, and Origen* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1966); Rebecca Lyman, "The Politics of Passing: Justin Martyr's Conversion as a Problem of Hellenization,'" in Mills, 36-60.

[89] Falls, 427.

[90] On the popularity of the cult of Isis and Sarapis see V. Tran Tam Tinh, *Isis Lactans: Corpus des Monuments Greco-Romains d'Isis Allaitant Harpocrate* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1973); V. Tran Tam Tinh, "Sarapis and Isis," in Meyer, 3:101-17; R. E. Witt, *Isis in the Ancient World* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1971).

[91] On Celsus' inspiration and his association with Alexandria see Chadwick, "Introduction," xxviii-xxix; Droge, 76; Jacobs, 50. For Celsus' conflation Egyptian paganism and Christianity, consider his accusation that Jesus employed himself as a magician in Egypt (Origen, *Con. Cels.* 1.28). Also see Chadwick, *Early Christian*.

Athenagoras does not appear to have been widely read,[92] he is nonetheless intriguing for my purpose because he had rather more to say about Egyptian paganism than other Christian apologists of his time.

Of course, Celsus, by comparison, was anything but obscure. He seems to have inspired one rebuttal after another, including a tract from Tatian (c. 120-c. 180), an Assyrian who seems to have been converted to Christianity under Justin's tutelage.[93] Theophilus of Antioch (d. c. 184), a convert from paganism who eventually rose to the position of bishop of Antioch on the Orontes, answered some of Celsus' charges in an apology addressed to a pagan by the name of Autolycus.[94] It is unclear just how much sway Theophilus had on other Christian thinkers, but scholars have suggested that he was read by the next three apologists on my list, Tertullian (160-220), Minucius Felix, and Clement of Alexandria (c. 150-c. 211).[95]

Born in Carthage to wealthy pagans, Tertullian produced a large body of work and had a strong influence on North African Christianity.[96] Scholars debate the direction of influence between Tertullian and Minucius Felix, who might have been North African origin but was clearly sufficiently interested in Egyptian paganism to

---

[92] William Schoedel, "Introduction," in *Athenagoras: Legatio and De Resurrectione* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), ix –x; Nasrallah, 187; Edgar Goodspeed and Robert Grant, *A History of Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966), 115-16.

[93] Mary Whittaker, "Introduction," in *Oratio ad Graecos and Fragments*, ed. Molly Whittaker (Oxford, Clarendon, 1982), ix; Droge, 86. Also see Michael McGehee, "Why Tatian Never "Apologized" to the Greeks," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 1 (1993): 143-58; Emily J. Hunt, *Christianity in the Second Century: The Case of Tatian* (New York: Routledge, 2003).

[94] Droge, 122; Eric Osborn, "The Apologists," in *The Early Christian World*, ed. Philip Esler (New York: Routledge), 542. Also see Rick Rogers, *Theophilus of Antioch: The Life and Thought of a Second-century Bishop* (Lanham, Md.: Lexington Books, 2000).

[95] Goodspeed, 118.

[96] Gerald Bray, "The Early Theologians," in Esler, 565-67. Also see Timothy Barnes, *Tertullian: A Historical and Literary Study* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1971).

record the little story of Isis that opened the previous chapter.[97] Clement of Alexandria's career is somewhat better document than Minucius Felix's, but little is known of Clement's youth, which was presumably spent as a pagan. According to his own account, Clement attached himself to one teacher after another—including a Greek (who may have been Athenagoras), a Syrian, an Assyrian (who may have been Tatian), and a Jew—until he was finally won over by a teacher in Alexandria, who encouraged Clement's conversion to Christianity (Clem. Al., *Strom.* 1.11.2). Afterwards, Clement himself took up teaching before fleeing Alexandria in 202 at the outbreak of an anti-Christian persecution.[98]

Clement might not have ever crossed paths with Origen, the next apologist under discussion here, but Origen might very well have been studying in Alexandria before Clement's departure. Origen, like Clement, was very active in the schools. After the death of Origen's father in the early third century anti-Christian persecution,[99] Origen taught grammar and catechism in Alexandria until the early

---

[97] Osborn, 547; F. L. Cross, *The Early Christian Fathers* (London: Gerald Duckworth & Co. Ltd., 1960), 146; Goodspeed, 166-69; Price, 105-29. Also see Katharina Heyden, "Christliche Transformation des antiken Dialogs bei Justin und Minucius Felix," *Zeitschrift für antikes Christentum* 13 (2009): 204-32.

[98] G. W. Butterworth, *Clement of Alexandria* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1919), xi; Ferguson, 3, 14-15; Whittaker, ix. For the debate over Clement's connection with the Catechical School later headed by Origen see Dawson, 219-22. Also see W. H. Oliver, "The Catechetical School in Alexandria," *Verbum et Ecclesia* 36 (2015): 1-14. For the Severan persecution see Dawson, 185 and the following chapter. Also see Eric Osborn, "Clement of Alexandria: A Review of Research, 1958-1982," *Second Century* 3 (1983): 223-25; Goodspeed, 127-33; Salvatore Lilla, *Clement of Alexandria: A Study in Christian Platonism and Gnosticism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971), 37-40; David Rankin, *From Clement to Origen: The Social and Historical Context of the Church Fathers* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2006); Annewies Van den Hoek, "How Alexandrian was Clement of Alexandria? Reflections on Clement and His Alexandrian Background," *Heythrop Journal* 31 (1990): 179-94; Denise Buell, *Making Christians: Clement of Alexandria and the Rhetoric of Legitimacy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999); Arkadi Choufrine, *Gnosis, Theophany, Theosis: Studies in Clement of Alexandria's Appropriation of His Background* (New York: Peter Lang, 2002).

[99] John Oulton, "General Introduction," in *Alexandrian Christianity*, eds. Henry Chadwick and John Oulton (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1954), 171; Philip Schaff, ed, *Eusebius Pamphilius: Church History, Life of Constantine, Oration in Praise of Constantine* (Grand Rapids, MI: Christian Classics Ethereal Library, 1890), 605-606. See the following chapter for the martyrdom of Origen's father and chapter five for further discussion of Origen's ethnicity. Also see M. J. Edwards, *Origen against Plato* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2002); Charles Kannengiesser, William Lawrence Petersen, eds., *Origen of Alexandria: His World and His*

230s, after which he travelled before he too was martyred, probably in Tyre, in 255.[100] Like so many other Christian apologists, Origen took exception to Celsus' anti-Christian polemic and penned what is probably the most well-known response today. Despite the current popularity of Origen's text, it does not appear to have had a wide audience at first, though it certainly reflected the development of highly influential ideas.[101]

Despite hailing from Egypt, Origen's treatment of Egyptian paganism seems to have been inspired more by Celsus' statements on the subject than personal interest. Surprisingly, readers have to turn to Arnobius (d. c. 330), a North Africa rhetorician, for more commentary on Egyptian paganism. Scholars tend to view Arnobius as the odd man out in terms of early Christian thought. His writing shows little familiarity with the texts commonly read by the other Christian apologists and his own writing does not seem to have exercised much influence.[102] Naturally, this makes it all the more compelling whenever the reader happens to come across a passage in which Arnobius agreed with the other apologists regarding the nature of Egyptian paganism.

Legacy (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1988). On Origen's familiarity with Clement's work see Chadwick, "Introduction," ix.

[100] Euseb., *Hist. eccl.* 6.3.3; Schaff, *Eusebius*, 611n1783; Oulton, 179. Also see Antony Grafton and Megan Hale Williams, *Christianity and the Transformation of the Book: Origen, Eusebius, and the Library of Caesarea* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2006).

[101] Chadwick, "Introduction," xiv-xv; Michael Frede, "Origen's Treatise *Against Celsus*," in Edwards, 131-55; Martin, 140-86.

[102] Comparatively, Arnobius' writing shows little evidence of a North African milieu. See Mark Edwards, "The Flowering of Latin Apologetic: Lactantius and Arnobius," in Edwards, 198-99; George McCracken, *Arnobius of Sicca: The Case against the Pagans* (Westinster, Maryland The Newman Press, 1949), 6-7, 11-12, 17, 25, 40-44. Also see P. Courcelle, "Anti-Christian Arguments and Christian Platonism: From Arnobius to St. Ambrose," in *The Conflict between Paganism and Christianity in the Fourth Century*, ed. Arnaldo Momigliano (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963), 151-92. Also see Michael Simmons, *Arnobius of Sicca: Religious Conflict and Competition in the Age of Diocletian* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995).

Arnobius was allegedly responsible for providing an education in rhetoric to Lactantius (c. 250-c. 325), who received an appointment from Diocletian (245-311) to act as a professor of Latin rhetoric at Nicomedia in Bithynea. Lactantius converted to Christianity around 300 but managed to maintain his post until Galerius (c. 260-311) closed the schools in 305/306. Scholars question whether the apology that Lactantius began composing around this time was really expected to impress a pagan audience, but it might have been inspired, at least in part, by a desire to refute anti-Christian claims on the part of a governor of Bithynia and an unnamed philosopher who might have been Porphyry (234-305).[103] The latter, along with his mentor Plotinus (204-270), provide tantalizing evidence as to the shape of pagan apologetic literature as the pendulum began to swing in favor of Christianity. Moreover, they provide particularly provocative testimony as to the prevailing opinions regarding traditional Egyptian paganism. Plotinus, who was born in Egypt and studied in Alexandria, penned an attack on the Gnostics—an entity just as difficult to define as "paganism"[104]—many of whom could be found in Egypt and were often accused of

[103] Mary Francis McDonald, "General Introduction," in *The Divine Institutes, Books I - VII* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1964), ix-xviii, 3-10; Edwards, "The Flowering," 198; McCracken, 13; Robert Wilken, "Pagan Criticism of Christianity: Greek Religion and Christian Faith," in *Early Christian Literature and the Classical Intellectual Tradition: In Honorem Robert M. Grant*, eds. William Schoedel and Robert Wilken (Paris: Éditions Beauchesne, 1979), 124. Also see Elizabeth DePalma Digeser, *The Making of a Christian Empire: Lactantius & Rome* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2000); Kristina Meinking, "Eusebius and Lactantius: Rhetoric, Philosophy, and Christian Theology," in *Eusebius of Caesarea: Traddition and Innovations.* Edited by Aaron Johnson and Jeremy Schott, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2013), 325-50; R. M. Ogilvie, *The Library of Lactantius* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978).

[104] The "un-orthodoxy" of the Gnostics, and indeed the notion that all Gnostics could be referred to under a single umbrella term of "Gnosticism," was a construction of early Christian polemic. It is doubtful that the so-called Gnostics would have used similar labels. There is an enormous literature on this. See for instance James Goehring, Charles Hedrick, Jack Sanders, and Hans Dieter Betz, eds., *Gnosticism and the Early Christian World* (Sonoma: Polebridge Press, 1990); Karen King, *What is Gnosticism?* (Cambridge: Belknap, 2003); Armand Veilleux, "Monasticism and Gnosis in Egypt," in *Roots of Egyptian Christianity*, eds. Birger A. Pearson and James E. Goehring (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986), 271-306.

adhering to practices that bordered on paganism.[105] Later, Porphyry penned an attack on traditional Egyptian pagan thought itself, a tract that aroused the ire of Iamblichus (c. 245-325), a fellow pagan Neo-Platonist.[106]

A disciple of Origen's went on to tutor Eusebius (260/65-339/40), a prolific writer who lived through the last of the Christian persecutions, during which he was arrested in Egypt. Of course, Eusebius also witnessed the transformations after Constantine decided to lend his support to Christianity. Eusebius, who could not have known the lasting effects of this decision, did not hesitate to turn his hand towards apologetic works, attacking, among others, Porphyry.[107]

Christianity, split though it was by dissension, was much more secure by the time that Athanasius began writing a few decades later. Of all the apologists discussed so far, none had such close ties to Egypt. Despite frequently being in exile on account of his stormy relationship with the emperors, Athanasius remained extremely popular with his Egyptian supporters. According to legend, he was

---

[105] For instance, Tertullian argued that at least some of the heretical views of the Alexandrian gnostic Valentinus were derived from Plato. Tertullian, *De praescriptione haereticorum* 7.

[106] Porphyry, *Vita plotini* 3; Eunapius, *Vitae sophistarum* 455. On Porphyry, Plotinus, and Iamblichus see Edward Watts, *City and School in Late Antique Athens and Alexandria* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 24-78; Aaron Johnson, *Religion and Identity in Porphyry of Tyre the Limits of Hellenism in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013); Digeser, *Threat*, 72-97. For the debate over whether Porphyry's correspondent in the letter to Anebo and the Egyptian authorities to which Iamblichus (or pseudo-Iamblichus) appealed in his response were figments of the Greco-Roman imagination discussion see Peter Struck, *Birth of the Symbol: Ancient Readers at the Limits of their Texts* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), 206; Jacco Dieleman, *Priests, Tongues and Rites: The London-Leiden Magical Manuscripts and Translation in Egyptian Ritual (100-300 CE)* (Leuven: Peeters, 2008), 5n11; Philippe Derchain, "Pseudo-Jamblique ou Abammon? Quelques observations sur l'égyptianisme du *De Mysteriis*'" *Chronique d'Egypte* 38 (1963): 220-26; Emma Clarke, *Iamblichus' De Mysteriis* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2001).

[107] For Eusebius' testimony on the persecution in Egypt, see the following chapter. On Eusebius' career and the composition of the *Historia ecclesiastica* and the *Praeparatio evangelica* see W. H. C. Frend, *Martyrdom and Persecution in the Early Church* (London: Basil Blackwell, 1965), 477-81; Timothy Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1981), 136-90; A. J. Carriker, *The Library of Eusebius of Caesarea* (Boston: Brill, 2003); Glenn Chesnut, *The First Christian Historians: Eusebius, Socrates, Sozomen, Theodoret, and Evagrius* (Macon, Georgia: Mercer University Press, 1986); Aaron Johnson and Jeremy Schott, eds., *Eusebius of Caesarea: Tradition and Innovations* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2013; Robert Grant, *Eusebius as Church Historian* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1980); Aaron Johnson, *Ethnicity and Argument in Eusebius' Praeparatio Evangelica* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006); Kofsky; Meinking.

responsible for the early education of the later patriarch, Theophilus (d. 412), who was himself the uncle of my next apologist, the still later patriarch Cyril of Alexandria (patriarch 412-444).[108] By this point, some scholars argue that the empire was already largely Christian,[109] yet Cyril still felt compelled to compose a defense of Christianity as a rebuttal to the earlier anti-Christian tract of the emperor Julian (reigned 361-363). If it is true, as some scholars have argued, that Julian drafted his apology with an Alexandrian audience in mind, then Cyril's motivation is easier to understand.[110]

By the time that the last two (both non-Egyptian) apologies under discussion here were composed, paganism was presumably well into decline. Augustine's *City of God* was composed after the sacking of Rome—the shocking nature of this incident being evidence enough of the important transformations taking place in the Roman world at large—and scholars consider Theodoret of Cyrus the author of the last formal apology against paganism.[111] Works critical of paganism continued to be penned, like Aeneas of Gaza's (d. c. 518) *Theophrastus*, which was set in Alexandria and was framed as a debate in one of the schools. Yet the motivation behind works of

---

[108] Haas, 219-20. Also see Davis, 47-84; J. Gwyn Griffiths, "Egyptian Influences on Athanasius," *Studien zu Sprache und Religion Ägyptens* 2 (Göttingen: F. Junge, 1984), 1023-37; K. Holum, *The Theodosian Empresses: Women and Imperial Dominion in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), 98-99, 151-86 John McGuckin, *St. Cyril of Alexandria the Christological Controversy: Its History, Theology, and Texts* (New York: E. J. Brill, 1994); William Malley, *Hellenism and Christianity: The Conflict between Hellenic and Christian Wisdom in the* Contra Galilaeos *of Julian the Apostate and the* Contra Julianum *of St. Cyril of Alexandria* (Rome: Università Gregoriana Editrice, 1978).

[109] M. Depauw and W. Clarysse, "How Christian was Fourth Century Egypt? Onomastic Perspectives on Conversion," *Vigiliae Christianae* 67 (2073): 407-35; Roger Bagnall, "Religious Conversion and Onomastic Change," *Bulletin of the American Association of Papyrologists* 19 (1982): 105-24; Rodney Stark, *The Rise of Christianity: A Sociologist Reconsiders History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 3-27.

[110] Malley, 239, 244; Haas, 308; Frede, "Origen's," 135.

[111] On Augustine see Peter Brown, *Augustine of Hippo: A Biography* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967). On Theodoret see Adam Schor, *Theodoret's People Social Networks and Religious Conflict in Late Roman Syria* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011).

this sort is somewhat murky. Either paganism did not decline as quickly as scholars have speculated, or these apologies were not directed against paganism *per se*. Aeneas of Gaza's *Theophrastus* seems to be directed at elite, Greco-Roman philosophical notions, implying a pagan target limited to high status non-Egyptians (or Egyptians drawn to Greco-Roman, rather than traditional Egyptian, pagan ideals). Does this mean that Egyptian paganism *per se* had disappeared? Perhaps Aeneas and his fellow apologists were merely using paganism as a foil for demonstrating their skill in rhetoric. If so, then there is no reason to imagine that elite forms of Greco-Roman paganism were still circulating. Indeed, Aeneas might have been inspired by the existence of what was essentially a Christian audience for these ideas. Perhaps he was in fact attacking the paganizing tendencies of so-called heretics under the cover of an anti-pagan apology. Whatever the case, it is telling that paganism continued to be perceived as an important element in the construction of a Christian identity, with Aeneas defining Christianity through comparison with paganism.[112]

Aside from the pagans mentioned above, this discussion employs works by the historians Herodotus (c. 484–425 BCE), Strabo (64/63 BCE-c. 24 CE), Diodorus Siculus (fl. 1st cent BCE), Cassius Dio (c. 155-235), and Ammianus Marcellinus (325/30-post 391), as well as the philosophers Cicero (106 BCE-43 BCE) and Plutarch (46 CE-120 CE), and the satirists Ovid (43 BCE-17/18 CE), Juvenal (fl. late 1st-early 2nd cent. CE), and Lucian (c. 125-post 180 CE). Alas, we are somewhat lacking when it comes to Egyptian apologetic literature, though we do have the works of Manetho (fl. 3rd cent. BCE), Chaeremon (fl. 1st

[112] As chapters four through six will demonstrate, inter-Christian politics often influenced the use of pagan images in the construction of a Christian identity. While I question the certainty with which scholars assert paganism's early demise (see chapter five), I intentionally avoid taking a firm stand on this issue. I do not doubt that the actual existence of a prominent pagan population in the fourth and fifth centuries would change the way scholars envision the construction of a Christian identity during this period, but my arguments regarding the development of this construction do not hinge on population numbers.

cent CE), and Apion (30/20 BCE-45/48 CE). The Egyptian-ness of the first of these can hardly be doubted, though his political allegiances have been called into question. Manetho was a high-ranking Egyptian priest who wrote a Greek history under the Ptolemies and was involved with the initiation of the Serapis cult.[113] Chaeremon also appears to have been a high-ranking Egyptian priest, but his allegiance to the Egyptian cause is even more suspect, for he was a well-respected Stoic philosopher employed as a tutor for Nero (37-68). Apion was a rhetorician who might have actually enjoyed a stint as head of the Museum, Alexandria's highly esteemed library. Like Chaeremon, Apion's claim to Egyptian descent is unclear and his commitment to Egyptian paganism is even less clear, though the Jewish apologist, Josephus (37-c. 100 CE), was all too happy to deride the fellow as an Egyptian.[114] Whatever the case, Apion seems to have been part of a pagan delegation that went to Rome in 40 CE to deliver a complaint to the emperor Gaius (12-41 CE) regarding an outbreak of pagan-Jewish violence in Alexandria.[115] The Jewish delegation sent in regard to the same incident included Philo (20 BCE-50 CE), a leading Alexandrian scholar who made pivotal contributions to Middle Platonic thought, fostered an allegorical approach towards Scripture that was later adopted by Christians like Origen, and generated a bevy of anti-pagan apologetic literature that was incredibly influential on the Christian apologists.[116]

Having introduced the apologists and hinted at the lines of influence between each, I am shifting onto the first line of arguments of interest to this discussion. Here, as elsewhere, the reader will find that the apologists were highly selective in their use of Egypt. The details

---

[113] Ian Moyer, *Egypt and the Limits of Hellenism* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 38.

[114] Josephus, *Contra Apionem* 2.13 (138).

[115] Peter Schäfer, *Judeophobia: Attitudes toward the Jews in the Ancient World* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1997), 28.

[116] For further discussion of this outbreak of violence in Alexandria see the following chapter. The body of scholarship addressing the influence of Philo and Josephus on the Christian apologists is huge. See for example Louis Feldman, "Origen's *Contra Celsum* and Josephus' *Contra Apionem*: The Issue of Jewish Origens," *Vigiliae Christianae* 44 (1990): 105-135; Annewies van den Hoek, *Clement of Alexandria and His Use of Philo in the Stromateis: An Early Christian Reshaping of a Jewish Model* (New York: E.J. Brill, 1988); Lilla, 19-23; Sabrina Inowlocki, *Eusebius and the Jewish Authors: His Citation Technique in an Apologetic Context* (Boston: Brill, 2006)

they ignored or over-emphasized, to the point of distortion, go a long way towards illuminating the role of the so-called Other in the construction of internal identity.

Ethics

This section of the discussion looks at the arguments posed by the apologists with regard to their opponent's so-called ethics, or lack thereof. Interestingly, Christians appear to have shown much more interest in Greco-Roman paganism than Egyptian paganism, a situation that appears to have reflected an underlying bias against the Egyptians. Yet Christians were certainly happy to use the two against each other, accusing, for instance, the Greco-Roman pagans of encouraging the sexual dissolution of Egyptian pagans. In turn, Greco-Roman pagans accused Christians of cannibalism, a charge which was commonly levied against the Egyptians. Hence, it seems all the more strange that the Christians should have ignored the opportunity to attack the Egyptians on these grounds. This seems to have been indicative of a preference for Greco-Roman targets. In the midst of these arguments, internal disputes complicated the attempt to construct clear-cut boundaries and cohesive identities.

Apologists on each side claimed that their faith had a monopoly on ethics.[117] Egyptian pagans had a long tradition of ethical teachings—such as "The Instruction of 'Onchsheshonqy," one version of which was copied as late as the Ptolemaic period[118]—but no apologists appear to have introduced this sort of evidence into the debate. Egypt only entered the discussion insofar as morality was thought to be inherently linked to a person's social status. Christians and pagans accused one another of catering to those of the lowest rank,

[117] See for instance, Tert., *Apol.* 6; Origen, *Con. Cels.* 3.59.

[118] Jacco Dieleman and Ian Moyer, "Egyptian Literature," in *A Companion to Hellenistic Literature*, eds. James Clauss and Martine Cuypers (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 2010), 432; "The Instruction of 'Onchsheshonqy Papyrus British Museum 10508," in *The Literature of Ancient Egypt*, ed. William Simpson (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1973), 497-529. On Egyptian wisdom literature see Miriam Lichtheim, *Late Egyptian Wisdom Literature in the International Context. A Study of Demotic Instructions* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1983).

which, by implication, would have included the Egyptians.[119] Seeking to subvert the accusation, at least when it was turned in their direction, Christian apologists admitted that they ministered to those of low origin, for in contrast to paganism Christianity was allegedly capable of imparting virtue to the most insignificant members of mankind.[120] How could paganism do the same, they asked, beset as it was by tales of the gods committing the most immoral acts?[121] In asking this, Christians were only repeating criticisms that the pagans themselves had posed,[122] while ignoring questions from pagan critics like Julian about just how well-suited Scripture was for imparting moral lessons (Julian, *Con. Gal.* 229E).

Of the specific crimes attributed to the Christians, that of incest was among the most common (Min. Fel., *Oct.* 9.6; Tert., *Apol.* 2.5; Theophilus of Antioch, *Ad Autol.* 3.4; Athenagoras, *Leg. pro Christ* 3), being the sort of charge that was easy to make and difficult to disprove, at least to the extent that domestic life was more or less private. Eusebius declared that any incest that might have been found within Christian circles could be blamed solely on the heretics (Euseb., *Hist. eccl.* 4.7.10-11), an argument showing the degree to which Christians might have accepted the reality of some of the accusations being levied against them.[123] That being said, Christians were none too shy about pointing out the many examples of incest

---

[119] Clement of Alexandria, *Protrepticus* 10; Origen, *Con. Cels.* 3.44. Note that Josephus used an account of Egyptian immorality which led to the expulsion of Egyptian priests from Rome to downplay an accusation of immorality against a "wicked" Jew which led to the expulsion of Jews from Rome. Josephus, *Antiquitates judaicae* 18.3.4-5.

[120] Tatian, *Oratio ad Graecos* 32; Athenagoras, *Leg. pro Christ* 11.

[121] Theophilus of Antioch, *Ad Autolycum* 1.9; Athenagoras, *Leg. pro Christ* 32-34; Pseudo-Justin, *Cohort.* 1-3; Tert., *Apol.* 11.12-16, Clem. Al., *Strom.* 7.3; Clem. Al., *Prot.* 2.13-14; Lactantius, *Divinae institationes* 1.10; Arnobius 3.26-27, 4.9.

[122] Plutarch, *De superstitione* 170C-D. See also Chadwick, x; M. L. West, "Towards Monotheism," in Athanassiadi, 32.

[123] Pointing out out that so-called orthodox accusations of various crimes like cannibalism against so-called heretics appear at the same time as Christian testimony as to pagan accusations against Christians on this point, Lanzillotta argues that the former actually inspired the latter. That is, orthodox attacks on heretics inspired pagan attacks on Christian in general. See Roig Lanzilotta, "The Early Christians and Human Sacrifice," in *The Strange World of Human Sacrifice*, ed. Jan Bremmer (Dudley, MA: Peeters, 2007), 97-101.

committed by the Greco-Roman pagans, Greco-Roman pagan deities, and the Persians,[124] though they showed little interest in cases involving Egyptians or their deities,[125] despite the real-world practice of brother-sister marriage in Egypt.[126]

When Christian apologists finally brought Egyptian paganism into the mix, it was to criticize the phallic imagery allegedly found in Egyptian temples. In so doing, they were able to strike two birds with one stone, since a celebrated Greek mystery cult had purportedly imported rites involving phallic imagery from Egypt,[127] a region considered a hotbed of lust and sexual impropriety by Greco-Roman pagans, Jews, and Christians.[128] Among other things, Isis' priests were renowned for their inversion of Greco-Roman gender norms, their habit of removing all of the hair from their bodies, making them appear rather effeminate in the eyes of outsiders.[129] But

---

[124] Athenagoras, *Leg. pro Christ* 32-34; Clem. Al., *Prot.* 2.13-14; Lactant., *Div. inst.* 1.10; Tertullian, *Ad Nationes* 1.10; Tert., *Apol.* 9; Theoph., *Ad Autol.* 1.9.

[125] Aristides of Athens, upon whom this discussion is not focusing, noted that Isis and Osiris were brother and sister but did not criticize this as an example of incest. Aristides, *Apologia* 12.15.

[126] Perhaps they avoided the subject for fear of offending potential converts. Though brother-sister marriage was practiced by the pharaonic royalty, by Ptolemaic times it seems to have been limited to the ruling class. By Late Antiquity, the practice had spread to a larger portion of the population, though it had declined in popularity overall. The reality of the situation is difficult to judge, however, as it was customary, even among Christians, to refer to one's spouse as a sibling regardless of actual familial connections. See for instance Paul Frandsen, *Incestuous and Close-Kin Marriage in Ancient Egypt and Persia: An Examination of the Evidence* (Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press, 2009).

[127] Theod. Cyr., *Graec.* 1.21, 1.113-114; Diodorus Siculus 1.21-23, 1.29.1-4. Cf. Eusebius, *Preparatio evangelica* 47c-d 2.4, 68c 2.4; Clem. Al., *Prot.* 2.19-20; Athanasius, *Contra gentes* 1.9.30-35; Plutarch *De Isis et Osiris* 358B, 365A, 371F. On Plutarch's portrayal of the Isis and Osiris cult, see Daniel Richter, "Plutarch on Isis and Osiris: Text, Cult, and Cultural Appropriation," *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 131 (2001): 191-216. On phallic imagery in traditional Egyptian paganism see Zimmermann, 39-44; Anne Burton, *Diodorus Siculus, Book I: A Commentary* (Leiden E. J. Brill, 1972), 97; P. W. van der Horst, ed., *Charemon Egyptian Priest and Stoic Philosopher: The Fragments* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1984), 8-13, 52. On the link between Dionysian rites and Egyptian paganism see Burton, 280.

[128] Dominic Montserrat, *Sex and Society in Graeco-Roman Egypt* (New York: Kegan Paul International, 1996); K. Berthelot, "The Use of Greek and Roman Stereotypes of the Egyptians by Hellenstic Jewish Apologists with Special Reference to Josephus' *Against Apion,"* in *Internatonales Josephus-Kolloquium*, ed. J. U. Kalms (London: Lit Verlag, 1999), 215. According to Theodoret, the Egyptians were so driven by lust that they deified a goat in honor of its mania for copulation. Theod. Cyr., *Graec.* 3.85. On animal worship see below.

[129] Herodotus 2.37; Plut., *De Is. et Os.* 352b-c. Note that Christian apologists often pointed that the priests of Isis shaved themselves, implying that this distinguished these priests from those of other faiths, but without being explicit as to the degree to which this made them an object of derision. For instance see Min. Fel., *Oct.* 23. Also see Montserrat, 74.

strangely, when targeting sexual relations between men for reproach, critics overlooked indications of this in traditional Egyptian pagan narratives, focusing instead on Greco-Roman evidence. In fuller accounts of the narrative that opened the previous chapter, Osiris and Isis' son, Horus, takes vengeance on Seth, the murderer of his father. This murderer is none other than Osiris' brother, Seth. Fratricide not having satisfied Seth's hopes for squashing the danger posed by his brother's family, Seth seeks to seduce Horus. Upon his mother's assistance, Horus tricks Seth into consuming his nephew's (that is, Horus') semen. This is revealed through the course of a trial before a collection of divine judges in order to undermine Seth's claims for supremacy over Horus.[130] The interpretation of this story and ancient Egyptian attitudes towards homosexuality in general remain the subject of scholarly debate,[131] but whatever the situation, opinions could certainly have changed through exposure to Greco-Roman practices.[132] This makes it all the more striking that Greco-Roman pagan, Jewish, and Christian discourse shows little awareness of the theme in

[130] Edward Wente, trans. "The Contendings of Horus and Seth," in *The Literature of Ancient Egypt*, ed. William Simpson (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1973), 91-103. Also see J. Gwyn Griffiths, *The Conflict of Horus and Seth from Egyptian and Classical Sources* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1960), 2-84; H. te Velde, *Seth, God of Confusion* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1967), 27-80; Antonio Loprieno, ed., "Defining Egyptian Literature: Ancient Texts and Modern Theories," in *Ancient Egyptian Literature: History and Forms* (NY: E. J. Brill, 1996), 50; John Baines, "Myth and Literature," in Loprieno, 373. Cf. G, Luck, *Ancient Pathways and Hidden Pursuits: Religion, Morals and Magic in the Ancient World* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999), 266.

[131] Dimitri Meeks and Christine Favard-Meeks, *Daily Life of the Egyptian Gods*, trans. G. M. Goshgarian (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996), 69; W.B. Parkinson, "'Homosexual' Desire and Middle Kingdom Literature" *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 81 (1995): 57-76; L. Manniche, *Sexual Life in Ancient Egypt* (New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1987), 22-27. Also see the circa Middle Kingdom (c. 2000-c. 1700 BCE) text "The Maxims of Ptahhotep," in *The Literature of Ancient Egypt*, ed. William Simpson (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1973), 143 #32 14.3-5.

[132] Greco-Roman attitudes towards homosexuality varied widely. The bibliography on this subject is large. See for instance K. J. Dover, *Greek Homosexuality* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1978); Michel Foucault, *Histoire de la sexualité* (Paris: Gallimard, 1976); James Davidson, *Courtesans & Fishcakes: The Consuming Passions of Classical Athens* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998).

traditional Egyptian literature, though demotic copies of the above narrative were still being made in the Roman period.[133]

Christian apologists were much more interested in the Greco-Roman pagan indulgence of so-called homosexuality,[134] especially lurid tales about the affair between Emperor Hadrian (reigned 117-138) and Antinous (c. 111-130), a young man who drowned in Egypt and was deified at Hadrian's behest. The polis of Antinoopolis (or Antinoë) was founded on the site of Antinous' death, opposite Hermopolis, an important Egyptian pagan cult center. Adherents of traditional Egyptian paganism do not seem to have been adverse to the introduction of Antinous' cult, perhaps associating the drowned Antinous with Osiris, whose body parts were cast into the Nile following his murder.[135] Christians were critical of the newly-formed cult, complaining that Greco-Romans were leading Egyptian pagans astray with what was essentially a celebration of deviant sexual mores.[136]

Postcolonial theorists would argue that the identification of Egypt with sex reflected Greco-Roman imperialistic impulses that sought to objectify and exploit the country. The region was certainly desirable as a source of grain and exotic goods

---

[133] Kim Ryholt, *The Carlsberg Papyri 10 Narrative Literature from the Tebtunis Temple Library* (Copenhagen: University of Copenhagen Museum Tusculanum Press 2012), 176.

[134] For instance, Athan., *Con. gen.* 11.

[135] *Scriptores historiae augustae*, Hadrian 14; Cassius Dio 69.11. Also see Françoise Dunand, "Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt," in *Gods and Men in Egypt: 3000 B.C.E. to 395 C.E.*, trans. David Lorton (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2002), 247. Jack Lindsay, *Men and Gods on the Roman Nile* (New York Barnes & Noble, Inc., 1968), 297-306; K. A. Smelik, and E. A. Hemelrijk, "'Who Knows Not What Monsters Demented Egypt Worships?' Opinions on Egyptian Animal Worship in Antiquity as Part of the Ancient Conception of Egypt," in *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt*, vol. 17, eds. H. Temporini and W. Haase (Berlin: DeGruyter, 1984), 1879n176.

[136] Clem. Al., *Protr.* 4; Athanasius, *Con. gen.* 9.40-50; Theoph., *Ad Autol.* 3.8. Note Celsus' complaint that the Christians with all of their sects were worse than the worshippers of Antinous (Origen, *Con. Cels.* 2.63). These Christian sects would have probably included the so-called Gnostics of Egypt who, according to the heresiologist Epiphanius, were guilty of sexual perversion (Epiphanius, *Panarion* 27 4,5-7). This allegation would have reinforced the equation of Egypt with sexual immorality.

(including religious learning). To that end, it makes sense that Greco-Romans might have perceived Egypt and the Egyptians as objects of desire. At first glance, such a perception would seem to have been at odds with the tendency to equate Egypt with violence and sedition. Egyptians were said to be particularly prone to irrational outbursts of anger and the indulgence of rebellious designs. Postcolonial theorists would respond that the identification of Egypt with sedition went hand-in-hand with its identification with sex. Power is exercised by casting the Other as an object of horror while at the same time downplaying the potential danger posed by the Other, by casting it as an object of sexual desire subordinate to the lusts of the dominant party. As chapter five will show, this view of Greco-Roman-Egyptian relations has received some criticism, but it can hardly be denied that Egypt was associated with sex and violence by non-Egyptians seeking to use the accusations to improve their own status. The reader should not assume that this behavior was limited to Greco-Roman pagans, either, for Philo went to some lengths to stress the dissipated barbarism of the Egyptians in contrast to the Jews in order to promote the position of these Jews in the eyes of Romans.[137]

The Christian apologists concentrated their accusations regarding the Egyptian predilection for violence on evidence for a propensity towards human sacrifice and

[137] Perhaps most importantly for my purposes, the stereotype of the Egyptian as a lustful, violent barbarian would have undermined any notion that the Egyptian priests could have been paragons of religious wisdom, for they would have been unable to control the passions that were allegedly mastered via true virtue. For the seditious impulses of the Egyptians see for instance Ammianus Marcellinus 22.11.4. Also see Haas, 11. For the contribution of postcolonial theory to the study of Greco-Roman imperialism see chapter five. Also see Berthelot, 198, 201-202. On the resources that made Egypt attractive to the Roman Empire see G. Rickman, *The Corn Supply of Ancient Rome* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980); D. Kehoe, *Management and Investment on Estates in Roman Egypt in during the Early Empire* (Bonn: Habelt, 1992); D. Rathbone, *Economic Rationalism and Rural Society in Third-century A.D. Egypt* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991); S. Wallace, *Taxation in Egypt from Augustus to Diocletian* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1969); C. Adams, *Land Transport in Roman Egypt: A Study of Economics and Adminstration in a Roman Province* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

cannibalism. This was a particularly important charge, since Greco-Roman pagans had accused Christians of the same.[138] Christian apologists responded that the pagans and their gods were the ones who were actually guilty of the crime.[139] When it came to Egypt, Christians had a plethora of Greco-Roman pagan testimony from which to borrow, the accusation that Egyptians were indulging a taste for human flesh no doubt serving a rhetorical strategy by which to denigrate a suspect people.[140] Yet, there may have been some basis for the accusations, as either a confusion of traditional pagan rites[141] or as a transfer of rituals actually practiced by the Nubians to the Egyptians.[142]

---

[138] Min. Fel., *Oct.* 9.6; Tert., *Apol.* 2.5; Theoph. *Ad Autol.* 3.4; Athenagoras, *Leg. pro Christ.* 3; Epiph., *Pan.* 26.5.5-6. For a summary of the scholarly debate over whether or not the Gnostics were committing cannibalism, see Lanzillotta, 97-101; Andrew McGowan, "Eating People: Accusations of Cannibalism against Christians in the Second Century," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 2 (1994): 431-40.

[139] Tatian, *Orat.* 25; Min. Fel., *Oct.* 30; Theoph. *Ad Autol.* 3.5; Euseb., *Prep. ev.* 4.16 155c-d. On Christian apologists equating spectacles in the arena with human sacrifice see Athenagoras, *Leg. pro Christ.* 35; Theoph. *Ad Autol.* 3.15; Tert., *Apol.* 14.4-6. On the equation of animal sacrifice with human sacrifice see Tatian, *Orat.* 23. Also see Ingvild Gilhus, *Animals, Gods and Humans: Changing Attitudes to Animals in Greek, Roman and Early Christian Ideas* (New York: Rouledge 2006), 114-50; Walter Burkert, *Homo Necans: The Anthropology of Ancient Greek Sacrificial Ritual and Myth* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983); McGowan, 423-25. Also see Lanzilotta, 84-86.

[140] Diod. Sic. 1.84; Juvenal 15.72-92; Achilles Tatius 3.15. Cf. Philostratus, *Vita Apollonii* 8.5-8.7. Compare to the accusation that pagans living in Alexandria during the patriarchate of Athanasius killed some children, examined their entrails, and consumed their flesh (Socrates Scholasticus, *Historia ecclesiastica* 3.13) and Apion's accusation that the Jews regularly cannibalized Greek men (Joseph., *Ap.* 2.8). Also see McGowan, 413-42; Christopher Eyre, *The Cannibal Hymn: A Cultural and Literary Study* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2002), 157; Lanzilotta, 81; Laura Nasrallah, "The Embarassment of Blood: Early Christians and Others on Sacrifice, War, and Rational Worship," in *Ancient Mediterranean Sacrifice*, eds. Jennifer Knust and Zsuzsanna Varhelvi (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 151; J. G. Griffiths, "Human Sacrifices in Egypt: The Classical Evidence," *Annales du Service des antiquités de l'Egypte* 48 (1948): 409-423.

[141] For archaeological evidence of human sacrifice in pre-Greco-Roman Egypt see J. Van Dijk, "Retainer Sacrifice in Egypt and Nubia," in *The Strange World of Human Sacrifice*, ed. Jan Bremmer (Dudley, MA: Peeters, 2007), 143; Andrew Wilburn, *Materia Magica: The Archaeology of Magic in Roman Egypt, Cyprus and Spain* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2012), 158. On the rumor that a maiden (later replaced by a statue) was thrown into the Nile every year to ensure the flood, see Pseudo-Plutarch, *De fluviis* 16; Burton, 160; Mogg Morgan, "'Bride of the Nile' An Orientalist Myth about Egyptian Culture?" Wordpress, October 12, 2014, accessed February 22, 2016, https://mandoxegypt.wordpress.com/2014/10/12/bride-of-the-nile-an-orientalist-myth-about-egyptian-culture/. According to Manetho, an Egyptian Pharaoh by the name of Amosis was responsible for halting the practice of human sacrifice. Amosis ordered the sacrifice of waxen images in place of the men who would have lost their lives (Manetho Fr. 85). Cf. Euseb., *Prep. ev.* 4.16 155d. The Greek writer, Athenaeus, who was from Egypt, claimed that cakes were placed on victims of human sacrifice in Egypt (Athenaeus, *Deipnosophistae* 4.172d). This, like the sacrifice of waxen images, seems to have represented a symbolic rite rather than an actual act of cannibalism, cakes perhaps being fashioned in the form of the entity meant to be cannibalized and consumed during these rituals. See Eyre, 11-24, 153-74; H. te Velde, "Human Sacrifice in Ancient Egypt," in Bremmer, 128. The Egyptian king Busiris, who cannot be directly traced back to an actual Egyptian ruler, was well-known in Greco-Roman circles for sacrificing Greeks. Opinions on Busiris' activities remained divided. Strabo argued that the accusations laid against Busiris simply reflected Egypt's lack of a good harbor and hence its apparent unfriendliness to foreigners (Strabo 17.1.19). Yet, Diodorus Siculus testified

A very open-minded person might have responded to all of this by saying: So what if other people are going around committing acts of so-called sexual impropriety and eating each other, so long as they leave me and mine alone?[143] The problem was that a person's relationship with the gods was thought to be contingent upon the maintenance of morally upright behavior. The Greco-Romans were usually good at recognizing that these moral guidelines shifted along with the identity of the deities to whom a person was inclined. Nevertheless, Greco-Roman pagans were predisposed towards privileging Greco-Roman pagan deities, and when evidence—in the form of natural calamities—emerged to suggest the displeasure of these deities, Greco-Roman pagans were wont to fasten the blame upon the non-Greco-Roman pagans in their midst, the people least likely to be upholding the behavior that would have been expected of them had they been Greco-Roman pagans. When Christians were accused of provoking calamities, they criticized the notion that there could be any link between a natural calamity and the disposition of a deity. At other times, they

---

to Busiris' reputation for impiety (Diod. Sic. 1.67.8-11). Diodorus Siculus traced Busiris' practice back to a rite in which foreigners were sacrificed because they were associated with Apophis (Typhon/Seth), the arch-enemy of Re-Osiris (Diod. Sic. 1.88.4-5). In fact, the Egyptians celebrated a festival known as the Typhonia in Dendara as late as the second century CE, but it is not clear just what went on during the course of this ritual or whether it was in honor of Seth or meant to celebrate his defeat. For Christian commentary on Busiris see for instance Min. Fel., *Oct.* 30; Orosius, *Historiae adversus paganos* 1.11. Also see Berthelot, 187, 195; David Frankfurter, *Religion in Roman Egypt: Assimilation and Resistance* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), 114; te Velde, *Seth,* 140n1; Burton, 14, 204; Stephen Nimis, "Egypt in Greco-Roman History and Fiction," *Alif: Journal of Comparative Poetics* 24 (2004): 37. On Seth's identification with foreigners, see below. Seth was identified with Typhon by the fifth century BCE in Greek circles. Apophis was the enemy of Re, who was assimilated to Osiris. Thus, Apophis was associated with Seth, even though Seth was an ally of Re in the battle against Apophis. See te Velde, *Seth,* 99-108; Dieleman, *Priests,* 132-34; Rosalie David, *Religion and Magic in Ancient Egypt* (New York: Penguin Books, 2002), 159; Frankfurter, 114. Also see J. Rives, "Human Sacrifice among Pagans and Christians," *The Journal of Roman Studies* 85 (1995): 65-85.

[142] Procopius, *De Bello Persico* 1.19.36; Burton, 205. Te Velde points out that Egyptologists who have resisted the notion that human sacrifice was practiced in Egypt during post-pharaonic periods have been suspiciously willing to accept the practice among non-Egyptians like the African Nubians of Philae. Te Velde, "Human," 129. On the Nubian practice of human sacrifice see van Dijk, 144.

[143] On endocannibalism (consumption of deceased community members as a way of the honoring the dead) see Cecilia McCallum, "Consuming Pity: The Production of Death among the Cashinahua," *Cultural Anthropology* 14 (1999): 443-71.

espoused similar beliefs, arguing that their God was the one whose displeasure was at issue (Euseb., *Hist. eccl*. 9.7; Arnobius, 1.24, 2.76, 3.23, 5.15, 7.11, 7.45-48). Traditional Egyptian pagans likewise harbored the notion that a person had to maintain a proper relationship with the gods in order to preserve the natural order,[144] and Christians were quick to adopt some of the forms this belief took,[145] but it is not clear that they perceived this as adherence to a way of thinking that was in the least bit Egyptian.

A debate over responsibility for calamities ran alongside a dispute over whether or not a true deity could be capable of inflicting punishment of this sort, pagans and Christians arguing that an authentic deity, by definition, was good and therefore could not be subject to the sort of anger necessary to exercise wrath upon mortals. Each side accused the other of deficiencies in this regard,[146] though neither showed much interest in the traditional Egyptian evidence, concentrating instead on the narratives found in Greco-Roman pagan and Scriptural narratives.[147]

---

[144] Christianne Zivie-Coche, "Pharaonic Egypt," in *Gods and Men in Egypt: 3000 B.C.E. to 395 C.E.*, trans. David Lorton (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2002), 63; Miriam Lichtheim, *Maat in Egyptian Autobiographies and Related Studies* (Vandenhoeck: Universitätsverlag Freiburg Schweiz, 1992). Upon the rise of Christianity, what would have been interpreted by traditional Egyptian pagans as a horrifying rupture of custom indicative of the end of times—the closure of the temples of Isis and Serapis and the cessation of animal worship—was interpreted by Jews and Christians as a far more laudatory sign of the same thing, the end of times and the concomitant imposition of God's anti-pagan judgment. Clem. Al., *Protr.* 4; *Sibylline Oracles* 5.275-280. Also see J. L. Lightfoot, *The Sibylline Oracles: With Introduction, Translation, and Commentary on the First and Second Books* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 446.

[145] For instance, see chapter three for Christian interpretations of Egyptian apocalyptic discourse and see chapter six for Christian interpretations of the Nile failing to flood.

[146] Julian, *Con. Gal.* 161A-171D; Origen, *Con. Cels.* 8.31; Arnobius, 6.1. Cf. Philostr., *VA* 1.11; Iamblichus, *Vita Pythagorae* 32; Lucian, *De sacrificiis* 1-14. Also see Malley, 323-31; McCracken, 29; Martin, 160-86; Michael Frede, "Monotheism and Pagan Philosophy in Later Antiquity," in Athanassiadi, 62-63; John Granger Cook, *The Interpretation of the Old Testament in Greco-Roman Paganism* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004), 144.

[147] When citing examples of pagan deities guilty of expressing their wrath towards mortals, Christians rarely cited Egyptian examples, though Christians were aware of stories attributing the Persian king Cambyses' madness, for instance, to divine wrath provoked by Cambyses' slaughter of the Apis bull. See below. For an example of a traditional Egyptian narrative comparable to the flood myth and thus noticeable for its absence from apologetic literature that discussed the flood as an example of divine wrath, consider "The Book of the Heaven

According to Christians, animal sacrifice constituted some of the most damning proof against the pagans, the violent nature of the gods being well-demonstrated by their lust for sacrifice (Arnobius, 6.1; Theod. Cyr., *Graec.* 3.59). In arguing thus, Christians were borrowing critiques of sacrifice already circulating in Greco-Roman pagan circles, arguments based on the belief that a true god should need nothing, because he was already perfect.[148] Egypt was something of a conundrum in this regard because of its custom of venerating animals while nevertheless performing what looked very much animal sacrifice.

Animal Worship and Sacrifice

This discussion compares the non-Egyptian perceptions of Egyptian animal worship to the reality. Contradictions and distortions reflect a basic (intentional?) failure to understand the practice. General distaste for the custom led to the use of rhetoric attributing animal worship to non-Egyptian opponents as a means of denigration. Thus, both Jews and Christians eventually found themselves accused of animal worship, with Greco-Roman pagans blurring lines in order to distance themselves from their alleged foes.

The esteem for sacred animals in Egypt was such that, during famines, the Egyptians would allegedly consume the flesh of humans rather that of the creatures receiving veneration (Diod. Sic. 1.84). A Roman official was supposedly murdered

---

Cow," dating to the New Kingdom. See Edward Wente, trans., "The Book of the Heaven Cow," in Simpson, 289-98.

[148] Athenagoras, *Leg. pro Christ.* 13; Arnobius, 7.1, 7.14; Theod. Cyr., *Graec.*3.66; Origen, *Con. Cels.* 8.63; Clem. Al., *Strom.* 5.10, 7.6-7; Tert., *Apol.* 14.1, 30.5; Luc., *Sacr.* 1-9; Philostratus, *Vitae sophistarum* 1.31 - 32. Also see Gilhus, 137-49; Jennifer Knust and Zsuzsanna Varhelvi, eds., *Ancient Mediterranean Sacrifice* (New York Oxford University Press 2011); Maria-Zoe Petropoulou, *Animal Sacrifice in Ancient Greek Religion, Judaism, and Christianity, 100 BC-AD 200* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 225-54; Malley, 162-63.

by a mob for killing a cat (Diod. Sic. 1.83), and the Thebans purportedly revolted against the Romans for the sake of a dog.[149] Strange as such a revolt might sound, it is entirely probable that animal worship had come to serve as a rallying point for Egyptians unhappy with foreign rule. Not only had the practice experienced a jump in popularity around 700 BCE, when a series of military and political calamities left Egypt in the hands of invaders (Nubians, Persians, Greeks, and Romans), but its resonance as a uniquely Egyptian custom might have made animal worship an especially poignant marker of Egyptian identity.[150]

Some Greco-Roman pagans associated animals with deities, but this was more like heraldry than actual animal worship.[151] The latter was allegedly practiced by some non-Egyptians,[152] but more often than not, the custom was taken to be a specifically Egyptian eccentricity.[153] Perplexed by the practice, Greco-Roman pagans,

---

[149] Aelian, *De Natura Animalium* 11.27. Unfortunately, Aelian does not provide any further information about the incident.

[150] These military and political calamities might very well have suggested to the Egyptians that their more anthropomorphic deities were failing to provide succor, spurring the decision to shift the emphasis of religious devotions to already existing theiranthropomorphic deities. Smelik, 1863-64. At first glance, the Ptolemies were more supportive of animal worship than the later Roman rulers but this may have been because they were far more dependent on the support of local religious leaders than the Romans. Smelik, 1905. Augustus allegedly refused to visit the Apis bull, scoffing at the notion that it was a god. Cass. Dio 51.16.5-17.1. Cf. Cass. Dio. 50.24.6. However, Alston has pointed out that this might have been a gambit by which Augustus sought to distinguish himself from Mark Antony. A stele from Hermonthis dated to the first year of Augustus' rule shows Augustus sacrificing to Buchis, the bull-god, and dressed in pharaonic garb. See Richard Alston, *The City in Roman Egypt* (London: Routledge, 2002), 197-98. But we should not dismiss the possibility that this image represented imperial interest less than priestly interest, these priests having a good reason for wanting to promulgate the notion that they enjoyed imperial support.

[151] Dunand, 277.

[152] The Greek Thebans were said to worship a marten, and inhabitants of the Troad supposedly worshipped a mouse Aelian, *NA* 12.5. The *Martyrdom of Apollonius*, the trial of an Alexandrian for Christianity, indicates that the Athenians worshipped a bronze bull's head (*Martyrdom of Apollonius* 10-19). See also Clem. Al., *Protr.* 2.33-34.

[153] For instance, Athanasius used animal worship to distinguish between Greco-Roman and Egyptian pagans, noting how the former sacrificed the animals that the latter deified (Athan., *Con. gen.* 24). Also see Berthelot 201n68; Smelik 1852-2000.

Jews, and Christians traced it to various origins, though none of these theories seem very convincing to modern scholars:[154]

- Animal worship was attributed to a desire to avoid food shortages and/or rebellion, with each district in Egypt being assigned a different sacred animal, consumption of which was banned in the district where the animal was held sacred.
    - As long as the inhabitant of each district avoided consuming its own sacred animals, these animals would remain available for consumption by other districts (Diod. Sic. 1.89.4-6).
    - Worship of different animals sowed discord[155] and prevented the sort of unity required for large-scale revolt (Diod. Sic. 1.86-90; Plut. *De Is. et Os.* 379F-381A).

  Athanasius pointed out the contradiction of one polis deifying an animal that another polis abhorred, without mentioning any practical explanations related to a desire to avoid famine or revolt.[156] Even had he done so, practicality would no doubt have been rejected as a justification for religious faith.
- Animal worship allegedly commemorated services that the animals provided to mankind.[157] A similar argument was suggested in a fifth century hagiography: When the Pharaoh was chasing the Jews out of Egypt, the Egyptians who stayed behind to tend their flocks avoided drowning in the Red Sea; they were so grateful for escaping

[154] See for instance Smelik, 1862. Note that animal worship was so inexplicable to Theodoret that he was forced to speculate that God had only permitted it with the hope that the Egyptians would realize—via the sheer frivolity of the practice—that Egypt had deviated from proper religion (Theod. Cyr., *Graec.* 7.21). See Smelik, 1908.

[155] Juvenal joked that two districts even went to war because of their disagreement over the animals worthy of veneration (Juv. 15).

[156] Athan., *Con. gen.* 23. For dissension in religious or philosophical ranks as a sign that the tenets of this discipline are invalid see for instance Soz., *Hist. eccl.* 6.36; Aeneas of Gaza, *Theophrastus* 9.6-11. For discussion of the significance of universal belief see chapters three, four, five, and seven.

[157] Diod. Sic. 1.87-90; Plut. *De Is. et Os.* 379F-381A; Plutarch, *Convivium septem sapientium* 670A-B.

this fate that they deified the animals that had "saved" them.[158] Writing a few centuries before this hagiographer, Origen had acknowledged that there might be some sense in deifying animals that were of use to mankind (naturally, he still rejected the practice), but Origen asked how the Egyptians could deify dangerous and seemingly useless animals like crocodiles (Origen, *Con. Cels.* 5.39), either ignoring or being entirely ignorant of Diodorus Siculus' claim that the crocodiles kept foreigners out of the Nile and were thus of some service to the Egyptians after all (Diod. Sic. 1.89.1-3).

- Animal worship purportedly commemorated an occasion on which Egypt's chief deities assumed animal forms to escape the wrath of an enemy.[159] This explanation is redolent of a tale in which Seth's supporters transformed themselves into animals during Seth's conflict with Horus.[160] The transformation of humans (and humanoid deities) into animals fascinated pagan audiences[161] and horrified Christian thinkers,[162] none of which barred the Christian hagiographers from producing their own stories about a Christian monk who reportedly cured a girl who had been turned into a horse.[163] Some of the Christian animosity towards metamorphosis might have been inspired by its resemblance to the doctrine of reincarnation which, in one form, claimed that human souls passed into animals and vice versa. Not for nothing did

[158] *Historia monachorum en Aegypto* 8.21-23. On the composition of this text see chapter five.

[159] Diod. Sic. 1.86-90; Plut. *De Is. et Os.* 379F-381A; Lucian, *De Sacr*. 14; Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 5.300-50; Joseph., *Ap.* 2.12.

[160] Smelik, 1904; J. G. Griffiths, "The Flight of the Gods before Typhon: An Unrecognized Myth," *Hermes* 88 (1960): 374-76; Burton, 253; Gianpiero Rosati, "*Latrator Anubis*: Alien Divinities in Augustan Rome, and How to Tame Monsters through Aetiology," in *Paradox and the Marvellous in Augustan Literature and Culture*, ed. Philip Hardie (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 275. Cf. Spell 18, in Thomas George Allen, *The Book of the Dead* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974), 32-34.

[161] Ov., *Met.*; Apuleius, *Metamorphoses*. Dunand notes that, except for Pan, animal-human hybrids never received cult honors from the Greeks. Dunand, 277. Also see Rosati, 279; Gilhus, 78-93.

[162] Lactant., *Div. inst.* 1.11; Tert., *Ad Nat.* 2.8; Augustine, *De civitate Dei* 18.18.

[163] See chapter six.

some Christians believe, incorrectly, that this doctrine had been acquired by Pythagoras and Plato from the Egyptians.[164]

From a modern Western perspective, animal worship still seems odd, this reaction being a reflection perhaps of latent Greco-Roman, Jewish, and Christian biases. So it is worth taking a moment to consider just why the deification of an animal might have seemed reasonable to an Egyptian.[165] Anthropologists have pointed out that some of the earliest evidence for what appears to have been religious activity in the archaeological record—Paleolithic wall paintings—depict the sort of animals and animal-human hybrids[166] often recorded from the visions of modern-day shamans and the hypnagogic hallucinations of ordinary people in the initial stages of sleep.[167] It hardly seems a coincidence that Greco-Roman pagans, Egyptian pagans, Jews, and Christians speculated that dreams contained divinatory messages.[168] This is not to say that dreams or visions were the origins of Egyptian animal worship, merely

---

[164] Theoph., *Ad Autol.* 3.7; Clem. Al., *Strom.* 6.4; Origen, *Con. Cels*. 1.20; Euseb., *Prep. ev*. 698d 13.16, Aeneas of Gaza, *Theophrastus* 10.8-12.26. Cf. Hdt. 2.123; Plato, *Respublica* 10.620A; Philostr., *VA* 5.42. For the lack of interest in metempsychosis in traditional Egyptian paganism see Erik Iversen, *Egyptian and Hermetic Doctrine* (Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press, 1984), 42. Also see Courcelle, 162-65; Gilhus, 86-90; Chadwick, *Early Christian* 49.

[165] Other classical explanations not listed above involved commemoration of an ancient custom in which the kings of Egypt wore animal masks and another custom involving the use of animal totems to divide the military (Diod. Sic. 1.86-90; Plut. *De Is. et Os*. 379F-381A. Plutarch also indicated that various animals were worshipped in honor on the animals' allegorical associations (Plut., *Conv. sept. sap*. 670A-671C). Herodotus concluded that the true reason for Egyptian animal worship was a sacred mystery which would be inappropriate for anyone to share (Hdt. 2.65). While he might have been attempting to cover up his own ignorance, or was shielding a practice that he knew was scorned by his fellow Greeks, or was bolstering his own credentials by declining to share insider information, Herodotus' statement does beg the question: If the reason behind animal worship was a mystery, why were so many Greco-Roman pagans claiming to know the answer? Should Herodotus be taken as evidence for a pre-Platonic notion that the Egyptians adhered to spiritual practices akin to Greco-Roman mystery religions? See below for a discussion of the scholarly debate over the Platonizing influences of Greco-Roman interpreters of Egyptian narratives. On Herodotus' favorable attitude towards Egyptians see Ian Moyer, "Herodotus and an Egyptian Mirage: The Genealogies of the Theban Priests," *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 122 (2002): 70-90.

[166] For an example of a human-animal hybrid deified by the Egyptians consider for instance the god Horus, half-human and half-falcon.

[167] Richard Leakey and Roger Lewin, *Origins Reconsidered: In Search of What Makes Us Human* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 317-35. Also see chapter six.

[168] See chapter six.

that it makes sense that the sort of creature that is likely to appear in the context of an experience imbued with religious significance—a dream or a vision—would have been endowed with religious significance.

The practice of both venerating and consuming or sacrificing the same animal might have seemed contradictory to Athanasius (Athan., *Con. gen.* 23), but it makes more sense once the observer moves past the biases of the Greco-Roman pagan, Jewish, and Christian polemics to take the traditional Egyptian evidence into consideration. While an entire species might have been revered in a particular Egyptian district—with the people of that district avoiding consumption of the animal and making an effort to ensure that members of the species never came to harm at the hands of a human—these creatures were not considered divine *per se*, merely sacred. The members of a species identified with a deity were sometimes killed and mummified in large numbers for dedication to the deity in question. Nonetheless, only one animal from a given species could be considered divine at any one time. And the animal itself was not divine. Rather, it was thought to be the living representative of the god with whom it was associated. This animal was allowed to live out its natural life and was in fact provided with all of its needs by priests who performed a lavish funeral for the creature upon its demise.[169]

To understand the Egyptian veneration of animals, the observer also has to disregard assumptions regarding the hierarchy between animals and humans. According to Greco-Roman pagans, Jews, and Christians, humans were vastly

[169] Diod. Sic. 1.83-84; Aelian, *NA* 11.10. Also see Zivie-Coche, 21; Gilhus, 96; David, 314; David Frankfurter, "Egyptian Religion and the Problem of the Category of 'Sacrifice,'" in Knust, 78. For a list of sources on Egyptian animal worship see Smelik, 1860n34. See below for further discussion of sacrifice.

superior to animals.[170] Egyptians simply do not appear to have accepted this hierarchy.[171] Even Greco-Roman pagans were prone to speculating that animals might be capable of communicating with the gods more easily than humans.[172] In response, Christians argued that animals were devoid of human reason and incapable of religious sentiment. [173] Going further, Origen pointed out that animals were employed in divination rites (because of their alleged expertise in communicating with the gods), but these same rites required that the animals be slaughtered. If the creatures truly had prophetic powers, Origen asked, why were they unable to avoid being slaughtered (Origen, *Con. Cels.* 4.90)?

---

[170] In keeping with the argument that animals were devoid of human reasoning and incapable of religious sentiment, Jewish and Christian apologists contended that deifying an animal was nonsensical on the basis of the animal's irrational and savage, violent nature. Philo, *Vita contemplativa* 8-9 (I 472-473); Athan., *Con. gen.* 22. Since the world was thought to have been created for man and animals were the subjects of man, Eusebius, for instance, complained that the Egyptian account of creation did not distinguish between the origin of animals and humans (Euseb., *Prep. ev.* 7.17 330b-c). Cf. Origen, *Con. Cels.* 4.74. For Jews and Christians, the debate over animal worship was given special weight by the belief that man was made in God's image. See Clem. Al., *Protr*. 4. Also see Smelik, 1858; Chadwick, "Introduction," x-xi; Droge, 109; S. H. Lonsdale, "Attitudes towards Animals in Ancient Greece," *Greece and Rome* 26 (1979): 146-59. On Philo's opinion on the subject, see Louis Feldman, *Philo's Portrayal of Moses in the Context of Ancient Judaism* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007), 146; Rosati, 273; Sara Pearce, *The Land of the Body: Studies in Philo's Representation of Egypt* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007), 241-308; George Boas, "Introduction," in *The Hieroglyphics of Horapollo* (1950, repr.; Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 19. For the Egyptian debate over anthropomorphism in Christianity (which might have had additional significance given the region's association with animal worship) see chapter five.

[171] See, for instance, Gilhus, 99.

[172] Aelian, *NA* 6.41, 7.44, 11.31; Pliny the Elder, *Naturalis historia 8.1 (2-3).* Also see Droge, 139; Nasrallah, "Embarassment," 231; Stephen Clark, "'Ask Now the Beasts and They Shall Teach Thee,'" in *Animals as Religious Subjects*, eds. Celia Deane-Drummond, Rebecca Artinian-Kaiser, David Clough (New York: Bloomsbury T & T Clark 2013), 15-34. If animals were naturally equipped to communicate with the divine, it followed that anyone who wanted to communicate with the divine would have to be capable of communicating with animals. Egyptian heroes and magicians were said to be well-versed in the language of animals. Spells from the Greco-Roman period found in Egypt refer to baboon and falcon script. *Papyri Graecae Magicae* IV.1000-1010, XIII.80-90, 145-50, 155, 455, 465-71, 590-600. Meeks, 102-103. Cf. Plin., *HN* 29.22; Philostr., *VA* 1.20. See chapter six on the abilities of pagan and Christian wonder-workers to communicate with animals. On the ability of animals to understand human language see Aelian, *NA* 11.25. Cf. Cicero, *De Oratore* 1.8 (33). On baboons in Egypt being taught to recognize letters see Aelian, *NA* 6.10. Cf. Lucian, *Revivescentes sive Piscator* 36-37. Interestingly, baboons were the sacred animal of Thoth, the Egyptian god responsible for inventing language. Burton, 78; Zivie-Coche, 15. Also see W. C. McDermott, "The Ape in Roman Literature," *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association* 67 (1936): 148-167.

[173] Athan., *Con. gen.* 31-32; Lactant., *Div. inst.* 2.9, 3.9-10. Cf. Aelian, *NA* 7.48, 8.22. Also see Gilhus, 37-63; Eric Meyer, "'Marvel at the Intelligence of Unthinking Creatures!': Contemplative Animals in Gregory of Nazianzus and Evagrius of Pontus," in Deane-Drummond, 192-207.

The privilege accorded to animals in the Egyptian mindset is easier to appreciate in recent days, with animal-rights activists protesting the human exploitation of animals. Yet even in antiquity, it is striking how critics of this privilege were all too happy to assert it in order to make a point. Thus, Christian apologists accused their opponents of being less rational than even the animals (Athan., *Con. gen.* 26, Arnobius 2.16-25). Christians jeered that at least these creatures refused to worship idols, the birds, for instance, defecating on statues of gods.[174]

Apologists also composed their own accounts of metamorphosis, reproaching their opponents for behavior that seemed to blur the lines between animals and humans. Jews accused animal-worshippers of becoming the very beasts that they honored, Greco-Roman pagans said that the Christians were no better than animals, and Christians likened the pagan gods to wild creatures.[175] These accusations thrived amid stories about animals that supposedly acted like humans,[176] even having sex with humans,[177] and humans that supposedly gave birth to animals.[178] Clement of

---

[174] Tert., *Apol.* 13.7; Clem. Al., *Protr.* 4, 10; Lactant. *Div. inst.* 2.4; Arnobius 6.16. Note that some species of birds were venerated in Egypt. See Zimmerman, 116-18. This means that the animals endowed with sanctity were defecating on statues endowed sanctity.

[175] Philo, *Decalogue* 76-80 (XVI 193-94); Origen, *Con. Cels.* 4.86; Arnobius 7.6. Cf. Lucian, *Alexander* 15.

[176] Philostr., *VA* 6.43. Compare to the *Aeosopica* collection of stories about animals acting like humans, parallels to which can be fould in Ptolemaic and pre-Ptolemaic Egyptian texts. See Dieleman, "Egyptian Literature," 437.

[177] For stories in which animals supposedly fell in love with or had sex humans see for instance Aelian, *NA* 6.15, 6.17, 7.19; Longus, *Daphnis and Chloe* 4.18; Ovid, *Ars amatoria* 1.289-326. Clement of Alexandria referred to a tradition (also found in Herodotus and Strabo) in which an Egyptian nome was the home of sacred goats that purportedly had sex with humans. Clem. Al., *Protr.* 11; Hdt. 2.46; Strabo 17.1.19. Also see Smelik, 1875; J. E. Robson, "Bestiality and Bestial Rape in Greek Myth," in *Rape in Antiquity,* eds. Susan Deacy and Karen Peirce (London: The Classical Press of Wales, 1997), 65-96. Pre-Greco-Roman and Roman era Egyptian dream manuals included interpretations for dreams in which humans were seen having sex with animals. Artemidorus 1.80; Joyce Tyldesley, *Judgement of the Pharaoh: Crime and Punishment in Ancient Egypt* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2000), 163; Martin West, "The Way of a Maid with a Moke: P. Oxy. 4762," *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 175 (2010): 38. Christians appear to have been particularly confused by pantomimes that seemed to mock the Egyptian animal deities (Tert., *Apol.* 15). It has been suggested that one of

Alexandria was making no small promise, then, when he said that conversion to Christianity had the power to transform bestial humans into civilized men.[179]

With all of this going on, it is by no means shocking that animal worship would be castigated as a perversion of proper religion.[180] Christians complained that it was hardly fair that the religious crimes of the Egyptians—meaning animal worship—went unpunished while the Christians endured persecution (Justin, *Apol.* 1.24; Tert., *Apol.* 24.7, 24.8-10; Origen, *Con. Cels.*5.39; Lactant., *Div. inst.* 5.20; Arnobius, 1.28). By juxtaposing themselves against the Egyptian pagan Other, Christians sought to buoy their own image.

Therefore, it must have been especially frustrating for Christians to find themselves confronted by the accusation that they worshipped a man with the head of

---

these pantomimes was inspired by an infamous attempt by an Egyptian priest to seduce a Roman woman (see R. W. Reynolds, "The Adultery Mime," *The Classical Quarterly* 40 [1946]: 79n5), but as Luck points out, traditional Egyptian pagans do not appear to have been adverse to the incorporation of humor into their religious discourse (Luck, 266). Satire was not necessarily indicative of impiety. Traditional Egyptian curses threatened wrongdoers with sexual abuse by a donkey. See Jan Assmann, "When Justice Fails: Jurisdiction and Imprecation in Ancient Egypt and the Near East," The *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 78 (1992): 149-62. Roman-era arena spectacles simulated human-animal sexual acts, and arena punishments included coerced sexual intercourse animals. Suetonius, *Nero* 12; Cass. Dio 76.8.2-3; Apul., *Met.* 10.29. Also see Kathleen Coleman, "Fatal Charades: Roman Executions Staged as Mythological Enactments," *Journal of Roman Studies* 80 (1990): 63-64; West, 33-40. Lest it be imagined that this punishment was never actually inflicted, see the discussion of this tactic in modern torture in William Schulz, ed., *The Phenomenon of Torture: Readings and Commentary* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007). For a discussion of bestiality in Coptic art see Thelma Thomas, *Late Antique Egyptian Funerary Sculpture: Images for this World and the Next* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000). For a discussion of the nexus of attitudes associated with animals, violence, and pornography in the modern Western world see Richard W. Bulliet, *Hunters, Herders, and Hamburgers:The Past and Future of Human-Animal Relationships* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005).

[178] According to Phlegon of Tralles, the servant of a Roman praetorian actually gave birth to a monkey and the wife of a Roman gave birth to a child that had Anubis' (a dog's) head. Phlegon of Tralles, *Book of Marvels* 22-23. For the interpretation of dreams in which the dreamer has animal body-parts see Artemidorus 1.37.

[179] Clem. Al., *Protr.* 6.6. Cf. *The Teachings of Silvanus VII,4*. This argument was clearly influenced by a tradition that traced human evolution from a bestial existence. See Droge, 109, 170, 193.

[180] Lucian, *Deorum concilium* 10; Min. Fel. *Oct.* 25; Lactant., *Div. inst.* 1.20; Theod. Cyr., *Graec* 3.85; Origen, *Con. Cels.* 6.4; Euseb., *Prep. ev.* 2.4 68c; 3.13 118a-b. For other references to animal worship in Greco-Roman pagan and Christian literature see Smelik, 1852-2000; Zimmermann, 87-135; Herman Te Velde, "A Few Remarks upon the Religious Significance of Animals in Ancient Egypt," *Numen* 27 (1980): 76-82.

an ass.[181] From the perspective of Greco-Roman pagans, the conflation of Christians and Egyptian pagans would have made sense to the extent that both were alien, strange religions. From the perspective of Egyptian pagans, the interpretation of this identification would have been less clear-cut. While Egyptian pagans could not have welcomed the accusation that they looked like Christians, the terms of this identification might have lessened the blow and fostered Egyptian anti-Christian sentiment. Egyptians associated the ass with Seth. Though Seth was venerated in some incarnations, for he assisted the other gods in their battle against Apophis, he was principally known as the arch-enemy of Osiris[182] and identified with foreign invaders, including the Hyksos, the Persians, and the Greeks.[183] Since a few sources linked the Hyksos to the Jews, the Jews served as mercenaries for the Persian conquest of Egypt, and some narratives of the Exodus identified the Hebrews with a region of Egypt where Seth was worshipped,[184] there might have been some basis, however misguided, for the notion that the Jews, and thus Christians, worshipped an ass-like deity.[185] Of course, Christians could hardly countenance such a charge. Indeed, Antony the Great (c. 251-356), a prominent early Christian monk, supposedly

---

[181] Tertullian complained that pagans were accusing Christians of worshipping a God with the head of an ass when in fact pagans worshipped donkeys. Tert., *Apol.* 16. Cf. Min. Fel., *Oct.* 28; Arnobius 3.16. Also see Clark, 30-33. On a second-third century CE image of a crucified man with the head of an ass or a horse found in a building on the Palatine Hill in Rome see McCracken, 355n71; Gilhus, 231-32.

[182] Aelian, *NA* 10.28; Plut., *De Is. et Os.* 362F; Russell Gmirkin, *Berossus and Genesis, Manetho and Exodus: Hellenistic Histories and the Date of the Pentateuch* (New York: T & T Clark, 2006), 278, 285; Burton, 58. On the identification of Seth with the donkey see te Velde, *Seth*, 7-26.

[183] The worship of Seth appears to date back to early Egyptian history and did not acquire a consistently negative connotation until the seventh century BCE. On the conflation of worshippers of Seth with invaders consider the claims that Persian invaders killed the Apis bull associated with Osiris. For instance see Hdt. 3.29; Plut., *De Is. et Os.* 31.363C; Aelian, *NA* 10.28; Aelian, *Varia Historia* 4.8. Cf. Aelian, *NA* 11.11. Also see Gmirkin, 174-279; te Velde, *Seth*, 109-50.

[184] See below and Gmirkin, 279.

[185] Joseph., *Ap.* 2.80 (7); Tacitus, *Historiae* 5.4; Philo, *Vita Moses* 1.49 269-274. Cf. Plut., *Conv. sept. sap.* 670. Note that Plutarch mocked the idea that Typhon was linked to the Jews (Plut. *De Is. et Os.* 363D). Also see John Gager, *Moses in Greco-Roman Paganism* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1972), 125; Gilhus, 231-34; Gmirkin 283-86; Smelik, 1865-69.

faced down a half-man/half-ass demon in the desert, a place identified as Seth's locale in traditional Egyptian narratives.[186] Far from identifying with the traditional Egyptian enemy, Christians claimed that they alone had the power to overcome the creature.

Christian propaganda aside, there might have been another reason for suspecting the Christians of harboring an inclination towards animal worship. Many Christians advocated the avoidance of meat, in part because the butchering process so often involved pagan sacrifice. This dietary restriction made the Christians resemble Egyptian pagans, who were well-known for avoiding the consumption of the animals that they deified.[187] Greco-Roman pagans had speculated that Jews avoided eating pork out of veneration for the animals.[188] When the pagan apologist Apion criticized Jews for slaughtering animals, Josephus protested, saying that Apion was merely demonstrating his "Egyptian-ness," since a Greek pagan would never make such a complaint.[189]

Yet not everyone was convinced of the supposed Egyptian adversity to sacrifice. Thus, Theodoret asserted that the Jews had adopted the practice of sacrifice from the Egyptians.[190] Lucian claimed that Egyptian animal sacrifice—when it was practiced—was

---

[186] *Vita Antonii* 53. Cf. Philostr., *VA* 6.27; Aelian, *NA* 16.21. See Griffiths, "Athanasius," 1025-26; Patricia Cox Miller, "Jerome's Centaur: A Hyper-Icon of the Desert," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 4 (1996): 209-233; Dag Endsjø, *Primordial Landscapes, Incorruptible Bodies: Desert Asceticism and the Christian Appropriation of Greek Ideas on Geography, Bodies, and Immortality* (Baltimore: Peter Lang, 2008), 19. On the composition of the *Vita Antonii* see chapter five.

[187] Tertullian worried that Christian dietary restrictions would give observers the impression that Christians believed in reincarnation (Tert., *Apol.* 43), which, as mentioned above, was sometimes traced to Egypt. Even Egyptians of the non-priestly class avoided consuming the flesh of sacred animals. Aelian, *NA* 10.46. On priests avoiding flesh see Chaeremon Fr. 10.

[188] For instance see Plut., *Conv. sept. sap.* 669F. Cf. Clem. Al., *Strom.* 7.6; Theod. Cyr., *Graec.* 7.19.

[189] Joseph., *Ap.* 2.13. Is this proof that Apion identified more strongly with the Greco-Romans than the Egyptians? Or was this just rhetoric on Josephus' part? In the same passage, Josephus complained that Apion condemned Jews for avoiding pork. Tellingly, perhaps, Aelian claimed that the Egyptians hated pigs and thus sacrificed them once a year to the moon (Aelian, *NA* 10.16), while Theodoret claimed that the Egyptians eat pigs because the other animals were considered deities (Theod. Cyr., *Graec.* 7.19).

[190] Theod. Cyr., *Graec.* 7.16. In reality, of course, the Jews sacrificed the animals that at least some of the Egyptians deified (Tac., *Hist.* 5.4). Egyptians seem to have been involved with efforts to demolish a Jewish

just like Greco-Roman sacrifice except that the Egyptians mourned the creatures after they were dead (Luc., *De Sacr*. 15). And here the Christians were given a chance to exploit an internal Greco-Roman pagan debate, for fellows like Lucian were critical of sacrifice even when it was practiced by fellow Greco-Roman pagans. Some of these Greco-Roman pagans actually praised the Egyptian aversion to sacrifice,[191] while others sought to assert the superiority of Greco-Roman pagans in this regard, claiming that an aversion to sacrifice was really a Hellenic trait. According to Philostratus (c. 170/72-247/250), for instance, the pagan holy man Apollonius of Tyana (c. 40-c. 120) was particularly critical of the Egyptians for sacrificing animals.[192] Eusebius quoted a harsh Greco-Roman pagan critic of sacrifice, Porphyry, on the manner in which the Egyptians treated their animals, saying that "thongs are violently cracked in the temples, and animals are dashed against the ground before worshipping the gods" (ἐν τοῖς ἱεροῖς ἐπιρρήσσονται καὶ ζῷα προσουδίζεται πρὸ τῆς θρησκείας τῶν θεῶν).[193] Such testimony was damning, coming as it did from Porphyry, both a pagan and a student of a Plotinus, who was born in Egypt.

As mentioned above, however, the Egyptians were not necessarily contradicting themselves when they sacrificed or ate an animal that was the object of veneration in other contexts. The violent nature of Porphyry's language—assuming that it was not just rhetoric—implies that the rite in question might have been an execration rite, with the victims assimilated to Seth, Apophis, or Typhon, these deities being the object of intense animosity in

---

Temple at Elephantine in 410 BCE because they were put out by the sacrifice of animals that were held sacred in that district. See Smelik, 1907; Dunand, 278. On Jews critical of even Jewish sacrifice see Petropoulou, 282.

[191] Berthelot, 196, 196n53. Cf. Burton, 74-75.

[192] Philostr., *VA* 5.25-26. On the apologetic functions of pagan, Jewish, and Christian biographies see Simon Swain, "Defending Hellenism: Philostratus, *In Honour of Apollonius*," in Edwards, 191-94.

[193] Euseb., *Prep. ev.* 4.23 174a-d; Porphyry, *De Philosophia ex oraculis* 326F. Translation from Edwin Gifford, trans., *Eusebius: Preparation for the Gospel* (1903, repr.; Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1981). On Porphyry's attitude towards sacrifice see Philippa Townsend, "Bond of Flesh and Blood: Porphyry, Animal Sacrifice and Empire," in Knust, 214-32.

the traditional Egyptian faith.[194] Otherwise, Porphyry's language suggests a disregard for the victim of sacrifice that seems at odds with the general Egyptian attitude towards animals. Greco-Roman pagan sacrifice should have raised far more eyebrows than Egyptian sacrifice. The former was a much more public spectacle and the meat was distributed to the public.[195] Egyptian sacrifice was performed by priests in private, with the meat consumed by these priests (when the sacrifice was performed for a god)[196] or the relatives of a deceased client (when the sacrifice was performed for the dead).[197] In fact, it is somewhat inappropriate to claim that the demand for sacrifice during the reigns of Decius (c. 201-251) and Diocletian (245-311)[198] was meant to confirm *pagan* identity. It might have confirmed *Greco-Roman* pagan identity, but the desire for a public demonstration of pagan belief in Egypt would have been better served by a traditional procession, in which the priests presented the deities to the people.[199]

Moreover, Porphyry seems to have misunderstood the distinction between deifying a single animal from a species (like the Apis bull identified with Osiris[200]), associating an entire species with a god (like the animals that could not be consumed

---

[194] In this regard, Egyptian sacrifice sometimes had an apotropaic power absent from Greco-Roman practices. Zivie-Coche, 90-91. For further discussion, see the below chapter on martyrs.

[195] Thus, Clement of Alexandria seems to have had Greco-Roman paganism in mind more than traditional Egyptian paganism when he attributed the invention of sacrifice to a desire to taste the flesh of a sacrificial animal (Clem. Al., *Strom.* 7.6). Some scholars have gone so far as to challenge the use of the term "sacrifice" in an Egyptian context altogether. Frankfurter, "Sacrifice," 75-93. For a similar argument with regard to Greco-Roman practices, in light of its negative connotation in a modern Christian context, see Nasrallah, "Embarassment," 146. For an introduction to anthropological approaches to sacrifice see Petropoulou, 1-26. On Greco-Roman sacrifice see Petropoulou 7-15, 20-26; Beard, 35-37, 239-41, 361-62. For an overview of scholarly approaches towards Jewish sacrifice see Petropoulou, 15-19.

[196] Zivie-Coche, 90-91.

[197] Eyre, 200. The cuts of meat given to the gods also differed from those found in Greco-Roman paganism. See Eyre, 181-201.

[198] See the following chapter.

[199] Frankfurter, "Sacrifice," 85.

[200] The Apis bull was allowed to live out its natural life, then mummified. On the funerary rites associated with the Apis bull see Françoise Dunand and Roger Lichtenberg; *Mummies and Death in Egypt*, trans. David Lorton (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006), 112-16; R. L. Vos, *The Apis Embalming Ritual: P. Vindor 3873* (Leuven: Peeters, 1993). Pliny the Elder claimed that the Apis bull was drowned. Plin., *HN* (184) 8.71. This may be linked to the connection between Osiris (whom Apis represented) and drowning (his corpse was thrown into the Nile by Seth). Some Egyptian texts do refer to Seth drowning Osiris. See Burton, 60.

as food but might have been mummified), and the identification of animals as proper objects of sacrifice. He claimed that the Egyptians considered *all* animals divine, making the sacrifice of these animals—and in such a violent fashion—seem particularly strange.[201] Elsewhere, Porphyry (again cited by Eusebius) acknowledged that the Egyptians did not believe that the animals that they sacrificed were actually gods. Indeed, his proof of this was that they sacrifice the animals.[202] But his comment shows that he still (willfully?) failed to understand that the Egyptians had different categories for animals, since Porphyry again lumped all of the animals together.[203]

Rhetoric aside, Porphyry's violent depiction of Egyptian sacrifice probably carried less resonance in antiquity than it does in the Western world today, now that the slaughter of animals is carefully hidden away and cuts of meat are neatly wrapped up in plastic for purchase. That being said, Porphyry's account was hardly as graphic as some of the literature disseminated by the People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA).[204] The interpretation of violence against an animal in antiquity was partly contingent on the creature's identification with a deity or lack thereof. The Persian invader Cambyses (d. 552) supposedly provoked divine wrath for killing the Apis bull *because* the bull was divine, being identified with Osiris.[205] Had the bull

---

[201] Euseb., *Prep. ev.* 95c-d 3.5; Porphyry, *De abstinentia* 4.9. See Smelik, 1978-79.

[202] Euseb., *Prep. ev.* 3.12 117b; Porphyry, *De cultu simulacrorum* Fr. 10. See Smelik, 1979.

[203] Complicating matters still further, scholars have speculated that Porphyry was citing Chaeremon fr. 17D. See van der Horst, 29n1. If so then Chaeremon made a serious mistake, particularly insofar as he claimed that the Apis bull was subjected to sacrifice. For the same mistake in a previous Greek historian see Hdt. 2.39. Cf. Plin., *HN* (184) 8.71.

[204] For instance, consider a video showing the slaughter of deer at Musicon, Inc., in Goshen, New York. The webpage includes a form so that visitors to the site can send an email to the owner of this company urging him to "shut down this cruel business." See "'Bambi Butchers' Horror!" PETA, accessed March 22, 2015, https://secure.peta.org/site/Advocacy?cmd=display&page=UserAction&id=1548.

[205] Hdt., 3.29. Clement of Alexandria took some delight in Cambyses' slaying of the Apis bull (Clem. Al., *Protr*. 4), conveniently ignoring the divine retribution that Cambyses supposedly suffered for his impiety.

been just any bovine, with no sacred associations whatsoever, would anyone have cared?

This brings me to my next topic. The veneration of something that could die or suffer was, according to apologists on both sides, evidence of their opponents' irrationality (Tert., *Apol.* 14.2-6, 15; Plut., *De Is. et Os.* 379D). Christians, again using an argument already found within Greco-Roman pagan circles, contended that a true god could not suffer; therefore, the so-called gods who appeared to have done so were ordinary men and women who had been deified on account of their impressive feats.[206] Euhemerization explained why there were so many tombs for the gods, for these tombs belonged not to gods—who, by definition, ought to be immortal—but to mere humans (Clem. Al., *Prot.* 2.31-33; Euseb., *Prep. ev.* 206d-207a; Lactant., *Div. inst.* 1.11).

God(s): Dead, Suffering, and Idle Idols

This section of the discussion looks at debates related to the nature of divinity. Here, again the Egyptians inspired quite a bit of interest from the Christians. The popularity of the rites associated with Isis and Osiris in the Greco-Roman world were such that it was almost incumbent upon Christians to respond. And an Egyptian context for the debate over the nature of divinity complicates the picture for paganism insofar as the Egyptian idols were subjected to rituals that allegedly invested these idols with life, so that they were animated in ways above and beyond the idols associated with other forms of paganism. While Christians do not appear to have been

Actually, Cambyses was probably innocent of this charge and there is a stele that depicts Cambyses worshipping Apis. See Smelik, 1865-69; Gmirkin, 285-86; Gager, 125.

[206] Diod. Sic. 1.13.1; Tert., *Apol.* 10; Athenagoras, *Leg. pro Christ*. 26, 28; Theoph. *Ad Autol.* 1.9; Clem. Al., *Prot.* 2.27; Athan., *Con. gen.* 18. Cf. Hdt. 2.144. Also see. Griffiths, *Conflict*, 96; Droge, 127.

aware of this distinction, which is in and of itself significant, Egyptian idols did inspire speculation with regard to efforts to trace the origin of a much condemned idolatry. The latter reflected the perverse ends to which Egypt's identification as the home of religion could be put.

Though Greco-Roman paganism continued to be the focus of the attention for Christian apologists interested in euhemerization, these apologists also attacked Egyptian paganism on these grounds, and borrowed from Greco-Roman pagan writers to do so. Athenagoras, for instance, cited Herodotus[207] on the location of one of Osiris' tombs, at Saïs, as evidence that the Egyptian gods were in fact mortal.[208] But since Osiris' demise was just a preliminary stage in a process that culminated in his resurrection and his assumption of power as the king of the underworld,[209] Athenagoras was distorting pagan beliefs just as thoroughly as the pagan apologists were distorting Christian beliefs when they claimed that Christians were worshipping a dead man (Justin, *Apol.* 1.21; Julian, *Con. Gal.* 197C). Vulnerable as they were to accusations like this, Christians had a vested interest in distinguishing themselves from pagans in this regard. So when Celsus likened Jesus to Antinous, Hadrian's lover and a recipient of cult honors in Egypt, Origen retorted that the two cases had

[207] Given Herodotus' fondness for the Egyptians, noted above, he would probably not have appreciated the ends to which his information was put in Christian sources.

[208] Athenagoras, *Leg. pro Christ.* 28. He also devoted some space to the genealogies of the gods, arguing that these proved that the gods were begotten and not eternal, and therefore not true gods (Athenagoras, *Leg. pro Christ.* 18-19). Eusebius made a similar argument with regard to the Eyptian gods (Euseb., *Prep. ev.* 108 a 3.10). Osiris' corpse was reportedly housed in multiple tombs throughout Egypt, which were in fact popular attractions for Greco-Roman visitors eager to see for themselves the resting place of a god. According to Diodorus Siculus, Osiris had more than one tomb because Isis had entrusted his body parts to priests at different locations to safeguard them (Diod. Sic. 1.21). Cf. Strabo, 17.1.23; Plut., *De Is. et Os.* 358A, 358E-359B. Traces of this belief can be detected in traditional Egyptian texts. See Griffiths, *Conflict,* 4-6; te Velde, *Seth,* 81-98.

[209] Burton, 6, 59. The traditional Egyptian mortuary rites through which mortals were assimilated to Osiris, and like Osiris obtained resurrection in the afterlife, were extremely popular even among Greco-Romans by the first few centuries of the Common Era. Some early Christians appear to have engaged in some of these rites—at least mummification—though of course conversion should have undermined the degree to which resurrection was thought to be contingent upon rites of this sort. See chapter five.

nothing in common, especially since Antinous was given to lust, whereas Jesus was a model of morality.[210] Apparently, virtue made all the difference.[211]

Elite notions of decorum even inspired criticism of Isis' grief over the death of Osiris. During the first few centuries of the Common Era, an annual three day festival commemorated Isis' lamentations.[212] The festival was enormously popular all over the Mediterranean,[213] and perhaps it was the festival's popularity that raised the ire of Greco-Roman pagan and Christian apologists, for a person could hardly claim to be very sophisticated if he went around endorsing the tastes of the masses. Lactantius seems to have missed the point entirely, because he claimed that the rites were actually associated with Isis' search for her lost son Horus.[214] Other critics attributed their skepticism to Isis' indulgence of a seemingly human emotion like grief and the engagement of humans in the associated rites of mourning. These critics asked how a god could possibly be the subject of human grief, for this implied the deity's inferiority to the humans by whom it was pitied.[215] In the traditional Egyptian funerary context, however, mourning rituals seem to have been integral to the process

---

[210] Origen, *Con. Cels.* 3.36. Cf. Justin, *Apol.* 1.29; Tatian, *Orat.* 10; Athenagoras, *Leg. pro Christ.* 30; Clem. Al., *Prot.* 4. Socrates Scholasticus used the example of Antinous to mock Libanius' efforts to denigrate the Christians for deifying a man, stressing Libanius' implication that Julian, a mere man, was a god (Socrates, *Hist. eccl.* 3.23).

[211] For the claim that Egyptians worshipped a man who was still living see Euseb., *Prep. ev.* 94b 3.4; Theod. Cyr., *Graec.* 3.58. Also see van der Horst, 64n1. If the story about a man receiving divine honors at Anabis has some basis in fact, one wonders if the "man" in question was actually a baboon, especially if, as van der Horst argues, "Anabis" was a corruption of "Athribis," which was a cult center for Imhotep (see van der Horst 67n21), since Imhotep—a Third Dynasty physician who was deified (identified with Asclepius by the Greeks)—was associated with baboons via his identification with Thoth. On Inhotep see Bell, *Cults*, 11; David, 315.

[212] Burton, 75

[213] Tinh, "Sarapis," 101-17.

[214] Lactant., *Div. inst.* 1.21. Cf. Arnobius, 1.36; August., *De civ. D.* 6.10.

[215] Plut., *De Is. et Os.* 379B-C; Plut., *De superst.* 171E. Cf. Clem. Al., *Prot.* 2.21, 2.19-20, 4; Min. Fel., *Oct.* 23.1; Aristides, *Apol.* 12.35. Athenagoras criticized the custom of mourning the sacred animals (like the Apis bull, living representatives of gods) after their deaths (Athenagoras, *Leg. pro Christ.* 14). Also see Kahlos, 162n111.

by which deceased individuals were thought to undergo resurrection.[216] It was a failure to appreciate the culturally-specific significance of mourning that prompted mockery on the part of non-Egyptians. In a rare show of sympathy for Egyptian paganism from a Greco-Roman pagan, Plutarch defended the festival, but did so by reframing the problem in Greco-Roman terms rather than attempting to clarify the Egyptian perspective. He provided arguments that would have made sense to a Greco-Roman, suggesting that Isis and Osiris were demigods—and thus more likely to demonstrate human characteristics—and argued that their suffering was meant to be interpreted allegorically.[217] Unimpressed by this kind of defense, Christian apologists concluded that demigods were just demons[218] and challenged the use of allegorical interpretation altogether, at least when it came to pagan narratives.[219]

Of course, anyone who doubted the immortality of the gods had only to look to the idols.[220] Some of these images could supposedly speak[221] and were credited with multiple miracles (Athenagoras, *Leg. pro Christ.* 18, 23). In response to these claims, Christians attributed the lifelike qualities of the idols to the trickery of pagan

---

[216] Vos, 165.

[217] Plut., *De Is. et Os.* 355B, 360D-F. Also see J. G. Griffiths, "Allegory in Greece and Egypt," *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 53 (1967): 79-102.

[218] For instance, see Lactant., *Div. inst.* 2.14. Also see chapter six.

[219] See below.

[220] Christians attacking pagan idolatry again borrowed from Greco-Roman pagan critics of the practice, exploiting an internal pagan debate. For Greco-Roman pagan criticism of idolatry see for instance Lucian, *Philopsuedes* 19E-21; Philostr., *VA* 5.20; Porphyry, *Epistle ad Anebo*. Cf. Tert., *Apol.* 25.12-13; Clem. Al., *Strom.* 5.14. Also see West, 34; Nasrallah, *Christian*, 203; Droge, 129. In a point that will seem particularly compelling in light of the above discussion regarding animal worship, Clement of Alexandria declared that the idols were so devoid of life that it actually seemed more rational that a person worship animals than idols, for at least animals had senses. Clem. Al., *Prot.* 4. Cf. Athan., *Con. gen.* 15.

[221] One cannot help but wonder if Theophilus of Antioch was referring to one of these when he mocked the Egyptian worship of shameful sounds. Theoph. *Ad Autol.* 3.41.10. Cf. Psalms 115:4-7, 135:15-18; Wisdom 15:15. See chapter five and Lightfoot, 234.

priests,[222] and, to undermine the notion that idols were capable of working miracles, pointed out that idols were so ineffectual that they were unable to protect themselves from calamities, like violence suffered at the hands of Christians (Athan., *De incar.* 1.31.1-22, 1.32.15-22) and a fire that damaged the Serapeum in Alexandria (Clem. Al., *Prot.* 4; Lactant., *Div. inst.* 2.4 106; Arnobius 6.16). Jewish and Christian apologists also emphasized the everyday, profane nature of the items from which the idols were fashioned—including an Egyptian footbath—to mock the notion that these idols could have any association with divinity (Philo, *Vita con.* 472.7; Clem. Al., *Prot.* 4; Arnobius, 6.14; Theoph. *Ad Autol.* 1.10; Min. Fel., *Oct.* 22.1-4). Going to considerable trouble to describe the many rumors surrounding the origins of that paragon of wicked idolatry, the statue of Serapis standing in the Serapeum at Alexandria, Clement of Alexandria stressed that the idol had been fashioned by human hands and out of earthly materials,[223] clearly appealing to the argument that an idol, being *created*, should not be confused with the *Creator* who had produced those materials.[224]

---

[222] See Origen on the trickery of priests who produced seemingly miraculous deeds in association with the cult of Antinous (Origen, *Con. Cels.* 3.36).

[223] According to Clement, the idol was fashioned from a mixture of every stone that could be found in Egypt—note that traditional Egyptian paganism claimed that the bodies of the gods were fashioned from precious metals (see Meeks, 57)—and had been dyed with a pigment obtained through the funerary rites for the Apis bull. The reference to funerary rites was a reminder that Serapis was no god, for as mentioned above, a true divinity should be incapable of death (Clem. Al., *Prot.* 4). Cf. Plut., *De Is. et Os.* 361F-362A. The funerary connection would have also underscored Clement's argument that paganism led to death, while Christianity led to life (Clem. Al., *Prot.* 10). Note that Osiris, to whom Serapis was assimilated, ruled the underworld. Thus, Clement of Alexandria claimed that the statue in the Serapeum depicted Pluto. Clem. Al., *Prot.* 4. Cf. Theod. Cyr., *Graec.* 3.63. Plutarch commented that some believed that Serapis was Apis' coffin (Plut., *De Is. et Os.* 362C). Accoring to Rufinus of Aquileia, some believed that the statue of Serapis was meant to commemorate Joseph (Rufinus, *Historia ecclesiastica* 11.23).

[224] A century earlier, Philo argued that pagans who worshipped the *created* world—the sun, the moon, and the rest of the heavens—were elevating the subjects (the *created* world) over their ruler (the *Creator*), like idolators. Philo, *Decalogue* 66 (XIV 191). Cf. Romans 1:18-25; Athenagoras, *Leg. pro Christ.* 16; Athan., *Con. gen.* 8, 27; Theod. Cyr., *Graec.* 3.6; Tatian, *Orat.* 4; Clem. Al., *Prot.* 4. This critique, when applied to Egyptian paganism, was correct to an extent: The Egyptians associated the heavens with Osiris and Isis. Manetho, Fr. 82; Diod. Sic. 1.11.1-2; Origen, *Con. Cels.* 7.42; Euseb., *Prep. ev.* 3.2 87d-88a; Theod. Cyr., *Graec.* 3.6. See Griffiths, *Conflict*, 108-42; Droge, 128; Thomas Dousa, "Imagining Isis: On Some Continuities and Discontinuities in the

Pagans tried to counter arguments like this by contending that the idols were merely *representations* of the gods, meant to elevate the devotee's worship to the spiritual plane.[225] The Christian apologists responded to this line of thinking by arguing that the idols, if they were *representations* of the divine, were inherently inferior to that which they were meant to represent and were therefore unworthy of divine honors (Athenagoras, *Leg. pro Christ.* 15; Athan., *Con. gen.*1.21; Lactant., *Div. inst.* 2.18). Clement of Alexandria argued that the true likeness of God was within each living man, who had been molded in God's image (Clem. Al., *Prot.* 4). Both sides of the debate were off base, however, when it came to critiquing traditional Egyptian attitudes towards idolatry. The Egyptian pagans did not, like Greco-Roman apologists, believe that idols were merely *images* of the divine or *visual reminders* meant to help elevate the worshippers' mind to the divine. Egyptians might not have believed that a statue *was* a deity any more than they thought that the Apis bull *was* Osiris. But the animal or idol that was identified with a deity became something more than ordinary flesh or earthly material. It was invested with the living

---

Image of Isis in Greek Isis Hymns and Demmotic Texts," in *Acts of the Seventh International Conference of Demotic Studies, Copenhagen, 23-27 August 1999,* ed. Kim Ryholt (Copenhagen: University of Copenhagen, 2002), 155. Some ancient authorities speculated that religion itself had originated with (Egyptian) speculations about the divinity of the heavens (Diod. Sic. 1.11.1; Clem. Al., *Strom.* 6.14; Athan., *Con. gen.* 9. Cf. Deuteronomy 4:19. For Egypt as the home of astronomy see below.

[225] Olympius, a pagan priest who was involved with an outbreak of violence between Christians and pagans in Alexandria, allegedly attempted to counter this argument by declaring that the idols in imminent danger of violence had been vacated by the gods (Sozom., *Hist. eccl.* 7.15.6). See chapter four and Ando, "Apologetics," 201; Kahlos, 170. Celsus attempted to sidestep altogether the question of whether or not the idols were alive, arguing that if the idols had no powers, there should be no harm in worshipping them (Origen, *Con. Cels.* 8.24). Christians responded with a whole list of the damages done by idolatry. They noted, for instance, the immorality of the depictions involving pagan deities and asked how an image of Anubis could inspire ethical behavior (Tatian, *Orat.* 33-34; Clem. Al., *Prot.* 4; Athan., *Con. gen.* 12; Theod. Cyr., *Graec.* 7.7-7.8; Arnobius, 6.25). Besides, they continued, even if the idols *were* alive, they were clearly of demonic origin (Tert., *De spec.* 10; Athenagoras, *Leg. pro Christ.* 26). At the very least, idolatry was base superstition and made a cuckold of the God who should have been the true object of one's devotion. Clem. Al., *Strom.* 6.16, 7.1; Origen, *Exhortatio ad maryrium* 9-10. Cf. Wisdom 14.12. At the worst, idolatry heralded the end of days. Clem. Al., *Prot.* 10. Also see Smelik, 1915; Jones, 47-48.

spirit, or *ba*, of the deity.[226] Texts dating from the Old Kingdom (2686-2181 BCE) right down into the Roman period attest to the performance of "Opening of the Mouth" rituals that were meant to give life to the statues. Once invested with life, the idols were treated like living entities: The priests would greet the idol every day, wash and clothe it, then leave food for it.[227] Arnobius seems to have been referring to this very practice when he mocked the custom of priests singing to awake the gods.[228] But when Athanasius joked about the absurdity of investing a common lump of clay or wood with divinity—asking if this was done before or after the object was sold in the market, with the introduction of business implying a debasement of the sacred[229]—it is not clear if the critique would have been applicable to all brands of paganism.[230]

In any case, a special connection with idolatry could not have helped Egypt's case. Jewish and Christian apologists speculated that idolatry had been inspired by a confusion of Moses' teachings about God creating man in his own likeness.

---

[226] Zivie-Coche, 15, 21; Siegfried Morenz, *Egyptian Religion*, trans. Ann Keep (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1973), 156.

[227] Zivie-Coche, 15, 21. Note that "Opening of the Mouth" rituals were also found in Babylonian religion. On first-second century CE Egyptian texts of the ritual see Jaqueline Jay, "Religious Literature of Late Period and Greco-Roman Egypt," *Religion Compass* 1 (2007): 95.

[228] Arnobius, 7.32. See McCracken, 612n100.

[229] Athan., *Con. gen.* 13. Cf. Theoph. *Ad Autol.* 2.2. The analogy cannot be pushed too far, but the process of transubstantiation of the Eucharist suggests a parallel. Critics who asked "just when" the deity was thought to enter the Eucharist must have sounded rather like the early Christian apologists who asked the same with regard to pagan statuary. See chapter four for further discussion of the idols and profane statuary.

[230] The Christian critique of idols must have had implications for mortuary rites, even if this is not obvious at first glance. The "Opening of the Mouth" ritual was also performed on mummies and Roman period mummy labels used the word "idol," εἴδωλον, to translate the Egyptian word *bȝ*, ba, the spirt of a god or a deceased person. See Dieleman, *Priests*, 157n28. Clement of Alexandria preferred that man internalize his identification with God (Clem. Al., *Prot.* 4), but in traditional Egyptian mortuary rites, resurrection was afforded through assimilation to Osiris, and imagery was crucial to this process. This imagery emphasized the identification between the deceased and Osiris, so as to ensure resurrection, and it may be no coincidence that the Roman period saw an explosion in mortuary portraits, a characteristic that Riggs argues was an important aspect of identity construction in the complicated cross-cultural milieu of Roman Egypt. See Christina Riggs, *The Beautiful Burial in Roman Egypt* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 141-42, 157-58, 246-47. Cf. Marjorie Venit, *Monumental Tombs of Ancient Alexandria: The Theatre of the Dead* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 124-59; Dunand, *Mummies*, 82-83.

Supposedly, Egyptians had misinterpreted these teachings to mean that idols resembling men were appropriate representations of the divine. This error was passed on to others.[231] Egyptian animal worship was linked to idolatry as well. Greco-Roman pagan, Jewish, and Christian apologists alike condemned idolatry by comparing it to Egyptian animal worship.[232] Philo blamed the incident involving the Golden Calf on the debilitating effects of prolonged exposure to Egyptian customs,[233] his animosity towards the subject seemingly fueled, at least in part, by his unique knowledge of the divine honors received by the Apis bull and bovine idols and mummies in Egypt.[234] Christian apologists followed in his footsteps, explaining the Israelites' lapse into idolatry as an Egyptian corruption (Lactant., *Div. inst.* 4.10; Theod. Cyr., *Graec.* 7.16), a contention that was no doubt buoyed by a desire to distance Christianity from the idolatry of the Egyptians, especially as so-called gnostic Christians in Egypt, like the Carpocratians, reportedly worshiped images of Jesus, Plato, and other sages.[235]

Accusations of idolatry, like accusations of animal worship, blurred distinctions. Apologists on every side identified their opponents with Egyptian

---

[231] Pseudo-Justin, *Cohort.* 34. Cf. Clem. Al., *Prot.* 4.

[232] Plut., *De Is. et Os.* 382C; Philo, *Legatio ad Gaium* 138-139; Lactant., *Div. inst.* 1.20.

[233] Philo, *Vita Mos.* 2.49 270. Feldman argues that Philo's position might have been inspired in part by a rival assertion that Moses was responsible for the Egyptians adopting the habit of animal worship. Intent upon distancing the Jews from the Egyptians, Philo could hardly have endorsed such a theory, even if it would have bolstered claims that the Jews were founders of civilization. See Feldman, *Moses,* 141-46. Also see Smelik, 1995-96; Gerard Mussies, "The Interpretatio Judaica of Thot-Hermes," in *Studies in Egyptian Religion*, eds. M. Heerma van Voss, Dl. J. Hoens, G. Mussies, D. van der Plas, and H. te Velde (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1982), 104. For more on the debate over the Jews as founders of civilization, see below.

[234] On the role of bovine idols and mummies in Egyptian worship see Burton, 247. Also see Zimmermann, 94. On the Golden calf as an alternative to the cherubim that would later be installed in the Temple see M. Coogan, *A Brief Introduction to the Old Testament: The Hebrew Bible in its Context* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 117-20.

[235] Epiph., *Pan.* 27 6,9-10. Cf. Euseb., *Hist. eccl.* 2.14.6, 7.18.1. Also see Jones, 53-54, 56.

paganism and ignored distinctions to facilitate their polemic.[236] They also exploited internal debates going on in their opponents' camps, turning insider attempts at boundary maintenance into a weapon.[237] By recasting internal debates as evidence of hypocrisy or inconsistency, the apologists implied that the process of identity formation and boundary negotiation was far more clear-cut than is actually the case. It is much easier to assert a distinction between "us" and "them" when the latter are the only ones guilty of confusion and boundary-crossing. Had the apologists acknowledged that identity is always a matter of social and cultural construction—that everyone is prone to boundary-crossing—it would have undermined the fundamental distinction between "us" and "them" upon which the apologetic argument ultimately rested.[238]

Increasing confusion over religious boundaries might be one of the reasons that apologists attempted to shift the focus from a metaphysical debate over the nature of divinity to a historical debate over ethnic identity. With pagans and Christians looking so much alike, apologists hoped to distinguish them along historically-

[236] This spilled over into other genres (that is, assuming that apologetic literature should be considered a unique genre). A letter attributed to the brother-in-law of Hadrian snickered that there was no way to distinguish between Christians and the devotees of Serapis (*SHA* Saturninus 8). See Livia Capponi, "Serapis, Boukoloi and Christians from Hadrian to Marcus Aurelius," in *Hadrian and the Christians*, ed. Marco Rizzi (New York: De Gruyter, 2010), 125; Alessandro Galimberti, "The Pseudo-Hadrianic Epistle in the *Historia Augusta* and Hadrian's Religious Policy," in Rizzi, 111-20.

[237] For instance, Arnobius makes a point of declaring that the source on one of his criticisms is none other than "your Varro" (Arnobius, 7.1).

[238] If difference is constructed, then so is the absence of difference. Apologists were ignoring differences when these mattered and over-emphasizing differences when commonalities might have facilitated peaceful co-existance. To say that Egyptian pagans and Christians or Greco-Roman pagans were the same was but the flip-side of assertions that pagans and Christians were fundamentally different; neither extreme was particularly accurate and both fed all too easily into the sort of rhetoric that encouraged violence. Elizabeth Digeser goes so far as to argue that the early fourth century anti-Christian persecution was in fact inspired by the very real fear that Christians were beginning to look too much like pagans. It was not enough for pagans to accuse Christians of twisting pagan philosophy to Christian ends, lines had become so blurred that pagans felt that violence was needed to clarify boundaries. Digeser, *Threat*, 14. Also see chapter four and Ando, "Apologetics," 182.

contingent, (though sometimes fictive) kinship-based ethnic lines,[239] with religiously distinct ethnicities differentiating themselves from one another based on internal cultural developments and intellectual contributions to the world at large. This argument hinged in part on the privilege accorded to tradition and custom, the notion being that a person should not deviate from his ethnic mores.

Competitive Historiography

This section of the discussion looks at efforts on the part of Jews and Christians to invest Jewish and Christian history with authority. When Greco-Roman pagans questioned the accomplishments of the Jews and the Christians, as a people, the latter replied with fire, accusing Greco-Romans of acquiring much of their wisdom from Hebrews via Egypt. Not only did this undermine Greco-Roman pagan claims to superiority, it also undermined the reputation of Egypt as the home of religious wisdom.

Tradition and custom were thought to be superior to innovation and novelty.[240] According to Julian, Egyptian paganism and Judaism might be perverse, but at least their adherents were following the established customs of their own people.[241] To Iamblichus, the Egyptians were paragons of tradition, so much so that, compared to them, Greeks were the innovators.[242] As a self-proclaimed "new"

---

[239] Ethnicity was not merely an issue of biology. It included, among other things, language, religion, and customs. See chapter five.

[240] William Adler, *Time Immemorial: Archaic History and Its Sources in Christian Chronography from Julius Africanus to George Syncellus* (Washington D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 1989), 21.

[241] Julian, *Ep.* 47; Julian, *Con. Gal.* 43A-B, 238B. Cf. Origen, *Con. Cels.* 5.25-37. Also see Malley 131, 162-64.

[242] Iamblichus, *De mysteriis* 7.5.

religion with no clear link to a unique ethnicity,[243] Christianity was inherently inferior from a traditional perspective that accorded merit on the basis of custom. This was such a powerful argument that Theophilus of Antioch claimed that he was only writing to Autolycus because he wanted to demonstrate the antiquity of the Christian faith, for he had become increasingly disconcerted by critics who claimed that Christianity was an innovation (Theoph., *Ad Autol.* 3.1, 3.4).

Christian apologists responded to the accusation that Christianity was an innovation in several, sometimes conflicting ways. First, they argued that universality was a good in and of itself, and that disagreement over religious beliefs was evidence of distance from the divine.[244] True religion should apply to everyone, with a universal set of beliefs and practices, instead of a different set for each ethnicity.[245] Some Christians argued that their faith was not really "new" (Theoph., *Ad Autol.* 3.1, 3.4) since it was consistent with the Old Testament,[246] but these apologists insisted that Christianity should not be conflated with Judaism, for Judaism was a corruption of Mosaic teachings brought about through exposure to the Egyptians.[247] Thus, Christianity was reform, not novelty. Indeed, some Christians argued that Greek

---

[243] See chapter five.

[244] To Athanasius, the fact that one Egyptian nome worshipped the crocodile while another nome reviled the same creature was proof that there was no validity to such beliefs. Athan., *Con. gen.* 23. Cf. Athenagoras, *Leg. pro Christ.* 14; Aristides, *Apologia* 13.1.

[245] Origen, *Con. Cels.* 5.38. Also see Mitchell, 8-9.

[246] Malley, 342-44. Some Christians embraced the notion that Christianity *was* "new," either because Jesus had indeed overturned pagan sin or because he had brought God's message to the Gentiles. The pagans were the ones who were erring with their obedience to degenerate customs, like incest (Min. Fel., *Oct.* 31; Euseb., *Prep. ev.* 280a 6.10). Old ways had to be cast off, just as adults cast off the habits of youth (Clem. Al., *Prot.* 10). Arnobius pointed out that progress was good, listing many of the innovations that were of benefit to mankind. Arnobius, 2.67-68. Also see Kofsky, 109-10.

[247] Euseb., *Prep. ev.* 312b-c 7.8. Also see Droge, 186. With pagans complaining that the Christians were really just lapsed Jews (Origen, *Con. Cels.* 2.1) some Christians felt compelled to explain away the distinction between their faith and that of the Jews. To do so, they accused Jews of misinterpreting and perverting God's commandments (Origen, *Con. Cels.* 2.4).

paganism was the innovation,[248] being derived from (yet again) a confusion of Moses' teachings.

Scholarship has yet to fully appreciate the significance of the last of these arguments to a wave of early and important conversions from an influential pool of pagan intellectuals. According to these converts—like Justin Martyr and Clement of Alexandria—the vast number of pagan poets and sages who seemed to attest to the truth of monotheism[249] had stolen these ideas from Jewish sources (Justin, *Apol.* 1.55, 1.62, 1.64, 1.66; Clem. Al., *Strom.* 5.14, 6.2) via Egypt, where visiting pagan sages had come into contact with Egyptian priests who were peddling learning that Moses had passed on before his departure.[250] Asserting a Mosaic origin for pagan learning was just the most recent sally in a long-standing tradition of "competitive historiography," whereby historians sought to assert the authority of a particular ethnicity as the origin of mankind, religion, and the refinements of civilization.[251] Competitive historiographers sought to trace the descent of various peoples, as if the

---

[248] Euseb., *Prep. ev.* 7.8 333a. For Arnobius' assertion of the same point, see Edwards, 215-18.

[249] Justin, *Apol.* 1.5, 2.10; Pseudo-Justin, *Cohort.* 2, 17 -19; Tert., *Apol.* 14.7-8; Athenagoras, *Leg. pro Christ.* 6; Clem. Al., *Prot.* 5, 7; Clem. Al., *Strom.* 5.14. Also see Jaeger, 123n3.

[250] On the notion that Moses and/or the Hebrews had imparted teachings to the Egyptians, see Theod. Cyr., *Graec.* 1.44-45. For the reliance of the Christian apologists on Manetho for this argument see Adler, 31. For an example of a Christian apologist explicitly referencing Manetho (as well as Josephus) in support of his chronology, see Theoph., *Ad Autol.* 3.23. For sources on the Egyptians passing Hebrew learning on to the various Greek sages who supposedly visited Egypt, see Pseudo-Justin, *Cohort.* 12, 14, 20-22, 28; Clem. Al., *Strom.* 6.2; Theod. Cyr., *Graec.* 1.12-14; Euseb.,*Prep. ev.* 471a-472a 10.4. Also see Chadwick, "Introduction," ix. On Jewish support for the notion that the Greek sages visited Egypt, see, for instance, Joseph., *Ap.* 1.2.

[251] On "competitive historiography," see J.J. Collins, "Introduction to Artapanus," in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha,* vol. 2, ed. James Charlesworth (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1985), 892; Adler, 50-51; Alexander Loveday, "The Acts of the Apostles as an Apologetic Text," in Edwards, 27. On the various modes in which the past was employed in ancient sources see Doron Mendels, "How was Antiquity Treated in Societies with a Hellenistic Heritage? And Why Did the Rabbis Avoid Writing History?" in *Antiquity in Antiquity: Jewish and Christian Pasts in the Greco-Roman World,* eds., Gregg Gardner and Kevin Osterloh (Ottersweier: Tubingen, 2008), 131-51. On the privilege accorded to the past, see for instance Euseb., *Prep. ev.* 75d-76b 2.8. For ancient criticism of the notion that past sages were worthy of respect see James Ker and Christoph Pieper, eds., "General Introduction: Valuing Antiquity in Antiquity," in *Valuing the Past in the Greco-Roman World: Proceedings from the Penn-Leiden Colloquia on Ancient Values VII* (Boston: Brill, 2014), 13; Illaria Ramelli, "Valuing Antiquity in Antiquity by Means of Allegoresis," in Ker, 495; Jason Nethercut, "Ennius and the Revaluation of Traditional Historiography in Lucretius' *De Rerum Natura*," in Ker, 437-38.

identification of an Athenian origin for the Egyptians justified Egyptian submission to the Athenians.[252] Thus, Eusebius was happy to note a tradition claiming that the Athenians originated in Egypt—leveraging prejudice against the Egyptians to further undermine the Greco-Roman pagan position—while Plato made a point of rejecting an Egyptian origin for the Athenians.[253] Despite Plato's reservations, many Greco-Roman thinkers traced Greco-Roman learning to Egypt.[254] Embracing this notion, Christians argued that many worthwhile accomplishments on the part of Greco-Roman pagans—such as a sometime aversion to idolatry—could be traced back to Moses.[255] This was a powerful argument for conversion to Christianity. If the best elements of pagan faith were really Christian—Judaism being a corruption of the true faith (Origen, *Con. Cels.* 2.4)—then reason (according to the Christian apologists) demanded conversion.[256]

---

[252] On the rivalry between various nations (such as the Thebans, Egyptians, and Ethiopians) claiming to be the birthplace of mankind itself see Diod. Sic. 1.10.1, 1.50.1-2, 3.1. Also see chapter five and Burton, 52.

[253] Euseb., *Prep. ev.* 491a 10.10. Athens' limited written records—taken as evidence by other writers for Athens' "youth"—was proof to Plato that Athens was in fact older than other cities. Athens' records were destroyed by natural disasters. If Athenian laws resembled those of Egypt, it was because the Egyptian laws were based on the Athenian ones (Pl., *Ti.* 23e-24d). Also see Berthelot, 192-93; Droge, 10; Burton, 11, 120; Erich Gruen, *Rethinking the Other in Antiquity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011), 265-67. Plutarch too sought a Greek origin for Egyptian culture. For instance, he traced Isis' name from a Greek word (Plut., *De Is. et Os.* 351F). See Richter, 196. Cf. Diod. Sic. 1.9.5. Compare to a tradition claiming that Mercury fled to Egypt and imparted language and laws to the residents under the guise of Thoth (Lactant., *Div. inst.* 1.6).

[254] Plutarch, *Solon* 26; Plut. *De Is. et Os.* 354E-355A; Iambl., *VP* 2-4, 28-29; Amm. Marc. 22.21-22. Strabo claimed that he actually visited the houses at Heliopolis where Plato stayed when visiting the priests there (Strabo 17.1.29). Also see Burton, 283-84; Berthelot, 195. Since Greco-Roman thinkers had already suggested an Egyptian origin for many Greco-Roman pagan rites, such as those associated with Dionysus (see above), it was by no means a large leap to posit that Egypt had been the source of the monotheistic trends in Greco-Roman pagan thought as well. For an assessment of the impact of Moses and the Exodus narrative on the development of monotheism in general see Assmann, *Moses*.

[255] For instance, Numa Pompilius' aversion to idolatry was credited to his knowledge of Mosaic teachings (Clem. Al., *Strom.* 1.15; Euseb., *Prep. ev.* 9.6 410b-c).

[256] Of course, a Mosaic source for pagan belief and practice begged the question: Why did pagans not resemble Jews or Christians more closely? According to Christian apologists, pagans were *not* Christians (or Jews) because pagans had garbled Moses' message and had misinterpreted the examples that he provided (Justin, *Apol.* 1.62, 64; Clem. Al., *Strom.* 5.1; Pseudo-Justin, *Cohort.* 34; Tert., *Apol.* 47). On pagan poets and philosophers plagiarizing the prophets, see Theoph., *Ad Autol.* 1.14. This line of argument inverted the pagan accusation that Christians were plagiarizing pagan sages like Plato and pagan belief in general (for instance, Satan was allegedly based on the myths of Osiris). See Origen, *Con. Cels.* 3.16, 6.21, 6.42-43.

For Jewish and Christian competitive historiographers, the elevation of Moses as a source of sacred wisdom meant overturning a particularly damning version of the Exodus that was circulating in pagan circles. This account was supposedly based on Egyptian records, which were integral to the question of historical precedent because these records were known to predate those of the Greeks,[257] and pagans had been arguing that Jews were of recent origin based on the Jews' absence from works of Greek history (Joseph., *Ap.* 1.1). To correct this mistake, Josephus cited Manetho, who claimed—quite truthfully, scholars believe—to be utilizing ancient Egyptian accounts,[258] but, to Josephus' dismay, also claimed that the Hebrews were driven, not chased, out of Egypt.[259] According to this alternative version of the Exodus, the Jews could be traced to leprous Egyptians[260] who had been condemned to a quarry by the Pharaoh on the advice of an oracle. These lepers elected an Egyptian priest by the name of Moses as their leader. He convinced them to reject native Egyptian pagan practices, including animal worship. Moses then secured an alliance with the so-called Shepherds, previous invaders of Egypt who had been driven out of Egypt and

[257] Hdt. 2.143. But compare to tales in which the Egyptians were said to have lost their sacred books in the flood and had to go to Assyria, their rival in the assertion of intellectual and religious priority, to recover lost knowledge. Adler, 60-62. Celsus challenged Moses' account of the Creation, arguing that the accounts of the Egyptians were more trustworthy as they had never endured the sort of natural calamity—like a flood!—which seemed to pose such a threat to record-keeping (Origen, *Con. Cels.* 1.19-20, 4.9-13, 4.21). Interestingly, Diodorus Siculus reported on speculation that southern Egypt did not fall victim to the flood (Diod. Sic. 1.10.4-7).

[258] Stanley Burstein, "When Greek Was an African Language: The Role of Greek Culture in Ancient and Medieval Nubia," *Journal of World History* 19 (2008): 46; W. G. Wadell, "Introduction," in *Manetho* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1964), xxi-xxiv; David, 155-56.

[259] The discussion below does not depend on the historicity of the Exodus, on which see, for instance, Gmirkin, 1-300; Israel Finkelstein and Neil Asher Silberman, *The Bible Unearthed: Archaeology's New Vision of Ancient Israel and the Origin of Its Sacred Texts* (New York: Free Press, 2001). This discussion concentrates instead on the role that the Exodus was thought to have played in "competitive historiography." On Manetho's identification of the Hebrews as the subject of the "expulsion/flight" and Josephus' use of same, see Schäfer, 17-21.

[260] Gager, 125, 129-130; Martin Braun, *History and Romance in Graeco-Oriental Literature* (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1987), 27-28; Berthelot, 205n79; Lindsay, 309. Also see Tac., *Hist*. 5.2-4; Aelian, *NA* 10.16.

were currently living in Jerusalem. The lepers and the Shepherds laid waste to Egypt, pillaging temples and forcing the Egyptian priests to slaughter their own sacred animals. Eventually, the Pharaoh, allied with the king of Ethiopia, drove the lepers and the Shepherds out of Egypt.[261] Variations of this story were repeated by Diodorus Siculus and Tacitus, among others,[262] and were even being used against Christians by pagan apologists like Celsus (Origen, *Con. Cels.* 3.5).

Scholars have argued that Manetho's version of Exodus was inspired in part by a desire to undermine Jewish claims upon Ptolemaic patronage.[263] Whatever the case, it is easy to see why Jews and Christians felt compelled to combat the claim that Hebrews were just diseased and rebellious Egyptians (Joseph., *Ap.* 1.25-30; Origen, *Con. Cels.* 4.31; Theoph., *Ad Autol.* 3.20-21; Euseb., *Prep. ev.* 8.6 355d-356b; Oros., *Hist. adv. pag.* 1-10). According to competitive historiography, the assertion that Hebrews were in fact Egyptians communicated an implicit hierarchical assumption, relegating the Hebrews—and Jews and Christians—to an inherently subordinate position. The conflation of Hebrews, Jews, and Christians with Egyptians was not merely intended to simplify the competition, but it was a historical argument meant to

---

[261] Coincidentally, the lepers were settled in Avaris, the very city where the Shepherds had once lived and a city that also happened to be identified with the worship of Typhon (that is, Seth), a point which no doubt buoyed the conflation of Jews with worshippers of Seth. Manetho, Fr. 54; Joseph., *Ap.* 1.25-30. On this entire narrative see Assmann, *Moses*, 37-43.

[262] Tac., *Hist*. 5.2-4; Diod. Sic. 34.1; Strabo, 16.2.34-35. Feldman argues that Manetho was actually complimenting Moses by suggesting a connection to the Egyptian priesthood. See Feldman, *Moses*, 5. For a helpful comparison of the Exodus accounts see Schäfer, 15-33. On the competitive historiography over the Exodus see for instance Berthelot, 185-221; Mussies, 89-120; Cook, 120-21; Gager, 19-20, 38-40; Holger Zellentin, "The End of Jewish Egypt: Artpanus and the Second Exodus," in Gardner, 27-73; John Collins, "Reinventing Exodus: Exegesis and Legend in Hellenistic Egypt," in *For a Later Generation: The Transformation of Tradition in Israel, Early Judaism, and Early Christianity*, eds. Randal Argall, Beverly Bow, and Rodney Werline (Harrisburg, Pennsylvania: Trinity Press International, 2000), 52-62.

[263] Cook, 8. On Manetho's anti-Jewish stance and his attempt to justify Ptolemaic imperialism see Doron Mendels, "The Polemical Character of Manetho's *Aegyptiacai*," in *Purposes of History: Studies in Greek Historiography from the 4th to the 2nd Centuries B.C.*, eds. H. Verdin, G. Schepens and E. de Keyser (Lovanii: Orientaliste, 1990), 91-110. For the argument that Manetho was actually anti-Ptolemaic see Burstein, 46-47; Waddell, x.

undermine the very roots of Jewish and Christian identity. This explains why Christian apologists such as Origen took the trouble to argue that the speed with which the Jews established their nation after leaving Egypt and the absence of Egyptian names among the Jews demonstrated that they were not of Egyptian descent (Origen, *Con. Cels.* 3.6-8).

Origen's interest in this issue is also easier to understand if the observer considers the efforts that were made to establish Moses as the source of Egyptian, and thus Greco-Roman, learning.[264] When Philo and Josephus praised Moses as an innovator, it was heady praise indeed.[265] According to many pagan narratives, the inventors of note were all gods.[266] Moses was credited not only with the accomplishments of gods such as Thoth and Hermes,[267] but also the deeds attributed

---

[264] For Greco-Roman pagan attitudes towards Moses see Feldman, 7, 16; Gager.

[265] The transmission of cultural practices was taken as evidence of superiority in terms of competitive historiography. Josephus explained that writers would attempt to trace the history of their people in order to demonstrate that they did not imitate others. Joseph., *Ap.* 2.15 (152). As evidence for the Egyptian origin of the Jews—and in a bid to undermine the reputation of Jews—the Jews were accused of acquiring the practice of circumcision from the Egyptians. Origen, *Con. Cels.* 5.42, 5.47. Cf. Hdt. 2.37. See Berthelot, 207-208n87. Jews and Christians responded by accusing the Egyptians of acquiring the practice from the Jews (Theod. Cyr., *Graec.* 1.16). Similarly, the invention of astronomy—the reader will recall from an earlier footnote the significance of gazing at the heavens for theories about the origin of religion—was attributed alternatively to the Babylonians (or Chaldaeans or Persians) and to the Egyptians. Eusebius attributed this innovation to Abraham, who supposedly collaborated with the Babylonians in the invention of the craft and then brought it to Egypt. Euseb., *Prep. ev.* 9.17-18 418c-420ab. Cf. Joseph., *AJ* 1.8.2; Euseb., *Prep. ev.* 9.16 417b-418b. Such a claim was clearly meant to undermine pagan rhetoric asserting that the Jews had made no meaningful contributions to civilization. Joseph., *Ap.* 1-9 (1-2). Burton points out that comparison of astronomical treatises between Babylon and Egypt suggests that Babylon was actually far more advanced than Egypt. See Burton, 236. On the Thebans claiming that astronomy originated among them—they also claimed to be the origin of mankind—see Diod. Sic. 1.50.1-2. Also see Feldman, 7. On ancient literature, including that of Clement of Alexandria, devoted to the subject of invention and inventors, see Droge, 87-88. On Abraham and astronomy see chapter six.

[266] For instance, Dionysus taught the Egyptians how to grow vines (Diod. Sic. 3.73.3-6).

[267] Moses was allegedly honored as a deity by the native Egyptians (Euseb., *Prep. ev.* 9.27 432a-d). Also see Mussies, 91. On Moses' foundation of Hermopolis see Euseb., *Prep. ev.* 432d-433a 9.27. Note that Greco-Romans attributed the foundation of Hermopolis, a center of the Thoth cult, to Thoth-Hermes, a tradition that is not found prior to Greco-Roman rule of the region. See Fowden, 174. On Moses' identification with Hermes and Thoth (who were identified with each other) and the association of all three as founders of language and writing, see Fowden, 23; Mussies, 91, 100-101; Zellentin, 37-39. Also see Mussies, 94-97, 110; Lindsay, 306-308; Feldman, *Moses*, 4, 313, 333-34; Burton, 275; Droge, 95; Zellentin, 37; Rob Kugler, "Hearing the Story of Moses in Ptolemaic Egypt: Artapanus Accommodates the Tradition," in Hilhorst, 75. Also consider the claim that Orpheus conveyed learning to the Greeks from Egypt (Diod. Sic. 1.96) and that Moses was Orpheus' instructor (Euseb., *Prep. ev.* 9.27 432a-d, 13.12 664c-666b).

to native Egyptian heroes like Sesoosis,[268] and was praised for his learning, [269] as a great inventor of mechanical devices (Euseb., *Prep. ev.* 9.27 432a-d), a law-giver,[270] and a general.[271] Like Joseph,[272] Moses was said to have been responsible for dividing Egypt into districts, a feat elsewhere attributed to native Egyptian leaders (Euseb., *Prep. ev.* 9.27 432a-d). Artapanus (later 3rd cent.-1st cent. BCE), a historian of uncertain ethnicity who lived in Egypt at some point during the Ptolemaic period,[273] was so committed to establishing Moses' reputation as a founder of civilization (particularly Egyptian civilization) that he credited Moses with the invention of Egyptian animal worship, arguably the most distinctive aspect of Egyptian religion and a feature against which the biblical Moses fiercely lobbied.[274]

---

[268] Zellentin, 37-38; Feldman, *Moses,* 6; Droge, 30n66; Braun, 18. On Sesoosis' identification with Egyptian heroes such as Sesostris and Sesonchosis see Braun, 13, 15. For comparison to Alexander the Great's assimilation to the Egyptian hero Nectanebos, see Gmirkin, 219.

[269] Admittedly, there was a debate over the nature of Moses' learning (just as there was a dispute over the distinction between Greco-Roman learning and Judeo-Christian learning, on which see chapter five). According to Scripture, Moses was not eloquent (Exod. 4:10), but he was the first person in Scripture associated with writing. See Mussies, 100. Second Temple literature composed in Hebrew and Aramaic rejected the notion that Moses had non-Jewish learning. Literature composed in Greek was more likely to portray a Moses who had learning in non-Jewish subjects. For instance, Philo claimed that Moses was educated by Greek, Egyptian, Assyrian, and Chaldaean teachers (Philo, *Vit. Mos.* 1.23 [5]). Cf. Acts 7:22. Such a claim of course contradicted the assertion that Moses was the source of all learning, for what were these instructors teaching, if not their own learning? See Antony Hilhorst, "'And Moses was Instructed in All the Wisdom of the Egyptians' (Acts 7.22)," in Hilhorst, 153-72; Feldman, *Moses,* 50, 316.

[270] Philo, *Vit. Mos.* 2.3 11-16; Diod. Sic. 1.94. For discussion regarding the discomfort some Jews seem to have felt over Moses' role as a lawgiver, see Droge, 29.

[271] Zellentin, 37-38; Feldman, 6. Some of the mechanical inventions attributed to Moses by Eusebius were related to warfare. Euseb., *Prep. ev.* 9.27 432a-d.

[272] Euseb., *Prep. ev.* 9.*23* 429c-430a. On Joseph's administration of Egypt and the means by which he "civilized" the country, see Philo, *On Joseph* 33 204; Zellentin, 36.

[273] It is uncertain just where and when Artapanus was writing, but his pro-Jewish attitude and his interest in Egypt suggest that he might have been a Jew living in Egypt under the Ptolemies. Yet this is hotly debated. For some of this debate, see Zellentin, 28, 52; Feldman, *Moses,* 6.

[274] Artapanus' claim is recorded in Euseb., *Prep. ev.* 9.27 432a-433b. See discussion in Collins, "Artapanus," 892-93; Berthelot, 207-208n87, 211. In response to the argument that Artapanus' portrayal of Moses' as a founder of Egyptian culture was intended as farce, Collins suggests that Artapanus was more interested in promoting the contributions of the Jews than in demonstrating their adherence to Law. See Collins, "Exodus," 54. Kugler argues that Artapanus was motivated by a desire to encourage the Jews to live peaceably among the Egyptians, an effort which might have been facilitated, at least intellectually, if Jews could claim credit for Egyptian animal worship. See Kugler, 74-78. *Contra* Kugler, Zellentin argues that Artapanus' Exodus narrative actually encouraged flight from a Ptolemaic Egypt that seemed to favor Egyptian over Jewish religious and political claims. See Zellentin, 66.

Given Egypt's reputation as the birthplace of both mankind and religion, the assertion that Moses was a founder of Egyptian civilization and/or religious practice was a particularly powerful claim in the context of competitive historiography: Insofar as Greco-Roman pagans were thought to have derived their religious beliefs from Egypt, if Moses founded Egyptian civilization and religion, then he was also a founder of Greco-Roman civilization and religion.

To bolster this argument, Christian apologists created elaborate chronologies to prove that Moses predated the important milestones of Greco-Roman civilization and thought, arguing that clearly the "younger" had been influenced by the "older."[275] As support for their position, the Christians quoted Plato, who claimed that an Egyptian priest told Solon (c. 638-c. 558 BCE) that the Greeks were children,[276] meaning that the Greek civilization had only been recently founded. The reference to Plato was no accident, since Moses and Plato were often likened to each other, the Platonist Numenius (2nd cent.) arguing that they were much of

[275] Euseb., *Prep. ev.* 482d-483a 10.8. Also see Droge, 10. These milestones included the Trojan War—which Theophilus of Antioch dated as many as 900 years after the Exodus (Theoph., *Ad Autol.* 3.21)—the flood associated with Deucalion, the birth of Erichthonius, the establishment of the Eleusinian mysteries, and Cadmus' arrival in Thebes (Euseb., *Prep. ev.* 484b-484d 10.9). Cf. Pseudo-Justin, *Cohort.* 9; Tatian, *Orat.* 31-40; Clem. Al., *Strom.* 1.21; Origen, *Con. Cels.* 7.43; Pseudo-Justin, *Cohort.* 35. Also see Droge, 92, 138; Johnson, *Ethnicity*, 20; Adler, 3, 19. On pagans challenging the timeline associated with Moses and claiming that the Jews plagiarized their religion from the Phoenecians see Droge, 176-77; Adler, 70n105. On pagan interest in critiquing chronologies outside of anti-Christian polemic see for instance Diod. Sic. 1.24.1-4. Also see Droge, 95; Adler, 15-16. On efforts to reconcile the Jewish, Egyptian, and Greek chronologies see Adler 4, 50; Chaim Milikowsky, "Justus of Tiberius and the Synchronistic Chronology of Israel," in *Studies in Josephus and the Varieties of Ancient Judaism*, eds. Shaye J. D. Cohen and Joshua J. Schwartz (Boston: Brill, 2007), 103-26. On the importance of record-keeping and script to this debate see Theoph., *Ad. Autol.* 3.30; Euseb., *Prep. ev.* 1.6 17c-18a, 9.26 431c, 10.10 487d; Origen, *Con. Cels*. 4.21; Joseph., *Ap.* 1.2-13, 1.23. Consider the claim that the structure of the Hebrew alphabet proved it was based on Egyptian hieroglyphs (rather than the Greek alphabet). Euseb., *Prep. ev.* 10.5 173d-475a. Cf. Origen, *Con. Cels.* 7.28; Iambl., *Myst.* 7.5. See also Adler, 67-68; Droge, 94-95, 113, 146; Cook, 123; Burton, 53-54; Berthelot, 192-93; Gager, 71; Gideon Freudenthal, *No Religion without Idoltatry: Mendelssohn's Jewish Enlightenment* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2012), 105-34. Josephus argued that Egyptian records were more trustworthy than Greek ones because, like the Jews, the Egyptians treated these records as though they were sacred (thus history itself was sacred!) and approached the matter of record-keeping with a philosophical demeanor. As a priest who studied sacred philosophy, Josephus claimed that he was a trustworthy historian. The Greeks were not compelled to post their records in public. Hence, they were free to lie or make mistakes. Joseph., *Ap.* 1.2-1.6. Cf. Diod. Sic. 1.26.1-5; Arnobius, 1.57; Joseph., *Ap.* 1.15 (3); Theoph., *Ad Autol.* 3.23, 3.29. Also see Adler, 76-77. On the use of allegorical interpretation to explain discrepancies in dating when trying to reconcile different timelines, see Adler, 4, 50.

[276] Theod. Cyr., *Graec.* 1.52; Plato, *Timaeus* 22b.

a piece, while Julian thought that Plato put Moses to shame.[277] Chronology was paramount here too. When Celsus accused Moses of plagiarizing Plato, Origen replied by asking how Moses could have plagiarized Plato when Moses was writing before Plato had been born.[278]

The Jews—and by extension, the Christians—were thus afforded with a lineage that was far more impressive than that of the Greco-Romans. Since *tradition* outweighed *innovation*, the Jews and Christians were the winners when it came to adherence to custom. As long as the latter was taken as proof for the validity of a religion, the Jews and Christians had a much better claim to "truth" than the pagans (Euseb., *Prep. ev.* 482d-483a 10.8). For this reason, it is surprising that scholars investigating conversion have paid so little attention to the role of competitive historiography with regard to the activities of Hebrews and Greeks in Egypt.[279] Though to my knowledge no Christian explicitly posited Moses' identity as the source of Greek learning (via Egypt) as a "reason" for conversion, the obvious interest of the early Christians in the subject suggests that the argument was more

---

[277] Clem. Al., *Strom.* 1.22; Numenius Fr. 8; Julian, *Con. Gal*. 49A. On Numenius' religious orientation, see Gager, 66-68; M. J. Edwards, "Atticizing Moses? Numenius, the Fathers and the Jews," *Vigiliae Christianae* 44 (1990): 64-75. On Plato's expression of Moses' theology in a limited form, Plato having censored himelf for fear of facing Socrates' fate, see Pseudo-Justin, *Cohort.* 25. On other examples of Plato's apparent imitation of Moses, see, for instance, Theod. Cyr., *Graec.* 11.27. Taking careful note of the dates involved, Augustine acknowledged that Plato could not have availed himself of the Greek translation of the Old Testament supposedly commissioned by Ptolemy II Philadelphus (309–246 BCE), since this would not have been available at the time of Plato's purported trip to Egypt. Instead, Augustine suggested that Plato relied on interpreters who provided him with insight into Jewish learning as well as Egyptian learning. August., *De civ. D.* 8.11. See Chadwick, *Early,* 14-15; Droge, 146.

[278] Origen, *Con. Cels.* 6.7. Cf. Euseb., *Prep. ev.* 11.11 523b-c. See Droge, 97-98. For the argument over the link between Noah and Deucalion in pagan and Christian apologies see Droge, 120-21; Feldman, *Moses* 224. Chadwick suggests that, in some cases, the Christian accusation that pagans had plagiarized Scripture may have functioned as a defense for pagan philosophical study. Chadwick, *Early Christian,* 44. Eusebius snickered that it should not surprise anyone that the Greeks had plagiarized the Jews considering that the Greeks plagiarized from the Egyptians as well as each other (Euseb., *Prep. ev.* 10.2-3 460d-468b). Cf. Tatian, *Orat.* 1).

[279] According to Tatian, Christians had abandoned Greek learning (that is, they had converted) because this learning was contaminated by a foreign language (Tatian, *Cohort.* 1), by which it appears he meant an infusion of foreign learning. Based on the above argument, one cannot help but think that Tatian meant that conversion to Christianity afforded more direct access to the monotheistic trends which had been filtered through Egyptian sources into Greek paganism.

than a little compelling. If Moses was the true source of the most laudable pagan traditions, why not convert?[280]

Chronology not only justified conversion, it facilitated boundary maintenance. Scholars have long recognized the political significance of imposing a calendar as a mechanism of imperialism, control being exercised via time management and unity being encouraged through a shared concept of history. By replacing a pagan timeline with a Christian one, apologists were making a political statement. Chronological investigations established religious truth,[281] and functioned as a mechanism for delineating the outlines of a Christian identity which could be favorably compared to the historically-contingent identity of non-Christians.[282] It is not surprising that Moses and the Exodus[283] become powerful touchstones for Christian identity, appearing again and again in Christian discourse.[284]

But this line of argument faces a problem. If Egypt was really the link in the chain between Greco-Roman monotheism and Jewish monotheism, one would expect to find evidence for monotheistic thought in traditional Egyptian paganism. Yet

---

[280] As Eusebius argued, since the Greeks had plagiarized their beliefs from the barbarians, the Greeks could hardly criticize the Christians for opting to convert to a barbarian religion (Euseb., *Prep. ev.* 468b-c 10.3).

[281] *Contra* the anti-historical stance of some Gnostics who perceived of their religion as innovation. See Droge, 199; Hilary Armstrong, "The Self-Definition of Christianity in Relation to Later Platonism," in Sanders, 195. Notably, Abraham and Moses' roles were downplayed in some Gnostic circles. See Raoul Mortley, "The Past in Clement of Alexandria," in Sanders, 191-92. For discussion of Christians as "competitive historiographers" and challenges to the notion that they even "could" compose a history of their "third" race, see Droge, 196. On the definition of Christians as a "third" race see chapter five.

[282] On the importance of historical inquiry in the construction of self-identity see Raoul Mortley, "The Past in Clement of Alexandria," in Sanders, 186; Johnson, *Ethnicity,* 55; Droge, ii. See chapter five for the use of learning in the construction of self-identity.

[283] For instance, Eusebius compared Licinius and Maxentius (Constantine's rivals) to the Pharoah who opposed Moses (Eusebius, *Vita Constantini* 2.11; Euseb., *Hist. eccl.* 9.9.5). See Cook, 124; Finn Damgaard, "Propaganda against Propaganda: Revisiting Eusebius' Use of the Figure of Moses in the *Life of Constantine,*" in Johnson, *Eusebius,* 115-32. Also see chapters five and six for a story about Christian pilgrims visiting a garden constructed by the Egyptian magicians (in the employ of the Pharoah) against whom Moses contended.

[284] But note that individuals interested in Judaism and Christianity were not necessarily universal in their approval of Moses (*The Second Treatise of the Great Seth VII,2* 63).

Jewish and Christian apologists ignored the Egyptian world, focusing instead on evidence for such beliefs in the Greco-Roman world. This makes sense insofar as Greco-Romans held a position of political and social dominance at the time: Greco-Roman pagans were the ones that the Jews and Christians really cared about. Nevertheless, it is somewhat contradictory, especially since there is evidence for a monotheistic tradition in Egypt. Even leaving aside the monotheistic tendencies of Akhenaten, long before the arrival of Greco-Roman pagan influence, syncretic processes had produced a fusion of deities that, to later Christians, suggested a surplus of doppelgangers,[285] but to traditional Egyptian pagans seems to have been merely an expression of the ineffable nature of the divine that to the eyes of some scholars resembles a trend towards monotheism. The divine was both multiform and unified: Osiris was identified with the god Re, and the deity Thoth was linked to the ibis as well as the baboon, while the baboon was also associated with the deity Khons. For the Egyptians, this was not a contradiction.[286] And since at least the third millennium, so-called monotheistic trends had cropped up now and then in Egyptian faith, though the religion remained primarily polytheistic.[287] During the Greco-Roman period, both Isis and Serapis were identified as supreme deities.[288] Isis in

[285] For instance, Diodorus Siculus identified three characters all known as Dionysus, one of whom operated in Egypt (Diod. Sic. 3.74.1). There was also more than one Hercules, one of whom was born in Egypt (Diod. Sic. 3.74.4-5). Christian apologists questioned how different gods could bear the same name. Theoph., *Ad Autol.* 1.10; Clem. Al., *Prot.* 2.24; Lactant., *Div. inst.* 1.11; Arnobius, 4.14-16. Cf. Athan., *Con. gen.* 22.

[286] Zivie-Coche, 15, 79.

[287] Admittedly, the distinction between polytheism and monotheism is problematic (see the previous chapter). West, 24; Zivie-Coche, x; David, 184-85, 228; Erik Hornung, *Conceptions of God in Ancient Egypt: The One and the Many* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1982); Assmann, *Moses.*

[288] Dousa, 158, 169, 172; Tinh, "Sarapis," 101-17; Nicole Belayche, "*Deus deum…summorum maximus* (Apuleius): Ritual Expressions of Distinction in the Divine World in the Imperial Period," in Mitchell, 151-52, 157, 162-63.

particular was identified as the true manifestation of all other deities, though singular in form.[289]

Contradictory as this might seem to us—this conflation of diversity and unity—it was not necessarily counter-intuitive to insiders. Scholars argue that seemingly contradictory beliefs can be maintained without believers even noticing a conflict.[290] When attention is drawn to the contradiction, it is often out of a desire to challenge the validity of one or all aspects of the related belief, but contradiction does not necessarily invalidate religious belief. *Contra* Athanasius, the worship of different animals by different nomes only undermined Egyptian pagan belief to the extent that a person also accepted the argument that religious beliefs must be universal in order to be valid. It was not a given that everyone would accept the latter, and pagan apologists certainly did not.[291] Indeed, these apologists often argued that seemingly contradictory beliefs only appeared to conflict when they were interpreted incorrectly, that is, when they were not interpreted allegorically.

The Many Faces of Allegory

This section of the discussion examines the construction of the Egyptian stereotypes regarding a penchant for religious wisdom. Since the divine, by

---

[289] Apul., *Met.* 11.5. Dieleman, "Egyptian," 445; Kahlos, 147; Athanassiadi, 12-13; V. F. Vanderlip, *The Four Greek Hymns of Isidorus and the Cult of Isis* (Toronto: A.M. Hakkert, 1972). In response to the argument that the monotheistic tendencies of Egyptian paganism during this period reflect Greco-Roman influence, Dieleman points out that these monotheistic tendencies are often expressed in language that can be traced to pre-Greco-Roman elements of Egyptian thought. Dieleman, "Egyptian," 444-45. See also Fowden, 49-50.

[290] Simon Price, *Rituals and Power: The Roman Imperial Cult in Asia Minor* (NY: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 5, 8-9; Dan Sperber, "La pensée symbolique est-elle pré-rationnelle?' in *La function symbolique*: *E*ssais d'anthropologie réunis, eds. M. Izard, P. Smith (Paris: Gallimard, 1979), 17-42. Also see T. M. Luhrmann, *Persuasions of the Witch's Craft: Ritual Magic in Contemporary England* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1989), 308.

[291] The argument in favor of custom reflects a fundamental rejection of universalism. See for instance Origen, *Con. Cels.* 5.25.

definition, was thought to be fundamentally incomprehensible, it was assumed that religious wisdom should be inherently enigmatic. The reputation of Egypt as the home of religion encouraged the notion that its people were particularly adept at communication with the divine. Hence, Greco-Roman pagans and Christians harbored the notion that hieroglyphs functioned via a very specific form of symbolism that had little relationship to the actual operation of hieroglyphs. While the recognition of Egypt's presumed excellence with regard to religious matters implies admiration, the associated distortion of Egyptian belief seems to reflect yet another (intentional?) failure to understand Egyptian paganism. Such distortions could not have helped but to generate a distance that would have fostered alienation.

Greco-Roman commentators who were favorable towards Egyptian paganism, such as Plutarch, sometimes tried to explain away the peculiar (to Greco-Romans) nature of Egyptian narratives by claiming that these narratives were allegories,[292] meaning that these narratives communicated messages via imagery and allusion, the literal meaning of the text being subordinate to the text's symbolic significance.[293] Thus, animal worship was predicated on symbolism—the dog (Anubis) being associated with Hermes in honor of the dog's watchfulness[294]—and the conflict between Osiris/Horus and Seth/Typhon/Apophis was allegedly a lesson about the

[292] Plut., *De Is. et Os.* 354D. Dawson believes that Plutarch's interpretation of the Isis-Osiris myth was based on inspired by Plutarch's conviction that Egyptian religion was inherently allegorical: Isis' search for Osiris' body was a model for the process that a religious adherent was meant to follow in "decoding" the enigmas of religious discourse in order to access the enigmas' hidden meaning, the adherent looking for meaning just like Isis looked for Osiris. See Dawson, 60-61.

[293] Of course, the identification of the so-called literal meaning of a text is also informed by cultural assumptions. See below and Dawson, 8.

[294] Plut., *De Is. et Os.* 355B-D. Cf. Philostr., *VA* 6.19.

battle between good and evil.[295] Some Christian apologists, such as Clement of Alexandria, seem to have accepted that the Egyptian faith was fundamentally enigmatic.[296]

The Egyptian affinity for symbolism and allegory was thought to be embedded in the very script with which the Egyptians wrote. Instead of employing a strictly alphabetic script, the Egyptians used images that communicated meaning via iconography.[297] According to Plotinus, the iconographic nature of hieroglyphic writing allowed for the communication of divine meaning in ways that phonetic letter forms prevented.[298] To the extent that the divine was thought to be beyond human

---

[295] Plut., *De Is. et Os.* 377A. See Philip Scott-Moncrieff, *Paganism and Christianity in Egypt* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1913), 11-12. Compare to Synesius of Cyrene's *De Providentia*, discussed below.

[296] Clem. Al., *Strom.* 5.6. According to some pagan and Christian apologists, Egyptian religious thought was either the origin for allegorical methodology or was inherently suited to its use. See for instance Philostr., *VA* 6.19- 20. Origen's allusion to this argument seems rather sarcastic (Origen, *Con. Cels.*1.20). But Clement of Alexandria appears to have been more favorable to the notion, claiming, like Plutarch (Plut., *De Is. et Os.* 354D), that sphinxes were placed before Egyptian temples as a sign that Egyptian doctrine was communicated symbolically (Clem. Al., *Strom.* 5.5). The fact that Egyptian temples were constructed in such a fashion that the main altar was far more secluded than in traditional Greco-Roman temples was taken by Plutarch as further proof that Egyptian religious beliefs were based an allegorical methodology (Plut., *De Is. et Os.* 358E-359B), the implication being that Egyptians required one to seek out religious truth. In Egyptian temples, the public was allowed no further than the gate of the enclosure and then only for special occasions. Zivie-Coche, 87. Regarding the sphinx, see Christiane Zivie-Coche, *Sphinx: History of Monument*, trans. David Lorton (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2002). On the Greco-Roman identification of the sphinx with divination and divinity, see John Hermann and Annewies van den Hoek, "The Sphinx: Sculpture as a Theological Symbol in Plutarch and Clement of Alexandria," in Hilhorst, 285-310.

[297] For instance, a hare's ear was used to represent hearing. Plut., *Conv. sept. sap.* 670E-F. Cf. Diod. Sic. 3.4.

[298] Plotinus, *Enneads* 5.8.6. A hieroglyph is a pictograph depicting objects or living beings. Some words consist solely of phonological elements. Though there are a few "alphabet-like" symbols among the hieroglyphs, the language remained fundamentally a combination of phonograms (signs representing sounds), ideograms (signs resembling the thing they represent), and determinatives (indicating that the previous sign(s) is a phonogram and clarifying how the word is meant to be interpreted). For instance, the sign for "ascend" might end with a determinative represented by an image of two legs walking in order to indicate that the ascension in question involves physical motion. See James Allen, *Middle Egyptian: An Introduction to the Language and Culture of Hieroglyphs* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 3. For a discussion of Plotinus' mistaken interpretation of the hieroglyphs in the context of Greco-Roman philosophical debates over the relationship between the signifier and that which the signifier signified, and whether or not communication with the divine was even possible, and if so how, see Erik Iversen, *The Myth of Egypt and its Hieroglyphs: In European Tradition* (Copenhagen: Gec Gad Publishers, 1961), 49; Struck 53-61, 131-33, 190, 220; Padraig O'Cleirigh, "Symbol and Science in Early Christian *Gnosis*," in *Hellenization Revisited: Shaping a Christian Response within the Greco-Roman World*, ed. Wendy Helleman (New York: University Press of America, 1994), 413. For a gnostic allusion to this dilemma see *The Thunder: Perfect Mind VI,2* 20-21.

reach (intellectually or physically), many thinkers argued that religious truths could only be communicated allegorically through symbolism and enigmas.[299] Part of Egypt's claim to fame was the notion that Egyptian religion was particularly suited for such communication.[300] Even Clement of Alexandria believed that hieroglyphic writing, at least hitherto, facilitated the project of preserving sacred wisdom because the medium suited the message (Clem. Al., *Strom.* 5.6).

Naturally, it did not hurt that Alexandria's schools was a center of allegorical interpretation. It is enticing to speculate that leading scholars of Alexandria, including Philo, the so-called gnostic Valentinus (c. 100-c. 150), Clement of Alexandria, and Origen,[301] were all drawn to allegorical methodology because of their exposure to Egyptian religious practices. But we need not look to Egypt for their inspiration.[302]

---

[299] For instance Clem. Al., *Strom.* 5.4. Also see Kahlos, 179. Antique hermeneutical approaches show that it would not be inappropriate to adopt a rather broad view of the correlation between symbolism, allegory, metaphor, and enigma, taking allegorical interpretation to mean simply the attachment of a meaning to a text/image/concept/event/story beyond its literal significance (which, as already indicated, is itself problematic; see below on literal interpretations). O'Cleirigh, 420n2; Struck, 24, 39, 64.

[300] According to one Greco-Roman novel, Homer's use of the allegorical method was (implied) proof that Homer was Egyptian (Heliodorus, *Aethiopika* 3.14-15). Iamblichus took what he perceived to be the inherently symbolic nature of Egyptian religious discourse as a sign of the religion's superiority (Iambl., *VP* 23). Iamblichus defended the religious symbolism thought to be associated with Egyptian religious beliefs by arguing that—since divinity was ineffable—one could only hope to approach the divine by learning the arcane symbolism through which religious truths were communicated (Iambl., *Myst.* 6.7). Struck points out that the enigmatic quality of the hieroglyphs, at least in the Greco-Roman imagination, hinges on the understanding that there might not be a one-to-one relationship between the appearance of the symbol and what it signified. That is, one could not tell merely by the appearance of the hieroglyph what it meant. Struck, 200. Iamblichus provided other reasons for the honor accorded to the Egyptian language: Since Egypt was the birthplace of religion the Egyptians were the first to learn the sacred names of the gods. Hence, it was only proper that Egyptian language and practices ought to be adopted by anyone seeking religious learning, for the gods would be more interested in responding to messages and rituals evoing their true names (Iambl., *Myst.* 7.4). The notion that hieroglyphs had a religious function was further encouraged by the widespread knowledge that its use was cultivated solely by the Egyptian priests. Other forms of script were used by the more general public and the sanctified aura of hieroglyphic script became a *topos* in Greco-Roman literature (Diod. Sic. 1.81; Clem. Al., *Strom.*, 5.4; Apul., *Met.* 11.22; Plutarch, *De genio Socratis* 577E-579D; Iambl., *Myst.* 8.5; *The Discourse on the Eighth and the Ninth VI* 52, 1-63, 32; *The Gospel of Truth I,3 and XII,2*). Also see Iversen, *Myth*, 42; Frankfurter, *Roman Egypt*, 254-55; Hans Betz, "Secrecy in the Greek Magical Papyri," in *Secrecy and Concealment: Studies in the History of Mediterranean and Near Eastern Religions*, eds. Hans G. Kippenberg and Guy G. Stroumsa (New York: E. J. Brill, 1995), 166-67. See chapters five and six on the continuing allure of the Egyptian language among Christians.

[301] Ferguson, 8; Dawson, 18, 73, 127, 217.

[302] The function of the native Egyptian temples as the premier centers of wisdom would have been undermined by the establishment of the schools of Alexandria. Bell, *Cults*, 53-55; Fowden, 19; Dunand, "Ptolemaic," 208-210, 233.

Allegorical methodology was well in line with Middle Platonic and Stoic approaches.[303] Clement of Alexandria claimed that Pythagoras, Plato, Aristotle, the Epicureans, and the Stoics had all concealed their teachings in allegorical narratives.[304] But of course, Pythagoras, Plato, and the other Greek sages had supposedly acquired this learning—learning that trickled down to Aristotle, the Epicureans, and the Stoics—from Egypt.[305]

Outside the Greco-Roman imagination, however, traditional Egyptian pagan narratives were relatively free of obvious allegory,[306] which is not to say that Egyptians were not interested in symbolism. Both before and during Greco-Roman

---

[303] Ferguson, 8; Dawson, 23-36.

[304] Clem. Al., *Strom.* 5.10. Clement of Alexandria reported the popular tradition that Plato wrote a letter asserting that the pure tenets of religious faith ought to be concealed from the impure (Clem. Al., *Strom.* 5.4). The notion that Plato had a "secret" teaching was the matter of some debate in antiquity. On the authenticity of this letter and the belief that Plato had secret teachings that contradicted his anti-allegorical stance, see Robert Lamberton, "The ἀπόρρητος θεωρία and the Roles of Secrecy in the History of Platonism," in Kippenberg, 139-52. The "riddles" of Pythagoras (enigmas intended for decipherment by the wise) were also a popular theme during this period. See below and Philostr., *VA* 6.11.

[305] According to Plutarch, after the priests of Egypt educated Pythagoras in sacred Egyptian wisdom, Pythagoras recorded these teachings in precepts that were later passed down by his followers. The inscrutable nature of these precepts was indicative of their esoteric origin, so that they were not unlike hieroglyphic writings (Plut., *De Is. et Os.* 354E-F). Not for nothing did Clement of Alexandria's discussion of the hieroglyphs include a section on Pythagoras and a digression on the symbolism with which the Pythagoreans communicated (Clem. Al., *Strom.* 5.7-8). Is there any evidence that these sages visited Egypt? Some scholars are inclined to believe that many of these visits actually happened. See for instance, Antony Preus, "Greek Philosophy in Egypt: From Solon to the Arab Conquest," in *Greeks and Barbarians: Essays on the Interactions between Greeks and Non-Greeks in Antiquity and the Consequences for Eurocentrism*," eds., John Coleman and Clark Walz (Bethesda: CDL Press, 1997), 155-74. Others scholars are more cautious, hazarding that, in some cases, we will simply never know the truth. See for instance Luc Brisson, "L'Égypte de Platon," *Les Études philosophiques* 2 (1987): 153-68. While it is likely that Pythagoras was influenced by Babylonian astronomy and mathematics (either because he visited or came into contact with a Babylonian source), he does not appear to have been influenced by the Egyptians, who were far less advanced than the Babylonians in this regard. Plato depicted an Egyptian priest providing an allegorical interpretation of myth (Pl., *Ti.* 22c-d), but whether or not Plato actually visited Egypt, we can hardly conclude that he learned allegorical methodology from the Egyptians or that he would have been inclined to interpret Egyptian religion allegorically, especially since, as indicated above, his attitude towards allegory is far from clear-cut. Eudoxus of Cnidos, a pupil of Plato, probably did visit Egypt, but his work does not reflect Egyptian influence either. By the Roman period, Egyptian physicians, astrologers, and astronomers were active in Alexandria, but it has been argued that Alexandrian scholarship primarily reflected the influence of Athenian, not Egyptian, thought. See Burton, 283-84. Even if Greek sages actually visited Egypt, this is no guarantee that Greek visitors understood what they were told, especially as they relied on translators. On the problem of translation with regard to Christian pilgrims to Egypt see chapter five.

[306] The Late Egyptian "Blinding of Truth" is one of the few examples of an Egyptian allegorical narrative. Despite the allegorical elements, the tale reflects many features more proper to a "mythical" narrative. See Griffiths, "Allegory," 89-90.

rule, Egypt was a center of dream interpretation, a craft that heavily relied on symbolism.[307] Religious literature often employed allusions.[308] And, as mentioned above, Egyptian religious beliefs were deeply syncretic, conflating deities and traditions in a manner reminiscent of the analogy-making discourse found in allegory.[309] The gnostic and hermetic literature with which the Christians were so interested[310] is rife with allegorical allusions.[311] But the Egyptian-ness of these texts continues to be debated.[312] Little evidence suggests that traditional narratives were meant to be interpreted allegorically. While the Stoics were going about explaining the so-called battles of the Greco-Roman gods as *metaphors for* natural phenomena,[313] the Egyptians were cultivating the notion that humans could observe

---

[307] Montserrat, 20-25.

[308] For instance, a spell that was copied into the Greco-Roman period refers to a night on which two dd-pillars were erected. A scholiast explained that these pillars are the arms of Horus, wrapped around Osiris like a piece of cloth. Spell 18, in Allen, 32-34. On dd-pillars (a symbol of Osiris) see C. J. Bleeker, *Egyptian Festivals: Enactments of Religious Renewal* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1967), 116-17.

[309] Dunand, "Ptolemaic," 234-35.

[310] For Christian interest in hermetic literature see for instance Clem. Al., *Strom.* 6.4; Lactant., *Div. inst.* 1.11; Euseb., *Prep. ev.* 1.9 31d-44b; August., *De civ. D.* 8.39. Also see Fowden, 179-82, 205-209; Preus, 166; Malley, 259; Mussies 94-119.

[311] The use of allegory is implied by the hermetic claim that wisdom is imparted in riddles. See *Corpus Hermeticum Treatise* XIII. For the use of allegory in gnostic tracts consider *The Exegesis of the Soul* II,6. Also see Dawson, 127-82.

[312] Dunand insists upon the Greco-Roman nature of hermetic literature (Dunand, "Ptolemaic," 275-76) and Preus may be going too far by suggesting that hermeticism (and gnosticism) were the "philosophy" of the native Egyptians (Preus 171n28). Yet Greco-Romans clearly believed that Hermes Trismegistus, the hermeticist *par excellence*, was Egyptian. As Iversen, Fowden, and Dieleman demonstrate, hermetic discourse evinces a strong Egyptian influence. Iversen, *Egyptian*, 29-54; Fowden, 24, 139-40, 168; Dieleman, *Priests*, 2. A hermetic text dating to the Ptolemaic period written in demotic suggests that members of the Egyptian priesthood were generating hermetic texts well before the Greek *Corpus Hermeticum* seems to have appeared. Dieleman, *Priests*, 2n4. And as for the Egyptian-ness of gnostic literature seemingly generated in Egypt, some traditional Egyptian texts employ language similar to that of the gnostics. Griffiths, *Conflict*, 107, 111-12; Scott-Moncrieff, 176-79; Albert Torhoudt, *Een Onbekend Gnostisch Systeem in Plutarchus De Iside et Osiride* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1942). However, (*contra* Preus) the typical gnostic worldview was at odds with that of the traditional Egyptian one. According to a popular gnostic view, because the material world was the work of an evil demiurge, it was to be shunned. This aversion towards the material world is incompatible with the traditional Egyptian sensibility where divinity is identified with the material world. See Daniel McBride, "The Egyptian-Gnostic View of Death," in *Death and Taxes in the Ancient Near East*, ed. Sara Orel (Lewiston, New York: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1992), 130-39.

[313] A. A. Long, "Stoic Readings of Homer," in *Ancient Literary Criticism*, ed. Andrew Laird (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 216.

the gods' (very real) activities *through* nature. Hence, the victory of the sun god Re over Apophis ensured the appearance of dawn each day. The texts do not suggest that this was merely a metaphor. Indeed, the priests performed daily rituals to ensure Re's continued success.[314] Would such rituals be necessary if this process was entirely natural?

When Plutarch concluded that Egyptian deities could be identified with celestial bodies, this did not necessarily contradict traditional Egyptian sensibilities.[315] Plutarch's allegorical interpretation of the battle between Osiris and Seth/Typhon/Apophis as a battle between good and evil could be taken a more or less valid articulation of Osiris' role in maintaining *Ma'at* (order and justice) in the universe.[316] Yet the reader should not imagine that Egyptians dismissed these narratives as simple, albeit enigmatic, stories. The Egyptians, unlike the Greco-Roman pagans, do not appear to have felt compelled to justify the preservation of their religious narratives by claiming that they were merely allegories.[317]

---

[314] Iversen, *Egyptian*, 22; Jay, 95; David Lorton, "The Theology of Cult Statues in Ancient Egypt," in *Born in Heaven, Made on Earth: The Making of the Cult Image in the Ancient Near East*, ed. Michael Dick (Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 1999), 189-91.

[315] Plut., *De Is. et Os.* 359D, 368A-E, 372A-E. See Dousa, 155; Griffiths, *Conflict*, 108-109.

[316] Plut., *De Is. et Os.* 377A. See Iversen, *Egyptian*, 22; Vincent Tobin, "Mytho-Theology in Ancient Egypt," *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt* 25 (1988): 176-77. In the *De Providentia* of Synesius, a convert to Christianity who will come up in later chapters, Osiris and Typhon clearly represented Aurelian and Gainas, ministers under the emperor Arcadius, as models of good and bad government. Synesius, *De Providentia*. See Richter, 191-216; Susanna Elm, "Isis' Loss—Gender, Dependence and Ethnicity in Synesius' *De Providentia* or *Egyptian Tale*," *Zeitschrift für antikes Christentum* 1 (1997): 96-115. On traditional Egyptian literature devoted to ideal kingship, the apocalyptic effects of bad kingship, and political struggle expressed via conflict between deities see Frankfurter *Roman Egypt*, 241-46; David O'Connor and David P. Silverman, eds., *Ancient Egyptian Kingship* (New York: E.J. Brill, 1995). On Synesius see chapters four-five and Jay Bregman, *Synesius of Cyrene: Philosopher-bishop* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982).

[317] Thus, Zivie-Coche argues that it is simply inappropriate to ask if the Egyptians "believed" in their religious narratives. The existence of the gods was as evident to the Egyptians as was the existence of the universe with which the gods were consubstantial. The narratives merely revealed the deities' functions. ZivieCoche, "Pharaonic," 37. Also see Tobin, 169-73. A more "abstract" form of thought was occasionally captured in Egyptian texts like the Memphis narrative of creation that was recopied in 700 BCE. (On the date of this text see Lorton, 187). This text explains creation as the work of the heart and tongue of Ptah in language that, as Griffiths points out, sounds very much like the doctrine of the *logos*. Griffiths, *Conflict*, 112. "The Memphite Theology of Creation," in James Pritchard, ed., *The Ancient Near East: An Anthology of Texts and Pictures* (Princeton

Moreover, non-Egyptians appear to have misinterpreted the function of hieroglyphs. It is true that Egyptian writing was thought to have a divine origin[318] and that the essence of a signified concept or thing was thought to be contained in the script with which it was represented.[319] The physical text had supernatural power,[320] so much so that spiritual power could be acquired via actual consumption of a text.[321] So Greco-Roman writers who lamented the translation of Egyptian learning into non-Egyptian languages appear to have grasped the significance of the script, even if they ended up expressing this in the midst of the very translations that they were ostensibly lobbying against.[322] But few Greco-Roman pagan, Jewish, and Christian writers appear to have realized that the Egyptian script actually had three forms:

University Press, 1958), 1-3. Yet some scholars question the degree to which the Egyptian language was even capable of communicating the sort of metaphysical principles found in Greco-Roman philosophy. Scott-Montcrieff, 51. Some scholars have gone so far as to argue that the relative paucity of full-blown mythic *narratives* in Egypt suggests that cult, not myth, was the focus of Egyptian religion. That is, ritual texts and temple reliefs might refer to deities that imply the existence of narratives in which these deities play particular roles, but the full-scale narratives do not appear to have been "written down" until Greco-Romans like Plutarch did so. Scholars such as Bleeker see this not as an accident of preservation but as a result of a genuine Egyptian disinterest in religious narrative. Bleeker, 1-20. For a reassessment of Bleeker's argument, see Tobin, 170. For further discussion of the debate among Egyptologists regarding the "absence" of Egyptian mythology, consider John Baines' argument that Plutarch's occasional (seemingly accurate) allusions to certain narrative motifs found in traditional Egyptian ritual implies the existence of an oral tradition. See John Baines, "Egyptian Myth and Discourse: Myth, Gods, and the Early Written and Iconographic Record," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 50 (1991): 81-105. For a cross-cultural examination of the development of abstract thinking in the last few millennia before the common era, see Robert N. Bellah, *Religion in Human Evolution: From the Paleolithic to the Axial Age* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011). Bellah's application of the term "evolution" to such a late stage of human history is potentially problematic. I am not convinced that the abstract thought that he identifies with the so-called axial age did not in fact predate this period. Moreover, his treatment of Egypt did not to expand greatly upon previous scholarship. However, the work is provocative with regard to the question of just what we mean by the practice of "religion" and insofar as it provides comparative evidence from a diverse range of cultures.

[318] The god Thoth invented letters and taught writing to mankind. Burton, 78.

[319] Zivie-Coche, "Pharaonic," 8. The imagery reinforced meaning in a way that alphabetic script might not be capable of doing. For instance, a c. 10-8th cent. BCE text describing the daily cult ritual directed the officiant to say that Maat embraces the god (its image) so that the god's ka exists. The hieroglyph for *ka* is actually arms stretched in an embrace. Lorton, 143.

[320] Such was the Egyptian faith that a sign *was* the thing it represented that the mutilation of signs commonly served an apotropaic function. See Antonio Loprieno, *Ancient Egyptian: A Linguistic Introduction* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 18.

[321] Fowden, 63-64; Dieleman, *Priests*, 230. Also see chapter five.

[322] For instance *Treatise* XVI 1-2 of the Corpus Hermeticum is written in Greek and was probably originally written in Greek but claims to be written in Egyptian and discourages translation into Greek. For discussion of this text see Fowden, 30; Dieleman, *Priests*, 2-4. Also see chapter five.

hieroglyphic, hieratic, and demotic. Most commentators seem to have been aware of only two forms and usually ignored hieratic.[323]

There is little evidence that hieroglyphs reflected an allegorical tradition. Many words communicated meaning via a rebus, by depicting an image, the name of which bore a phonological resemblance to the word that the hieroglyph was attempting to communicate, or symbolically, by depicting a narrative image that suggested an association related to that which the hieroglyph was attempting to communicate. For example, the image of a house communicates the concept of a "house," the image of a duck communicates the word "son" because the Egyptian words for "duck" and "son" sound alike, and the sign for "Thoth" looks like a heart because "Thoth" was understood to be the heart of Re. Greco-Roman interpretations of the hieroglyphs clearly picked up on the symbolic dimensions of the script, but mistook narrative elements for allegorical parables, and completely missed the phonological dimension.[324] A second century CE Latin novel alluded to the use of animal forms in Egyptian hieroglyphs, quite accurately, but also described curves and knots which seem more evocative of the so-called nonsense imagery found in spells than traditional hieroglyphic texts.[325] By the fifth-century CE, comprehension of

---

[323] Clement of Alexandria and Porphyry were unique in recognizing the existence of all three. Clem. Al., *Strom.* 5.4.20-21; Porphyry, *Vita Pythagorae* 11-12; Struck, 198; Iversen, *Myth*, 41. Hieroglyphs were used mainly for monumental purposes. Hieratic was used for the transcription of religious texts until the third century CE. Demotic, which flourished between the seventh century BCE and the fifth century CE, had a more popular association though it was increasingly used for religious texts. Loprieno, *Ancient Egyptian*, 11; W. John Tait, "Demotic Literature: Forms and Genres," in Loprieno, 175-90; Bagnall, *Late Antiquity*, 261-73. Some commentators compounded the confusion by tracing the origin of hieroglyphs to Ethiopia instead of Egypt. See chapter five and Chaeremon Fr. 12; P. W. van der Horst, "The Secret Hieroglyphs in Classical Literature," in *Actus: Studies in Honour of H. L. W. Nelson*, eds. J. denBoeft and A. H. M. Kessels, (Utrecht: Instituut voor Klassieke Talen, 1982), 115-16.

[324] Loprieno, *Ancient Egyptian*, 12-13; Iversen, *Myth*, 14, 25, 40, 44.

[325] Apul., *Met.* 11.22. See also Frankfurter, *Roman Egypt*, 255.

hieroglyphs appears to have fallen into serious decline.[326] An Alexandrian scholar by the name of Horapollo (fl. 5th cent.), who wrote a textbook on the subject, possessed enough facility with hieroglyphs to recognize that the image for a duck communicated the word "son," but thought that it was because ducks enjoyed a special bond with their young.[327]

No doubt the Egyptian penchant for so-called cryptography was one of the reasons that the Greco-Romans were led astray in their efforts to understand the function of Egyptian script. Cryptography was a sort of game in which a sign would be invested with a new phonological value, or a word or phrase would be intentionally misspelled for literary effect. The practice, which actually originated in the Old Kingdom, exploded in popularity in the Ptolemaic period, when the number of hieroglyphs expanded to over 7000 signs.[328] Were Egyptian priests introducing complications in order to exclude outsiders, like Greeks?[329] If so, then the enigmatic aura of hieroglyphs was encouraged by Greco-Roman subjugation, even if it was intended to safeguard authentic traditions. But many of the cryptographic texts were accompanied by "translations," so they were not meant to be entirely enigmatic.[330]

---

[326] On the closure of a school of hieratic in Canopus by an Alexandrian patriarch see chapter five. On the last inscriptions in hieroglyphics and demotic see chapter seven.

[327] Horapollo, 1.53. See Frankfurter, *Roman Egypt,* 254; Dieleman, *Priests,* 7; Fowden 64, 184-86; Iversen, *Myth,* 48; Assmann, *Moses,* 106-107. Some of Horapollo's interpretations are more poignant in their Greco-Roman translation then they would have been in their alleged Egyptian original (for instance the association between Horus and the sun based on his link to the passage of the hours [Horapollo, 1.17]). See Boas, 16. On this Horapollo see Laura Cavero, *Poems in Context: Greek Poetry in the Egyptian Thebaid 200-600 AD* (NY: Walter de Gruyter, 2008), 9-10.

[328] Iversen, *Myth,* 36-37; Loprieno, *Ancient Egypt,* 23-24; Dieleman, *Priests,* 86-87. For further discussion see Étienne Drioton, "Les principes de la cryptographie égyptienne," *Comptes rendus des séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres* 97 (1953): 355-64; H. Brunner, "Änigmatische Schrift (Kryptographie)," in Ä*gyptische Schrift und Sprache* (Leiden: Brill, 1973), 51-58; Assmann, *Moses,* 108-14.

[329] Iversen, *Myth,* 36-37.

[330] Morevoer, these texts were not exactly hidden from the public, since they were "published" on public monuments; cryptographic techniques may have actually been intended to draw the viewer's eye. Dieleman, *Priests,* 85-87. Cf. Assmann, *Moses,* 108-14.

Furthermore, Greco-Romans might have helping to generate this cryptography, since Greek-speaking priests appear to have been producing other Egyptian religious texts, such as the spells that—while employing or alluding to the Egyptian script—were apparently peddled by Egyptian temple priests to Greco-Roman clients.[331]

This prompts the scholar to ask how Egyptian so-called Egyptian paganism really was in the first few centuries of the Common Era. According to Diodorus Siculus, stories about the Greek sages visiting Egypt were being disseminated by the Egyptian priests themselves. These priests claimed that their own sacred records proved that their temples had been visited by a whole of host of eminent Greeks, including Homer, Daedalus, Melampus, Musaeus, Orpheus, Lycurgus of Sparta, Pythagoras, Solon, Plato, and Eudoxus, to name but a few. To substantiate these stories, the priests would point to statues that had been erected in honor of the sages and buildings that had been named after the sages. The priests would elaborate on the branches of learning to which these sages had contributed thanks to the sages' exposure to Egyptian learning (Diod. Sic. 1.96). But perhaps these priests were not actually in a good position for providing instruction. When Strabo visited Heliopolis, one of the most important religious sites in Egypt, he complained that he could find no astronomers or philosophers. There were only tour-guides and sacrificers.[332]

Scholars vary widely in their opinions regarding the nature of Egyptian paganism under Greco-Roman rule, some arguing in favor of a sharp separation of Greco-Roman and Egyptian paganism while others contend that there was a high

---

[331] Frankfurter, *Roman Egypt*, 231; Dieleman, *Priests*, 10, 19-20, 47, 80, 154-55, 281-84, 287, 293. But see Tait, 179-80. Also see chapter six.

[332] Strabo, 17.29; Scott-Moncrieff, 22.

degree of syncretism. Philip Scott-Montcrieff, writing in the early twentieth century, argued that the seemingly allegorical aspects of Egyptian paganism reflected the influence of Greco-Roman adherents to Egyptian paganism who distorted the latter.[333] Writing in the mid- to late-twentieth century, Erik Iversen argued that one of our most important sources on Egyptian paganism, a high-ranking Egyptian priest by the name of Chaeremon (fl. early 1st cent. CE),[334] claimed that the Egyptians communicated all of their teachings symbolically (Chaeremon, Fr. 2, 12) because he was a Stoic who had become so thoroughly assimilated to Greco-Roman culture that he served as a tutor for Nero. Indeed, Chaeremon's depiction of the Egyptian priesthood makes the members look rather like Pythagoreans or Stoics. Chaeremon's preserved writings show no knowledge of the phonological functions of the hieroglyphs, even if his interpretations were sometimes close to accurate.[335] More recently, scholars such as Marjorie Venit, Christina Riggs,[336] Garth Fowden,[337] Ian

---

[333] Any apparently Egyptianizing elements were, in Scott-Montcrieff's opinion, merely side effects of Egypt's "natural" environment. For instance, the asceticism of the Egyptian priests that was so attractive from the perspective of Pythagorean and Platonic ideals resulted from the fact that "the climate of Egypt naturally bred an abstemious people" and the simple linen garments worn by these priests were the obvious choice considering "the natural resources of the country." Scott-Montcrieff, 11-12, 29-31. Any influence that the Egyptians might have exercised over the Isis cult was shrugged off by Scott-Montcrieff as an accident of nature. The Egyptian pagans were almost completely passive. In a few spots, Scott-Moncrieff admitted that the Isis cult had an Egyptian origin born of the "fusion of Greeks *and* Egyptians" but he denounced the resulting religion as a "bastard off-shoot." Scott-Moncrieff, 33. Italics mine. Scott-Moncrieff undermined the *Egyptian* identity of these Egyptian collaborators (a term that, I admit, is highly tendentious) by emphasizing their hellenization. Scott-Montcrieff, 51. From this perspective, it hardly matters if the members of the Isis and Serapis cult dispersed throughout the Mediteranean were Alexandrians, as Iversen suggests. Iversen, *Myth*, 53.They would still be "too Greco-Roman" to provide an accurate portrait of the Egyptian faith for other Greco-Roman pagans and Christians.

[334] On Chaeremon's role in the Egyptian priesthood see P. van der Horst, "The Way of Life of the Egyptian Priests," in *Studies in Egyptian Religion*, eds. M. Heerma van Voss, Dl. J. Hoens, G. Mussies, D. van der Plas, H. te Velde (Leiden: E. J. Brill 1982), 61; van der Horst, "Secret," 115; Schäfer, 30.

[335] Iversen, *Myth*, 46-47. Also see Fowden, 56; Dieleman, *Priests*, 8. Therefore, it may not have been saying much about the content of Egyptian thought when Origen's allegorical methodology was attributed to a perusal of books by Chaeremon (among others) (Euseb., *Hist. eccl.* 6.19.8). Also see van der Horst, *Charemon*, 48n1; Ramelli, 490-491.

[336] Riggs and Venit have done much to elucidate the ways in which Egyptian funerary practices of the Greco-Roman period reflected not just a blending of Greco-Roman and Egyptian rites, but also the generation of a new kind of imagery, suggesting that collaboration was a *creative* process. Riggs, 5, 23; Venit, 124-59. As such, this was a far cry from the sort of passive activity imagined by scholars with a more negative view of syncretism.

Moyer,[338] Jacco Dieleman,[339] and David Frankfurter[340] have argued for a higher degree of syncretism,[341] though scholars such as H. Smith continue to challenge the

---

[337] Fowden argues that the hermetica may not have been the work of the *ancient* Egyptian priests, but the collaboration of *contemporary* Egyptian priests in the composition of these hermetica probably fostered such notions. Fowden, 139-40, 168. Supporting evidence is provided by demotic papyri dealing with hermetic topics that predate the main Greek corpus of hermetic texts. See Dieleman, *Priests*, 2n4. However, Fowden believes that Egyptian and Greek traditions remained relatively separate in formal situations, and that it is more likely that the Greco-Romans were "Egyptianized" than the Egyptians were "Hellenized." Fowden, 15n14, 19, 19n34.

[338] Moyer argues that scholarship on the subject of syncretism in Greco-Roman Egypt reflects contemporary debates about the function of early modern and modern colonialism. According to early twentieth century scholarship, which had a more positive view of colonialism, the syncretism that took place in Greco-Roman Egypt was largely one-way: Greco-Romans influenced affected Egyptians, not vice versa. Hellenism remained "pure" and "untainted" by Egyptian influence. With de-colonization, the tone of scholarship shifted radically. Where scholars once saw syncretism, they began to see evidence of segregation. Scholars influenced by post-colonial theory sought to disentangle the Egyptian Other from the obscuring web of Greco-Roman discourse through which the Other was interpreted. Moyer contends that these efforts ironically reasserted the colonialist model whereby Hellenism was thought to be unaffected by Egyptian influence. By insisting on segregation, post-colonial theorists implied that Scott-Montcrieff was correct in doubting the two-way nature of syncretism. Moyer argues that personages such as Manetho—who, like Chaeremon, was an Egyptian priest laboring under the auspices of Greco-Roman patrons—did not entirely fit the post-colonial definition of a subaltern and classifying him as such would re-invoke the colonialist discourse that post-colonial theorists claim to be lobbying against. That is, by denying an Egyptian priest's ability to "speak," post-colonial theory confirms the Egyptian's placement at the periphery of Greco-Roman representations of Egypt. Moyer argues that Manetho's *Aegyptiaca* drew upon Egyptian models and Egyptian evidence, Manetho's work challenging Hellenistic historiographical models and correcting the "mistakes" of Hellenistic historians. Thus, Moyer believes that Manetho's history actually encourages the audience to perceive Egyptian history through an Egyptian lens. For instance, Manetho's version of Exodus as preserved in Josephus focuses on kingship and Egyptian religion, subjects ignored in other sources. Moyer sees this as Egyptianizing. Moyer, *Egypt*, 11-27, 32, 34, 84-142. For further discussion of post-colonial theory, see chapter five.

[339] Dieleman cautions against viewing the Egyptian priesthood as a collective, as if Chaeremon or the Egyptian priests seen by Strabo at Heliopolis spoke for the whole. The priesthood had its own hierarchy and was certainly subject to intellectual and social stratification. Dieleman, *Priests*, 9. On this hierarchy also see Walter Otto, *Priester und Tempel im Hellenistischen Ägypten* (New York: Arno Press, 1975), 17-172; Serge Sauneron, *The Priests of Ancient Egypt* (Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 2000), 51-74. According to Dieleman, Chaeremon's portrayal of the Egyptian priesthood according to the Pythagorean and Stoic ideal might look like assimilation to Greco-Roman culture, but it also suggests an effort at improving the perception of the native priests in the eyes of the Greco-Romans. So Chaeremon may be more "Egyptian" than has been previously assumed. Dieleman, *Priests*, 8. Note that many native priests were employed as teachers of grammar and philosophy in Alexandria, including, assuming that he was actually of what we would consider Egyptian descent, a priest of Thoth by the name of Ammonius who fled the city in 391 (Socrates, *Hist. eccl.* 5.16). Such men would no doubt have been attracted towards the Egyptianizing elements of Greco-Roman thought. Why deny them their identity as Egyptians simply because they also incorporated aspects of Greco-Roman identity into their lives? Also see Fowden, 167, 168, 183.

[340] Frankfurter argues that the Egyptian priesthood was not as passive as Scott-Montcrieff implied. Like Dieleman, Frankfurter argues that these priests were actively embracing the stereotypes with which they were associated and "performing" their ethnicity for the sake of economic and social rewards. Frankfurter, *Roman Egypt*, 224-37. If this was a case which a subordinate population was adopting the identity imposed upon it by outsiders, a practice which sociologists and anthropologists have observed among modern minorities (see Albert Atkin, *The Philosophy of Race* [Durham: Acumen, 2012], 149-71) then it nevertheless reflected an effort at self-promotion. If identity really is a series of playing cards, then the Egyptian priests were "playing" their cards to their own advantage. Doing so does not necessarily undermine their identity as Egyptians, especially if the success of this venture was predicated on their association with this identity. Given the economic incentives associated with Greco-Roman pilgrimage (see chapter five) Egyptian priests might have felt pressure to interpret evidence (records, statuary, et cetera) in a way that substantiated claims about previous visitors to the area, including Pythagoras, Solon, and Plato. This is not to say that these priests lied. It is merely to acknowledge the pressure that

extent of that syncretism and contend that what looks like syncretism is in fact evidence for a rapid decline of paganism in the face of Christianity.[342]

Whatever the degree of syncretism,[343] neither Greco-Roman pagans nor Christians appear to have been entirely correct in their depictions of Egyptian pagan belief. But to assume that they were completely wrong is akin to accepting the existence of a passive, "pure" Egyptian faith untainted by Greco-Roman influence, the same sort of Egyptian faith that, according to Moyer, was a construct of a colonialist and post-colonialist discourse. It is probably safer to conclude by saying that the situation was complicated. When the Greco-Roman pagan and Christian apologists made use of allegorical interpretations, they were appropriating (consciously or not) a practice that some of them believed (correctly or not) was

---

was applied as visitors began to arrive claiming that they were inspired by the visits of the Greek sages. On Neoplatonists claiming that they were inspired to visit Egypt by Plato's example, see Smelik, 1939.

[341] It is worth considering the possibility that some Egyptians came to adopt an allegorical view of their religion, if only as self-defense against the mockery of Greco-Roman pagans who were put off by the so-called literal interpretations. If the allegorization of Egyptian paganism was conducted under duress, it nevertheless deserves to be regarded as a potentially valid response. Compare the scholarly effort to deprive Hellenizing Egyptians of their Egyptian identity to the Late Antique effort of the apologists to deprive Christians of their Christian identity on the basis of their so-called pagan tendencies (see chapter six).

[342] H. Smith, "Aspects of the Preservation and Transmission of Indigenous Religious Traditions in Akhmim and its Environs during the Graeco-Roman Period," in *Perspectives on Panopolis: An Egyptian Town from Alexander the Great to the Arab Conquest*, eds., A. Egberts, B. P. Muhs, J. van der Vliet (Boston: Brill, 2002), 233-48. See chapter four.

[343] The situation is complicated by apparent differences between the Greeks and Romans in terms of the administration of Egyptian religious institutions, with the former allowing for a greater degree of syncretism than the latter. Bell. *Cults*, 63. Segregation of Egyptian and Greco-Roman religious devotions during Roman rule would have been pointless if, as Scott-Montcrieff contended, the Egyptian pagans had become so Hellenized by this point that they looked just like Greco-Roman pagans. On the role of the native priests in encouraging resistance to the Greco-Romans see Philostr., *VA* 3.25, 32. Also see Bell, *Cults*, 53; Griffiths, "Egyptian," 1033. Sympathetic as I am to the notion that identity reflects a process of negotiation, I am inclined towards a more positive view of syncretism, while I nonetheless appreciate the impulse to seek out traditional brands of belief untainted by the coercive influences of assimilation. No doubt, a critic could claim that I want to see negotiation and syncretism rather than resistance and assimilation because I am drawn towards multicultural initiatives in my own time. See chapter five.

originally the property of Egyptian pagans.[344] Vice versa, when they attacked allegorical methodology, they were attacking Egyptian religion.

The very use of allegory and allegorical interpretation inspired debates.[345] Tellingly, perhaps, Plutarch was willing to defend the allegorical interpretation of Egyptian tales but attacked this methodology when it was applied to Homeric literature.[346] Not everyone agreed that the Egyptians deserved special treatment. Cicero suggested that accepting allegorical methodology was tantamount to embracing the madness of Egyptian pagan belief.[347] Porphyry's *Letter to Anebo* was particularly critical of the allegorical interpretation of Egyptian mythology,[348] while Iamblichus, unsurprisingly, was as positive towards allegorical methodology as he was towards Egyptian paganism.[349]

Some critics were put off by the fact that allegorical language was employed by oracles. It was a given that religious wisdom would be communicated in an enigmatic, poetic fashion.[350] But as chapter six will discuss in more depth, oracles

---

[344] Indeed, Clement of Alexandria defended the Christians' use of allegorical interpretation by pointing out how both the Hebrews *and* the Egyptians had relied on symbolic language (Clem. Al., *Strom.* 5.4). According to Eusebius, even Moses had employed a symbolic method of communication, explaining some things clearly and other things through enigmas (Euseb., *Prep. ev.* 7.8 312d; Euseb., *Hist. eccl.* 3.2.53). Perhaps Eusebius' claim was related to the (disputed) notion that Moses had been trained in hieroglyphics (Philo, *Vit. Mos.* 1.23 (5); Clem. Al., *Strom.* 1.23).

[345] Struck, 6-8, 14-16, 24n7, 39n51, 41n58, 112n3; Cook, 59-60.

[346] Dawson, 52-53.

[347] Cicero, *De natura deorum* 1.15-16 (41-43), 3.19 (47); Dawson, 55.

[348] For instance, Porphyry criticized the attribution of an astronomical meaning to the portrayal of a god who was seated above a lotus or sailing on a ship—which, according to van der Horst, was a reference to the sun god (van der Horst, *Chaeremon*, 54n7)—by asking why such phenomena must be veiled in allegory when anyone ought to be able to observe astronomical occurrences for himself (Porph., *Ep. ad An.*).

[349] For discussion of Iamblichus' use of allegorical methodology see Struck, 204-26.

[350] Struck, 11. In antiquity, oracles and prophetic language were understood to be inherently associated with the use of symbolism and allegory. Oracles and prophets relied on metaphor for the expression of divine messages. The enigmatic nature of the language associated with oracles shielded the sacred. On the equation between divination, enigma, poetry, and allegory, see Struck 167-69. For further discussion of divination see chapter six.

were particularly subject to the suspicion of fraud, and the enigmatic language associated with oracles was one source of this skepticism, for the messages were often so vague that they could be interpreted in multiple ways. Plutarch complained of the poetic excesses of the language attributed to some of the oracles, explaining that charlatans used this sort of language to falsify oracles associated with Serapis and other deities.[351] Apparently worried that such practices would cast doubt on Scripture, Clement of Alexandria argued that the enigmatic nature of the prophetic discourse found in the Old Testament was not an artistic flourish. Biblical prophecies were divine speech and thus, by definition, enigmatic. This distinguished Scripture from Greek discourse that imitated prophetic language by purposely using obscure language simply for artistic effect.[352]

Like an enigmatic omen that could be read many ways, a so-called allegory was all too subject to manipulation. While the apologists employing competitive historiography often preferred to interpret religious narratives as history rather than allegory, for fear of losing their faith's legitimizing claim to a history,[353] allegorical interpretation was still useful, and dangerous, because it allowed so much freedom in deflecting criticism. Simply by claiming that a narrative was really an allegory, an

---

[351] Plutarch, *De Pythiae oraculis* 404A-B, 406D-409C. Compare to his defense of the Egyptian "myths" on the basis that they are *not* like poetry. Plut., *De Is. et Os.* 358E-359B. Also see Struck 4, 24, 63-65, 154-55.

[352] Clem. Al., *Strom.* 6.15. Cf. Philostr., *VS* 1.1. Thus, Clement of Alexandria—who accused the pagan oracles of fraud (Clem. Al., *Prot.* 2.11)—was sometimes willing to credit non-Jews with having access to veiled truths (Clem. Al., *Strom.* 5.4, 5.8). Compare to Porphyry's accusation that the Jews had invented the notion that Scripture was meant to be allegorically interpreted as an excuse for their lapses from the practices it prescribes (Euseb., *Hist. eccl.* 6.19.4).

[353] Ramelli argues that it was the chief difference between Christian Platonists and the pagan Platonists and Stoics. The former insisted that Scripture had a basis in history whereas the latter were loath to admit any literal basis to pagan religious narratives. Ramelli, 495, 502-503. Cf. Nethercut, 437-38. It is hardly insignificant that allegory also functioned to explain away discrepancies in timelines. Adler, 4, 50. If, as suggested by the earlier discussion of the Exodus narrative, the early Christian's interest in chronology and history demonstrated a need to define Christian identity in historical terms, as a people with a distinct past thanks to which Christians were distinguished from others, then the debate over the designation of a text as allegorical rather than historical could have important repercussions.

apologist could go a long way towards stymieing mockery.[354] Opponents could respond by rejecting allegorical interpretation, but then they were running the risk that their own religious narratives would invite criticism if interpreted in a so-called literal fashion. [355] When Celsus accused Jews and Christians of using allegory to shore up a shameful body of literature, Origen asked why allegorical methodology was permitted to the Greeks and the Egyptians but not the Christians, and went on to argue that Greek "Scripture" was far more embarrassing than that of the Jews and Christians.[356]

Again, Christians turned internal pagan debates against the pagans. Eusebius reminded his audience how Plato's ideal city had excluded allegorical interpretations of Homer's more lurid excesses.[357] In some cases, it was not the use of allegorical interpretation itself that seemed to inspire ire, but the presumed defects in an opponent's methodology.[358] Arnobius asked how a person could be sure that the "author" of a text intended it to be taken allegorically. If only part of a particular story was meant to be taken allegorically, how did the audience distinguish this from the other parts of the tale (Arnobius, 5.32-42)? When pagans defended idolatry and/or animal worship by claiming that the idols and/or animals were merely symbolic

---

[354] Of course, he might still be vunerable to criticism regarding the methodology of his interpretation and his conclusions. See for instance Dawson, 226, 228.

[355] Origen appears to have realized this danger (Origen, *Con. Cels.* 4.38). See below for discussion of "literal" interpretations.

[356] Origen, *Con. Cels.* 4.38, 4.48; Jaeger, 48-49. Athenagoras denounced pagans who used allegorical interpretations to defend stories about Isis, Osiris, and the other gods (Athenagoras, *Leg. pro Christ.* 22).

[357] Pl., *Resp.* 2.377e; Euseb., *Prep. ev.* 76c-77b. For discussion of Plato's comments here see Struck, 42. On the positions of Plato, the Stoics, and Origen on the role of allegory in education, see Jaeger, 48-49. The reader may recall that Plato was cited by Clement of Alexandria as a *defense* of allegorical methodology, based on a letter in which Plato supposedly claimed that "true" wisdom should be communicated via enigma (Clem. Al., *Strom.* 5.10). On the authenticity of this letter and the belief that Plato had secret teachings that contradicted his anti-allegorical stance, see Lamberton, 139-52.

[358] Dawson, 226, 228, 231-32; Ramelli, 502; Preus, 164.

representations of the divine,[359] Christians argued that fundamental differences between the signifier and the signified undermined the viability of the interpretation.[360] Origen complained that even if one accepted allegorical methodology for the interpretation of pagan narratives, the resulting analyses were unacceptable. An allegorical interpretation of the Isis-Osiris tale, for instance, reduced the gods to elements of the created world and hence elevated the created above the Creator.[361]

Thus far this discussion has operated on the assumption that the literal interpretation of a text is a natural given, shared across everyone who encounters the text. The apologists of whom I have been speaking certainly implied that they assumed as much, but this was a conceit. A "commonsense" interpretation is always contingent upon a person's preconceptions. When a text seems to contradict these assumptions, allegorical interpretation can be particularly useful, allowing a consumer of the text to translate the contradictions into a narrative that makes sense because it conforms to his expectations, which are the fruit of his cultural, social, and political context. To this end, allegorical interpretation of another person's narrative is a form of appropriation, the interpreter asserting authority over that text. Because even literal interpretations are subject to cultural, social, and political preconceptions, the rejection of allegorical interpretation does not imply freedom from bias, though it

[359] See above.

[360] Lactant., *Div. inst.* 2.18; Athenagoras, *Leg. pro Christ.* 18; Clem. Al., *Prot.* 4, 5; Clem. Al., *Strom.* 6.18; Arnobius, 6.10. Interestingly, Leiden Hymn 100, found on a papyrus dated to the thirteenth century BCE, claimed that the Egyptian god Amun could not be represented pictorially. "Leiden Hymns," in *Ancient Egyptian Literature: An Anthology*, trans., John Foster (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2001), 165. Apuleius' *Metamorphosis* describes a procession of Isis devotees including a symbol of the supreme deity that does not resemble an animal or human but rather an urn that somehow, according to Apuleius, communicates the ineffable nature of the deity which is otherwise best associated with silence. Apul., *Met.* 11.11.

[361] Origen, *Con. Cels.* 5.38. For criticism of the Stoics for likewise reducing divine beings to the status of mere natural or moral forces see Dawson, 58.

is often framed as such. Thus, the ancient debate over allegorical methodology was not only a debate over what a text actually meant, but how a person used interpretations of that text to situate himself within a social, political, and cultural context. Commentators competed for authority to interpret a text because interpretation was used to justify particular stances within the commentator's community and facilitated the construction (and destruction) of authority.[362] Social and political competition was thoroughly implicated in the use, abuse, and rejection of allegorical methodology.[363]

For those who did not reject allegory altogether, the enigmatic nature of allegorical language, like the sophisticated flourishes of cryptographic hieroglyphs, privileged the class of persons who were thought to be capable of decoding a text's true meaning. Of course, an interpreter had to be a religious expert to ensure accuracy. Indeed, one of the reasons that Plato[364] and Origen criticized allegorical methodology was the danger of misinterpretation.[365] Obviously, the so-called wise man was the only person who could be trusted to recognize and to interpret allegory correctly. The aura of secrecy—impenetrable as this discourse was to outsiders—only

---

[362] Dawson, 8, 116, 236. For criticism of the notion that allegorical writing or interpretation is inherently polemical (as opposed to sometimes simply an issue of genre) see Struck, 14-16, 18.

[363] Sincere though he might have been in his criticism of Gnostic allegorical methodology, Clement of Alexandria's accusations in this regard were also political maneuvers meant to undermine the authority of rival (so-called gnostic) teachers who were probably competing with Clement for students. Clement's efforts to appropriate authority over *gnosis* (wisdom) and to claim *his* paradigmatic wise man as the true Gnostic thus emerges as the result, in part, of social competition. See Dawson, 219-22. This is true whether he received official endorsement as the head of Alexandria's Catechical School, which is a matter of debate, or was merely a popular teacher who attracted a circle of students, like Valentinus. On Clement's role in the Catechical School see above. For an introduction to the school of Alexandria, including the social circles and the relationship between teacher and student see Watts, 143-68.

[364] Pl., *Resp.*, 2 378d. For discussion of this text see Struck, 42.

[365] Origen thought that this sort of misinterpretation was responsible for a mistaken belief that Osiris' clash with Typhon was in fact a divine war against Satan (Origen, *Con. Cels.* 7.42).

increased the authority of the wise man who acted as interpreter.[366] But the reader should not assume that subordinate parties could not turn this to their advantage. Because secrecy both privileges the knowledge it conceals and enhances the esteem of those who are in on the secret, it facilitates boundary maintenance and can help to shore up the identities of subordinate parties who self-identify as different, establishing so-called hidden areas of activity and learning allegedly safe from the intrusion of the dominant party. While secrecy boosts the frisson of difference—giving people something with which to identify—it also provides some protection to persecuted minorities.[367]

In antiquity, all of this was complicated by a debate over the degree to which religious wisdom was inherently cloaked in secrecy. On the one hand, secrecy was thought to be an inherent feature of "true" religious wisdom, given the ineffable and inexpressible (to humans and by humans) nature of divinity.[368] On the other hand, an

---

[366] The "true" meaning of an allegorical text was supposedly secret to everyone who had not received appropriate training. That is, unless one believed that mere human reason was capable of penetrating such mysteries. For a discussion of knowledge received via natural reasoning versus divine insight versus education, see chapter five.

[367] Secrecy automatically evokes issues of insider and outsider status. Initial confrontation with the Other is always fraught with ignorance. An outsider quite simply lacks the knowledge possessed by an insider, and might be led to suspect that this insider information is being intentionally concealed. This is to some degree an accident—the foreign is naturally unknown and unfamiliar, but it is not necessarily *secret*. Knowledge of the Other might, in fact, be available to anyone who wants to invest some effort into investigation. However, an insider who is committed to maintaining distance from outsiders might encourage an aura of secrecy and adopt strategies of concealment (the use of obscure language, for instance) in order to preserve boundaries and his own claims to authority *as* an insider, even if that means embracing what looks like a subordinate position vis-à-vis the outsider. On the "social productivity" of secrecy see Dieleman, *Priests*, 81n6, 83. A seminal text in the study of secrecy is George Simmel, "Das Geheimnis und die geheime Gesellschaft," in *Soziologie. Untersuchungen über die Formen der Vergesellschaftung* (Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot, 1908), 383-455. On the deviant appeal of difference, see the following chapter. On secrecy as a form of protection for pagans following the rise of Christianity, consider Shenoute's accusations about pagan practices that were going on in secret (see chapter four). Even if Shenoute's pagans were a figment of his own imagination, his portrait of the "pagan in hiding" corresponded to the behavior that we would expect to see for the members of a persected subordinate religious group. For "secrecy" as a form of self-protection in early Islamic Shī'ism, see Etan Kohlberg, "Taqiyya in Shī'ī Theology and Religion," in Kippenberg, 345-80. On the hermeticists using secrecy to secure their authority see Fowden, 158. Compare to the above discussion of cryptographic hieroglyphs possibly evolving as a means of safeguarding Egyptian religious identity from Greek interference.

[368] Martin points out that we must distinguish between a refusal to disclose something and the notion that something defies expression. Martin, 113. On the role of silence in education see chapter five.

aura of secrecy invited envy.[369] Questions arose as to whether secrecy and concealment were proper to religion at all.[370] Secrecy inspired both awe and disgust, for an outsider who was envious of initiates might, as a means of self-defense, conclude that the mystery was not really worth knowing after all. As a character in one of Lucian's satires pointed out, a person did not need to be initiated into a mystery to recognize the difference between gods and creatures with dog heads, this joke clearly implying that the a secret veiled in an animal-headed god was not worth penetrating.[371] By corollary, a person need not accord a foreign (to him) religion any respect if its strange (because unknown) ways were but a mask for a stupid and blasphemous faith. Thus, Greco-Roman pagans rejected Egyptian paganism just as

---

[369] Fowden, 25.

[370] Guy Stroumsa, "From Esotericism to Mysticism in Early Christianity," in Kippenberg, 289-310.

[371] Luc., *Deorum conc.* 11. Of course, all of this begs the question: How did anyone ever "get in" on the secret? Initiation into a priesthood and/or education at the hands of a scholarly teacher—like Clement of Alexandria, whose elite status was confirmed by his function of gatekeeper—not only provided entrée into an elite circle of adepts and intellectuals, but it afforded the learning that was required to lift the veil of mystery obscuring the meaning of enigmatic religious discourse. Competition for this knowledge and for entrée into the learned class encouraged the learned to keep their doctrines secret. Fowden, 158. Struck points out that enigmatic language is attributed to prophets, poets, *and* cult initiates. Struck, 178-79. No less a sage than Plato was thought to have said that the pure tenets of religious faith ought to be concealed from the impure (Clem. Al., *Strom.* 5.10). On this assertion see Lamberton, 139-52. And woe to the adept who disclosed divine secrets. The nineteenth century BCE "Admonitions of a Great Sage" likens the revelation of the secrets of the temple to a natural calamity, warning that the rituals will no longer be efficacious if they are made public. In Simpson, 197. According to one of the Leiden Hymns dated to the thirteenth century BCE, a person who spoke the hidden name of "God" would face death. In Foster, 165. A New Kingdom text claimed that Isis achieved supremacy over Osiris by forcing him to reveal his true name. See Burton, 62n2. According to Arnobius, there was a penalty for revealing the secret burial place of the Apis bull (Arnobius, 6.6). Clement of Alexandria claimed that a student had been expelled from the school of Pythagoras for revealing the school's tenets in everyday language (Clem. Al., *Strom.* 5.9). Cf. Porph., *Plot.* 3-4. If injunctions to preserve the secrecy actually existed, they were clearly being ignored. References to the so-called secrets of the hermetic corpus, for instance, were widespread. Fowden, 158. Yet the hermetica were known to Clement of Alexandria, Lactantius, Eusebius, and Cyril of Alexandria, to name but a few. The tension that must have existed between the desire to keep a secret (so as to preserve authority) and to advertise the secret (so as to gain authority) is suggested by a hermetic text discovered among a 2nd-4th century CE cache of papyri at Nag Hammadi: One participant in the discussion is told, on the one hand, to maintain secrecy about the learning being imparted and, on the other hand, to leave a record of this learning on a stele at an Egyptian temple in hieroglyphs (*The Discourse on the Eighth and Ninth VI*, 321-27). On the role of secrecy in traditional Egyptian religion see below.

Christians rejected Greco-Roman paganism, both arguing that the so-called mysteries of the rejected parties were utterly ridiculous.[372]

Christians were particularly sensitive to the accusation of secrecy. The unknown nature of the Christian rites—unknown because Christianity was "new"—seems to have sparked suspicion. Why, critics supposedly asked, would the Christians maintain secrecy unless it was to hide their crimes? Tertullian dared his audience to investigate for itself the *non-secret* books of the Christians to confirm what the Christians believed (Tert., *Apol.* 31.1-22) and sarcastically asked how the crimes of Christians were so well known if they were being committed in secret (Tert., *Apol.* 7.5).

By attacking secrecy, Greco-Roman pagan and Christian apologists were attacking a central element of traditional Egyptian paganism. Given Greco-Roman assumptions regarding the allegorical nature of Egyptian paganism, it is hardly surprising that Greco-Romans associated the faith with secrecy.[373] But evidence of traditional Egyptian beliefs demonstrates that the Greco-Romans were not entirely off-base with this.[374] Thus, it hardly seems immaterial that the Egyptian wise man—

---

[372] Clem. Al., *Prot.* 2.17, 2.19. Cf. Diod. Sic. 1.85. On the so-called secrecy of the Greco-Roman mysteries, see Burkert, *Mystery*; Luther Martin, "Secrecy in Hellenistic Religious Communities," in Kippenberg, 117-21; Jan Bremmer, "Religious Secrets and Secrecy in Classical Greece," in Kippenberg, 61-78. On the distinction between secrecy related to Egyptian rituals and Greco-Roman mystery cults see Dunand, "Ptolemaic," 292; Bleeker, 45-50.

[373] Not for nothing did Plutarch claim, citing Manetho as his source, that the name of Ammon—a Libyan deity (with a rather popular oracle) who was associated with the Egyptian god Amun and the Greek god Zeus—could be etymologically linked to the term for "concealment" (Plut., *De Is. et Os.* 354D). Secret sacred texts became a *topos* in literature from or about Egypt, popping up again and again in demotic tales dating from the Ptolemaic period, Greek novels, gnostic tracts, and hermetic literature. For instance see *Setne I*; Apul., *Met.* 11.22; *The Teachings of Silvanus VII,4* 97. Also see Fowden, 33, 148; Jacobus van Dijk, "Early Christian Apocrypha and the Secret Books of Ancient Egypt," in Hilhorst, 420. For Jewish, pre-Greco-Roman Egyptian, and Roman comparators see A. Droge, "'The Lying Pen of the Scribes': Of Holy Books and Pious Frauds," *Method & Theory in the Study of Religion* 15 (2003): 117-47.

[374] Egyptian literature referred to Amun as the "hidden one" (Leiden Hymns 80 and 100, in Foster), a phrase indicating the degree to which Amun was thought to be fundamentally ineffable and concealed. An inscription in the Temple of Edfu, which was constructed under the Ptolemies, warned the priests not to reveal the

the man who demonstrated his intellect and confirmed his status by interpreting the otherwise impenetrable enigmas of religious learning—was so often the standard against which non-Egyptian wise men were judged.[375]

Outsiders admired, however reluctantly, the Egyptian aura of wisdom, but as the above discussion demonstrates, their admiration seems to have been in part informed by ignorance, without which Egypt's exotic allure would have been undermined by familiarity. It would be simplistic to conclude that views of Egyptian paganism were polarized between love and hate. Syncretism blurred boundaries, while ignorance—which is neither inherently good nor bad—marred the portraits painted by critics as well as supporters, and the discourse as a whole reflected socio-political competition between Egyptians and non-Egyptians, to say nothing of the competition within non-Egyptian circles, into which the Egyptians were dragged as the standard against which others would be judged.

---

secrets of the rituals taking place within the temple. See Zivie-Coche, Pharaonic," 24, 101; Fowden, 23. According to Iamblichus, the order of the universe (that is, *Ma'at*) was only maintained because the secrets associated with Osiris and Isis (secrets which were the proper preserve, not of the public, but rather of highly trained priests) remained mysteries (Iambl., *Myst*. 6.7). In this, Iamblichus was in keeping with traditional Egyptian pagan thought as recorded in texts that continued to be copied well into the Greco-Roman period. Secrecy was considered an integral part of the ritual activities that, repeated on a daily basis, ensured the continuation of the universe. Sacred texts frequently refer to the need to maintain secrecy about the contents. Full access to the temples was possible only for initiated priests and the king. See van Dijk, "Apocrypha," 420-26; Moyer, *Egypt*, 255-58; Dieleman, *Priests*, 82. It seems significant that Egyptian literature was more positive than Greco-Roman and Christian literature on the subject of magic, the secrets of which were only supposed to be known to the wise man. See chapter six.

[375] To demonstrate Solomon's intelligence, for instance, Josephus compared the king (favorably) to the Egyptians (Joseph., *Ant*. 8.2.5 [42]) and when Apollonius of Tyana wanted to establish his credentials as a wise man, he went to Egypt to test his mettle against the holy men living there (Philostr., *VA* 5-6). Also see Jan Bremmer, "Foolish Egyptians: Apion and Anoubion in the *Pseudo-Clementines*," in Hilhorst, 311-30. Furthermore, Zachariah of Mytilene chose Alexandria's schools as the setting for a debate between a Christian and a philosopher (Zachariah of Mytilene, *Ammonius*). If a Christian *student* could defeat a pagan *teacher* in Egypt of all places, then surely Christianity was superior.

Conclusion

Egypt's allure as a subject of commentary appears to have been driven in large part by the apologists to whom a particular writer was responding, but even here, there are anomalies. Origen appears to have devoted so much attention to Egypt solely because he was responding to Celsus, who appears to have been writing from Alexandria. Eusebius spent so much time on Egyptian animal worship because he was borrowing from Porphyry, who was the student of a scholar from Egypt, but Porphyry was hardly positive towards the pagan practices in question. Porphyry's respondent, Iamblichus, was far more receptive to beliefs associated with Egyptian paganism, but he appears to have been largely ignored.

Julian might very well have been inspired to pen his anti-Christian apology out of frustration over Alexandria's continued support of Athanasius, who had offended Julian for ostensibly flouting his authority. Yet neither Julian nor Athanasius seems to have made much of an effort to find a middle ground with traditional Egyptian elements. Julian wrote to the city asking the inhabitants why they were supporting Athanasius, the defunct leader of what Julian called a sect of perverted Judaism (Christianity being nothing more than a distortion of Jewish belief). The behavior of the Alexandrians in this instance seemed particularly strange to Julian insofar as the Alexandrians, as "descendants," according to Julian, of Alexander the Great, the founder of Alexandria, had in fact conquered the Egyptians, who had themselves enslaved the Jews upon whose Scripture the Christian faith was

founded.[376] This diatribe of Julian's spared no one, least of all the Egyptians, conquered three times over, by the Greeks, the Romans, and then by their former slaves, Jews in Christian guise.

Another time, when the inhabitants of Alexandria murdered a patriarch accused of heresy, Julian wrote to the city's pagans, that is, the city's Greeks (Julian, *Ep.* 21 380D), the emperor's language here showing his complete disregard for the possibility that he might be alienating pagan elements who did not identify with Hellenizing tendencies. Unsurprisingly, Julian's anti-Christian apology privileged Greco-Roman paganism as he perceived it. He ignored the opportunity to defend alternative forms of paganism like the veneration of animals, the popular rites associated with Isis and Osiris, and the notion, however distorted, that traditional Egyptians were in the possession of occult, enigmatic teachings conducive to allegorical expression. Incensed by Athanasius' popularity among Greco-Romans—the emperor even complained at one point that the patriarch was baptizing elite Greek women (Julian, *Ep.* 111)!—Julian simply had no interest in Egyptian pagans or their concerns. While Athanasius devoted comparatively more space to the subject of Egyptian paganism, his treatment of the topic was hardly indicative of serious interest. Presumably, Athanasius was more worried about baptizing Greek women than refuting the notion that Osiris was really buried in plots scattered across Egypt.

With the apologists showing more interest in each other than Egypt *per se*, there do not appear to have been significant differences between Christian apologists with special links to Egypt (like Clement of Alexandria, Origen, and Athanasius) and

[376] The mistake was compounded if one added Roman Alexandrians into the mix, since Rome (with the alleged support of the Greco-Roman Egyptian god Serapis), had conquered the Greeks who had conquered the Egyptians who had conquered the Jews. Julian, *Epistulae* 47.

the other Christian apologists. Though trends can be traced—early apologists with Egyptian ties, like Clement of Alexandria and Origen, were favorable towards allegorical methodology—the apologists look very much alike, which is to say that the "Egyptian" apologists did not disagree with the "non-Egyptian" apologists any more than they disagreed with each other. Surprisingly, the "Egyptian" apologists, particularly Athanasius, did not show a great deal more interest in traditional Egyptian paganism than the "non-Egyptian" apologists,[377] a fact that might be explained by the exposure of "non-Egyptians" to Egyptian paganism through the widespread Isis and Serapis cult.[378]

"Egyptian" and "non-Egyptian" apologists displayed similar levels of interest in syncretic Greco-Roman-Egyptian forms of paganism.[379] It would be inappropriate

---

[377] These lists are not exhaustive (see Zimmerman) but the North African apologists upon whom this discussion has focused, Tertullian and Arnobius, made several references to Isis (Tert., *De spec.* 23; Tertullian, *De testimony animae* 2; Tert., *Apol.* 6.8; Arnobius, 1.36, 2.73). Cf. August., *De civ. D.* 6.10, 8.26, 18.3, 8.37, 8.39. Origen referred to the Isis/Osiris-water/earth link (Origen, *Con. Cels.* 5.38) and Eusebius referred to the Isis/Osiris-sun/moon link (Euseb., *Prep. ev.* 3.2 87d-88a). Isis' search for her husband and the associated rites were mentioned by Clement of Alexandria, Minucius Felix, Lactantius, Eusebius, Athenagoras, and Theodoret (Clem. Al., *Prot.* 2.19-21; Athenagoras, *Leg. pro Christ.* 14, 22, 28; Euseb., *Prep. ev.* 47c-d, 5.6 190d-191a; Min. Fel., *Oct.* 23.1; Lactant., *Div. inst.* 1.21; Theod. Cyr., *Graec.* 1.21, 1.113-114, 3.67). Egyptian animal worship was mentioned by Justin, Athenagoras, Tertullian, Minucius Felix, Theophilus of Antioch, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Eusbius, Lactantius, Athanasius, and Arnobius (Justin, *Apol.* 1.24, Tert., *Apol.* 16.13, 24.7; Athenagoras, *Leg. pro Christ.* 2-3; Theoph., *Ad Autol.* 1.10, 2.36; Clem. Al., *Prot.* 2.33-34; Origen, *Con. Cels.* 1.20, 3.17, 4.90, 6.4; Euseb., *Prep. ev.* 2.4 68c, 3.13 118a-b , 8.9 371c-372a; Min. Fel., *Oct.* 28; Lactant., *Div. inst.* 1.20, 2.13, 5.20; Athan., *Con. gen.* 9, 20, 23; Arnobius, 1.28, 3.15; Theod. Cyr., *Graec.* 3.85, 7.16). Clement of Alexandria, Eusebius, Athanasius, and Arnobius also made direct references to the Apis bull (Clem. Al., *Prot.* 4; Euseb., *Prep. ev.* 280a; Athan., *Con. gen.* 24.1-7; Arnobius, 1.36, 6.6). The Christian apologists sometimes referred explictly to other Egyptian deities as well, like Horus (Euseb., *Prep. ev.* 3.15 125c-d) and Anubis (Arnobius, 6.25), and sometimes made allusions to vaguely Egyptian religious rites. For the latter consider a reference to a foot bath as the object of Egyptian worship (Min. Fel., *Oct.* 22.1-4) and a reference to temple imagery involving ears (which represented deities listening to the prayers of the petitioner). Clem. Al., *Strom.* 5.7.41.2-43.2. Also van der Horst, *Chaeremon*, 69n9. On Anubis in the Christian apologists also see Zimmermann, 51-52.

[378] For discussion of the "Egyptian-ness" of the Isis and Sarapis cult in non-Egyptian cities, see the above footnotes regarding Iversen and Scott-Montcrieff's positions on the Alexandrian constituency of these cults and the "Egyptian-ness" of the Alexandrians. Osiris was not as popular as Isis, but there is also evidence for the diffusion of his worship throughout the Mediterranean. For instance, an amulet bearing Osiris and Harpocrates dated to the fifth century CE has been recovered from Cyprus. See Owen Jarus, "Ancient Amulet Discovered with Curious Palindrome Inscription," *Live Science* (Jan., 1, 2015), accessed March 22, 2015, http://www.livescience.com/49239-ancient-amulet-palindrome-inscription.html. Even Anubis was worshipped in Rome. See Berthelot, 197n57; Jean-Claude Grenier, *Anubis Alexandrin Et Romain* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1977).

[379] For instance, Justin, Tatian, Athenagoras, Theophilus of Antioch, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, and Athanasius all mentioned Antinous (Justin, *Apol.* 1.29; Tatian, *Orat.* 10; Athenagoras, *Leg. pro Christ.* 30;

to simply assume, however, that these forms of paganism were perceived as primarily Greco-Roman. Antinous was physically depicted in the guise of a pharaoh,[380] and Serapis possessed Greek physical characteristics, but he was based on a pre-Ptolemaic deity, Osor-Hapi/Osiris,[381] and Tertullian listed him right alongside Isis and Harpocrates as though he was a typical Egyptian deity.[382] While Christian apologists might have attempted to stress Serapis' Egyptian identity in some cases[383]—because they knew that doing so would win the sympathy of Greco-Romans who looked down on the Egyptians—they were all too happy to accuse the Greco-Roman pagans of leading Egyptian pagans into sin, particularly when it came to the promulgation of the cult of Antinous (Clem. Al., *Protr.* 4; Athanasius, *Con. gen.* 9.45-50; Theoph., *Ad Autol.* 3.8). In this instance, the Christian apologists were clearly leveraging the subordinate position of the Egyptians to construct a critique in which the dominant Greco-Romans were made to look all the worst for having inverted the expected hierarchy: the moral inferiority of the Greco-Romans was shocking insofar as they were in fact politically and socially dominant. The mere fact that Christian apologists

---

Theoph., *Ad Autol.* 3.8; Clem. Al., *Prot.* 4; Origen, *Con. Cels.* 3.36-37; Athan. *Con. gen.* 9). Minucius Felix, Theophilus of Antioch, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Lactantius, Eusebius, Theodoret, Arnobius, and Augustine all referred to Serapis (Min. Fel., *Oct.* 2; Clem. Al., *Prot.* 4; Theoph., *Ad Autol.* 1.9; Origen, *Con. Cels.* 5.38; Lactant., *Div. inst.* 1.21; Euseb., *Prep. ev.* 3.1 126d; Theod. Cyr., *Graec.* 3.63; Arnobius, 1.36, 2.73, 4.29, 6.23; August., *De civ. D.* 8.5). As the following chapter will discuss in more detail, Augustine referenced a traditional Egyptian apocalyptic discourse in its Greco-Roman reworking.

[380] Venit, 129.

[381] Tinh, "Sarapis," 101; Dunand, "Ptolemaic," 215-16. The Serapeum in Alexandria was originally built by Ptolemy III and appears to have employed Greek architecture, Greek ritual, and a Greek priesthood. But various Egyptian elements were integrated, and this seems to have increased during the Roman period. Serapeums outside of Alexandria showed heavier Egyptian influence. Fowden 20-21.

[382] Tert., *Apol.* 6.8. Elsewhere Tertullian referred to Serapis in isolation: Tert., *Apol.* 39.14-15; Tert., *De spec.* 8.

[383] Consider, for instance, Clement of Alexandria's comments on the use of the ashes from the Apis bull in fashioning the statue of Serapis in the Serapeum in Alexandria (Clem. Al., *Prot.* 4).

could play with the discourse in this fashion demonstrates the degree to which ethnicity, religion, and identity in general were actually contested.

Can we really gain a picture of paganism in Egypt (distorted or not) from the apologetic literature?[384] The apologies provide relatively lengthy accounts of the Isis and Osiris story and allusions to the rites of Osiris/Apis/Serapis. Clement of Alexandria's depiction of the pagan priesthood sometimes included details, such as references to Egyptianizing texts (Clem. Al., *Strom.* 6.4), that demonstrate that he was speaking of traditional Egyptian, not Greco-Roman, priests. This seems to reflect first-hand knowledge. For the most part, however, the apologists did not provide the sort of vibrant accounts that scholars would expect of an "on the ground" investigation of the kind carried out by Strabo, Diodorus Siculus, or a modern anthropologist. Some, if not most, of the Christian apologists were clearly copying their accounts of Egyptian paganism from earlier narratives,[385] and none too carefully either. The monuments and patterns of spatial usage described by Strabo and Diodorus Siculus were almost completely ignored, the Christian apologists showing almost no interest in local variations,[386] conflating diverse Egyptian pagan beliefs into

[384] For the attempt, see of course, Zimmerman. Again, the current project differs from Zimmerman's work by asking what the evidence, or lack thereof, for traditional Egyptian paganism in the Christian apologists means in terms of identity construction.

[385] Herodotus, Chaeremon, Strabo, Diodorus Siculus, and Plutarch served as chief sources. For instance, Athenagoras admitted that he was quoting Herodotus on the subject of one of Osiris' tombs (Athenagoras, *Leg. pro Christ.* 28). Of course, once a tale made its way into Jewish or Christian apologetic literature, apologists need not bother with pagan sources. They could rely on Christian literature for their knowledge of the Egyptian Other.

[386] Space—at least the Christian usage of space—seems to have been much more important in the Christian martyrologies, histories, and hagiographies, even when these were penned by apologists like Eusebius. Was this because apologies were meant to be more universal, whereas martyrologies, histories, and hagiographies focused on local narratives (histories of course blending several local narratives into a general one)? Was it because the apologies focused on paganism whereas the martyrologies, histories, and hagiographies focused on Christianity, and it would have been disquieting for the apologists to admit the extent to which space remained pagan, while other genres, with their Christian focus, could emphasize how specific space was Christianized? For the Christianization of space see chapter four in particular. For the disinterest of hagiographers in the *pagan* usage of space and the implications of this for gauging the rate of Christianization see chapter five.

a collective practice of supposedly degenerate behavior, so that the so-called crimes of one practitioner could be attributed to the whole.

Given Greco-Roman dominance of the discourse, perhaps it should not be considered surprising that Egyptian pagans looked so similar in Greco-Roman pagan apologies and Christian apologies. That is, when Christian apologists were writing about Egyptian paganism, they might have been doing so primarily in response to Greco-Roman pagan apologists and thus importing the latter's portraits of Egyptian paganism. While apologists on both sides seem to have captured some features accurately,[387] other features appear to have been misunderstood.[388] As central as Egyptians pagans were to this discourse—being used by each side against the other—it is striking how liminal the Egyptian voice remained. Where was the apologist to plead the case for Egyptian paganism, not as a weapon in the service of another faith, but in the defense of Egyptian paganism itself?

Learned Egyptians might have simply thought of apologetic literature as a Greek (or to a lesser extent, Latin) genre, but this would not have precluded defending Egyptian paganism in the Greco-Roman language, as the writings of Manetho, Apion, and Chaeremon well demonstrate. The Houses of Life (the Egyptian pagan temple scriptoria) in the first few centuries of the Common Era showed little interest in producing apologies, focusing instead on reproducing the same traditional narratives and ritual manuals that the temples had been producing for millennia. Yet there is no obvious reason why the Houses of Life could not have produced anti-

[387] The basics of the Isis and Osiris narrative, for example, appear to have been understood correctly, even if it occasioned disgust on the part of authors like Minucius Felix.

[388] For instance, animal worship and hieroglyphs.

Christian apologetic literature. Since the Middle Kingdom (c. 2000-c. 1700 BCE), Egyptians had been composing dialogues of a sort found in Greco-Roman apologetic discourse, and many of the Egyptianizing hermetic texts being edited in the Roman period used a dialogue format and were used to express criticism of Greco-Romans,[389] so why not use this literature to criticize Christians?

Maybe Egyptian paganism had already declined so thoroughly that the last pagan apologists identified primarily with Greco-Roman paganism. Or maybe Egyptians were attracted more strongly to Christianity than Greco-Romans,[390] which might also explain why Christian apologists showed less interest in Egyptian pagans than Greco-Roman pagans. Notably, Christian sermons, apocalypses, and hagiographies were much more popular with the Coptic reading audience than apologetic literature.[391] Alternatively, perhaps the dearth of Egyptian pagan apologies can be explained in terms of power relations. Maybe it was simply a given that a pagan apologist would always attempt to identify with the dominant party. So regardless of any sympathy a pagan apologist might have felt towards Egyptian paganism, whenever he took the offensive against Christianity, he did so primarily as a Greco-Roman pagan. When the Christian wanted to prove that Greco-Romans had acquired their monotheistic thinking from Moses, they did not waste their time looking for evidence of monotheism in Egypt—though they would have found it—

[389] Dieleman, “Egyptian,” 438-39. For the debate over apologetic function of the hermetic tract “Asclepius” see the following chapter.

[390] H. Idris Bell, *Egypt: From Alexander the Great to the Arab Conquest* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1948), 112. Also see Griffiths, "Athanasius," 1025. In the end, I cannot help but find this argument unconvincing, especially as it seems predicated on assuming the existence of a stereotypical Egyptian. The reality was no doubt more complicated.

[391] See chapters three and four.

they focused instead on the Greco-Romans who, being the politically dominant parties, appear to have been considered far more important.[392]

Whatever the case, this discussion has confirmed the value of including Egyptian paganism in assessments of Greco-Roman pagan and Christian apologetic discourse. If Egyptian paganism was already dead—which I cannot help but doubt giving its presence in the discourse—it was nevertheless important enough to continue introducing into the debate. It is a truism that discourse about the Other is always discourse about the self, and this discussion has born that out. In Greco-Roman pagan and Christian discourse, the Egyptian pagan was alternatively a paragon of religious learning and religious perversion. His language and rites were uniquely adapted to the exploration of sacred mysteries and yet he used his reputation for arcane knowledge to defraud the gullible, he worshipped animals, and he grieved over dead gods, in a grotesque parody of all that was proper. Whatever crime a particular apologist could be accused of committing could be more rightly attributed to the Egyptian pagan. The Greco-Roman pagans might have sacrificed animals, but at least they did not worship them. The Christians might have worshipped a man who had died on a cross, but at least they did not claim that he had more than one tomb. As the fulcrum on which the Christians and Greco-Roman pagans balanced each other, the Egyptian pagan was a hybrid creature, reflecting parts of each.

[392] Ignoring monotheism in Egypt might have been intended to deny Egypt part of its cultural heritage.

Chapter 3: Martyrologies and Apocalypses: Death and Vengeance

Whereas the previous chapter focused on the intellectual reasons for conversion to Christianity, the current chapter turns to the emotional side of the debate. Much of this is speculation. Since most of the surviving sources about Christian martyrdoms and apocalyptic expectations are Christian, we are predisposed towards assuming the presence of a sympathetic audience that is already Christian or close to it. But when we consider the diverse nature of the potential audience for these narratives—narratives which appear to have derived from pagan sources at least occasionally[393]—it becomes clear that this discourse originally evoked a full range of emotions, from sympathy to amusement and from admiration to horror and disgust at the antics of the Christian Other. Attracted as audiences of the day were to the Other, as an object of fascination, it is important to note that the distance between observer and observed need not have prevented the development of humanitarian concerns, which, as evidence suggests, would not have been entirely dulled by frequent exposure to violence in everyday life. When combined with Christian discourse[394] that sought to demonstrate the qualitative superiority of Christian forms of suffering and played up the terrors of the afterlife, this discourse could very well have helped to lay the groundwork for the conversion of some pagans.[395]

---

[393] Other popular works at the time demonstrate that there was certainly an audience for works of this sort, even when penned by and for a presumably hostile audience. See chapter six on pagans mimicking Christian martyrdoms on the stage as a form of entertainment.

[394] Even if this discourse was only in a pagan account as a form of mockery. See below for discussion of an example in which Lucian's mockery of a subject backfired.

[395] But recall that conversion, as defined in this study, includes a reconfirmation of faith by a person who already considers himself a Christian. So these martyrologies might very well have served to confirm the Christianity of people thought to be in danger of lapsing into the heresy that was conflated with paganism.

Recent scholarship has questioned the degree to which an attraction towards deviance or humanitarian concerns might have garnered the sympathies of pagans witnessing martyrdom.[396] But the work of social scientists on the emotional aspects of decision-making and literary and cinematic theories regarding audience-reception lend weight to the notion that a deviant allure and/or pity might have actually played a part in winning the attention and eventually the support of initially hostile audiences. While scholars of early Christianity have shown a great deal of interest in the violence of the martyrologies and the apocalypses,[397] insufficient interest has been paid to the specific means by which Christians set this violence apart from other forms of aggression. Whether it was a martyrology or a tour of hell or a vision of the end of time, Christian narrators enhanced their chances of securing an audience, sympathetic or not, by constructing compelling narratives that appealed to the potential audience's greatest hopes and worst fears. Once these narrators had captured they audience's interest, they relied on rhetorical tricks to encourage the audience along a path that would, at least for the duration of the narrative, produce a conversion.

The definition of a "martyr" is hotly contested. Technically, the title refers to a "witness," in the sense that the so-called martyr is primarily functioning as a witness offering testimony in a trial. Christian martyrs certainly served as witnesses on their own behalf in trial-settings when they were brought up on charges related to their faith. Their testimony functioned in a larger arena as well, with their ordeals allegedly providing testimony as to the validity of Christianity as the only true faith.

---

[396] Donald Kyle, *Spectacles of Death in Ancient Rome* (New York: Routledge, 1998), 81.

[397] See below.

Yet, the term "martyr" only began to be used in this sense after the execution of a Christian by the name of Polycarp in 155 CE. For this reason, one strain of scholarship argues that, when speaking of antiquity, the term "martyr" should only be used to refer to Christians executed for their faith after 155.[398] Another line of scholarship argues that the idea of martyrdom can be detected in earlier sources, such as the *New Testament*, as well as Greco-Roman pagan and Jewish discourse. For this reason, these scholars argue that we should allow for a broader usage of the term "martyr."[399] In line with this scholarship, I adopt a rather broad view of martyrdom, but focus on violence and execution carried out in relationship to trial-settings and riots involving what looks like religiously-based persecution.[400]

Unfortunately, for the sake of convenience, I have had to conflate several persecutions, moving back and forth in time and space. While important distinctions are no doubt lost through this approach, there are some grounds for proceeding in

---

[398] George Heyman, *The Power of Sacrifice: Roman and Christian Discourses in Conflict* (Washington D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2007), 173-75.

[399] Paul Middleton, *Radical Martyrdom and Cosmic Conflict in Early Christianity* (New York: T & T Clark, 2006), 125; Candida Moss, *The Myth of Persecution: How Early Christians Invented a Story of Martyrdom* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2013), 28; David Potter, "Introduction," in *Life, Death, and Entertainment in the Roman Empire*, eds. David Potter and D. J. Mattingly (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2010), 8. For the debate over Jewish and classical models for martyrdom see for instance G. W. Bowersock, *Martyrdom and Rome* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995); Daniel Boyarin, *Dying for God: Martyrdom and the Making of Christianity and Judaism* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999); Moss, 29-44.

[400] This approach seems well-justified given the extent to which some Christians perceived non-Christians as rivals with regard to claims of martyrdom. For instance, see Clement of Alexandria's criticism of the Indian sages who appeared to be martyrs (Clem. Al., *Strom.* 4.4). An Alexandrian allegedly tried in Rome for Christianity during the reign of Commodus was supposedly comfortable citing Socrates as a model according to a fifth or sixth century martyrology (*Martyrdom of Apollonius*, 36-42). Cf. Euseb., *Hist. eccl.* 5.21. On the date and trustworthiness of this martyrology see Herbert Musurillo, "Introduction," in Musurillo, xxiii-xxv, xlvi-xlvii; Timothy Barnes, *Early Christian Hagiography and Roman History* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 46, 142-46, 345, 348. On suicide as an act of defiance against a corrupt government and an invocation of divine justice, see Pamela Stewart and Andrew Strathern, *Violence: Theory and Ethnography* (New York: Continuum, 2002), 133; Paul Plass, *The Game of Death in Ancient Rome: Arena Sport and Political Suicide* (Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1995), 7, 81-134; Andrew Harker, *Loyalty and Dissidence in Roman Egypt: The Case of the* Acta Alexandrinorum (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 142-46; Middleton, 120; Heyman, 180-81; Carlin Barton, "Savage Miracles: The Redemption of Lost Honor in Roman Society and the Sacrament of the Gladiator and the Martyr," *Representations* 45 (1994): 46-47; Carlin Barton, *The Sorrows of the Ancient Romans: The Gladiator and the Monster* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 40-42.

such a fashion, particularly since these persecutions would have become conflated in the minds of early Christians as time passed. Though several non-Christian texts are introduced for comparison, this discussion focuses, in the first part, on two trials in Rome of Christians associated with Alexandria (Ptolemaeus c. 152-166 and Apollonius c. late second century), the persecution under Septimius Severus (r. 193-211) in the early third century, the persecutions under Decius (r. 249-251) and Valerian (r. 253-260) in the mid-third century, and a persecution begun under Diocletian (r. 284-305) in the early fourth century.[401] I begin by investigating the audience that, regardless of their religious-orientation, would have been drawn towards stories about martyrs, presented from either a pagan or Christian perspective. Again for the sake of convenience, I often conflate the *spectacle* of martyrdom with the *narrative* of martyrdom, a move that seems justified insofar as the two modes of presentation would have evoked similar reactions. I proceed on to an examination of the martyr as an exemplar of deviance, and then investigate the more compelling aspects of the martyr's arrest, imprisonment, trial, and execution. After discussing the burial and commemoration of the martyr, I conclude with a look at the martyr's role in judgment of the deceased and the general nature of discourse about the afterlife.

The Audience

This section attempts to sketch an outline of the audience that would have been drawn to stories about martyrdom. This audience would have included fans of the circus, the theater, street mimes, novels, and philosophical discourse. There is too

[401] For an account of the events associated with each of these persecutions see for instance Frend; Barnes, *Hagiography*.

much overlap in the language associated with these activities and Christian literature to deny the existence of a shared an audience. Certain images and themes were clearly drawing the attention of both pagans and Christians. If Christians and pagan philosophers, novelists, actors, and spectacle-organizers were not borrowing from one another, they were at least benefiting from the use of motifs shared with an already existing fan base.[402]

An Egyptian audience definitely existed for novels,[403] and for the theatrical productions and live spectacles that could have been seen in hippodromes and arenas across the empire. Alexandria was said to be very fond of theatrical productions[404] and theaters could be found in most urban settlements of Egypt by the second century

[402] On the Greco-Roman novels borrowing themes from Christian discourse see David Konstan and Ilaria Ramelli, "The Novel and Christian Narrative," in *A Companion to the Ancient Novel*, eds. Edmund Cueva and Shannon Byrne (Malden, MA: Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2014), 182-89; Ken Dowden, "The Roman Audience of *The Golden Ass*," in *The Search for the Ancient Novel*, ed. James Tatum (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), 429-30; B. P. Reardon, "Introduction to *Chaereas and Callirhoe*," in *Collected Ancient Greek Novels* (LA: University of California Press, 1989), 19. Note the argument that the Greco-Roman novel by Xenophon of Ephesus was intended to serve as propaganda for the cult of Isis. See Howard Clark Kee, *Miracle in the Early Christian World: A Study in the Sociohistorical Method* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), 193. On Christian interest in the stage see Timothy Barnes, "Christians and the Theater," in *Roman Theater and Society: E. Togo Salmon Papers I*, ed. William Slater (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1996), 161-80; Ruth Webb, *Demons and Dancers: Performance in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008). On the use of Alexandria's stage for real-world religious violence see Philo, *In Flaccum* 84-85; Socrates, *Hist. eccl.* 7.13. On Christian martyrologies appealing to the audience of spectacles and the use of learned discourse in the trial-settings of the martyrologies, see below. For an example of a mime seemingly inspired by a novel see *P.Oxy.* 413.

[403] Of the novels discussed here, Achilles Tatius' second century CE *Leucippe and Clitophon*, Xenophon of Ephesus' second century CE *An Ephesian Tale*, Chariton's second century CE *Chareas and Callirhoe*, and Heliodorus' c. fourth century CE *An Ethiopian Story* have Egyptian settings and characters. The novels of Achilles Tatius, Chariton, and Heliodorus are known from papyrus fragments. Longus' second century CE *Daphnis and Chloe* and Petronius' first *century* CE *Satyricon* do not have any Egyptian connections, *per se*, but provide useful comparators. John Winkler, "Achilles Tatius Leucippe and Clitophon," in Reardon, 170-72; Graham Anderson, "Xenophon of Ephesus An Ephesian Tale," in Reardon, 125-27; Reardon 19; J. R. Morgan, "Heliodorus An Ethiopian Story," in Reardon, 349-52.

[404] Haas, 63.

CE. While Egypt preferred hippodromes[405] to amphitheaters, Alexandria had its own school of gladiators and their bouts were usually staged in the theaters.[406]

But how diverse was this audience, socioeconomically speaking? At least some of the audience members were probably of an inferior status. Although the novels were too long for quick public recitations, papyrus fragments demonstrate that short scenes were performed by mimes. Elitist snobbery sometimes induced higher status individuals to criticize spectacles, but this segment of the population was also responsible for funding this entertainment. Thus, it seems safe to say that there was a diverse audience for the sort of spectacles and narratives that would have included Christian martyrdoms.[407]

Alas, it is difficult to determine how audience members would have reacted to a Christian martyrdom, either as the act was played out before them or as they heard or read about it secondhand. The truth of this is well-demonstrated by Lucian's reaction to a similar incident and the reactions of the individuals to whom Lucian relayed the story. One day, Lucian happened to hear about a fellow by the name of Peregrinus who was planning to commit suicide in public. Lucian and a crowd of interested parties travelled far out of their way to witness the event, proving that such

---

[405] Alston, 329.

[406] Jack Lindsay, *Leisure and Pleasure in Roman Egypt* (New York: Barnes & Noble, Inc., 1965), 176-77. On Egyptian Christians complaining about the arena see Frankfurter, *Roman Egypt*, 29.

[407] Magnus Wistrand, *Entertainment and Violence in Ancient Rome: The Attitudes of Roman Writers of the First Century A.D* (Göteburg, Sweden: Acta Universitatis Gothoburgensis, 1992), 62; J.R. Morgan, "Make-Believe and Make Believe: The Fictionality of the Greek Novels," in Gill, 177; Charles Hendrick, "Literature and Communication," in *The Oxford Handbook of Social Relations in the Roman World*, ed. Michael Peachin (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 177-87; Garrett Fagan, "Leisure," in *A Companion to the Roman Empire*, ed. David S. Potter, (Maldon, MA: Blackwell Publishing 2006), 371-73; Richard Hunter, "Ancient Readers," in *The Cambridge Companion to the Greek and Roman Novel*, ed. Tim Whitmarsh (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 264-67; Susan Stephens, "Who Read Ancient Novels?" in Tatum, 407-13; Ewen Bowie, "The Readership of Greek Novels in the Ancient World," in Tatum, 438. For more on literacy and book production see chapter five.

displays were a surefire way to attract attention. Peregrinus was a one-time Christian who, like Clement of Alexandria, travelled about, allegedly in search of religious edification, visiting Egypt among other places. Yet Peregrinus was not going to his death as a Christian *per se*, nor as a martyr, if by that we mean a person sentenced to death in the course of a trial. Peregrinus voluntarily ascended a pyre and burned to death, purportedly so as to prove that death was no evil. The spectacle inspired mixed responses. According to Lucian, Peregrinus enjoyed a fair number of admirers. But ever the skeptic, Lucian sarcastically remarked that Peregrinus was simply making a vapid bid for glory. The fact that Lucian later penned a defense of his account[408] suggests that not everyone appreciated his unsympathetic remark.

Peregrinus' defenders might have admired his bravery, but did they identify with him to the point that they wanted to follow his example? "Identification" can be taken to mean that an observer genuinely likes the person with whom he identifies and agrees with his actions, or merely that the observer has had similar experiences, or that he can imagine experiencing a similar scenario and/or reacting in a similar fashion. Therefore, so-called identification with Peregrinus did not necessarily mean that his defenders wanted to follow in his example. Then why identify with him at him? Literary and cinematic theorists argue that an audience's enjoyment of a spectacle or a narrative is enhanced if the audience identifies with one of the actors. This means that an audience member will find a spectacle or a narrative more compelling if—for the duration of the spectacle/narrative—the audience member can imagine shedding his own skin and assuming that of the actor, complete with all of

[408] Lucian, *De morte Peregrini*; Lucian, *Fugitivi*. Compare to the more positive portrait of Peregrinus in Amm. Marc. 29.1.39.

that actor's motivations and foibles. An audience member does not need to believe that the actor's behavior is objectively rational, only that this behavior makes sense *to the actor in his current role*. Otherwise, the spectacle/narrative is unconvincing and its entertainment value is limited to mockery, as Lucian's skepticism and subsequent derision of Peregrinus demonstrated.[409]

Less sardonic witnesses might not have relished watching, smelling, and hearing Peregrinus burn to death, or hearing about it afterwards, but their demonstration of sympathy for Peregrinus over Lucian—even when Lucian was the source of the narrative—suggests that they found the incident compelling enough, and in that sense they enjoyed the spectacle and the narrative. Similarly, a person who overheard an account about a Christian martyrdom in the marketplace or who actually borrowed a Christian account of a martyrdom—a copy of Justin Martyr's account of a trial involving Romans living in Alexandria, for instance—could have found the narrative compelling (and not simply for the purposes of derision) even if he did not agree with the martyr's actions. Yet fuller identification, if only briefly, could increase the entertainment value of the text, whether this text was transmitted verbally, in writing, or in pictures.[410] Again, identification does not necessarily mean that an audience member wants to follow in a character's footsteps, but some degree of identification helps to familiarize an audience member with what might otherwise be utterly foreign. Hence, I propose that audience reception could have played a role in laying the groundwork for at least some conversions.

---

[409] Yvonne Leffler, *Horror as Pleasure: The Aesthetics of Horror Fiction*, trans. Sara Death (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 2000), 169-71; Graham McFee, "Empathy: Interpersonal vs Artistic?" in *Empathy: Philosophical and Psychological Perspectives*, eds. Amy Coplan and Peter Goldie (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 185-210.

[410] I use the term "text" in all of these ways throughout this chapter.

Significantly, the Greco-Roman novels of Achilles Tatius (fl. early 2nd cent.) and Xenophon of Ephesus (fl. 1st-2nd cent.) depict relatively high status individuals enduring slavery and violence, suggesting that some high status audience members were interested in identifying with and experiencing the vicarious emotions associated with the suffering of inferior status individuals,[411] like the Christian martyrs who, even if they were ostensibly high status figures, would have been demeaned by their reclassification as criminals. Why would a high status person want to imagine himself in the place of a slave or a Christian martyr? The disgust evoked by deviance encourages avoidance and fuels hatred, but it can also inspire fascination. "Deviance" is defined here rather loosely, as "wrongdoing," with the understanding that, in some contexts, a person might not consider himself a deviant even though he knows that others would identify him as such, while in other contexts the same person might embrace his association with deviance. A so-called deviant activity, belief, person, or thing might be considered simultaneously shameful, forbidden, exciting, and/or fun.[412] This is because parapathic emotions—emotions experienced in a detached setting, by the audience of a play or a novel, for instance—can be deemed entertaining even when the subjective experience of the emotions in question would be avoided.[413] And objects of disgust—deviants—exercise inherent fascination because, lying as they do beyond the bounds of normative society, they illuminate

---

[411] Melanie Green and Jenna Clark, "Transportation Theory," in *Encyclopedia of Media Violence*, ed. Matthew Eastin (Washington, D.C.: Sage, 2013), 356-57; Morgan, "Make-Believe," 193.

[412] Gary Jensen, "Deviance and Social Control," in *The Routledge Handbook of Deviant Behavior*, ed. Clifton Bryant (New York: Routledge, 2011), 11-13; Nachman Ben-Yehuda, "Moral Panic," in Bryant, 38-45; Robert Prus and Scott Grills, *The Deviant Mystique: Involvements, Realities and Regulations* (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger, 2003), ix.

[413] Garrett Fagan, *The Lure of the Arena: Social Psychology and the Crowd at the Roman Games* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 205-206.

these boundaries. It is by studying such creatures that supposedly normative members of society gain insight into themselves, by inversion.[414] In a similar fashion, the previous chapters argued that Christians constructed their own self-image by invoking the image of the pagan Other, drawing boundaries by contrasting "us" and "them."

Of course, the degree to which Christians or martyrs could have elicited fascination as objects of deviance in the third and fourth centuries depends on the rate of conversion. Christians could hardly have been considered deviant once a majority of the population had converted. Eusebius implied that the successful spread of Christianity was actually the reason for persecution (Euseb., *Hist. eccl.* 4.7.1). This is contradictory: If everyone was Christian, who was doing the persecuting? Some scholars suggest that the widespread nature of Christianity is the reason that persecution failed, contending that Christians were so well-known that no one could reasonably suspect them of the crimes being used to justify persecution.[415] A handful of martyrologies complicate the situation still further, claiming that onlookers were so impressed by the resilience of the martyrs that the crowds were moved to convert. However, if most of the empire was already Christian, these crowds should have already been Christian.[416] The rate of conversion in the empire is hotly contested but, largely on the basis of naming practices, it has been suggested that 20-30% of Egypt was Christian in 313, the majority of Egypt was Christian in the mid-fourth century,

---

[414] Peter Stallybrass and Allon White, *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 4-5, 20, 178; Tim Whitmarsh, "Class," in Whitmarsh, 85-86.

[415] Robin Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1987), 453, 457, 598-99. G. M. de Ste. Croix, "Aspects of the 'Great' Persecution," *Harvard Theological Review* 47 (1954), 103. For further discussion of the debate over the rate of conversion see chapter five.

[416] Most of these claims are in later matyrologies but it is implied by Justin, 2.12. Also see Fox, 441; Middleton, 78; Kate Cooper, "Martyrdom, Memory, and the 'Media Event': Visionary Writing and Christian Apology in Second Century Christianity," in *Martyrdom and Terrorism: Pre-Modern to Contemporary Perspectives*, eds. Dominic Janes and Alex Houen (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 36; David Potter, "Spectacle," in Potter, 402.

and almost all of Egypt was Christian by the mid-fifth century.[417] Unfortunately, the influence of syncretism[418] undermines the value of the onomastic evidence on which these statistics rely. It is safest to conclude that the proportion of Christians to pagans during the third and early fourth centuries is simply unknown.

Many of the reports about crowds converting out of admiration for the resilience of the martyrs were actually composed well after the martyrdoms in question. It is entirely possible that the conversion of a crowd only became conceivable after persecution itself came to an end, once Christianity became widespread, and that few onlookers were actually moved to conversion by witnessing the spectacle of martyrdom or reading a martyrology.[419] But there are grounds for considering the possibility that pity and an attraction towards deviance—emotional responses—motivated the sort of decision-making that would have gone into a conversion. Rhetors who appealed to the emotion inspired complaint in some circles, but that was because these appeals worked. Aristotle (384BCE-322 BCE) himself argued that an orator needed to be able to arouse emotions, for a person's decisions were swayed by whether or not he was angry or sad.[420] Like Aristotle and the Stoics, modern researchers have found that emotions perform a cognitive function. Feelings are a kind of judgment. They affect beliefs.[421]

---

[417] Depauw, 407-35; Bagnall, "Onomastic," 105-24; Stark, 3-27.

[418] See chapters six and seven.

[419] Cooper, 36; Fox, 441. Cf. Potter, "Spectacle," 402; Everett Ferguson, Early Christian Martyrdom and Civil Disobedience," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 1 (Spring 1993): 73.

[420] Aristotle, *Rhetorica* 1.2.4-5, 1.2.7; David Konstan, "Rhetoric and Emotion" in *A Companion to Greek Rhetoric*, ed. Ian Worthington (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2007), 412, 414, 421; David Konstan, *The Emotions of the Ancient Greeks: Studies in Aristotle and Classical Literature* (Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 2006), 201. Cf. *Rhetorica ad Herennium* 2.31.50.

[421] See for instance Cic., *De or*. 2.178 (41). Arthur M. Eckstein, *Moral Vision in the Histories of Polybius* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995); Konstan, *Emotions*, 3-40; Konstan, "Rhetoric," 412;

Aristotle's model of pity relied in part on the concept of identification as described above. To experience pity, according to Aristotle, a person has to be capable of imagining himself in a similar plight.[422] There is a great deal of debate among modern researchers about the source of pity and its role in dictating actions. Most modern research is actually directed towards the subject of empathy, which properly speaking should be distinguished from pity, which is a sense of anxiety over the suffering of another, while empathy verges on identification as I have defined it, referring to the experience of knowing or imagining another person's thoughts or emotions, imagining how one would feel or think in another person's position, or mimicking the physiological markers of another person's emotional state, mimickery which activates the same neurological features associated with "real" emotion and therefore can trigger the experience of an analogous emotional state.[423] If pity is predicated, as Aristotle suggested, on identification akin to the modern concept of empathy, then it seems appropriate to apply the findings of modern research on

---

David Konstan, *Pity Transformed* (London: Duckworth, 2001), 6, 9; Robert Solomon, "The Philosophy of Emotions," in *Handbook of Emotions*, ed. Michael Lewis, Jeannette Haviland-Jones and Lisa Feldman Barrett (New York: The Guilford Press, 2008), 5, 14; Kristin Stewart and Matthew Eastin, "Aggression and Affect," in Eastin, 17-21. Ramsay MacMullen argues that scholars of antiquity should pay greater attention to the role of emotions in influencing the course of history. See Ramsay MacMullen, *Feelings in History, Ancient and Modern* (New Haven, CT: Regina Books, 2003), ii, 13, 27, 32-36.

[422] He also argued that pity was only possible if the subject of the emotion was considered undeserving of whatever plight was provoking this emotion in the onlooker (Arist., *Rh.* 2.8.1-4). A critic might argue that pagan observers would not have pitied a Christian martyr because the latter, by definition, deserved and even embraced his fate. But this argument is misguided for three reasons. First, by Aristotle's definition, a person cannot pity someone with whom he does not identify. Identification, as I have defined it, means that a person who identifies with an actor assumes the actor's motivations for the duration of the identification and therefore must consider (for the duration of the identification) the actor undeserving of any suffering that, from the actor's perspective, is unwarranted. Second, though Christian martyrologists assured the audience that the martyrs were embracing their fate, the rhetorical strategies employed by these martyrologists (see below) demonstrate that these narratives were meant to provoke horror, which is only conceivable to the extent that the audience appreciated this violence *as* violence, that is, undesirable. Third, some incidents of violence in the arena (see below) suggest that audiences were capable of feeling an emotion akin to pity for the victims of violence even when this violence was thought to be at least partially deserved.

[423] Daniel Batson, "These Things Called Empathy: Eight Related but Distinct Phenomena," in *The Social Neuroscience of Empathy*, ed. Jean Decety and William Ickes (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2009), 4-8; Abigail Marsh, "Empathy and Compassion: A Cognitive Neuroscience Perspective," in *Empathy: From Bench to Bedside*, ed. Jean Decety (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2012), 192-95.

empathy to the reception of martyrdoms and martyrologies in antiquity. If martyrdoms and martyrologies were to be successful in evoking pity, then audience members had to able to imagine themselves in the martyr's place, whether or not the audience objectively (that is, when not actively engaged in identification) agreed with the martyr's actions.[424]

The Martyr: Deviant or Hero or Both?

But just who was this martyr? Scholarly attitudes on this subject have been exacerbated as of late by modern political and religious debates, with one person's "martyr" looking all too much like another person's "terrorist." Because martyrdom is meant to serve as testimony as to the validity of the position for which the martyr is dying, labelling a person a "martyr" implies that the so-called martyr's actions and motivations enjoy a measure of validity, even if the martyr meets his death by an act of self-destruction that also takes the lives of others.[425] To imperial authorities, the

[424] The appeal to pity in the martyrologies was implicit. If anyone mentioned pity in the speeches delivered in the course of the trial, it was the judge, who petitioned Christians in Egyptian Thebes, for instance, to take pity on the families whom the martyrs would be leaving behind should they refuse to sacrifice (Euseb., *Hist. eccl.* 8.9.8).

[425] See chapter four for the argument over granting the title of "martyr" to a monk who was tortured to death following his physical attack upon a prefect. On the controversy between labelling a suicide bomber, for instance, as a martyr, see Bill Durodié, "Fear in an Age without Meaning," in *Fear: Essays on the Meaning and Experience of Fear*, eds. Kate Hebblethwaite and Elizabeth McCarthy (Portland, OR: Four Courts Press, 2007), 125; Arthur Droge and James Tabor, *A Noble Death: Suicide and Martyrdom among Christians and Jews in Antiquity* (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1992), 188; Dominic Janes and Alex Houen, eds., "Introduction," in Janes, 8. For an example of recent scholarship evoking this issue in the context of early Christian martyrdom, see Joyce Salisbury, *The Blood of Martyrs: Unintended Consequences of Ancient Violence* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 166-70, 203-204. For a more nuanced treatment see Middleton, 6-12. Moss argues that we should not privilege the early Christian form of martyrdom (as Salisbury does), nor any form of martyrdom, because labelling an act (passive or not) as "martyrdom" implies that it has a religious validity or significance that is immaterial (and may in fact be detrimental) to the actual problem of mitigating violence in the modern world. Moss, 1-2, 203, 207. Because the definition of a person as a "martyr," as opposed to a "terrorist," relies on the construction of a narrative that explains and justifies his activities, conflicting narratives result in conflicting interpretations. This is what happened when Christians debated whether or not the so-called martyrs of a rival sect really deserved the title. See the following chapter and Heyman, 167; Elizabeth Castelli, *Martyrdom and Memory: Early Christian Culture Making* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 34.

Christian martyr was a criminal,[426] his fanaticism encouraging others to seek out death.[427] To be sure, the martyrs in this case were at the most passively bringing about the deaths of others, who were themselves volunteers, and so this cannot be conflated with the modern incarnation of the so-called martyr who actively brings about the death of unwilling participants. Yet we should not ignore the degree to which imperial authorities perceived the martyrs as active rather than passive dangers, being guilty of the crimes discussed in the previous chapter, such as cannibalism, and responsible too for disrupting the relationship of the Roman state with the gods and thus encouraging divine wrath.

Though the Christian apologists denied all charges of wrongdoing,[428] Christianity continued to carry the taint of criminality in some circles at least until the fourth century. According to a letter preserved by Eusebius, a patriarch of Alexandria named Dionysius (d. 264) complained when an Egyptian Christian was arrested as a thief during one of the mid-third century persecutions. The suspected thief was exonerated of the charge of thievery, but was nevertheless executed, merely for being Christian, alongside convicted robbers (Euseb., *Hist. eccl.* 6.41.21). While at first glance, this incident suggests that pagan authorities were attempting to denigrate the Christian Other via association with common thieves, the effort would have facilitated the generation of a deviant allure without which Christianity might have garnered less attention. A charge of thievery was sure to excite curiosity, good or bad,

---

[426] On the charges see G. M. de Ste. Croix, "Why Were the Early Christians Persecuted?" *Past and Present* 26 (1963): 6-38. For a summary of current scholarship on this issue see Candida Moss, *Ancient Christian Martyrdom: Diverse Practices, Theologies, and Traditions* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2012), 163-88.

[427] Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations* 11.3. Cf. Epictetus, *Discourses* 4.7.1-6; Tacitus, *Annals* 15.44.

[428] For instance Justin, 1.16.

in the same audience that was drawn to the Greco-Roman novels, where Egyptian bandits were popular characters,[429] despite being conflated with rebel armies in both fiction and reality.[430]

Presumably, most Christians were not guilty of cannibalism or the many other heinous crimes of which they were accused,[431] but the popularity of these charges—even in Christian circles[432]—proves that these crimes were considered compelling. That is, they made a good story. But how does an audience go from enjoying an exaggerated story about alleged cannibal baby-killers to actually lashing out at these alleged cannibal baby-killers, especially when the audience knows that these accusations of deviance might be exaggerated?[433] Social scientists argue that perceived deviance is more likely to be targeted for suppression when the crimes in question (like cannibalism) are deemed too grave to be ignored and there is a lack of sympathy or congenial interaction with the alleged deviants.[434] Therefore, violence was more likely to break out between pagans and Christians when the boundaries between the two were stronger. Indeed, familiarity was exactly what was needed in order to dispel rumors of cannibalism and the like. Similarly, efforts to correct false reports has helped to resolve moral panics sparked in the United States in the not so

---

[429] Achilles Tatius 3.9-5.7; Xenophon, *Ephesiaca* 2.13; Heliod., *Aeth.* 1.1, 4.

[430] Brent Shaw, "Bandits in the Roman Empire," *Past & Present* 105 (1984): 3-52; B. C. McGing, "Bandits, Real and Imagined, in Greco-Roman Egypt" *American Society of Papyrologists* 35 (1964): 159-83.

[431] See the previous chapter.

[432] See the following chapter for examples of Christians turning the charge of cannibalism against pagans.

[433] Especially since formal education in antiquity consisted largely in the cultivation of rhetorical strategies, including exaggeration (see below), meaning that at least some members of the audience should have known that hyperbole might have been a factor.

[434] Prus, 65-66, 190.

recent past with regard to the supposed crimes of NeoPagans and so-called Satanists.[435]

Even when pagan audience members knew that Christians were innocent of the worst of the charges levied against them, pagans still had grounds for suspecting that Christians were stirring up trouble. Fears of sedition were no doubt encouraged by the presence on Christians in the military, especially given the prevalence of warfare in Egypt during the third century[436] and the debate among Christians about the propriety of military service (Origen, *Con. Cels.* 8.73). Interestingly, Christian sources claim that soldiers in Egypt were targeted for persecution[437] even as the military was being employed as an instrument of persecution.[438] If the military was an instrument of suppression, then Christian subversion of the same might have attracted the interest of observers who were critical of the military and drawn towards deviance. Unfortunately, it is difficult to determine whether or not residents of Egypt as a whole resented or felt alienated from the military operating in their midst.[439] In any case, it seems significant that one hagiography told of soldiers employed in the torture and execution of Christians coming to a sudden halt, unable to continue with

---

[435] Jason Bivins, "Religious and Legal Others: Identity, Law, and Representation in American Christian Right and Neopagan Cultural Conflicts," *Culture and Religion* 6 (2005) 31-56; James Richardson, Joel Best and David Bromley, eds., *The Satanism Scare* (New York: A. de Gruyter, 1991). On moral panics—in which acts of suppression are carried out once alarm over a given situation reaches levels substantially above and beyond what evidence suggests is the actual threat—see Erich Goode and Nachman Ben-Yehuda, "Moral Panic," in Bryant, 46-47, 51-52.

[436] David Frankfurter, *Elijah in Upper Egypt: The Apocalypse of Elijah and Early Egyptian Christianity* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 264-65; Frend, 341-42.

[437] Euseb., *Hist. eccl.* 6.5.1, 6.41.16, 6.41.22, 8.4, 10.8.10; *Hist. mon.* 19.10. Also see Frend, 341-42, 359-60; Frankfurter, *Elijah*, 264-65.

[438] Euseb., *Hist. eccl.* 6.41. Also see Frend, 304.

[439] Roger Bagnall, "Army and Police in Roman Upper Egypt," *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt* 14 (1977): 67-86; Richard Alston, *Soldier and Society in Roman Egypt: A Social History* (New York: Routledge, 1995). That residents of Egypt approached centurions and Roman officials for assistance in legal matters is itself telling. See Ari Bryen, *Violence in Roman Egypt: A Study in Legal Interpretation* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), 36-38. Of course, there is no way of knowing just how many petitions were *not* sent because the potential sender did not feel that doing so would be effective.

their ghastly work, and filled with a desire to convert.[440] These conversions would have constituted a subversion of the power structure that served to subjugate a province like Egypt to the Roman military, offering up a narrative that no doubt would have appealed to audience members inclined towards harboring seditious sympathies.

If Christians were not openly advocating treason, they were nevertheless flouting imperial authority in a way that must have aroused suspicions. Some scholars argue that the demand for universal sacrifice during the reign of Decius and the early fourth century persecution reflected a fundamental shift in authority, as religion came to be used as a justification for political power to a far greater extent than before.[441] In this context, the refusal to sacrifice was treason, even though, to modern eyes, this refusal might look like nothing more than passive civil disobedience. The favorable attitude harbored today towards civil disobedience in Western societies is a modern conceit not necessarily shared in antiquity.[442] When considered in its proper context, a refusal to sacrifice would have bolstered the notion that Christians, like terrorists today, were seeking to overthrow the government.

Modern government agencies endeavor to identify "risk factors" for a person to commit treason and become a terrorist. Might we do the same for the early Christian martyr? The most common stereotype of a terrorist in the modern West is a

---

[440] See below and *Hist. mon.* 19.10.

[441] J. B. Rives, "The Decree of Decius and the Religion of Empire," *The Journal of Roman Studies* 89 (1999): 135, 140-42; H. A. Drake, "Lessons from Diocletian's Persecution," in *The Great Persecution: The Proceedings of the Fifth Patristic Conference, Maynooth, 2003,* eds. D. Vincent Twomey and Mark Humphries (Portland, OR: Four Courts Press, 2009), 52-54; David Potter, *Prophecy and History in the Crisis of the Roman Empire: A Historical Commentary on the* Thirteenth Sibylline Oracle (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 264-65; Townsend, 217, 220-21; Mark Humphries, "The Mind of the Persecutors: 'By the Gracious Favour of the Gods,'" in Twomey, 20-26.

[442] Ferguson, "Martyrdom," 73-82; Moss, *Myth,* 186-87. On sedition in pre-Ptolemaic Egypt see Tyldesley, 83.

man of apparently Middle Eastern descent bearing markers of the Muslim faith.[443] By the same logic, in early Roman Egypt, the stereotypical terrorist would have been a person of apparently Egyptian biological descent,[444] bearing markers of adherence to non-Hellenized customs. To be sure, the Egyptians enjoyed quite a reputation for seditious behavior.[445] Dionysius of Alexandria identified some of the martyrs of one of the mid-third century persecutions as Egyptian (Euseb., *Hist. eccl.* 6.41-42) and the large number of Christians arrested in the Thebaid in connection with the early fourth century persecution (Euseb., *Hist. eccl.* 8.9) suggests that many of these Christians were Egyptian, on the assumption that the Thebaid was mostly populated by those of Egyptian descent.[446] Though scholars continue to debate the issue, some sources suggest that the native Egyptian priesthood of Thebes was instrumental in stimulating anti-Ptolemaic resistance.[447] If so, then it might be no accident that Thebes turned out to be a source of Christian resistance to the Roman Empire, particularly since an aversion towards animal sacrifice, as discussed in the previous chapter, might have encouraged adherents of traditional Egyptian paganism to resent a demand for universal sacrifice.[448]

However, the assumption that the Roman Empire was confronting an "Egyptian Christian terrorist" faces several problems. If Egyptians were drawn

---

[443] On "risk factors" for becoming a terrorist and problems with the "terrorist" stereotype see Durodié, 127-28 and below.

[444] See chapter five on the construction of ethnicity and anti-Egyptian prejudice.

[445] See the first chapter.

[446] Vivian, 38n130. Note that Eusebius also singles out residents of the Thebaid and Alexandria as victims of the early third century persecution (Euseb., *Hist. eccl.* 6.1).

[447] Bell, *Cults*, 53; Griffiths, "Egyptian," 1033.

[448] Frankfurter, *Roman Egypt*, 24-25. But see the following chapter on the role of sacrifice in traditional Egyptian statue animation.

towards Christianity out of subversive, anti-Hellenic sympathies, then presumably these Egyptians were not converted by Greco-Romans. The Jewish-Egyptian tensions suggested by the writings of Manetho and Philo would have undermined the success of missionaries who evoked Jewish associations for Egyptians. As the previous chapter indicated, however, the "ethnicity" of the first Christian communities in Egypt remains unclear, and some scholars argue that it actually originated in a Jewish milieu. Moreover, it is misguided to assume that a person who was "ethnically" Egyptian would have felt any more alienated from the Roman Empire than a person who was "ethnically" Roman or Greek or Jewish.[449] This point is amply demonstrated by discourse associated with violence that broke out in Alexandria in the mid-first century CE. Narratives inspired by these events were composed by both Jews (for instance, Philo's *In Flaccum* and *Legatio ad Gaium*) and pagans (in texts which continued to be composed into the third century and are collectively known by scholars as the *Acta Alexandrinorum* or *The Acts of the Pagan Martyrs*), each side casting itself as the victim of persecution at the hands of the other side and/or of the Roman state.[450] Andrew Harker contends that the audience of the *Acta Alexandrinorum* actually included Roman citizens, men who were disgruntled over the decline of their privileges after Roman citizenship was expanded and Septimius Severus granted *boulai* to the *metropoleis*, an act that caused Alexandria to fall in

[449] On the definition of ethnicity see chapter five.

[450] H. A. Musurillo, *The Acts of the Pagan Martyrs: Acta Alexandrinorum* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1954). Also see Joseph., *AJ* 18.8. Note, however, Harker's argument regarding the attraction of this literature for those of Egyptian descent. See Harker, 113-17, 176. Also see Erich Gruen, *Diaspora: Jews amidst Greeks and Romans* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2002), 52-63; Schäfer, 136-60; Alston, *City*, 220-35.

importance.[451] The *Acta Alexandrinorum* would have added fuel to the fire for the many rebellions that broke out in Egypt in the third century, and not for nothing have these texts been likened to Greco-Roman novels and novelistic biographies about confrontations between tyrannical emperors and holy men, like Apollonius of Tyana.[452] The audience of the *Acta Alexandrinorum* would have been drawn to the Christian martyrologies, if only as entertainment, because they too showcased bravery in the face of persecution and contests with imperial authority.

Since the *Acta Alexandrinorum* suggest that resentment of imperial authority sometimes reflected economic, rather than ethnic, factors,[453] perhaps we should be looking for a terrorist motivated by economic interests, not ethnicity *per se*. Greco-Roman pagan and Christian apologists claimed that Christianity attracted the poor (Origen, *Con. Cels*. 3.44-3.52), but did Christianity facilitate subversion on the part of the economically disenfranchised? Unfortunately, the subversive nature of less overt forms of economic resistance, if it occurred, would have prevented the sort of exposure needed to ensure that these actions would find their way into the historical record. A person seeking to impede successful exploitation of resources without drawing undue attention is successful only to the extent that he avoids the sort of attention that would result in generating a record of his actions.[454] But aside from

---

[451] Harker, 132.

[452] Schäfer, 138; Harker, 147-51, 167.

[453] In one of the pagan texts that appears to have been inspired by the violence that broke out in Alexandria in the mid-first century, an elite Greco-Roman pagan ambassador from Alexandria complained to the emperor of the rising price of bread and suggested that the emperor was making a profit from the injustice, only for the emperor to call for the executioner (*Acta Appiani).* See Jerry Toner, *Popular Culture in Ancient Rome* (Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2009), 180.

[454] A classic text on resistance is James Scott, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), 30-41. On slave resistance see Roger Bagnall, "Slavery and Society in Late Roman Egypt," in *Law, Politics and Society in the Ancient Mediterranean World*, eds. Baruch Halpern and Deborah Hobson (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), 235. On the possible use of

charity,[455] Christians do not appear to have shown much interest in improving the lot of the poor, let alone slaves.[456]

Some socioeconomic basis for anti-Christian persecution is suggested by Dionysius of Alexandria's claim regarding pagan employers who took it upon themselves to kill members of their staff when the latter refused to sacrifice during one of the mid-third century persecutions (Euseb., *Hist. eccl.* 6.42.1). Yet, some Christians living in Egypt during the early fourth century persecution actually appear to have been forcing their Christian servants to commit what looks like apostasy in order to save themselves, sending these servants off to sacrifice on behalf of their masters.[457] Furthermore, one of our chief sources for the persecution of Christians, Eusebius, seems to have been inclined to favor the wealthy and influential victims of persecution over the poor.[458] If Christian efforts to flout imperial authority had any

---

subversion to resist economic exploitation during the persecution conducted under Valerianus see Annemarie Luijendijk, "Papyri from the Great Persecution: Roman and Christian Perspectives," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 16 (2008): 341-69.

[455] Not for nothing, then, was the monastic leader Pachomius supposedly converted to Christianity after witnessing Christian acts of charity (*Vita prima graeca Pachomii* 4-6). Cf. Euseb., *Hist. eccl.* 7.22; 9.8.12; *Apophthegmata patrum* 19.12 Macarius of Egypt 7. On the *Vita prima graeca Pachomii* and the *Apophthegmata patrum* see chapter five. On the unique vulnerability of the poor to disaster see Jerry Toner, *Roman Disasters* (Cambridge, MA: Polity Press, 2013), 88-89. Jews and pagans practiced charity as well, if not, perhaps on such a wide scale. Julian, *Ep.* 22 429D; Libanius, *Oratione* 30.20. See Wayne Meeks, *The Origins of Christian Morality: The First Two Centuries* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 107; W. H. C. Frend, *The Rise of Christianity* (London: Dartman, Longman and Todd, 1984), 421; Peter Brown, *Through the Eye of a Needle: Wealth, the Fall of Rome, and the Making of Christianity in the West, 350-550 AD* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012), 59-71; Ramsay MacMullen, *Christianity and Paganism in the Fourth to Eight Centuries* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), 184n41; Toner, *Disasters,* 47-51; E. Patlagean, *Pauvreté Économique et Pauvreté Sociale à Byzance: 4e–7e Siècles* (Paris: Mouton, 1977); L.E. Tacoma, *Fragile Hierarchies. The Urban Elites of Third-century Roman Egypt* (Leiden: Brill Academic Publishers, 2006).

[456] Isabel Moreira, *Heaven's Purge: Purgatory in Late Antiquity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 48; Kyle Harper, *Slavery in the Late Roman World, AD 275-425* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011). On Late Antique bishops acting as patrons for the poor see Peter Brown, *Poverty and Leadership* (Hanover: University Press of New England, 2002). Although the content of the Greco-Roman novels implies that the high status consumers of these texts might have fantasized about being mistaken for slaves and abused as such (see for example Xenophon, *Ephes.* 2.4-6; Ach. Tat. 5.17) this did not necessarily translate into sympathy for the plight of slaves in the real world.

[457] Peter of Alexandria, *Canons* 6.

[458] According to Eusebius, when the Alexandrian Apollonius was tried for Christianity during the reign of Commodus (177-192), Apollonius' own servant was responsible for turning the martyr in to the authorities

economic basis, it is worth pointing out that economic discontent was not limited to the lowest economic ranks.[459] Taxation provoked violent resistance according to the papyri,[460] and higher status inhabitants of Egypt could very well have resented taxation, especially if they suspected corruption.[461]

It is striking how many victims of the persecution appear to have been relatively wealthy. Though Peter Brown argues that a relatively wealthy segment of the Christian population served as a chief source of financial support of the Church in the third century,[462] this segment also suffered from occasional economic woes.[463] David Frankfurter believes that discontent over this, combined with the pressures of

---

(Euseb., *Hist. eccl.* 5.21.1). Eusebius seems to have included this detail less out of a desire to tell the whole story and more out of a desire to denigrate paganism via an association with treacherous low status servants. Elsewhere, Eusebius demonstrated less interest than his fellow martyrologists in the menial status of Christians martyred in Egypt. For instance, Palladius showed comparatively more interest than Eusebius in the low social status of a servant named Potomaiena, who was martyred during the early third century persecution in Egypt (Palladius, *Historia Lausica* 3; Euseb., *Hist. eccl.* 6.5). On Palladius see chapter five. On the method of execution used for Potomaiena see Timothy Barnes. "Pre-Decian *Acta Martyrum,' Journal of Theological Studies* 19 (1968): 525-26. As discussed below, the account recorded in Eusebius regarding Thebans persecuted in the early fourth century shows a tendency to exaggerate the suffering of higher status Christians.

[459] See above discussion about the complaint regarding bread prices in the *Acta Appiani*.

[460] Bryen, 97-98. Some scholars argue that census records collected for the purposes of taxation were used to document who had and had not sacrificed during periods of persecution, a practice that would have leant taxation a disturbing association with paganism. Moreover, pagan temples were sometimes granted certain tax collection privileges to supplement an income that had declined after the imperial seizure of temple lands. Tellingly, perhaps, men fleeing tax collectors and Christians fleeing the persecution supposedly took the same route, seeking the outskirts of Egyptian settlement, where at least some of them allegedly took up as ascetics. Toner, *Popular*, 171; Frend, *Martyrdom*, 232, 345, 420; Annemarie Luijendijk, *Greetings in the Lord: Early Christians and the Oxyrhynchus Papyri* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008), 171n54. But see de Ste. Croix, "Aspects," 112-13; Alston, *City*, 211; Frend, *Rise*, 456. But Fox suggests that the outbreak of violence against Christians in Alexandria in the year prior to the persecution under Decius might have been fueled by the notion that they were to blame for tax hikes. See Fox, 451-54. For the debate over whether or not pagans as well as Christians were required to obtain *libelli*, certificates of sacrifice, see for instance, Fox, 456-57; Frend, *Martyrdom*, 303; John Knipfing, "The Libelli of the Decian Persecution," *The Harvard Theological Review* 16 (1923): 345-90; Potter, "Prophecy," 263; Luijendijk, *Greetings*, 171-73.

[461] Frend, *Martyrdom*, 343. While a poll tax would have been particularly hard on those identified as being of Egyptian descent, this form of exploitation seems to have ceased in the first half of the third century. See de Ste. Croix, "Aspects," 113. Also see Amm. Marc. 22.16.23; Garrett Fagan, "Violence in Roman Social Relations," in Peachin, 176.

[462] Brown, *Eye*, 41.

[463] Alston, *City*, 345-60; Bagnall, *Late Antiquity*, 226; Jane Rowlandson, *Landowners and Tenants in Roman Egypt: The Social Relations of Agriculture in the Oxyrhynchite Nome* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996); Emmanuel Mayer, *The Ancient Middle Classes* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012); E. A. Atkins and R. Osborne, eds., *Poverty in the Roman World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); A. H. M. Jones, "The Social Background of the Struggle Between Paganism and Christianity," in *The Conflict Between Paganism and Christianity in the Fourth Century*, ed. A. Momigliano (Oxford: Oxford Univeristy Press, 1963), 17–37.

persecution, inspired apocalyptic Christian discourse such as *The Apocalypse of Elijah*.[464] The anti-Christian persecutions conducted under Severus[465] and Valerian[466] might have actually been directed at the wealthy. According to Dionysius of Alexandria, when Decius demanded universal sacrifice, some Christians were encouraged to come forward by their associates but others were compelled to do so because of their official positions (Euseb., *Hist. eccl.* 6.41.10-12), social and political status clearly serving as a means by which to identify high value targets of persecution.[467]

Some Christians might have used their resources to bribe officials so as to avoid penalties associated with their faith.[468] A wealthy, well-educated Alexandrian woman arrested during the early fourth century persecution apparently had her property confiscated, but at least she escaped torture (Euseb., *Hist. eccl.* 8.14.15).

---

[464] Frankfurter, *Elijah*, 242-47; Frend, *Martyrdom*, 316.

[465] According to the *Historia Augusta*, this persecution was aimed at converts (*Scriptores Historiae Augustae*, Severus 17), which should have included Origen, assuming that he was born a pagan (see chapter five). The mode of execution used for Origen's father (beheading) suggests that he was high status (Euseb., *Hist. eccl.* 6.1-2). Yet Origen avoided arrest even when he accompanied his students to their martyrdoms. Perhaps Origen was half-Egyptian. Frend argues that the reason for Origen's departure from Alexandria can be traced to Caracalla's edict expelling all Egyptians from the city. Frend, *The Rise*, 376. While some of Origen's students were beheaded, others were set on fire, suggesting that the latter were of non-elite status. One was tortured *and* beheaded (Euseb., *Hist. eccl.* 6.3-4), showing that either higher status individuals were being subjected to torture or that the mode of execution alone was not a trustworthy barometer or status. Perhaps Severan's persecution was aimed not at citizens *per se* but the wealthy. When Origen's students were targeted, Origen was impoverished, his father's estate having been seized. His students must have been wealthy enough to afford an education. If Eusebius is correct in claiming that the authorities eventually took notice of Origen (Euseb., *Hist. eccl.* 6.3.5) perhaps this is because Origen was making a nuisance of himself. On the motivation for this persecution, also see J. G. Davies, "Was the Devotion of Septimius Severus to Serapis the Cause of the Persecution?" *Journal of Theological Studies* 5 (1954): 73-76. On the relationship between social status and the treatment of martyrs see Kyle, 171; John McGuckin, "Martyr Devotion in the Alexandrian School: Origen to Athanasius," in *Martyrs and Maryrologies*, ed. Diana Wood (Cambridge: Blackwell Publishers, 1993), 36. Also see Lactantius, *De mortibus persecutorum* 21. Note that the monk Antony the Great, who was supposedly Egyptian (see chapter five), also escaped arrest despite coming to Alexandria to comfort the victims of one of the persecutions (*Vita Antonii* 46).

[466] Luijendijk, *Greetings*, 175-76.

[467] Aurelius Athanasius, a financial officer during the early fourth century persecution, may have been forced to commit apostasy in order to keep his position, for his name suggests that he was born a Christian, but he is mentioned in papyri as an enforcer of the persecution. Luijendijk, *Greetings*, 214.

[468] According to Peter of Alexandria's Canons, issued during the early fourth century persecutions, Christians who bribed officials in order to avoid sacrificing were not required to do penance (Pet. Al., *Canon* 12). Peter's leniency may have been driven in part by a desire not to offend wealthy patrons.

High status persons were not supposed to be subject to torture except in cases of treason, and anti-Christian propaganda likened Christianity to treason, but high status individuals clearly felt that they were entitled to immunity from torture. Eusebius' elitism inspired the outrageous claim that the persecution of elite Christians was more noteworthy than that of non-elite Christians because of the difference in status, even when the former were not subjected to the torture inflicted on the latter.[469]

If Christian martyrdom looked insane to pagans,[470] it must have looked doubly insane when it was sought out by elites who otherwise would have been expected to pursue political careers. These "insane" elite Christians bear a striking similarity to the modern terrorist, freed of stereotypes. The modern terrorist is likely to hail from the middle or upper classes of a Western nation, is a member of a dominant Western ethnicity, possesses a better than average education, and can hardly be accused of the sort of passivity associated with the stereotypical terrorist—who strikes out at the West in response to subjugation—for the modern terrorist actively seeks out terrorist organizations and, if he converts to a religion as part of this process, he does so of his own volition. Scholars have suggested that these terrorists are inspired to turn against their own nations out of frustrated ambitions, disappointed by the limited opportunities they find at home.[471] Similarly, relatively high status individuals might have been drawn towards Christianity and martyrdom out of the desire for a

---

[469] Euseb., *Hist. eccl.* 8.9.4-8. According to an anonymous fourth century martyrology of one of these elites, a bishop by the name of Phileas, the judge expressed a reluctance to prosecute Phileas on account light of the bishop's wealth. *Acts of Phileas, Papyrus Bodmer XX,* 11. On the date of the text see Alanna Nobbs, "Phileas, Bishop of Thmuis," in *Egyptian Culture and Society: Studies in Honour of Naguib Kanawati,* eds. Alexandra Woods, Ann McFarlane and Susanne Binder (Cairo: Conseil Suprême des Antiquités de l'Égypte, 2010), 2:95.

[470] M. Aur., *Med.* 11.3. Cf. Epic., *Dis.* 4.7.1-6; Tac., *Ann.* 15.44. Also see Middleton, 36-37; Fox, 421; Harker, 146; Castelli, 258n125. For an example of a modern scholar who seems to adopt the pathological view of martyrdom see Frend, *Martyrdom,* 197. For criticism of that stance see Moss, *Ancient,* 6-7, 166.

[471] Durodié, 127-28.

challenge, disgruntled, like the high status audiences of the *Acta Alexandrinorum*, by what they perceived as a loss of status as their desires for advancement through traditional channels were stymied.[472]

The supposition that deviance played a role in drawing attention to Christianity does not necessarily mean that we need to imagine Christianity fueling the sort of nationalistic movement that has inspired skepticism in recent scholarship.[473] In fact, it is possible that the so-called "Christian terrorist" was invented by the government; that persecution itself radicalized Christians.[474] After all, the major Christian instructors in Alexandria prior to the first imperially-mandated persecution (that of Septimius Severus) were so-called gnostics who were allegedly

---

[472] Fox, 442. On the possibility that accusations might have been inspired by personal enmity or rivalry, consider, for instance, the mid-second century trial of Ptolemaeus in Rome. Ptolemaeus, whose name suggests an Egyptian origin, had instructed an unnamed woman of apparently elite or semi-elite status on the subject of Christianity. She attempted to divorce her husband, who had gone to Alexandria. Her husband retaliated by accusing both her and Ptolemaeus of being Christians. Ptolemaeus was condemned to execution (Justin, 2.2). Cooper, 28. On a similar scenario involving Peter of Alexandria, see Vivian, 44. Alternatively, Christianity might have functioned as an "escape hatch" for elites suffering from social pressure, providing an outlet for frustrated interests, not unlike certain philosophical circles and the cult of Isis. See Brown, *Eye*, 46; Toner, *Popular*, 174-75. In light of the below discussion of apocalyptic literature, it is worth noting that millennial aspirations might have reflected a longing for "escape hatch" on an extreme scale. If the destruction of texts containing so-called prophecies and the prosecution of the individuals who patronized oracles and astrologers are any indication, the Roman government perceived such activity as potentially treasonous. On this topic, see below.

[473] For instance, E. A. E. Reymond and J. W. B. Barns, eds., "Introduction," in *Four Martyrdoms from the Pierpont Morgan Coptic Codices* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), 5-6. If Christianity was an outlet for anti-Roman sentiments, and if Egypt really resented Roman rule, then Egypt should have been a hotbed of anti-Roman Christian sentiment. But residents of Egypt had a vested interest in supporting pagan institutions even when these had imperialistic implications, since cities and elites competed for prestige and imperial favors. That being said, despite the severity of the persecutions in Egypt when conducted under imperial mandate (see the below discussion regarding the persecution of Christians in the Thebaid in the early fourth century), there appears to have been little interest in persecuting Christians in Egypt except in association with an imperial mandate. For the legend that the apostle Mark was martyred in Alexandria see the previous chapter. On skepticism regarding Septimius Severus' role in the early third century persecution see Barnes, "Pre-Decian," 526. Regarding the so-called persecution that broke out a year prior to the persecution performed under Decius (Euseb., *Hist. eccl.* 6.41), Fox speculates that the person responsible for directing hostilities towards the Christians was a prophet associated with the interpretation of oracles. Fox further speculates that Christians suffered from resentment over tax reforms. Fox, 451-54. In light of the fifth chapter's arguments regarding Egyptian-Roman relations and Christian attitudes towards non-Greco-Romans, it seems safest to assume that we cannot exercise too much certainty about the function of pro-Egyptian or anti-Roman sentiment in early Christian activities.

[474] Or rather, accepting Moss' argument that the Christians exaggerated the persecution, the Roman officials were responsible for radicalizing the Christians *according to the Christians*. Given the role that the martyrs came to play in apocalyptic literature and conceptions of a final judgment (see below), one might even say that the government was accused of "weaponizing" the Christians: When martyrs sat in judgment of pagans at the end of times, no one would be to blame but the pagans themselves. On Christians exaggerating the persecution they faced under pagan emperors see Moss, *Myth*, 1-2, 203, 207; Middleton, 14-15; Castelli, 25.

critical of martyrdom.[475] To have a persecution one needs martyrs. To have martyrs, one needs the pro-martyrdom rhetoric of a man like Clement of Alexandria who, coincidentally, was in Alexandria when the persecution under Severus broke out.

Justifying Persecution, Facing Arrest, and Enduring the Joys of Incarceration

So how did a fellow like Clement of Alexandria justify persecution? He denied that God wanted to see Christians suffer, but insisted that this suffering had been foretold (Clem. Al., *Strom*. 4.11), the implication being that suffering was a precondition of salvation. In both the Christian martyrologies and the Greco-Roman novels, suffering was presented as a sort of test. In a somewhat circular fashion, Christians claimed that martyrdom existed so that Christians would have martyrs, suffering and death serving as a reward for adherence.[476] Such an onerous fate functioned as a reward in the sense that it allowed a martyr to imitate Jesus' sacrifice.[477] It secured salvation for the martyr and possibly others, fulfilled prophecy, and constituted proof for the validity of Christianity.[478] Similarly, some of the Greco-Roman novels claimed that the suffering of the protagonists had been predicted beforehand (Heliod., *Aeth.* 10.41; Xenophon, *Ephes*. 1.6) and implied that suffering was necessary in order to justify the reward that, as in the Christian martyrologies,

---

[475] Epiphanius of Salamis, *Panarion* 24.4,1-2; 31.21,2; Frend, *Martyrdom*, 180-83; Moss, *Ancient*, 157-60.

[476] Eusebius, *De martyribus Palaestinae* 13.9.

[477] Origen, *Ex. m.* 30, 35. On the potency of the sacrificial paradigm in paganism, Judaism, and Christianity see Ra'ana Boustan, "Confounding Blood: Jewish Narratives of Sacrifice and Violence in Late Antiquity," in Knust, 265. For attempts to sacrifice the heroines of the Greco-Roman novels see Ach. Tat. 3.20-21; Xenophon, *Ephes.* 2.13; Heliod., *Aeth.* 9.24, 10.7, 10.17-19.

[478] Clem. Al., *Strom.* 4.11; Origen, *Ex. m.* 6, 30; Tertullian, *De fuga in persecutione* 2; Lactant., *Div. inst.* 5.22; Cathryn Chew, "The Representation of Violence in the Greek Novels and Martyr Accounts," in *The Ancient Novel and Beyond*, ed. Stelios Panayotakis, Maaike Zimmerman, and Wytse Keulen (Boston: Brill, 2003), 131-32.

resulted in union with the beloved.[479] While the novels did not present this suffering as proof of paganism's validity *per se*,[480] the narratives often concluded with the protagonists thanking one or more deities for bringing an end to the protagonists' troubles.[481]

By comparison, Greco-Roman pagan philosophers made little effort to justify suffering. According to Cicero (106-43 BCE), wise men should never let themselves become disturbed by suffering, and the latter is not in and of itself an evil.[482] Theoretically, this perspective obviates the need for an explanation altogether. Yet the value of an explanation was alarmingly evident to the Christians who were faced with persecution, since suffering interpreted as a sign of divine disfavor or weakness could be taken as a reason to commit apostasy.[483]

The Greco-Roman novels,[484] real-world legal petitions from Roman-era Egypt,[485] and, more rarely, Christian martyrologies (Euseb., *De mar. Pal.* 11.2),

---

[479] Konstan, "Novel," 187; Judith Perkins, *The Suffering Self: Pain and Narrative Representation in the Early Christian Era* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 15-76. The Greco-Roman novels also blamed suffering on conniving foes and sometimes dropped vague hints about various misdeeds on the protagonists' part, implying that suffering was a form of punishment. For instance, the heroine in Achilles Tatius' novel consented to premarital sex but seemed to redeem herself for this indiscretion when she later resisted an attempted assault (Ach. Tat. 2.24, 6.18-20).

[480] Recall the argument, mentioned above, regarding the possibility that Xenophon of Ephesus's novel was intended to serve as propaganda for the cult of Isis. See Kee, 193. Also consider a statement in one of the novels indicating that troubles were either a sign that the protagonists were cursed or that the gods were forcing the protagonists to face adversity so that the gods could save them (Heliod., *Aeth.* 8.10). Elsewhere, a character stated that the oracles foreshadowing adversity were signs of the gods' will and should be heeded for that reason (Heliod., *Aeth.* 4.13).

[481] Chariton, *De Chaerea et Callirhoe* 8.8; Xenophon, *Ephes.* 5.15.

[482] Wise men should never let themselves become disturbed (Cicero, *Tusculanae disputationes* 3.7 [15]), thus suffering is not an evil (4.27 [59]).

[483] Clem. Al., *Strom.* 4.8; Origen, *Ex. m.* Also see Oliver Nicholson, "Preparation for Martyrdom in the Early Church," in Twomey, 78; Kofsky, 221.

[484] Though it is worth noting that the absence of an explanation heightens the sense of anxiety and makes the happy ending all the sweeter.

[485] Legal petitions often complained that the petitioner did not know why he/she had been attacked, even though he/she knew the supposed attacker, was sometimes even related to the attacker, and an unmentioned but obvious economic motive existed. The claim to ignorance appears to have been a rhetorical strategy meant to shift

sometimes admitted that a person might not always be able to find an explanation for suffering. Claims like this appear to have functioned as pleas for pity from the audience and were thus a far-cry from pagan philosophical discourse that discouraged lamentation. To the extent that an audiences' empathy is contingent upon the protagonists of a narrative appearing blameless,[486] a disavowal of knowledge regarding the source of a person's suffering could be a useful rhetorical ploy, but this does not undermine the possibility that such language was occasionally a genuine expression of feeling, reflecting a true sense of despair in the face of what seemed to be inexplicable woes. Researchers who study disaster and grief in a modern setting argue that psychological health depends in part upon the generation of explanations for suffering.[487] By providing a collection of all-encompassing explanations for persecution[488] and by rarely resorting to the argument that this suffering might be

---

the burden of an explanation onto the defendant, to establish that the victim was free of responsibility, and to make the victim seem more pitiable and therefore deserving of assistance. Bryen, 95.

[486] Arist., *Rh.* 2.8.1-4. Also see Konstan, *Pity*, 30; Stephanie Echols and Joshua Correll, "It's More than Skin Deep: Empathy and Helping Behavior across Social Groups," in Decety, 59.

[487] Tellingly, a search for an explanation was common in ancient discourse regarding the responses to disasters such as earthquakes. See Toner, *Disasters*, 157-58.

[488] When not attributing persecution to a divine plan meant to secure salvation, Christians sometimes blamed the devil, but since an all-powerful God should be able to avert a devil's machinations, this explanation could be problematic. Christians also blamed heretics, suggesting that persecution was a form of divine punishment for permitting the growth of internal disputes (Euseb., *Hist. eccl.* 4.7.1-2; 8.1.7). Also see Timothy Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1981), 136, 162. For examples of Christian executions interrupted by divine intervention (or coincidences narrated to look like divine intervention) consider: Wild animals miraculously prevented from attacking several Christians from Egypt condemned to the beasts in Tyre (Euseb., *Hist. eccl.* 8.6.10-8.7.6) and a rain shower that doused a fire intended for the execution of some Thebans (*Hist. mon.* 19.7-8). Cf. Heliodorus' novel, where a heroine condemned to a pyre eagerly sought out the flames, only to find them miraculously receding (Heliod., *Aeth.* 8.9). Modern researchers continue to quibble over the psychological impact of notions regarding divine punishment. Psychological health can be adversely can be affected by the attribution of personal suffering to divine punishment. However, this sort of explanation endows trauma with some meaning, which is in of itself useful to recovery. Proactive measures taken after a calamity also contribute to recovery. See Judith Hays and Cristina Hendrix, "The Role of Religion in Bereavement," in *Handbook of Bereavement Research and Practice: Advances in Theory and Intervention*, eds. Margaret Stroebe, Robert Hansson, Henk Schut, and Wolfgang Stroebe (Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association, 2008), 329; Toner, *Disasters*, 157-58. By attributing persecution to human sin, Christians were giving themselves an area in which they could address the problem (of persecution) proactively, by avoiding so-called heresy, for instance. This strategy also gave Christians a scapegoat. It was not *their* sins that led to persecution, but the sins of others. For a discussion of these issues with regard to the persecution of Jews under Trajan see Boyarin, 26-27.

inexplicable, Christian thinkers no doubt performed a critical function by bolstering the faith of Christians during particularly trying times.

It was not a given, however, that a Christian would have to choose between apostasy and death.[489] A letter from early fourth century Oxyrhynchus reports that the sender, who appears to have been a Christian, appointed someone to act on his behalf in court. Scholars have interpreted this statement to mean that an appointee was needed by the Christian letter-writer principally in connection with the sacrifice required in association with all court-related business at the time.[490] When workarounds like this could not be found, or seemed untenable for ethical reasons,[491] Christians could also flee, though this practice was subject to criticism from pagans, like Celsus,[492] and particularly zealous Christians.[493] Dionysius of Alexandria, far from condemning flight, claimed that the people who fled during the persecution carried out under Decius faced such terrible perils—including starvation, illness, bad weather, wild animals, robbery, and enslavement—that flight itself was a form of

---

[489] Christians who encouraged flight from persecution seem to have been responding in part to a realization that, zealous though a person might be, confrontation with authorities carried with it the risk of apostasy. Stories circulated about Christians who were so eager for martyrdom that they actively sought it out, only to commit apostasy when faced with the threat of death. On this situation in Smyrna see Euseb., *Hist. eccl.* 4.15.7-8; Nicholson, 70-75. Cf. *Paralipomena* 5 [8-11]. For an introduction to the latter text see chapter five. In some cases, an eagerness for martyrdom seems to have reflected guilt over prior lapses, with Christians provoking authorities in order to make up for former acts of apostasy. See Fox, 443. Peter of Alexandria's Canons indicate that the people who went to such lengths need not offer any penance before being readmitted into the Church (Pet. Al., *Canons* 8).

[490] *P.Oxy*. XII 1495; Luijendijk notes that the sender of this letter might not have realized that other Christians were critical of workarounds like this. See the following footnote and Luijendijk, "Papyri," 357-363. On efforts to bar Christians from appearing on their own behalf in court Lactant., *De mort. pers.* 13.

[491] Peter of Alexandria addressed the problem of Christians who got around the requirement for sacrifice by appointing someone to act on their behalf. Interestingly, in light of the above discussion regarding the socioeconomic aspects of persecution, Peter was much harsher on Christians who imposed upon their servants for this task than he was on Christians who enlisted the aid of pagans. Pet. Al., *Canons* 5, 7; Vivian, 199n3.

[492] Origen, *Con. Cels.* 2.9. Cf. Clem. Al., *Strom*. 4.10. Also see Lucy Grig, *Making Martyrs in Late Antiquity* (London: Duckworth, 2004), 19; Moss, *Ancient,* 145-57. Interest in the motif of flight is suggested by references in the Greco-Roman novels to servants who flee rather than face torture (Ach. Tat. 2.25-28, 7.10) and to philosophers who consider fleeing when persecuted by corrupt emperors (Philostr., *VA* 7.7-14).

[493] See chapter four for the response of Melitius to Christians who fled persecution.

persecution.[494] Fear that a congregation would crumble without leadership, even if this was leadership from afar, might have motivated the flight of men like Peter I (patriarch 300-311), the patriarch of Alexandria who was martyred during the early fourth century persecution but was harshly criticized for apparently abandoning Alexandria in his attempt to avoid this fate.[495]

How far was a person supposed to go to avoid martyrdom? He was not, in fact, supposed to resist arrest, as Dionysius of Alexandria's own confrontation with the authorities demonstrated (Euseb., *Hist. eccl.* 6.41.4-9). Interestingly, his tale provides some confirmation for the degree to which the plight of a Christian faced with arrest might have excited the interest and even the support of observers. Like the hero of Achilles Tatius' novel, who was saved from false arrest by a spontaneously gathered crowd (Ach. Tat. 7.16), Dionysius inspired local support, when some of the inhabitants of the village where he happened to be staying attempted to intervene on his behalf, supposedly against his wishes, to prevent him from being carried off by the police (Euseb., *Hist. eccl.* 6.41.4-9). Perhaps Dionysius benefitted from already existing friction between police and locals, friction that can also be seen in police

[494] Euseb., *Hist. eccl.* 6.42.1-4. When Dionysius was criticized by other Christians for his own flight, he defended himself by insisting that he had not really fled: at first he refused to leave home at all and then, when he did leave, he was saved from arrest through no effort of his own (Euseb., *Hist. eccl.* 6.41). Antony the Great's hagiographer went to similar lengths to protect Antony from any accusations of cowardice. Allegedly, Antony escaped imperial attention during the early fourth persecution solely through divine will, for when the desert father went to Alexandria to comfort the Christians who had been arrested, he went out of his way to wear clothing meant to catch the eye of the persecutors. Supposedly, God spared the renowned monk Antony the Great from arrest so that the desert father could continue his leadership activities (*Vita Antonii* 46).

[495] Fox, 455. Of course, the flight of the Christian leadership left an opening for men like Origen, who assumed responsibility for Christian instruction when everyone else, including Clement, fled Alexandria during the early third century persecution (Euseb., *Hist. eccl.* 6.3.1), and Melitius (see chapter four), who rose to leadership after Peter's flight a century later. Note that Peter forbade the criticism of flight (Pet. Al., *Canons* 13). On Peter's career, including his flight and martyrdom, see Vivian, 8-86. That Melitius received so much support in his rivalry with Peter suggests that flight was resented by a number of Christians who perceived it as cowardice or, perhaps, a luxury of the wealthy. Intriguing as this argument is, Griggs points out that there is no documentary support for it. See C. Wilfred Griggs, *Early Egyptian Christianity: From Its Origins to 451 C.E.* (New York: Brill, 1991), 90.

records and petitions from Roman Egypt.[496] Although the police were usually recruited from the local population, and therefore should have been somewhat sensitive to local interests, critics complained about police corruption and the undue influence of powerful magnates.[497]

Once arrested, a Christian would have been taken to prison. Unlike today, prison was rarely used for punishment. Prisons were predominately occupied by people awaiting trial. Unfortunately, delays were common, and actual prison conditions were notoriously bad. Christian and non-Christian sources complained about inmates suffering from torture, food shortages, lack of space, and inadequate light and air.[498] According to Dionysius of Alexandria, conditions were so grave that imprisonment alone drove many would-be martyrs to commit apostasy (Euseb., *Hist. eccl.* 6.41.13). For sustenance and companionship, prisoners often had to rely upon the support of visiting friends and family who, in turn, suffered anxiety and deprivation of income through the incarceration of a potential wage-earner (Lib., *Or.* 45.9-15).

---

[496] Sofia Tovar, "Violence in the Process of Arrest and Imprisonment in Late Antique Egypt," in *Violence in Late Antiquity: Perceptions and Practices*, ed. H. A. Drake (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2006), 104-108. Cf. Lib., *Or*. 45.6.

[497] Ach. Tat. 6.5, 7.1; Lib., *Or*. 45.13; Tovar, 108-12; Bryen, 48-49, Bagnall, "Army," 77; Deborah Hobson, "The Impact of Law on Village Life in Roman Egypt," in *Law, Politics and Society in the Ancient Mediterranean World*, eds. Baruch Halpern and Deborah Hobson (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), 193-219. On Ptolemaic practices see John Bauschatz, *Law and Enforcement in Ptolemaic Egypt* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013). On pre-Ptolemaic practices see Bagnall, "Army," 67; Tyldesley, 47-59; C. J. Eyre, "Crime and Adultery in Ancient Egypt," *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 70 (1984): 92-105.

[498] Euseb., *Hist. eccl.* 5.1. 2; Lib., *Or*. 45.8-15; Tovar, 105n11, 107; Cécile Bertrand-Dagenbach, *Carcer: Prison et Privation de liberté dans l'Antiquité classique: Actes du Colloque de Strasbourg (5 et 6 décembre 1997)* (Paris: De Boccard, 1999); Jens-Uew Krause, *Gefängnisse im römischen Reich* (Stuttgart: F. Steiner, 1996). Cf. Bauschatz, 222, 252-54. For problems in modern prisons see for instance Yvonne Jewkes, ed., "Introduction," in *Handbook on Prisons* (Portland, Oregon: Willan Publishing, 2007), xxiv; Ben Crewe, "The Sociology of Imprisonment," in Jewkes, 134.

These drawbacks aside, imprisonment appears to have generated a deviant allure.[499] It was a popular theme in Greco-Roman novels. Here, the prisoners were frequently visited by lovers and friends, a motif that also popped up in Christian hagiographies and pagan diatribes.[500] Some martyrologies suggest that visitors were drawn by the hope that a soon-to-be martyred Christian might grant the visitors forgiveness of their sins. This notion appears to have taken Dionysius of Alexandria and Peter of Alexandria by surprise, though neither condemned it, apparently realizing that it would be foolhardy to deny the allure exercised by prisoners.[501] After all, these incarcerated Christians possessed so much charisma that they were supposedly converting pagan visitors who were actually coming to jeer at them (*Hist. mon.* 19.2-12).

In recognition, perhaps, of the fascination inspired by incarceration and out of annoyance with the psychological and physical support which the visitors were rendering to the prisoners—thereby strengthening the resolve of Christians endeavoring to avoid apostasy—imperial authorities sought to stop visitors from attending to the needs of imprisoned Christians.[502] I came across no records of prison

---

[499] Similarly, today, prison motifs appear in popular songs, movies, and television shows, without, it seems, evoking much interest in improving prison conditions. Crewe, 146n1; Jewkes, xxv.

[500] Ach. Tat. 6.14; Xenophon, *Ephes.* 2.7; Heliod., *Aeth.* 8.9; *Vita Antonii* 46; Luc., *De mort. Peregr.* 11-13. Cf. Philostr., *VA* 7.27. On the efforts of Christians to look after the incarcerated, even those not incarcerated for adherence to Christianity, see Tovar, 109-10.

[501] Dionysius and Peter struggled over this threat to the patriarch's authority. Euseb., *Hist. eccl.* 6.42.5; Pet. Al., *Canons* 5; Vivian, 148-57, 167-68.

[502] Euseb., *Hist. eccl.* 7.11.25, 10.8.11; Euseb., *De mar. Pal.* 7.1. But imprisoned Christians could obtain psychological support from their fellow inmates as well. Writing from prison, Phileas boasted that his prisoners continued to encourage one another in the maintenance of their faith (Euseb., *Hist. eccl.* 8.10.9-11). See Fox, 449. Note, however, Eusebius' complaint that Christians were being mixed together with common criminals (Euseb., *Hist. eccl.* 8.6.9). Depending on their resources, Christians might use the time in other profitable ways. Pamphilus, Eusebius' mentor, utilized his time in prison to correct a text written by Origen. Fox, 471. To be sure, Peter of Alexandrian declared that Christians who committed apostasy after imprisonment without suffering torture (though depriving inmates of adequate food, air, and light would certainly fall under the "low impact" forms of torture recognized by some today; see below for the modern debate over the definition of torture) had to perform

riots conducted in association with the persecutions in Egypt, but visitors do appear to have caused occasional trouble. According to a tenth century martyrology of Peter, a crowd surrounding the jail so frightened the jailers that they had to sneak Peter out in order to execute him.[503] In reality, Peter's guards probably did not have to go such extreme lengths. Yet this tale suggests that, like today,[504] some degree of complicity between prisoner and guard might have been required to maintain order in a prison. This problem would have been mitigated in antiquity by chaining, starving, and otherwise incapacitating inmates,[505] but authorities confronted by a daunting stream of interfering visitors would have had a vested interest in moving inmates out of prison and onto trial. Unfortunately, the courtroom battle posed its own set of problems.

The Trial

A great deal of scholarship has gone into addressing the authenticity of the trial-related content of the martyrologies.[506] Like the *Acta Alexandrinorum*, many of the martyrologies adopt a question-and-answer format that suggests that they were based on actual trial records. Scholars debate how well such records would have been

---

four years of penance before being readmitted into the Church, explaining his decision by pointing out that inmates could at least enjoy the comfort of socializing with other Christians (Pet. Al., *Canons* 2). Cf. Heliod., *Aeth.* 8.9. One wonders if Peter's position would have changed after he was imprisoned, especially if it is true that he had to share a cell with Melitius, a rival (Epiph., *Pan.* 68.3.2-4).

[503] *History of the Patriarchs of the Coptic Church of Alexandria*, 2:131. Monks visiting an imprisoned fellow monk posed such a problem for Theophilus, a fourth century patriarch of Egypt, that Theophilus released the imprisoned monk. Sozomen, *Historia ecclesiastica* 8.12. Cf. *Hist. mon.* 8.10-13. See chapter six for discussion of prison breaks as a *topos*. In light of the below discussion regarding tours of hell, consider stories of Jesus' visit to hell and his offer of a reprieve to the inmates in the context of a prison break.

[504] Crewe, 124-25.

[505] Moreira, 53.

[506] For recent discussions of this issue see Moss, *Ancient*, 15-16; Grig, 146-47; Barnes, *Early*, 343-59.

kept and whether or not Christians would have had access to them.[507] Regardless of one's position on the matter, it is clear that references to actual court records would have bolstered the authority of a text. Surely Dionysius of Alexandria had this in mind when he referred to the records that were made in connection with his own trial, though presumably he could have relied on his own memory to report on the incident.[508]

An appeal to trial records also served to whet the audience's appetite for the spectacle of a courtroom drama. Like today, courtroom dramas were very popular in antiquity, appearing in Greco-Roman novels, biographies of philosophers, the *Acta* of the apostles, and even the satires of Lucian.[509] Given the self-help nature of Roman justice and the plethora of legal documents found in Egypt, this interest in trial proceedings is not surprising. In antiquity, injured parties often had to submit petitions to prompt police and government officials to take action, and multiple petitions sometimes had to be submitted to generate a response. Moreover, interested parties frequently had to represent themselves in court. Thus, it was in the interests of petitioners to be aware of the law, especially as they might not able to rely on the legal knowledge of the official who eventually heard their case. It was also in the petitioners' interests to collect documents supporting their case and to ensure that these items reflected a narrative that was in their favor, even if that meant rearranging

[507] David Potter, "Performance, Power, and Justice in the High Empire," in Slater, 145-51; Ruth Webb, "Rhetoric and the Novel: Sex, Lies and Sophistic," in Worthington, 532; Nicholson, 62-63; Barnes, *Early*, 55-58, 149; Harker, 100-12; Reymond, 9-10.

[508] Euseb., *Hist. eccl.* 7.11.6. On the trustworthiness of memory see the following chapter.

[509] Chariton, 3.4, 5.4-6.7; Ach. Tat. 7.7-8.19; Xenophon, *Ephes.* 4.2; Longus, *Daphnis et Chloe* 2.15-17; Heliod., *Aeth.* 1.13, 8.9; Philostr., *VA* 7.16-20; Harker, 155-59; Lucian, *Revivescentes sive Piscator*. Cf. Lichtheim, *Maat*, 42.

or misplacing certain items of evidence.[510] These petitioners certainly had the wherewithal to judge the authenticity and quality of a legal drama.

Yet a person did not need personal experience with courtroom procedure in order to judge courtroom rhetoric. Training in rhetoric was essential to the lives of higher status men, for whom it played a pivotal role in political life and functioned as a vehicle for competition.[511] Students in Roman Egypt were trained with sample court cases from rhetorical handbooks and were judged for the quality of their arguments, public performances of mock courtroom speeches being very well-attended.[512]

So what did it take to satisfy such a savvy audience's taste for courtroom scenes? Despite the Egyptian setting, these martyrologies rarely introduced local color in the form of references to traditional Egyptian paganism.[513] Instead, the martyrologies showed a bias towards elitist forms of discourse that would have appealed to relatively high status Greco-Roman audiences. They employed rhetoric reminiscent of the apologies,[514] thereby appealing to the audience's hunger for witty

---

[510] Jill Harries, *Law and Empire in Late Antiquity* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 54; Joëlle Beaucamp, "Aristocratic Landholding and the Economy of Byzantine Egypt," *Egypt in the Byzantine World, Between Tradition and Innovation*, ed. Roger Bagnall (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 271-87; Bryen, 47; Hobson, 195, 215; Dennis Kehoe, "Law and Social Formation in the Roman Empire," in Peachin, 155; Ari Bryen, "Judging Empire: Courts and Culture in Rome's Eastern Provinces," *Law and History Review* 30 (2012): 777. Cf. Tyledesley, 140.

[511] Martine Cuypers, "Historiography, Rhetoric, and Science: Rethinking a Few Assumptions on Hellenistic Prose," in Clauss, 325; Joseph Roisman, "Rhetoric, Manliness and Contest," in Worthington, 391; George Kennedy, *Classical Rhetoric and Its Christian and Secular Tradition from Ancient to Modern Times* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1980); George Kennedy, *Greek Rhetoric under Christian Emperors* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983).

[512] Maud Gleason, "Elite Male Identity in the Roman Empire," in Potter, 81; Harker, 166; Rafaella Cribriore, *Gymnastics of the Mind: Greek Education in Hellenistic and Roman Egypt* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001).

[513] The supposed trial transcript of an Alexandrian tried in Rome is an exception, deriding the Egyptians worship of a footbath, an onion, and animals (*Martyrdom of Apollonius*, 10-19).

[514] Apologetic discourse rather resembles the defense that one might mount in court. See Frances Young, "Greek Apologists of the Second Century, in Edwards, 91. For an example of an apparent crossover between the martyrologies and the apologies see, for instance, Phileas' response to a question about how Jesus could have been crucified if he is really God (*Acts of Phileas, Papyrus Bodmer XX*, 6).

courtroom repartee, as demonstrated by the courtroom scenes in the Greco-Roman novels and the biographies of holy men like Apollonius of Tyana.[515] Some martyrologists appear to have gone so far as to exaggerate their chosen martyr's skills in rhetoric. A comparison of two fourth century accounts describing the trial of Phileas, a bishop from Thebes martyred during the early fourth century persecution, demonstrates this sort of manipulation. In the earlier version, based perhaps on verbatim notes from the trial, Phileas lacked the rhetorical panache that he exhibited in the later text, where his performance appears to have been enhanced by a martyrologist seeking to impress the audience.[516]

Unfortunately, there was more to a trial than rhetoric. Torture was considered a pivotal part of the legal process. Though the acceptability of torture is debated today,[517] it was a customary part of trial procedure in antiquity, where it was used to elicit information and confessions from lower status individuals and was applied to higher status individuals when protocols were violated by overly zealous officials or

---

[515] Philostr., *VA* 8.4; Ach. Tat. 7.7-8.19. Also see Saul Lieberman, "Roman Legal Institutions in Early Rabbinics and in the Acta Martyrum," *The Jewish Quarterly Review* 35 (1944): 25-26; Webb, "Rhetoric," 532.

[516] Nobbs, 94-95; Barnes, *Early*, 142-46.

[517] The definitions of both torture and violence are debated. An overly broad definition would require the condemnation of otherwise legal forms of interrogation and punishment. When something is called "violence," this implies that the behavior in question has crossed the line into improper behavior. Yet the recognition of a particular behavior as "violence" is also dependent on the actor. The state might be allowed to do things that private citizens are not allowed to do. The debate over the definition of torture involves questions such as: Is physical pain required, or does psychological trauma qualify? How severe must the effects be? Stewart, *Violence*, 3; See Schulz, 6-7. For a further introduction to this issue see Patrick Tolan, "Understanding Violence." In *The Cambridge Handbook of Violent Behavior and Aggression*, eds. Daniel Flannery, Alexander Vazsonyi, and Irwin Waldman (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 5-18; Bryen, *Violence*, 66-76. Some definitions of "torture" and "violence" hinge on whether or not the activity is permitted by law. See Shelby Brown, "Death as Decoration: Scenes from the Arena on Roman Domestic Mosaics," in *Pornography and Represenation in Greece and Rome*, ed. Amy Richlin (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 181. This approach obscures the degree to which the justice of the actions is subject to controversy. It is my contention is that both "torture" and "violence" are always considered undesirable by the recipient (see Bryen, *Violence*, 24; thus I exclude consensual role-playing) and always constructed (relying on narratives for articulation). See Stuart Carroll, ed., "Introduction," in *Cultures of Violence: Interpersonal Violence in Historical Perspective* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2007), 10. This should not be taken to as a rejection of efforts to devise standards by which the perpetrators of such crimes can be prosecuted. Debates over the definition of violence constitute the construction of the line between proper and improper behavior in a society. Stewart, *Violence*, 3.

when an accusation of treason was involved. Torture as both an interrogation method[518] and as a means of execution[519] figured in the trials of many Christians from Egypt.

Yet early Christian martyrologists tended to conflate the stages of torture and execution, treating torment inflicted for the purposes of interrogation as though it was indistinguishable from torture applied for the purposes of execution. Differences between these stages were obscured in some accounts by the absence of explicit questioning. There was, of course, an implied question about the validity of the Christian faith, to which the martyr's endurance of pain and/or death was thought to be the response.[520] By ignoring how martyrologists were conflating the stages of torture and execution, scholarship on the subject reintroduces this implied question and tacitly suggests that martyrdom actually constituted testimony as to the validity of Christianity. For Eusebius, however, this conflation seems to have been a deliberate

---

[518] See, for instance, two cases where torture was not applied (Euseb., *Hist. eccl.* 6.41.19-20, 7.11) and a case where it was applied (Euseb., *De mar. Pal.* 11.7-13). On the reliability of the last account see Erica Carotenuto, "Five Egyptians Coming from Jerusalem: Some Remarks on Eusebius, *De martyribus Palestinae* 11.6-13," *The Classical Quarterly* 52 (2002): 500-506. Some scholars argue that the use of torture on Christians violated normal procedure, for the pain was meant to force a recantation of Christianity rather than a confession. See for example Harries, 126; Grig, 69. Yet, if charged merely for being Christian (a charge which scholars continue to debate) Pliny the Younger's letter to Trajan (Pliny, *Letters* 10.96-97) demonstrates that torture was meant to force *accused* Christians to admit their guilt and to force *confessed* Christians to admit the truth of their crimes (baby-killing, for one) and perhaps also the weakness of Christian doctrine. If charged merely with a refusal to sacrifice, then the use of torture to compel sacrifice was an interrogation to confirm this refusal. Ignoring the interrogative nature of torture suggests a Christian bias, namely an effort to demonize the court (by removing any reason for the torture and thus suggesting a descent into senseless cruelty) and a modern Western bias against the validity of torture as courtroom evidence. For the debate over what the Christians were charged for, see for instance, Maria-Zoe Petropoulou, *Animal Sacrifice in Ancient Greek Religion, Judaism, and Christianity, 100 BC-AD 200* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 261.

[519] It might be argued that any means of execution is a form of torture and that the designation of certain modes of execution as *torture*—that is, beyond acceptable standards—reflects a modern Western bias. Consider the case of Christians from Thebes who faced either decapitation or the sundering of their limbs (Euseb., *Hist. eccl.* 8.9). Should only victims of the latter be considered victims of torture? Eusebius did not distinguish between the two modes of violence.

[520] Questioning is implied in Dionysius of Alexandria's account of the persecution conducted under Decius (Euseb., *Hist. eccl.* 6.41.13-22). Although Eusebius' description of the martyrdom of Thebans in the early fourth century persecution does not specify that questions were put to the martyrs who suffered torture, questions are alluded to with regard to the Christians who escaped torture (Euseb., *Hist. eccl.* 8.9.5-8).

attempt to confuse the audience regarding a disparity in the treatment of Christians. When giving eyewitness testimony regarding the early fourth century persecution in Egypt, Eusebius moved seamlessly between Thebans who were scraped with shells until they died (an interrogation technique, perhaps, that was carried too far), Thebans who had their limbs torn apart, Thebans who were decapitated, and finally Thebans who were tortured in what must have been an interrogation, for these Thebans responded to the torture by declaring themselves Christian and only then did they receive death sentences (Euseb., *Hist. eccl.* 8.9). By conflating these punishments, Eusebius downplayed the differences between, on the one hand, lower status martyrs who were subjected to torture during interrogation and execution, and, on the other hand, higher status martyrs (like the bishop Phileas mentioned above) who appear to have been spared torture during interrogation and were killed using more direct methods that did not involve prolonged torment. Eusebius no doubt feared that this disparity might lead an audience to admire lower status martyrs over the Church leaders, and sought to redress this by conflating different kinds of violence. Eusebius also appears to have simply placed less stock in the sort of testimony that was offered via the endurance of pain, preferring the sort of rhetorically sophisticated *verbal* testimony offered by a person who was not liable to torture, like Phileas.[521] Taking a different tack, the later Christian martyrologists edited the accounts preserved in Eusebius to indicate that torture was in fact inflicted upon higher status individuals,

[521] Chesnut, 87. Note that Dionysius of Alexandria does not appear to have been tortured (Euseb., *Hist. eccl.* 7.11) but he praised a Christian who fell victim to torture (during the persecution under Decius) and who was suppposedly released by the judge on account, first, of his clever responses to the questioning, and second, his young age (Euseb., *Hist. eccl.* 6.41.19-20). Persons under the age of fourteen were actually supposed to be exempt from torture (*Digest* 48.18.10). One wonders if this provision applied to the boy in Dionysius' story. Sozomen indicated that testimony offered in the form of a refusal to heed the judge's demands despite the application of torture was especially suited for those who were not gifted in the use of rhetoric (Sozom., *Hist. eccl.* 1.1).

including Phileas and Apollonius, the Alexandrian mentioned above who was martyred in Rome during the reign of Commodus.[522]

In keeping with the fascination with violence seen in these later martyrologies, scholarship as of late has been very taken by the notion that pain was a vehicle for truth. The knowledge that is gained through violence supposedly carries a higher valence than other forms of knowledge. Insofar as this has implications for the character of the person experiencing pain, scholars have sought to reinterpret the martyrs' behavior as a form of weak-acting that transformed submission into a demonstration of power.[523] Both approaches overlook the existence of a debate in antiquity over the value of pain in producing testimony. Though some pagans and Christians seem to have believed that pain produced truth,[524] the issue was contested. Whereas Justin Martyr claimed that a (Christian) man can *only* face pain and death nobly if he is virtuous (and wise) (Justin, 2.12), Lucian claimed that a man (Peregrinus, for instance) can *seem* to face death and pain nobly when he is in fact a criminal suffering from a mental defect or is driven by a desire for glory (Luc., *De*

---

[522] *Martyrdom of Apollonius*, 43-47; Euseb., *Hist. eccl.* 5.21.3-4, 8.9.4-8; Musurillo, 103n200; *Acts of Phileas, Papyrus Bodmer XX*, 1. Rufinus, amending Eusebius' version of Phileas' letter, claimed that Christians were tortured prior to beheading, the mode of execution implying that the victims of this torture were elites. Rufinus of Aquileia, *Historia ecclesiastica* 8.10.

[523] Bernd Weisbrod, "Religious Languages of Violence. Some Reflections on the Reading of Extremes," in Carroll, 73; Brent Shaw, "Body/Power/Identity: Passions of the Martyrs," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 4 (1996): 269-312.

[524] Pain functions so powerfully as a medium for the communication of truth because, Scarry argues, the experience of somatic suffering carries special valence because it the sufferer cannot deny its reality. This is why pain is used as a method for obtaining "truth" in situations in which truth is uncertain. Thus, Scarry contends, pain functioned in the Old Testament as a confirmation for belief when doubts arose: when alienation from God gave rise to disbelief, pain made God present again. See Elaine Scarry, *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 27, 183, 201. Yet the experience of pain in of itself cannot be sufficient for the production of belief. Pain must be defined and interpreted via narration. Even if, as Scarry's argument suggests, the suffering of the martyrs made the victims' faith real to the victims themselves (that is, the victims had to suffer to believe, and this would work as long as one did not commit apostasy), this pain would not necessarily be interpreted in this way by observers. Consider the function of narrative in petitions submitted in Roman Egypt seeking redress for perceived injustices. The petitioners needed to define their experiences as unjust in order to secure support. See Bryen, *Violence*, 85.

mort. Peregr. 10, 27, 34). Even courtroom rhetors sometimes admitted that torture was not an infallible test of truth.[525] By privileging the claims of Christians like Justin Martyr, scholars stressing the "truth value" of torture ignore just how contested this was, thereby, again, tacitly suggesting that martyrdom really did constitute testimony as to the validity of Christianity.

But if pagans, Christians, and Jews were all capable of facing torture and dying nobly,[526] then the "truth value" of such evidence was clearly disputed: if only one faith can be "correct," and martyrs really do provide testimony as to the truth of their faith, then only one faith should be capable of producing martyrs. Admittedly, pagans had begun to question the value of the so-called martyrdoms of men like Socrates (d. 399 BCE) by the late first century.[527] Cicero scoffed that even an Egyptian pagan was capable of dying on account of religious principles, for the Egyptians were so superstitious that they preferred to suffer any pain rather than do harm to a sacred animal (Cic., *Tusc.* 5.78 [27]). The protagonists of the Greco-Roman novels were constantly threatening suicide or wishing they were dead, the frivolity of the context mocking (unconsciously or not) the willing sacrifices of the Christian martyrs.[528] And not everyone who committed suicide was as stoic or humble about his fate as Socrates. Criminals condemned to the arena sometimes killed themselves before arriving there. The gladiators seemed eager to die, but this was because they

---

[525] Quintillian, *Institutio oratoria* 5.3.1; *Rhetorica ad herennium* 2.10 (7).

[526] For Jewish models for martyrdom see Gruen, *Diaspora*, 54-83; Schäfer, 136-60; Boyarin, 92-96; Middleton, 106-15; Heyman, 175-93; Moss, *Myth*, 44-52; Moss, *Ancient*, 37-44; Harker, 151-55.

[527] Harker, 146. On Christians citing Socrates as a model for martyrdom see for instance *Martyrdom of Apollonius*, 36-42.

[528] In Petronius, the threat of suicide is clearly a joke (Petronius, *Satyrica* 94). Cf. Chariton, 1.5, 4.2-3, 5.10, 7.6; Xenophon, *Ephes.* 2.1, 3.5, 3.10, 4.5, 5.4, 5.8; Ach. Tat. 2.30, 3.16, 7.6; Heliod., *Aeth.* 2.1, 5.8.

were hoping to achieve fame.[529] By comparison, Christians condemned to the arena gave a poor show, for they lacked the training of the skilled gladiators[530] and refused to imitate the criminals who assumed costumes and performed in charades as part of their executions. This priggish behavior was, according to the martyrologies, evidence of a noble character.[531] But these so-called noble martyrs ran the risk of losing the attention of audience members attracted to spectacles and unaware, perhaps, of the defiance that had gone into producing a particular show.[532]

When it came to describing torture, Christian and non-Christian accounts were difficult to distinguish. Heroic victims, regardless of religion, were commonly impervious to pain. Even though the "truth value" of pain is heightened by proof of its severity as demonstrated by, for instance, signs of distress, since the wise (virtuous) man was not supposed to be susceptible to suffering (Cic., *Tusc.* 2.46-50 [19-21], 5.73 [26]), Christian and non-Christian victims were nigh on invincible,[533] refused to cry out,[534] and were cheerful in the face of death.[535] If anyone was

---

[529] For instance, Cic., *Tusc*. 2.17 (41); Seneca, *Epistles* 70.20, 22-3; Barton, "Savage," 44-48; Kyle, 86-87.

[530] Kyle, 248; Euseb., *De mar. Pal.* 8.1.2. Cf. Middleton, 76.

[531] The martyrologies do not specify the use of such ruses for the martyrs from Egypt, but knowledge of this practice must have undermined Christian claims as to bravery. See *Passio Sanctarum Perpetuae et Felicitatis* 18.

[532] Coleman, 44-73.

[533] A characteristic that invited the mockery of Plutarch. Plutarch, *Compendium argumenti Stoicos absurdiora poetis dicere* 1057 d-e.

[534] Note, however, the appearance of such cries in apocalyptic literature, demonstrating the comparative weakness of the victims of God's wrath. *The Apocalypse of Elijah: Based on P. Chester Beatty 2018: Coptic Text*, ed. Albert Pietersma, Susan Comstock and Harold Attridge (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1981), 8-9.

[535] Euseb., *De mar. Pal.* 10.1; *HE* 8.9.5, 8.10.4. Cf. *Martyrdom of Apollonius*, 29-35. The martyrologist's desire to emphasize the suffering of the martyr—so as to increase the valence of the truth which that suffering signified—competed with the desire to emphasize the voluntariness of this suffering, sometimes to the point of contradiction. For instance, when Pamphilus' servant was martyred, Eusebius claimed that he was tortured to the point of insensibility. Yet somehow his countenance still bore a cheerful mien (Euseb., *De mar. Pal.* 11.17-19). Compare to the smiling victims of execution in Livy 21.2; Josephus, *Bellum judaicum* 2.8.10, 3.7.33; Amm. Marc. 14.9.6.

susceptible to weakness, it was the judges and the executioners, who supposedly grew so weary that the heroes had to urge them on in the performance of their duties.[536] As for the torture itself, the more lurid Christian martyrologists, pagan historians, and Greco-Roman novelists provided long lists of torture methods, lest habituation to one or two methods dull the horror experienced by an audience clearly fascinated by these techniques.[537]

If there was so much overlap between Christian and non-Christian accounts of violence, where did the "truth value" of pain come in? It was in the specificity of the language regarding the damage inflicted upon the human body, with anatomical details as to just what parts of the body were injured and the severity of these injuries. If there was any "truth value" to pain, it was in the interests of the narrators to depict

---

[536] *Acts of Phileas, Papyrus Bodmer XX*, 11; Ach. Tat. 6.22. Cf. Euseb., *Hist. eccl.* 6.41.7, 8.9.4; Euseb., *De mar. Pal.* 11.14; Heliod., *Aeth.* 8.9. The eagerness of the Christians was such that they supposedly frightened the judges with their zeal (Euseb., *Hist. eccl.* 6.41.22). See below for discussion of the possibility that reluctance on the part of judges and torturers reflected genuine discomfort with their duties. Note, however, that another method for emphasizing the severity and thus the "truth value" of pain called for the suggestion that pain was being inflicted in new and therefore—given the ancient predilection for custom, as noted in the previous chapter—inappropriate ways. Other signs of excessive cruelty included the prevention of burial and evidence that judges or soldiers took pleasure from inflicting pain. Amm. Marc. 28.1.12; Euseb., *Hist. eccl.* 8.10.7, 8.12.7; Lactant., *De mort. pers.* 15, 22; Plutarch, *De cohibenda ira* 460 C; Seneca, *De ira* 2.5, 3.18; Suet., *Gaius* 11, 32; Suetonius, *Vitellius* 10; Cass. Dio 60.13; Livy 39.42.5; Valerius Maximus 2.9.3). As indicated above, older martyrologies were sometimes edited to specify that higher status individuals were indeed tortured, an act that constituted a perversion of tradition (Euseb., *Hist. eccl.* 10.8.14). Pagan historians likewise accused corrupt emperors of torturing high status individuals, perceiving such measures as evidence of a dangerous deviation from custom. Suet., *Gaius* 35; Amm. Marc. 26.10.9, 28.1.11, 28.1.24, 29.1.43-44. Cf. Philo, *In Flacc.* 78-80 528; Seneca, *Ira* 3.19. Martyrologists also described their persecutors as inhuman, bestial, or insane (Euseb., *Hist. eccl.* 8.9.1; Euseb., *De mar. Pal.* 13.6). These dispositions were frequently associated with excessive cruelty in pagan discourse. See Plass, 142-45; Konstan, *Pity*, 77. But see Daniel Baraz, *Medieval Cruelty: Changing Perceptions, Late Antiquity to the Early Modern Period* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003), 4-8, 36. Of course, Christians too, were accused of madness, and in antiquity the horrific nature of an act was not legally sufficient for erasing responsibility. One had to prove that a perpetrator had no knowledge regarding any details of the crime in order to prove that this person was unresponsible for his actions. If the perpetrator of a violent act was still sane when the early stages of rage took hold, some argued that the perpetrator should be considered guilty. See Konstan, "Rhetoric," 427-40; Peter Toohey, "Madness in the *Digest*," in *Mental Disorders in the Classical World*, ed. W. V. Harris (Boston: Brill, 2013), 441-60; Daniel Robinson, *Wild Beasts and Idle Humours: The Insanity Defense from Antiquity to the Present* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996), 19-32.

[537] Euseb., *Hist. eccl.* 8.14.13; Amm. Marc. 29.1.23-25; Ach. Tat. 6.22. The severity of pain could be further demonstrated by emphasizing the duration of the pain. Christians accused pagans of intentionally applying tortures that would keep the martyrs in agony for a prolonged period without killing them or causing them to pass out (Euseb., *Hist. eccl.* 8.8.2, 8.12.2; Lactant., *De mort. pers.* 21). A comparison of the passages regarding Potomaiena's death in Eusebius and Palladius reveal that latter went out of his way to emphasize the duration of her suffering (Euseb., *Hist. eccl.* 6.5; Pall., *LH* 3). Cf. Philo, *In Flacc.* 66-68 526-27; Amm. Marc. 21.16.9.

this violence as realistically as possible, "painting a picture," as the rhetorical handbooks put it, so as to secure the audience's attention and support.[538] The more detailed the violence, the better, with graphic descriptions of torture evoking physical reactions of disgust that would have alienated the audience from the perpetrators and encouraged sympathy for the victims.[539]

Therefore, it seems significant that Christian martyrologists were usually more detailed about what the human body endured during torture and execution than non-Christian authors, at least when the sample size is confined to works composed up to the early fourth century, with a focus on trial settings and pain/death inflicted at the hands of Greco-Roman officials.[540] When non-Christian historians incorporated more

---

[538] *Rhet. Her*. 4.55.68-69. *Ekphrasis* was the art of "painting a picture" in words. Though it was linked to the description of physical works of art, it was invoked when describing events as well. See Quint., *Inst.* 8.3.67-70; Grig, 112-13; George Kennedy, *Progymnasmata: Greek Textbooks of Prose Composition and Rhetoric* (Boston: Brill, 2003), 118-19. On the importance of the specificity of violence with regard to petitions of complaint submitted in Roman Egypt see Bryen, *Violence*, 84-84, 104-11.

[539] Eusebius' grisliest language appears not in relation to Egypt but rather in a passage regarding the early fourth persecution in Gaza, when body fluids were secreted from a martyr placed over a fire (Euseb., *De mar. Pal.* 4.10). In another scene involving Christians in the palace at Nicomedia, the comparison of a martyr's roasting flesh to animal meat meant for human consumption (Euseb., *Hist. eccl*. 8.6.3) would have provoked all of the disgust and physical nausea associated with notions of cannibalism. Disgust indicates when behavior has crossed over the line of just a society deems acceptable. Note Kaster's recent study of disgust in antiquity, which relies on sociological and neurological research linking social and cultural expressions of disgust to more basic forms of disgust related to the physical nausea provoked by the consumption of certain foods. Robert Kaster, *Emotion, Restraint, and Community in Ancient Rome* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 7-8, 104-33. On the physical responses associated with basic forms of disgust towards foods (accelerated heartbeat and clenching throat), the provocation of these responses in reaction to sources of *moral* disgust, and the generation of these responses as a mechanism of socialization see Paul Rozin, Jonathan Haidt, and Clark McCauley, "Disgust," in Lewis, 758-62. Since disgust is culturally determined, the problem for a scholar hoping to study this is of course recognizing language that would have provoked nausea for an ancient author but not perhaps a modern one.

[540] Plato, *Phaedo* 117E-118A (66-67); Diogenes Laertius 9.5 (26-28), 9.7 (58-59); Cic., *Tusc.* 2.22 (52); Philo, *Quod omnis probus liber sit* 108-109; Val. Max., 3.3; Tac. *Ann.*, 15.69-70; 16.14-15; Luc., *De mort. Peregr.* 36-37; Eunap., *VS* 462-464, 478-81; Iambl., *VP* 31; Xenophon, *Ephes.* 2.6; *Sifra Emor, pereq* 9.5; *Sifre Deuteronomy* 307; *Mekhilta Mishpatim* 18. Also see Jan Willem van Henten and Friedrich Avemarie, *Martyrdom and Noble Death: Selected Texts from Graeco-Roman, Jewish and Christian Martyrdom* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 132-68. One wonders if Achilles Tatius' example is meant to be a joke (Ach. Tat. 5.23). For a discussion of Greco-Roman pagan, Jewish, and Christian interactions during the critical third century see Y. A. Baer, "Israel, the Christian Church, and the Roman Empire from the Time of Septimius Severus to the Edict of Toleration of A.D. 313," in *Studies in History*, edited by A. Fuks and I. Halpern (Jerusalem: Hebrew University,1961), 79-147. For a discussion of the issues related to the interpretation of rabbinic sources see Eyal Ben-Eliyahu, Yehudah Cohn, Fergus Millar, *Handbook of Jewish Literature from Late Antiquity, 135-700 CE* (NY: Oxford University Press, 2012); Chaim Milikowsky, "The status quaestionis of Research in Rabbinic Literature," in *Rabbinic Texts and the History of Late-Roman Palestine*, ed. Martin Goodman and Philip Alexander (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 67-79. The incident involving the seven Maccabean brothers has been left out off of this list for

torture into their narratives,[541] they often mitigated the impact of this violence by including acts of cruelty unrelated to the judicial system.[542] While scholars have noted the excessive violence in the Christian martyrologies—this has become something of a trope in scholarship—scholars generally focus on the later martyrologies,[543] ignoring the importance of this factor in the earlier martyrologies and thus missing a crucial means by which Christians stood out from the pack.

To be fair, Christians were not as graphic as non-Christians writing beyond the very narrow parameters of torture and/or execution, particularly in a trial setting, at the hands of Greco-Roman officials. Eusebius was fairly explicit when he described how Christians from Egypt were maimed in the early fourth century: their eyelids and pupils were removed before hot irons were shoved into their eye sockets (Euseb., *Hist. eccl.* 8.12.1, 8-10; *Mar. Pal.* 8.1, 8.13). But his account falls short in

---

obvious reasons (the accounts are violent and the punishment was inflicted by non-Greco-Romans, and therefore does not meet the parameters of the cases discussed here) and is discussed below. For an example of the comparatively violent language of the Christians, consider Diogenes Laertius' account of Zeno of Elea's murder—Zeno was either stabbed or beaten to death—to Dionysius of Alexandria's far more graphic account of the murder of Metras, a Christian who was beaten, struck in the face and eyes with sharp sticks, and dragged through the streets of Alexandria (Euseb., *Hist. eccl.* 6.14.1-9). Dionysius' account is more graphic not only because Metras suffered more *kinds* of violence than Zeno, for as demonstrated by Seneca the Younger's account of Oedipus' blinding (discussed below), a writer interested in the pathos of violence makes the most of the smallest details (Seneca, *Oedipus* 965-79). Christians described more violence because they were more interested in violence. Tacitus' account of Seneca the Younger's suicide is an exception (Tac., *Ann.* 15.63). For Clement of Alexandria's discussion of Zeno of Elea and other so-called agan martyrs see Clem. Al., *Strom.* 4.8. Unfortunately, careful examination of the corpus of the *Acta Alexandrinorum* was beyond the scope of this project. However, one particularly violent scene is recorded in *CPJ* II 158.

[541] Suetonius, *Divus Augustus* 27, 67; Suetonius, *Tiberius* 53, 62; Suet., *Gaius* 27, 28-32. Cf. Amm. Marc. 29.1.35-44. Ammianus Marcellinus' commentary, in particular, is striking for its tone of lament in response to the violence the historian witnessed (Amm. Marc. 29.3.9). Livy, Tacitus, Josephus, and Cassius Dio frequently referred to pain inflicted at the time of death but rarely discussed the agonies suffered by the victims or were very specific as to the nature of the violence. Exceptions are: Livy 24.5, 29.9, 29.18; Joseph., *BJ* 1.2.4 (57-60), 2.8.10 (151-52), 5.11.1; Tac., *Ann.* 1.32. These exceptions are a minority compared to the many scourgings, floggings, and other punishments that are mentioned without description or commentary. Consider, for instance, references to examination under torture with no details as to the method of torture or the experiences of the torturers, the tortured, or the observers, Tac., *Ann.* 1.23, 3.23; Cass. Dio 76.8.

[542] Consider, for instance, acts of savagery not explicitly linked to punishment or execution in Suetonius (Suet., *Gaius* 28, 33). For an example of this from a later historian, consider, for instance, battle scenes in Ammianus Marcellinus (Amm. Marc. 16.12.52-57).

[543] For discussion of this trope see for instance Chew, 129-42.

comparison to Seneca the Younger's (c. 4 BCE-65 CE) *Oedipus*, where the titular character does not simply gouge his eyes out: the eyeballs roll around as Oedipus rips out the tendrils of veins and tissue hanging from his eye sockets (Sen., *Oed.* 965-79). If we look at accounts regarding Jewish martyrs killed at the hands of the Seleucids in the second century BCE, similarly graphic scenes of violence can be found. Consider 4 Maccabees, which was probably written in the second half of the first century CE, perhaps in Alexandria: the torture and execution of a Jewish family is described here in far more grotesque detail than in other versions of the incident.[544]

Perhaps it is significant that Seneca's *Oedipus* was composed as fiction, or if not fiction, than at least the events in question were thought to have transpired in the distant past. Likewise, 4 Maccabees was composed long after the events in question. And if the fictive context of torture in the Greco-Roman novels and plays trivialized real-world violence, it is striking to note how the Christian penchant for such violence only increased with time, martyrologies becoming more and more violent with every revision.[545] This seems like a contradiction. Since eyewitnesses have a vested interest in "painting a picture" of an event, and theoretically have the necessary information for painting this picture, their portraits should be more vivid than secondhand later accounts. Yet when it came to describing violence, Eusebius lay somewhere between,

[544] *4 Maccabees* 8-12; Cf. *2 Maccabees.*

[545] For instance, according to Phileas' early fourth century account, Thebans were beaten, stretched on pulleys, bound to pillars, and left to languish in prison (Euseb., *Hist. eccl.* 8.10). This was bad enough, but when Rufinus of Aquileia (340/345-410) edited Eusebius' text of Phileas' letter, he added several disturbing details (Rufinus, *HE* 8.10). For an even more violent example, consider *SS. Shenoufe and His Brethren* 103-138 (Ri-Vii). The increasing lust for blood in the later martyrologies suggests that we should be wary of accepting claims regarding the scope of violence employed during the persecutions. However, we should also be wary of disregarding this violence, insofar as our willingness to do so might be influenced by our own distaste for religious violence. This observation also applies to the following chapter's discussion of religious violence in fourth and fifth century Egypt. See Philip L. Tite, "Review of *Violence and the New Testament*," *The Journal of Theological Studies* 58 (2007): 260-63.

on the one hand, the more violent accounts of Seneca the Younger and 4 Maccabees, and on the other hand, the less violent narratives recounting the deaths of Socrates, Zeno of Elea (d. 430 BCE), and the Jewish martyrs Pappus (d. early 2nd cent.), Lulianos (d. early 2nd cent.), R. Hanina ben Teradion (d. early 2nd cent.), R. Shim'on (d. early 2nd cent.), and R. Yishma'el (d. early 2nd cent.). When describing violence that he had personally witnessed or for which he had eyewitness testimony, Eusebius was oddly vague, especially when compared to the later Christian martyrologies. Philo was similarly vague (though more explicit than many other non-Christian writers) when describing violence that he witnessed first-hand in mid-first century Alexandria (Philo, *In Flacc.* 64-130). Why were the eyewitness testimonies of Philo and Eusebius so hazy?

The ambiguity of their language seems to confirm the claims of scholars in trauma studies who argue that the experience of trauma is beyond expression because trauma, by definition, is so overwhelming that it disrupts the cognitive mechanisms required for processing expression.[546] Several times, Eusebius referred to the unspeakable nature of the suffering associated with persecution, confessing that he was incapable of adequately expressing just what had taken place (Euseb., *Hist. eccl.* 5.1.2; 8.3.4; 8.6.9; 8.9.1; *Mar. Pal.* 8.1.9). No doubt this was at least partly a rhetorical ploy, and a recent trend in trauma studies argues that the experience of

[546] Cathy Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996); E. Ann Kaplan, "Empathy and Trauma Culture: Imagining Catastrophe," in *Empathy: Philosophical and Psychological Perspectives*, eds. Amy Coplan and Peter Goldie (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 259. Of course, the violence seen in the later martyrologies might have been inspired not so much by distance from the event as a desire to use martyrdom at the hands of a pagan as propaganda against heretics, who were conflated with pagans. This begs the question: do later martyrologies about martyrdoms suffered at the hands of so-called heretics reflect the same ambiguity seen in Eusebius? That is, was contemporaneous violence perceived as a trauma that silenced witnesses? Unfortunately, examination of this question lies largely outside the scope of this project, though some fourth and fifth century accounts are discussed in the following chapter.

trauma is not beyond expression.[547] But if anything is incapable of expression, surely torture might be an example, especially for observers who, like Eusebius, never personally experienced it.[548]

Eusebius again hinted at the unspeakable nature of the violence he was trying to describe when he claimed it was too widespread to be characterized in full.[549] His ambiguity implied the existence of a host of anonymous victims in a strategy that might have facilitated the audience's efforts to imagine themselves in the victims' places.[550] This strategy could have backfired, though, as many members of the audience would have realized that they were being manipulated.[551] Moreover, modern research suggests that audiences identify more easily with well-developed characters and with individuals rather than with large groups.[552] Leigh Binford argues that lack

---

[547] On the rhetorical nature of claims regarding the unspeakable nature of trauma see Barry Stampfl, "Parsing the Unspeakable in the Context of Trauma," in *Contemporary Approaches in Literary Trauma Theory*, ed. Michelle Balaev (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2014), 21-22. On criticism of the notion that trauma cannot be expressed see Michelle Balaev, "Literary Trauma Theory Reconsidered," in Balaev, 1-14.

[548] Schulz, 2; Scarry, 3-5. If, as Scarry implies, the experience of pain is inherently religious to the extent that both torture and religion are ineffable, then to the extent that pain made God real to the martyrs via their suffering, it *had* to be inexpressible to the extent that God is beyond expression. Eusebius' relationship with the subject of torture was certainly complicated by his lack of personal experience. During the 335 Council at Tyre, Eusebius was accused of committing apostasy by a Christian from Egypt named Potamon who had lost an eye in defense of his faith. How, Potamon asked, had Eusebius avoided suffering a similar fate when Eusebius was arrested in Egypt? The fact that Eusebius' orthodoxy had fallen into question did not help matters. Indeed, the avoidance of torture through possible apostasy seems to have constituted proof, for some Christians, that Eusebius was the sort of lapsed Christian likely to engage in heresy (Epiph., *Pan.* 68.8.4). When Eusebius praised the torture-free martyrdoms of Christians like Phileas he was, by association, praising and defending himself. See the following chapter for further discussion.

[549] Euseb., *Hist. eccl.* 6.2.3, 7.11. 20, 8.6.9, 8.12.1, 8.12.10-11. Also see Griggs, 109n43. Cf. Suet., *Tib*. 61; Philo, *In Flacc.* 68 527; Joseph., *BJ* 6.5, 6.9.3; *Hist. mon.*, Epilogue 1. Scholars believe it is impossible to determine with any accuracy the actual number of total Christian martyrs, but Frend speculates that it may have been in the thousands during the early fourth century persecution in Egypt. Frend, *Martyrdom*, 394.

[550] Incidentally, this approach would have been in line with the modern notion that the pain suffered during torture erases the identity of the victims. See Scarry, 35.

[551] For instance, when Eusebius claimed that the martyrs in the Thebaid numbered 10, 20, 30, 60, 100 (Euseb., *Hist. eccl.* 8.9), he was making a biblical reference (Matt. 13:8, 13:23, Mark 4:8, 4:20) that his audience might very well have recognized. Allusion to a biblical reference did not necessarily undermine his claim, however, for it would have connected martyrdom to a biblical pattern, validating contemporary suffering by making it part of a divine plan.

[552] James Ivory, "Character Development within Violent Content," in Eastin, 66; Jesse Prinz, "Is Empathy Necessary or Morality?" in Coplan, 229.

of specificity in modern human rights reports, however well-meaning these reports may be, actually undermines humanitarian goals by turning the victims of violence into "stick figures" with whom a larger audience is incapable of empathizing.[553] It seems significant, then, that Dionysius of Alexandria specified the names of martyrs like Metras, Quinta, Apollonia, and Sarapion when describing a street riot—which Dionysius characterized as a religious persecution—that broke out in Alexandria a year prior to Decius' mandate for universal sacrifice (Euseb., *Hist. eccl.* 6.41.1-9).

If an early Christian martyrology, like a human rights report, was intended to garner the sympathy of the audience, this implies that Christians believed that the audience was capable of sympathy. This is hard to reconcile with the fact that this was the same audience clambering for torture in martyrologies, novels, the theater, and the arena. Not for nothing, then, did Stoic critics refer to the arena spectacles involving public execution as *voluptates*, pleasures.[554] It is difficult to imagine that a person could be capable of both sympathizing with the victims of this violence and committing or allowing (even passively) this violence to occur in the first place. After all, Diocletian's persecution was so brutal that scholars have compared it to the recent acts of genocide carried out in Darfur, Rwanda, and Bosnia.[555] Other scholars have referred to the spectacles associated with the Roman arena as "holocausts."[556] The

---

[553] Leigh Binford, *The El Mozote Massacre: Anthropology and Human Rights* (Tucson: The Univesity of Arizona Press, 1996), 6.

[554] Zara Torlone, "Writing Arenas: Roman Authors and Their Games." In *A Companion to Sport and Spectacle in Greek and Roman Antiquity*, eds. Paul Christesen and Donald Kyle (Malden, MA: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2014), 413; Wistrand, 55.

[555] Humphries, 18-19.

[556] Jerry Toner, "Trends in the Study of Roman Spectacle and Sport," in Christesen, 451; Kathleen Coleman, "The Contagion of the Throng': Absorbing Violence in the Roman World," *Hermathena* 164 (1998): 65. Comparison of the arena spectacles to acts of genocide is of course problematic insofar as it is not clear that these spectacles were indeed intended to eliminate any particular group, however defined. For further criticism of claims like this see below.

ancient appetite for violence was so strong that, according to Seneca the Younger, crowds grew angry at gladiators who refused to satisfy their lust for blood (Sen., *Ira* 1.2.4-5). The repeated exposure to violence seems to have simply fueled a desire for more violence.[557]

Was the ancient world so violent[558] that—despite the recommendations of the rhetorical handbooks regarding the use of vivid descriptions to evoke sympathy—the "truth value" of pain carried little weight? The subject is hotly debated, but some modern research suggests that an exposure to violence, even in the form of entertainment, increases aggression and decreases a person's ability to appreciate the severity of violence. Hence, depictions of violence have to become more and more graphic in order to maintain the audience's attention.[559] In antiquity, the educated members of the audience would have been well aware of the common tropes and

---

[557] Livy 41.20.11; Fagan, *Lure*, 296.

[558] Fagan, "Violence," 469, 490. For a critique of the claim that the modern world is less violent, see Carroll, 13. Estimates of ancient violence would naturally include warfare—the impact of which on the psyche of the soldiers is contested—as well as animal butchery that was much more visible than it is in much of the Western world today, illness and accidents without the benefit of modern medicine, natural disasters and regular food shortages without the assurance of government-mandated aid, and the prevalence of aggression that would be deemed violence today, but, because the victims were of a subordinate social status, would not have raised any eyebrows in antiquity. See George Contis, "Environment, Health and Disease in Alexandria and the Nile Delta," *Alexandria, Real and Imagined*, eds. Antony Hirst and M. S. Silk (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2004), 227-46; Toner, *Disasters*, 7, 153-70; Jonathan Shay, *Achilles in Vietnam: Combat Trauma and the Undoing of Character* (New York: Maxwell Macmillan International, 1994); Aislinn Melchior, "Caesar in Vietnam: Did Roman Soldiers Suffer from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder?" *Greece & Rome* 58 (2011): 209-23; Thomas Palaima, "When War is Performed, What Do Soldiers and Veterans Want to Hear and See and Why?" in *Combat Trauma and the Ancient Greeks*, eds. Peter Meineck and David Konstan (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2014), 261-86; Lawrence Tritle, "'Ravished Minds' in the Ancient World," in Meineck, 87-104.

[559] Repeated exposure to violence supposedly decreases the anxiety and fear generated in response, thereby reducing potential empathy towards victims and increasing the level of violence that must appear in order for a given act to be recognized as violence. This is not always maladaptive. Consider, for instance, the case of soldiers who need to be able to maintain compsure in the face of extreme violence. See Amanda Mabry and Monique Turner, "Arousal and Aggressive Content, Theory and Psychology of," in Eastin, 41. For a fair summary of the argument in favor of the desensitization model and very cogent critiques see Michael Beatty and Micelle Pence, "Verbal Aggressiveness as an Experssion of Selected Biological Influences," in *Arguments, Agression, and Conflict: New Directions in Theory and Research*, eds. Theodore Avtgis and Andrew Rancer (New York: Routledge 2010), 16; Gary Jensen, Social Learning and Violent Behavior," in Flannery, 643; Harold Schechter, *Savage Pastimes: A Cultural History of Violent Entertainment* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2005).

techniques for exaggerating violence,[560] but that just means that the competition would have been all the fiercer. Perhaps this is the reason why violence was so prevalent in ancient novels,[561] religious narratives,[562] and rhetoric.[563] But if so, then modern scholars are misguided in claiming that the "truth value" of pain was a significant factor in the reception of the martyrologies. After all, if violence was really that prevalent, then it could hardly have made much of an impact on the audience. Some ancient critics actually complained that reports of aggression were becoming cliché.[564] The same rhetorical handbooks that recommended using graphic descriptions of violence to evoke sympathy cautioned against overreliance on pity, warning that it was all too fleeting, like the sympathy of a crowd that would allegedly plead for a gladiator's life one moment and his death the next.[565]

Nevertheless, we should not assume that ancient audiences were simply packs of bloodthirsty savages. Recent scholarship suggests that gladiatorial combat was a proper sport, not mindless fighting.[566] Scholars have also reassessed the function of execution. Roman executions were public, many scholars argue, not because the audience necessarily had a thirst for blood, but because public execution allayed fears regarding security, satisfied a desire for retributive justice, frightened potential

---

[560] *Rhet. Her*. 4.33; Quint., *Inst.* 8.3.73-76; 8.4.1-2; Sallust, *Catiline* 51.9-11; Toner, *Disasters*, 140-41.

[561] Scholars have compared Achilles Tatius' novel to "a snuff movie" (see Elsom, "Callirhoe: Displaying the Phallic Woman," in Richlin, 216), the spectacles staged at the Grand Guignol (see Morgan, "Make-Believe," 204), and "modern 'slasher' films" (see Holly Montague, "From *Interlude in Arcady* to *Daphnis and Chloe*: Two Thousand Years of Erotic Fantasy," in Tatum, 394).

[562] René Girard, *Violence and the Sacred*, trans. Patrick Gregory (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977).

[563] Fagan, "Violence," 475-76; Janet Davis, "Teaching Violence in the Schools of Rhetoric," in Drake, 197-213; Cribriore, 68-72; Bryen, *Violence*, 77.

[564] Toner, *Disasters*, 140-41. Cf. Sall., *Cat.* 51.9.

[565] Cicero *De inventione* 1.66 (109); *Rhet. Her*. 2.31.50.

[566] Fagan, *Lure*, 78-79, 187-229.

criminals into maintaining good behavior, and reinforced a status quo essential for the preservation of hierarchy. By jeering at the condemned,[567] the crowd demonstrated its allegiance to order and its rejection of everything associated with criminality. When these executions took place in the context of arena spectacles—occurring in the middle of the day, following animal shows in the morning and preceding gladiatorial bouts in the afternoon—they were part of a larger program meant to reinforce imperial ideology and the hierarchical structure of society. The display of exotic animals and foreign enemies demonstrated the power of the empire over subjugated populations. An audience member of inferior status enjoyed arena shows because they allowed a viewer to identify with the empire and to feel superior to the performers, if no one else.[568] Alienation from the people who were condemned to the arena would have undermined the degree to which observers would have been capable of feeling empathy for these victims, especially if this alienation reflected pre-existing differences of status and/or ethnicity.[569] Explained thus, violence

---

[567] In one of Dionysius of Alexandria's accounts it is not clear if the jeering crowd includes solely pagans or also includes Christians annoyed with the sight of fellow Christians on the point of apostasy (Euseb., *Hist. eccl.* 6.41.11). Cf. Euseb., *Hist. eccl.* 6.5.3; *Hist. mon.* 19.5.

[568] Even if the performers' descent down the social scale was fairly recent. See Kyle, 34-127; John Wood, "Conceptualizing Cultures of Violence and Cultural Change," in Carroll, 87-88; Fox, 477; Kathleen Coleman, "Fatal Charades: Roman Executions Staged as Mythological Enactments," *Journal of Roman Studies* 80 (1990): 46; Shaw, "Bandits," 20-21. Fagan, *Lure*, 15, 37, 66-67, 145, 176, 186; Plass, 22-32, 45, 146-47; Donald Kyle, *Sport and Spectacle in the Ancient World* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2007), 312, 324, 328; Keith Hopkins, *Death and Renewal* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 29-30; Torlone, 416; Torrill Lindstrøm, "The Animals of the Arena: How and Why Could Their Destruction and Death Be Endured and Enjoyed?" *World Archaeology* 42 (2010): 317-18; Ronald Auguet, *Cruelty and Civilization: The Roman Games* (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1972), 188-90; Jerry Toner, *Leisure and Ancient Rome* (Cambridge, MA: Polity Press, 1995), 39; Toner, "Trends," 453; Wistrand, 62-67; Erik Gunderson, "The Ideology of the Arena," *Classical Antiquity* 15 (Apr., 1996): 115-17; Thomas Wiedemann, *Emperors and Gladiators* (New York: Routledge, 1992).

[569] Fagan, *Lure*, 163-64; Echols, 58-59; Konstan, *Pity*, 50. It is not clear where the trials and executions of Christian martyrs in Egypt took place, though some texts mention a prison setting. Note that this reference to a prison appears in a rather late martyrology for Peter (*Hist. Pat.* 131). In traditional Egyptian pagan practice, legal proceedings were carried out in the doorways of temples. See Lorton, "130; Zivie-Coche, "Pharoanic," 113. Amphitheaters do not appear to have been popular in Egypt, but Christians here were fond of stories about Thecla, who was supposedly condemned to the beasts in first century Antioch. If executions were staged in Egypt in connection with animal shows involving sacred animals, traditional Egyptian pagans could hardly have given the

associated with torture and execution becomes somewhat more comprehensible, if not necessarily excusable.

Therefore, it is all the more striking that propaganda was required to justify and to sustain the audience's support for the violence inflicted upon the Christians. Modern research on genocide and torture suggests that training and propaganda of this sort is needed lest the perpetrators of violence and the audience develop empathy for the victims.[570] A disturbing parallel to this kind of indoctrination is suggested by a statement attributed to the judge who presided over the persecution of Christians in the Thebaid in the early fourth century. This judge allegedly told the torturers "that they were not to have the least particle of regard for us [the martyrs], but to be so disposed and act as if we were no longer of any account. Such was the second torture that our enemies devised in addition to the stripes."[571] If pagans were completely

---

spectacles their full support. See Smelik, 1859. Less ire would have been raised by the association of executions with gladiatorial bouts. Indeed, these bouts seem to have originated with spectacles involving prisoners-of-war, who were forced to perform during the funerals of Romans, apparently as sacrifices in honor of the deceased. This practice would not have seemed entirely at odds with traditional Egyptian pagan execration rites, wherein enemies of the state were assimilated to Seth and Apophis, the enemies of Osiris and Re. If viewed as the victims of an execration rite, the Christian martyrs would have had their work cut out for them when it came to earnin the audience's sympathy. On human sacrifice by the Romans see A. Eckstein, "Human Sacrifice and the Fear of Military Disaster," *American Journal of Ancient History* 7 (1982): 69–95. On the sacrificial connotations of gladiatorial bouts see Fagan, *Lure*, 7n19; Nasrallah, "Embarassment…" 152; Auguet, 21; Kyle, *Sport.…* 270; Plass, 17, 24, 29; John Zaleski, "Religion and Roman Spectacle," in Christensen, 592-94; Kyle, *Spectacles*… 40; David Potter, "Entertainers in the Roman Empire," in Potter, 329-30. On Egyptian execration rites see Harco Willems, "Crime, Cult and Capital Punishment (Mo'alla Inscription 8)," *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 76 (1990): 27-54; Te Velde, "Human," 132-33; Antony Leahy, "Death by Fire in Ancient Egypt" *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 27 (1984): 200.

[570] Schulz, 207-8, 210-12. This implies that the perpetrators of torture fear that torture may lose public support, which is exactly the scenario described by the later Christian martyrologists when they claimed that the sight of martyrdom inspired conversion (which would have constituted a rejection of the social values justifying this torture). For an example of a crowd sympathizing with the martyr (or, in this case, a would-be martyr) see the Coptic fifth-sixth century hagiography of the companion of Paul, Thecla, who was so popular in Egypt (*Acts of Paul and Thecla* 27-39 [352]).

[571] "οὐ γὰρ εἶναι κἂν μέρος φροντίδος αὐτοῖς περὶ ἡμῶν, ἀλλ᾽ οὕτω καὶ διανοεῖσθαι καὶ πράττειν, ὡς μηκέτ᾽ ὄντων, ταύτην δευτέραν βάσανον ἐπὶ ταῖς πληγαῖς τῶν ὑπεναντίων ἐφευρόντων," Euseb., *Hist. eccl.* 8.10.7. Translation Kirsopp Lake, J. E. L. Oulton and Hugh Jackson Lawlor, *The Ecclesiastical History* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press 1932).

desensitized to violence and were already convinced that Christians were cannibal baby-killers, why was the judge's comment necessary?[572]

Perhaps it is wrong to group all torturers under the same umbrella. Recent research indicates that the individuals employed in the performance of torture include seemingly respectable heads of households and otherwise "good" people. A torturer, of course, may be a sadist who takes pleasure in his efforts, or an unemotional zealot, but alternatively he may be a professional who believes, however wrongly, that he is merely doing his job. The professional torturer is more likely than the sadist or the zealot to treat his victim to occasional shows of friendliness, and not merely as a strategy to undermine the victim's defenses. The professional torturer is also more likely to experience distress over the nature of his work, and relies on psychological self-defense mechanisms to justify his efforts, insisting that his work gives him no joy and redirecting responsibility for torture onto the victims.[573] Similarly, the judge mentioned above appears to have been trying to redirect responsibility for his actions when he asked the bishop Phileas to take pity on himself and to sacrifice (Euseb., *Hist. eccl.* 8.9.8), as if it was the bishop's fault that the judge had been placed in the onerous position of sitting in judgment. The complex psychological profile of the professional torturer suggests that the stories about soldiers who supposedly decided

[572] Which is to say that even if the judge did not make such a comment, it seems like the sort of thing that a judge would have said in similar trials. If this particular statement was invented by a martyrologist, it nevertheless reflects the existence of a notion that a person was only capable of torturing a fellow human being if he endeavored not to think of the victim as a human. On the importance of this strategy in the modern application of torture see J. Jeremy Wisnewski and R. D. Emerick, *The Ethics of Torture* (New York: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2009), 96.

[573] Schulz, 106, 109-10, 120, 137-141, 150-51; Rozin, 770; Scarry, 57-58. Interestingly, Seneca's ideal judge is emotionally detached (Sen., *Ira* 1.16.5-7). While at first an emotionally detached person does not seem to be the ideal subject in the effort to win empathy, this emotional detachment might have been a self-defense mechanism of the sort associated with the professional torturer, who in fact is capable of sympathizing with the victim.

to convert to Christianity in the very midst of the martyrdoms they were helping to carry out (*Hist. mon.* 19.10) were not necessarily fantasies produced as a form of Christian wish-fulfillment.

Audiences were not utterly desensitized to violence. Elite criticism of violent spectacles might have been driven primarily by an elitist aversion to anything associated with the so-called masses and a disdain for the particular emperors who were accused of producing these spectacles; yet a shared sense of injustice might have driven these elites to identify with the martyrs, as these elites perceived an increasing erosion of their own rank's legal rights and protections under tyrannical emperors.[574] No doubt, men and women were more likely to feel compassion for friends, family members, and those of their own status,[575] but bystanders were expected to intervene and offer assistance when people were attacked in public.[576] Seneca admitted that he was fascinated by the spectacle of a public execution, but as Brian Fagan points out, since Seneca's depiction of one such event indicates that the arena was nearly empty for this part of the show, not everyone appears to have shared this taste for blood.[577]

Narratives hostile to the martyrs might have actually inspired sympathy. As mentioned above, Lucian was so harshly criticized for his attack on Peregrinus that he

---

[574] Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984), 56; Wistrand, 61; Wiedemann, 136, 139-40; Grigs, 64; Kyle, *Sport*, 303; Toner, *Disasters*, 456; Harries, 122-23, 126; Fagan, *Lure*, 28; Moreira, 58, Harker, 82, 94-95, 163. Cf. Euseb., *Hist. eccl.* 10.8.17; Lactant., *De mort. pers.* 21-22; *Hist. mon.* 19.4; Suetonius, *Domitian* 10; *SHA*, *Commodus* 5; *SHA*, *Severus* 12-13, 17; Amm. Marc. 26.10.9, 29.1.40.

[575] Andrew Lintott, *Violence in Republican Rome*, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 46; Eliot Smith and Diane Mackie, "Intergroup Emotions," in Lewis, 436-37; Potter, "Spectacle," 399; Fagan, *Lure*, 158.

[576] Diod. Sic. 1.77; Ari Bryen and Andrzej Wypustek, "Gemellus' Evil Eyes (P.Mich. VI 423–424)," *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies* 49 (2009): 553. Some modern research suggests that the observation of violence triggers self-defense mechanisms that discourage identification with the victims of violence. This must be overcome in order for identification with the victims to spur intercession. See Martin Hoffman, "Empathy and Prosocial Behavior," in Lewis, 251.

[577] Sen., *Ep.* 7.2; Fagan, *Lure*, 133.

felt compelled to pen a defense.[578] Though some scholars question the degree to which elites were capable of identifying with low status figures[579]—which the Christian martyrs certainly were, even if they ostensibly possessed a high status, once they were condemned as criminals—other scholars caution against dismissing the possibility that a fascination with deviance might have encouraged this sort of identification.[580]

If the martyr was too outré to inspire real identification on the part of the audience of a martyrology, then why not identify with the audience in the martyrology itself? The mechanism by which the crowds in these martyrologies supposedly expressed their favor or disfavor for Christians is at least plausible, for the public was said to be quite vocal at theatrical performances, public speeches, executions, trials, gladiatorial bouts, and arena spectacles. In fact, the public's ability to express its opinion in such venues has been proffered as one of the reasons that these events were so popular.[581] But martyrologies claiming that pagan audiences expressed sympathy for the martyrs and asserted a desire to convert only became popular in Egypt after the danger of persecution at pagan hands had passed.[582] So if any consumers of the early martyrologies were converted by these narratives, it was

---

[578] Luc., *Fug*. Ammianus Marcellinus claimed that the victims of savage judges were like Peregrinus, his statement implying a positive view of the latter (Amm. Marc. 29.1.38-39).

[579] Kyle, *Spectacles*, 81.

[580] Toner, *Leisure*, 51, 78; Anne Duncan, *Performance and Identity in the Classical World* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 124-27

[581] Fagan, *Lure*, 126, 133, 135, 143, 257; Wiedemann, 165, 169; Potter, "Performance," 134-4, 145; Potter, "Spectacle," 8, 385-86; Potter, "Entertainers," 340-41; Toner, "Trends," 456-57; Holt Parker, "The Observed of All Observers Spectacle, Applause, and Cultural Poetics in the Roman Theater Audience," in *The Art of Ancient Spectacle* (Washington D.C.: National Gallery of Art, 1999), 168-70; Harries, 65-70; Charlotte Roueché, "Acclamations in the Later Roman Empire: New Evidence from Aphrodisias," *The Journal of Roman Studies* 74 (1984): 181-98; Gegory Aldrete, "Material Evidence for Roman Spectacle and Sport," in Christesen, 135-66; Coleman, "Fatal," 50; Kyle, *Spectacles*, 92. Cf. Chariton 3.4; Luc., *De mort. Peregr.* 32-33, 37.

[582] See for instance *The Acts of Paul and Thecla*, 36-37.

not because they were imitating a conversion on the part of the characters with whom the audience might have most easily identified, that is the audience *in* the martyrology. Fortunately, for martyrologists hoping to achieve conversion with their narratives,[583] the spectacle of martyrdom was not the end of the story. Execution in and of itself did not disprove Christian doctrine.[584] Indeed, it provided the Christians with yet another venue within which to assert the validity of their faith: martyr cult.

The Dead

When the martyrologists accused pagans of destroying the bodies of martyrs or preventing the burial of the martyrs' corpses,[585] they were reproaching the pagans for a particularly barbaric crime in the eyes of Christians and pagans alike.[586] Preservation of the body was crucial for resurrection and happiness in the afterlife according to traditional Egyptian paganism. Though Greco-Roman pagans generally took less interest in such matters, they were not entirely indifferent to them either.[587]

---

[583] Again, the reader should recall that conversion, as defined in this study, includes a reconfirmation of faith by a person who already considers himself a Christian.

[584] At least, according to Christians. See above for discussion of the degree to which execution might have shaken the faith of observers and the strategies used to prevent this (the explanations for suffering).

[585] For instance, the bodies of Egyptians condemned to the beasts in Palestine during the early fourth century were supposedly tossed in the sea so as to prevent proper burial (Euseb., *Hist. eccl.* 8.6.10-7.6). Dionysius of Alexandria and Eusebius were not explicit about the final deposition of the corpses in cases involving the execution of Christians in Egypt via fire (Euseb., *Hist. eccl.* 6.4; 6.41.10-6.42); however, cremation was considered a particularly heinous insult in traditional Egyptian paganism. See Henk Milde, "Going out into the Day.' Ancient Egyptian Beliefs and Practices Concerning Death and Immortality," in *Hidden Futures: Death and Immortality in Ancient Egypt, Anatolia, the Classical, Biblical and Arabic-Islamic World*, eds. Jan Maarten Bremer, Theo van den Hout, and Rudolph Peters (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1994), 16. Cremation was more common in Roman paganism, but a portion of the cremated corpse would still be retained for burial. See Valerie Hope, "Contempt and Respect: The Treatment of the Corpse in Ancient Rome," in *Death and Disease in the Ancient City*, eds. Valerie Hope and Eireann Marshall (New York: Routledge, 2000), 106. Cf. Philo, *In Flacc.* 65-66 526.

[586] Hope, 105, 114-16, 123.

[587] As demonstrated, for instance, by the anxiety expressed over unburied corpses in plays like Sophocles' *Antigone*, which Clement of Alexandria quoted and for which a second century papyrus fragment has been recovered from Oxyrhynchus. Clem. Al., *Strom.* 6.2; *P.Oxy.* 875. Cf. Heliod., *Aeth.* 2.5. Also see Kyle, *Spectacles*, 130. Note, however, that a predisposition towards viewing the Christian martyrs as suicides would

When the corpses of criminals and political enemies were denied proper burial in traditional Egyptian or Greco-Roman rites, the act was meant to demonstrate that the deceased was no longer considered part of the community, which included the living *and* the dead.[588]

Like traditional Egyptian pagans, the Christians were very interested in resurrection. Unlike traditional Egyptian pagans, many Christians argued that the treatment of the corpse had no impact on a person's enjoyment of resurrection.[589] This polemic helped to mitigate fears regarding the improper burial of martyrs, though Christians still tried to retrieve the bodies of martyrs for burial (Euseb. *Hist. eccl.* 7.11.24). These efforts need not have been linked to a debate over resurrection, however, for funerals served a function for the living as well as the dead, facilitating the expression of communal identity among the survivors[590] and alleviating disturbances caused in the community by the loss of members. Perhaps most importantly, funerals could help the living combat any humiliation accrued by the denigration of their hero-martyr as a criminal and re-establish communal mores.[591]

---

have undermined pagan sympathy for the martyrs' plights regarding burial, since suicides were not afforded the same considerations with regard to burial rights. See Hope, 119.

[588] On traditional Egyptian pagan belief on this subject see Diod. Sic. 1.91-92; David Lorton, "The Treatment of Criminals in Ancient Egypt: Through the New Kingdom," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 20 (1977): 14. On Greco-Roman practices see Hope, 113-16. Kyle makes the fascinating suggestion that pagans targeted the Christian use of cemeteries for supression (Euseb., *Hist. eccl.* 7.11.10; 9.2.1) because they hoped to prevent practices that would have fostered the existence of Christian ghosts that might have wanted revenge against their persecutors. Kyle, *Spectacles,* 255.

[589] Françoise Dunand, "Egyptian Funerary Practices in Late Antiquity," in Bagnall, 163-84; Kyle, *Spectacles,* 253; Gilbert Dagron, "Holy Images and Likeness," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 45 (1991): 32.

[590] On the assertion of Greek, Roman, and Egptian identity via mortuary rites see Riggs, 5, 14-20, 23, 141-42, 157-58, 246-47. By laying claim to a specific martyr, a community was expressing its identity in a way that would have fostered competition with other communities. See Moss, *Myth*, 234; David Frankfurter, "Approaches to Coptic Pilgrimage," in *Pilgrimage and Holy Space in Late Antique Egypt,* ed. David Frankfurter (Boston: Brill, 1998), 3-50.

[591] Donovan Ochs, *Consolatory Rhetoric: Grief, Symbol and Ritual in the Greco-Roman Era* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1993), 32-33; Hopkins, 224; Irene Visser, "Trauma and Power in Postcolonial Literary Studies," in Balaev, 109; Meeks, *Origins,* 179-80; Juan Chapa, *Letters of Condolence in Greek Papyri*

It is unclear when full blown martyr cult developed. However, it appears to have reached at least a nascent stage by the mid-fourth century.[592] Pagans criticized practices associated with martyr cult as evidence that Christians worshipped dead men.[593] To be fair, the Christians looked rather like Egyptian pagans in this regard. Greco-Roman pagans and Jews sometimes visited the remains of heroes and patriarchs, but both customarily attached rather more pollution to corpses than either traditional Egyptian pagans or Christian devotees of martyr cult.[594] Egyptian pagans, far from abhorring the dead, went so far as to keep the mummified bodies of loved ones in the cupboards of their homes.[595] Antony the Great supposedly left instructions that his body not be subjected to this treatment, insisting that he buried in a hidden location (*Vita Antonii* 90-92), a stipulation implying that he disapproved of both traditional funerary rites and the cult activities that were growing up around the remains of revered Christians. Yet Antony's alleged comments on this occasion might

---

(Firenze: Edizioni Gonnelli, 1998), 23; Hope, 110; John Wortley, "The Origins of Christian Veneration of Body-Parts," *Revue de l'histoire des religions* 223 (2006): 20n39. Pagan efforts to prevent burial would have made Christian funerary practices all the more potent as a demonstration of status.

[592] *P.Haun. III 67*; Euseb., *Vit. Const.* 2.40; Sozom., *Hist. eccl.* 2.17; Socrates, *Hist. eccl.* 2.28; Athanasius, *Historia Arianorum ad Monachos* 72; Pall., *LH* 60; *Hist. mon.* 19.12; Vivian, 50; W. Clarysse, The Coptic Martyr Cult," in *Martyrium in Multidisciplinary Perspective: Memorial Louis Reekmans*, eds. M. Lamberights and P. van Deun. Leuven-Louvain (Belgium: Leuven University Press, 1995), 383n19. For a discussion of papyrological evidence for martyr cult see Arietta Papaconstantinou, "The Cult of Saints: A Haven of Continuity in a Changing World?" in Bagnall, *Byzantine*, 350-67. Like traditional Egyptian and Greco-Roman pagan mortuary cult, Christian funerary rituals might have involved dining in cemeteries. For instance, the Melitians were accused of administering the Eucharist in cemeteries. But the provision of food and drink for the deceased so as to ensure adequate sustenance in the afterlife was not a focus of Christian ritual as it was in pagan ritual. See Thomas, 118n28; Venit, 12, 187-89; Bleeker, 124-40; Scott-Moncrieff, 181.

[593] Julian, *Con. Gal.* 201E, 335B-C; Julian, *Misopogon* 344a; Eunap., *VS* 470-473.

[594] Fox, 447; Peter Brown, *The Cult of the Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1981); John Wortley, "The Origins of Christian Veneration of Body-Parts," *Revue de l'histoire des religions* 223 (2006): 8n6, 14, 15; Allen Kerkeslager, "Jewish Pilgrimage and Jewish Identity in Hellenistic and Early Roman Egypt," in Frankfurter, 99-228. Interestingly, human skeletons were used in Alexandria to teach anatomy in the first couple centuries CE. See Heinrich von Staden, "Galen's Alexandria," in *Alexandria between Egypt and Greece*, eds. William V. Harris and Giovanni Ruffini (Boston: Brill, 2004), 179-216.

[595] Diod. Sic. 1.92; Dunand, *Mummies*, 80-81. Note that Plutarch's assumption that death is associated with pollution appears to have led him to insist that Osiris was not contaminated by his association with the dead (Plut., *De is. Et Os.* 382F).

have had less to do with the propriety of a Christian cult of the dead *per se*, and more to do with the danger this cult was posing in terms of internal Christian disputes. Had the location of Antony's burial been known, his remains might have fallen victim to a tug-of-war between rival Christian sects, with the winner—however unorthodox—gaining power over the Christians who were drawn to visit these remains.[596]

The carnival-esque atmosphere of Christian funerary rites was another cause for concern according to some Christians, who worried that these rites encouraged the sort of licentiousness[597] that was associated with traditional Egyptian pagan festivities, celebrations that were infamous for a far greater mingling of the genders than was considered proper even by Greco-Roman pagan standards.[598] If devotees of martyr cult expected to avoid sexualization of the martyrs, they would have been forced to combat an inclination to do just this, since death itself was thought to carry sexual connotations in popular discourse[599] and the dead were sometimes perceived as objects of sexual desire.[600]

---

[596] According to Jerome, the location of Antony's tomb was kept secret lest a wealthy man seize the remains and install them in a martyrium built on the wealthy man's property (Jerome, *Vita Hilarionis* 31). See David Brakke, "Outside of the Places, Within the Truth': Athanasius of Alexandria and the Localization of the Holy," in Frankfurter, 464, 466. For an alternative explanation of Antony's comments and discussion of Christian mummification practices see chapter five. Cf. Besa, *Life of Shenoute* 120. Cf. *Paralipomena* 3 [5]; *Vita bohairice Pachomii* 93, 123; Athanasius, *Festal Letter* 41 (Copt). For discussion of the *Life of Shenoute*, see chapter four. For discussion of the *Paralipomena* and the *Vita bohairice Pachomii* see chapter five.

[597] For instance, *AP* 10.114 N86; Janet Timbie, "A Liturgical Procession in the Desert of Apa Shenoute," in *Pilgrimage and Holy Space in Late Antique Egypt*, ed. David Frankfurter (Boston: Brill, 1998), 415-41. Also see Jaques Van der Vliet, "Bringing Home the Homeless: Landscape and History in Egyptian Hagiography," *Church History and Religious Culture* 86 (2006): 44-47; David Frankfurter, "Syncretism and the Holy Man in Late Antique Egypt," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 11 (2003): 361.

[598] Montserrat, 164-65; Brown, *Cult*, 98-99. On carnival see Stallybrass, 20; Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, trans. Helene Iswolsky (Cambridge, MA: The M.I.T. Press, 1968).

[599] Petronius' novel includes a scene in which a woman has sex with a man in her dead husband's tomb (Petron., *Sat.* 111-12). In other novels, heroines are entombed alive (Charitas, 1.8; Heliod., *Aeth.* 1.28; Xenophon, *Ephes.* 3.7). In Xenophon of Ephesus' novel, a character keeps the mummified remains of his wife in his house and is accustomed to lying down beside her (Xenophon, *Ephes.* 5.1). In Greco-Roman paganism, the sexual connotations of death were especially strong for virgins, which of course many of the Christian martyrs would have been. See Moss, *The Myth*, 29-32. Cf. Suet., *Tib.* 61; Tac., *Ann.* 5.9; Xenophon, *Ephes.* 3.7; Artemidorus, 2.65; Ach. Tat. 3.7, 3.10. It is interesting to note, especially given the below discussion regarding gendered

The resemblance of the martyrologies—particularly the later ones—to the romances of the Greco-Roman novels would have only amplified the sexual implications of martyrdom. Christians in Egypt were particularly fond of a first century heroine by the name of Thecla, who supposedly spent much of her time chasing after the apostle Paul—obviously a stand-in for her true beloved, God—only to find herself condemned to the beasts in Antioch. She was not a martyr *per se*, for she escaped the beasts (*The Acts of Paul and Thecla*, 37), as did the heroine of Xenophon of Ephesus' novel, who was thrown into a pit with two hungry dogs by Egyptian bandits (Xenophon, *Ephes.* 4.6). Nonetheless, Thecla's confrontation with the beasts was so popular that it was commemorated by pilgrim flasks obtainable at a shrine located about forty-five kilometers southwest of Alexandria. To modern eyes, the images on many of these flasks seem rather licentious.[601] They depict Thecla as she would have appeared in the arena, her breasts bared, her legs clearly outlined in thin material, and her arms apparently bound behind her back, in keeping with the common treatment for criminals condemned to the beasts, and a pose which also happens to thrust her breasts forward.[602]

---

violence, death for a male youth also associated with marriage (Artemidorus, 2.49, 2.53; Ach. Tat. 1.13). On pagan ghosts attempting to seduce monks, see chapter five.

[600] Herodotus claimed that the Egyptians waited three days before sending women to the embalmers for fear of what sounds very much like necrophilia (Hdt., 2.89).

[601] On the function of this imagery in the arena context, see below. For discussion of early Christian commentary on the need for women to hide their features see Heather Juliussen, "Thinking about Women in Early Christian Alexandria," M.A. Thesis (College Park: University of Maryland 2008), 31; Peter Brown, *The Body and Society: Men, Women, and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), 316.

[602] The addition of a garment for Thecla's lower body in these flasks, filmy though the fabric may be, does seem to be something of a bid for modesty, as criminals in her place were usually nude. On damnation to the beasts see Potter, *Spectacles*, 92, 401-402; Castelli, 167; Stephen Davis, "Pilgrimage and the Cult of Saint Thecla in Late Antique Egypt," Frankfurter, 306-307. On Thecla, who was probably "invented," see Stephen Davis, *The Cult of Saint Thecla: A Tradition of Women's Piety in Late Antiquity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

Sexual themes were particularly popular in Greco-Roman pagan artwork, as were scenes of violence. Late Antique mosaics in domestic settings regularly depicted criminals condemned to the beasts in the arena, the criminals' arms bound behind their backs and their bodies unclothed. By modern standards, this looks like snuff porn.[603] So why on earth would Egyptian Christians want to see this sort of imagery in connection with Thecla, especially given the dim view that some Christians were taking towards sexual themes in art?[604]

The answer is, of course, that artists no doubt felt a vested interest in creating accurate and compelling depictions of the events that the storytellers were so vividly "painting" with their words. And violence appears to have been considered a source of erotic stimulation. Gladiators were sex symbols. Public spectacles were opportunities for flirting and sexual assignations.[605] Violence and sex simply went together. For this reason, a Christian martyrologist hoping to titillate an audience with

---

[603] Brown, "Death," 198-99. For a fascinating attack on the ancient form of "snuff"—an artist torturing a slave so that the latter can serve as a model for artwork depicting torture—see Seneca the Elder, *Controversiae* 10.5; Helen Morales, "The Torturer's Apprentice: Parrhasius and the Limits of Art," in *Art and Text in Roman Culture*, ed. Jaś Elsner (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 188-96. Cf. Luc., *De mort. Peregr.* 37. On the link between visibility or sight and passion see Brown, *Body*, 316; Steven Goldhill, "The Erotic Eye: Visual Stimulation and Cultural Conflict," in Goldhill, *Being*, 168-77. Sight was also given a violent valence, via the evil eye, and reflected issues of status, with the refusal to drop one's eyes signaling dominance. Insofar as Thecla was from a high status family, her body ought to have been protected from exposure. Therefore, the viewer of the pilgrim flasks is carrying out an act of violence against her merely by looking at her image. In the images where she gazes back, however, she is returning the challenge. See Fox, 422; Barton, *Sorrows*, 93-95, 129, 150-51. On the role of sight in both the evil eye and the generation of love see Heliod., *Aeth.* 3.7, 4.4. On erotic interpretations of wounds of the sort received by the martyrs (and victims of arena violence) see Jeff Hearn and Viv Burr, editors, "Introducing the Erotics of Wounding: Sex, Violence and the Body," in *Sex, Violence and the Body: The Erotics of Wounding* (New York: Palgrave Macmillian, 2008), 2-3. Since sexuality carried less negative connotations in antiquity, it can be difficult to determine whether particular scenes would have been considered pornographic. Today, however, the presence of violence is often taken as an indication that something should be defined as "pornography." See Fagan, *Lure*, 231n7; Molly Myerowitz, The Domestication of Desire: Ovid's *Parva Tabella* and the Theater of Love," in Richlin, 155; Feona Attwood, "The Paradigm Shift: Pornography Research, Sexualization and Extreme Images," *Sociology Compass* 5/1 (2011): 18.

[604] Clement of Alexandria scorned the appearance of licentious pagan artwork in bedrooms, even though he supported sex for procreative purposes (Clem. Al., *Protr.* 4).

[605] Petron., *Sat.* 126; Juvenal, *Satires* 6.102-112; Artemidorus, 1.5; *SHA*, *Marcus Aurelius* 19; Suet., *Nero* 29; Ov., *Ars am.* 1.95-100; Kathleen Coleman, "Entertaining Rome," in *Ancient Rome: The Archaeology of the Eternal City*, eds. Jon Coulston and Hazel Dodge (Oxford, UK: Oxford University School of Archaeology, 2000), 238; Fagan, *Lure*, 238-39. Note, too, that fertility rituals, like the Lupercalia in Rome, could be particularly violent.

violence would have been a fool to ignore sex. Sexy martyrs were a valuable asset, especially in light of competition from Egyptian pagans who were reportedly telling devotees that they could have sexual intercourse with gods in temples,[606] and gnostic Christians who were supposedly conducting religious rituals that involved copious amounts of sex.[607]

Yet there appears to have been a disparity in the application of sexual violence to the Christian martyrs. Scholars have been quite struck by the degree to which female martyrs in particular were said to have been subjected to sexual violence during persecution.[608] Frankfurter goes so far as to argue that the prevalence of this theme reflects a latent hostility on the part of Christian male ascetics who, because they were denied sex, took out their frustrations by imagining violent sexual assaults

---

[606] Joseph., *AJ* 18.3.4-5; Ruf., *Hist. eccl.* 11.25; Plutarch, *Numa* 4.4. Cf. Philostr., *VA* 6.40. To the degree that martyrs might have been considered terrorists, this identification might have exercised a sexual allure in of itself. See Robin Morgan, *The Demon Lover: On the Sexuality of Terrorism* (New York: Norton, 1989). If these rumors about the sexual experiences being offered by pagans and gnostics were simply anti-pagan and anti-gnostic propaganda, that does not mitigate the possibility that these rumors would have actually inspired interest in the very practices that these rumors were ostensibly trying to undermine.

[607] Clem. Al., *Strom.* 3.3-4; Euseb., *Hist. eccl.* 4.11.5; Epiph., *Pan.* 24 3,7; 26 3,5-11,1; 27 4,5; 31 6,8-9; 31 21,3-6. Cf. *Asclepius VI*, 65-66. Zeke Mazur, "Having Sex with the One: Erotic Mysticism in Plotinus and the Problem of Metaphor," in *Late Antique Episemology: Other Ways to Truth*, eds. Panayiota Vassilopoulou and Stephen Clark (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2009), 74-75. In light of this competition, the use of martyrs to determine orthodoxy (see the following chapter) is hardly incidental. Even if claims about pagans and so-called heretical Christians engaging in sexual practices were simply negative propaganda, the so-called orthodox Christians would have still been compelled to construct vehicles for sexual expression if they wanted to compete sexually. As the below discussion demonstrates, asceticism itself is far from sex-less. Note, though, that Frankfurter doubts that the sexual content of the so-called orthodoxy martyrologies was related to any sort of transcendent sexualized notions of divinity. See David Frankfurter, "Martyrology and the Prurient Gaze," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 17 (2009), 243.

[608] For instance, Christian women in Egypt during the early fourth century persecution had their bodies exposed to public view and were condemned to the brothel (Euseb., *Hist. eccl.* 8.9.1, *De mar. Pal.* 5.2-3). Given Egypt's reputation for hyper-sexuality (see Montserrat, 164), all of this sexual violence would have seemed especially poignant when attributed to the depradations of Egyptian pagans. For a discussion of the recent recognition of rape as a form of torture see Schulz, 88, 304. For a discussion of complaints about rape in the petitions submitted in Roman Egypt see Bryen, *Violence*, 113, 121. Harper points out the lamentable dearth of information on how individuals who were forced to participate in sex were treated by the early church. See Kyle Harper, *From Shame to Sin: The Christian Transformation of Sexual Morality in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge, MA: Havard University Press, 2013), 180-81. Romans did not typically consider the victims of rape responsible for their treatment. Christians sometimes took a dimmer view. Consider Augustine's unsympathetic treatment of the legendary rape of Lucretia, an event that supposedly led to the overthrow of the last of Rome's kings (August., *De civ. D.* 1.18-19). Comparison between Augustine and Livy's treatment of this event (Livy 1.58) demonstrates just how positive Livy's attitude towards women really was, *contra* Sandra Joshel, "The Body Female and the Body Politic: Livy's Lucretia and Verginia," in Richlin, 125-7. Cf. Tyldesley, 161.

upon female martyrs.[609] While it does appear to be true that the theme of sexual violence against female martyrs was more popular than the theme of sexual violence against male martyrs, examples of the latter do exist,[610] and men appear to have suffered more sexual violence than women in connection with ascetic endeavors.[611] Insofar as conversion from an allegedly hyper-sexual Egyptian form of paganism[612] was portrayed and experienced as a conversion from sex, and asceticism was likened to martyrdom,[613] the presence of sexual violence in ascetic narratives seems significant. So why is it ignored by the scholars who are so preoccupied by sexual violence against women in the martyrologies?

---

[609] Frankfurter explicitly denies that the martyrologies were polyphonic. Frankfurter, "Prurient" 217-18, 227, 233, 245.

[610] Christians of unspecified gender endured torture to their genitalia in the early fourth century persecution (Euseb., *Hist. eccl.* 8.12.7). Christians were castrated outside of Egypt during the same persecution (Euseb., *De mar. Pal.* 7.1.4). Examples of violence to the genitalia of men in Egypt, taken from martyrologies composed under Muslim rule but set during periods of pagan persecution, can be found in the *Martyrdom of Thomas of Shentalet*. In the c. sixth-early seventh century *Panegyric on Macarius of Tkōw*, a so-called heretic martyrs a so-called member of the orthodox by kicking him under the genitals. *Panegyric on Macarius of Tkōw*, 15.8. Use of castration as a form of execution, not necessarily for Christians, appears in Tertullian (Tert., *Apol.* 14.4-6). Cf. Suet., *Tib.* 62. According to the *Apocalypse of Peter* (discussed below), fornicating men will be punished in the afterlife by being hung from their loins while the women who seduced them will hang from their hair (*Apocalypse of Peter*, 7). A tenth century wall painting, now lost, from a church in the Fayum depicted a scene of postmortem punishment in which snakes attacked a woman's breasts *and* a man's genitalia. See Troels Myrup Kristensen, "Embodied Images Christian Response and Destruction in Late Antique Egypt," *Journal of Late Antiquity* 2 (2009), 248. For a discussion of sexual punishments in hell see Martha Himmelfarb, *Tours of Hell: An Apocalyptic Form in Jewish and Christian Literature* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1983), 85-92. On the use of violence against both men and women as a test of their commitment to virginity, see Heliod., *Aeth.* 10.8-9.

[611] Stories about women masquerading as eunuchs (and eating so little that their breasts shrank) notwithstanding, men were far more likely to suffer damage to their genitals through the course of their ascetic labors. For examples of male Christian ascetics suffering sexual violence in Egypt see Pall., *LH* 23.5, 26, 29. Cf. Justin, 1.29; Euseb., *Hist. eccl.* 6.8; Socrates, *Hist. eccl.* 2.26. Also see Chadwick, *Early*, 68; Juliussen, 36-41. Recall, too, that traditional Egyptian priests practiced circumcision (Origen, *Con. Cels.* 5.42, 5.47). On Eusebius' effort to suppress this practice see Euseb., *Vit. Const.* 4.25. On Greco-Roman pagans interpreting the practice of Egyptian circumcision as form of castration see Richard Gordon, "Religion in the Roman Empire: The Civic Compromise and Its Limits," in *Pagan Priests: Religion and Power in the Ancient World*, eds. Mary Beard and John North (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990) 242; Daniel Caner, "The Practice and Prohibition of Self-Castration in Early Christianity," *Vigiliae Christianae* 51 (1997): 396-415; E. Mary Smallwood, "The Legislation of Hadrian and Antoninus Pius against Circumcision," *Latomus* 18 (1959), 334-47. On the controversy over Origen's alleged castration see Brown, *Body*, 347-53.

[612] On Egypt's hypersexualized connotation see Montserrat, 164.

[613] *Vita Antonii* 47. Cf. 5.18 N 166. Also see Barnes, *Eusebius*, 194.

Sexual violence against men in connection with ascetic endeavors is often interpreted by scholars as a demonstration of misogyny. It is a proxy for the social violence inflicted upon women, fueling a horror of sex that justified the exclusion of women from male company and thus from the power structure. Interpreted in this fashion, sexual violence against men did not really count as violence against *men*, for the incidents were in fact directed at women. Though scholarship conducted in this vein has offered many useful insights, it seems to suffer from a basic prejudice against the ascetic enterprise, mainly an underlying assumption that aversion to sex is so deviant that it can only be justified by perverse notions, like misogyny. When asceticism is taken seriously and on its own terms, sexual violence against men looks less like hostility towards women and more like a simple commentary on just how difficult it is to pursue asceticism, an endeavor so trying for some early Christians that sexual violence had to be employed to achieve the goal.

A lack of interest in sexual violence against men—both today and in antiquity—also seems to reflect biases about the susceptibility of men to such treatment[614] and preconceptions about the gender of the audience that might have been interested in these incidents. Presumably the potential audience included at least some men and women who were free to have sex, even if this was only sex for procreative purposes. Hence, it seems ill-advised to assume that references to violence in sexual situations were born solely out of otherwise repressed sexual urges.

---

[614] Harper, *Shame*, 15; Bryen, *Violence*, 113; John Boswell, *Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality: Gay People in Western Europe from the Beginning of the Christian Era to the Fourteenth Century* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1980), 63-78; Ivor Jones, "Cultural and Historical Aspects of Male Sexual Assault," in *Male Victims of Sexual Assault*, eds., Gillian Mezey and Michael King (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 107-108. For embarrassment over the existence of Christian eunuchs see Matthew Kuefler, T*he Manly Eunuch: Masculinity, Gender Ambiguity, and Christian Ideology in Late Antiquity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001). For bias inhibiting the recognition of sexual violence against men see Gillian Mezey and Michael King, "Preface," in Mezey, v-vi.

We should not assume that women were utterly disinterested in this imagery either. Thecla's shrine attracted female pilgrims who might not have been averse to collecting her flasks, sexual imagery notwithstanding.[615] The existence of female patronage for similar imagery is suggested in other contexts. The Wescher tomb at Kom el-Shoqafa at Alexandria, which probably belonged to a woman, is decorated with the image of a partially nude Venus.[616] While this decoration might have been commissioned by a male relative of the deceased, and Thecla's flasks might have been intended for a primarily male audience,[617] that does not entirely preclude the existence of a female audience for this kind of art. Mimes and Greco-Roman novels contain evidence for female fantasies about committing violence against male love interests, with scenes in which women order male slaves to be physically abused because these slaves have refused to comply with sexual demands (*P.Oxy.* 413; Xenophon, *Ephes.* 2.4-6; Heliod., *Aeth.* 8.5). These narratives might have been directed towards a male audience, but the emperor Constantine (r. 306-337) obviously took the scenario seriously enough to legislate against women who employed the sexual services of their servants.[618] We are on somewhat firmer ground when it comes to evidence for female fantasies about committing violence against female love interests. Though the evidence is sparse, we have testimony in the form a poem by

[615] *Miracles of Saint Menas*. See Davis, "Pilgrimage," 314, n. 49, 321-23.

[616] Incidentally, this tomb was also decorated with an image of Mary. See Venit, 184-85.

[617] Thomas, 69.

[618] *Codex Theodosianus* 9.9.1. See Harper, *Shame*, 168; Harper, *Slavery*, 438-41. On the existence of a male audience for fictive narratives in which men are the victim of sexual violence at the hands of women, see Michael Uebel, "Psychoanlysis and the Question of Violence: From Masochism to Shame," *American Imago* 69 (2012): 492-96. For a discussion of a modern female audience for fictive violence against men with sexual implications see Viv Burr, "'Oh Spike, You're Covered in Sexy Wounds!' The Erotic Significance of Wounding and Torture in *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*," in Burr, 137-56.

Sappho (d. c. 570 BCE), known from an Egyptian papyrus fragment, and an Egyptian love spell preserved in Greek.[619]

A degree of violence might have simply become an accepted part of some sexual relationships in antiquity (or rather, because it was accepted, it would not have been defined as violence).[620] Certain verses of elegiac poetry suggest that some Roman men fantasized about experiencing violence in a sexual context.[621] Achilles Tatius' novel provides ample proof as to the plethora of contradictory notions circulating about violence and female sexuality. The hero made an extended speech on the value and desirability of the female orgasm, protesting the use of force in a sexual setting, and one female character made an extended defense of her own sexual desire. Yet the heroine was threatened with sexual and bodily violence and, at one point, the shameful nature of sexual desire was said to encourage women to feign

---

[619] *P.Oxy*. 2288; *PGM* XXXII1-19. Also see Montserrat, 197. Interestingly, a terracotta figure of a woman recovered from a third century CE Antioopolis context was posed similarly to Thecla's image on the pilgrim flasks, with her arms behind her back, but with the figure on the terracotta figurine also kneeling (the traditional posture of captives in Egypt) and stuck with pins. The figurine appears to have been used in a spell for attracting the passion of the real-world woman represented by the image. Scholars debate whether these objects were purely Egyptian, or also reflected Greco-Roman influences. See *PGM* IV 296-321; Montserrat, 191; Christopher Faraone, "The Ethnic Origins of a Roman-Era *Philtrokatadesos (PGM IV* 296-434)," in Meyer, *Ritual*, 319-43; Geraldine Pinch, *Magic in Ancient Egypt* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1995), 90-103. On curses and magic in early Christianity see chapter six.

[620] It is worth noting that, according to Palladius, the man who handed Potomaiena over to be tortured during the Severan persecution did so because she would not consent to having sex with him (Pall., *LH* 3). The implication is that the man who handed Potomaiena over was interested in consensual sex not rape. Scholars debate the implications of a female audience for pornography, whether sexual consent is really possible in an environment that seems to limit a woman's capacity for appreciating her self-worth, and how the notion of a consensual sadomasochistic relationship complicates the definition of violence. In antiquity, Stoic ideals regarding the maintenance of agency in situations of apparent powerlessness would have been a further complicating factor. See Hearn, 12; Brigitte Egger, "Women and Marriage in the Greek Novels: The Boundaries of Romance," in Tatum, 272-73; Harper, *Shame*, 61-70; Montserrat, 86-88.

[621] For instance Tibullus, 1.9.21-2, 2.4.1-6; Propertius, 3.8.21-23, 4.8.63-71; Ovid, *Amores* 1.7.64-5, 1.8.97-98, 3.8.19-20. Seneca the Younger, *De tranquilitate animi* 2.11-12. Also see Stacie Raucci, *Elegiac Eyes: Vision in Roman Love Elegy* (Washington, D.C.: Peter Lang, 2011), 38-54. A poem attributed to the Roman poetess Sulpicia (31 BCE-14 CE) expresses the notion that, at least metaphorically, love was considered a source of suffering, with women enduring abuse in the form of separation and rejection (Sulpicia XVII). For a discussion of the authorship of this poem see Carol Merriam "Sulpicia and the Art of Literary Allusion: [Tibullus] 3.13," *Women Poets in Ancient Greece and Rome*, ed. Ellen Greene (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2005), 158-59.

resistance.[622] With men fantasizing about enduring and inflicting sexual violence, and women apparently being told to feign resistance, it is not hard to imagine sadomasochistic sexual inclinations influencing early Christian martyrologies.[623] Like the heroine of Achilles Tatius' novel, daring her would-be rapist and torturer to begin his work (Ach. Tat. 6.22), the martyrs supposedly went cheerfully to their deaths (Euseb., *De mar. Pal.* 11.17-19), urging their persecutors on (*Acts of Phileas, Papyrus Bodmer XX*, 11). While these martyrs might not have been in the throes of sadomasochistic sexual passion, the audience might very well have been drawn to these narratives out of their own sadomasochistic inclinations.

Of course, martyr cult did not have to rely solely on sex to attract adherents. The relics of some martyrs supposedly produced miracles,[624] and martyrs served as special friends and patrons to the living.[625] But there was another, darker side to the martyrs, for they were thought to play an important role in postmortem judgment.

---

[622] Ach. Tat. 1.10, 2.37, 5.17, 5.25, 6.20-21; Ov., *Ars am.* 1.276, 1.485, 1.700, 1.711, 2.682-92, 2.719-28. Cf. Heliod., *Aeth.* 1.21, 1.22, 1.26, 4.10. When the heroine's mother in Achilles Tatius' novel learned that her daughter had sought out premarital sex, the mother indicateed that she would have preferred to learn that her daughter had been raped. The message: if a woman wants to have sex outside of marriage without feeling guilty about it she has to be willing to be raped. Ach Tat., 2.24. Cf. Sulpicia XIII; Artemidorus 1.78.

[623] For comparison, see a recent case study regarding educated, professional Western women who self-identify as feminists and yet are drawn to submissive behavior. Staci Newmahr, *Playing on the Edge: Sadomasochism, Risk, and Intimacy* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2011), 10. Cf. Abigail de Kosnik, "Fifty Shades and the Archives of Women's Culture" *Cinema Journal* 54 (2015): 116-25; Sharon Cumberland "Private Uses of Cyberspace: Women, Desire, and Fan Culture," http://web.mit.edu/comm-forum/papers/cumberland.html, accessed May 8, 2015; Judy, "Response: The Secret Lives of Women: Cyberspace and Fan Erotica," http://newmediagenres.org/2013/02/25/response-the-secret-lives-of-women-cyberspace-and-fan-erotica/, accessed May 8, 2015. On the generation of exogenous opoids in response to injury or illness that may produce what looks like an addictive desire for pain see June Rathbone, *Anatomy of Masochism* (New York: Plenum Publishers, 2001), 266.

[624] For the miracles associated with a martyr cult established by Cyril of Alexandria near Alexandria see chapter six and Juliussen, 101-102. Note, however, that the remains of criminals and gladiators were also used in cures (see Hope, 121; Fox, 446), a factor that would have undermined the uniqueness of Christianity.

[625] Brown, *Cult*, 50. Palladius, for instance, reported a story in which the martyr Colluthus—whose extant martyrologies are all quite late and therefore are not discussed above—warned an ascetic that she was about to die and invited her to eat a meal in his martyrium. While there, she asked him to bless her food. She died later that night (Pall., *LH* 60). The account suggests that the martyr served as a source of comfort for a woman facing her own mortality.

Intervening Martyrs

Martyr cult resembled traditional Egyptian paganism more than Greco-Roman paganism, at least insofar as the martyrs were thought to take an active role in the lives of the living and retained so much of their personalities after death. Both Egyptian and Greco-Roman pagans sometimes appealed to deceased friends and family members for assistance,[626] but the Egyptian pagan dead retained their identities, as definite individuals, in a more routine manner than the Greco-Roman pagan dead. The latter were far more likely to be depicted as faceless, nameless wraiths.[627]

Some Greco-Roman pagans had a notion of postmortem judgment,[628] but this idea was much more central in Egyptian paganism. The knowledge required for a person to ensure that he received a favorable judgment and was able to make his way through the dangerous landscape of the Egyptian afterlife[629] appears to have inspired

---

[626] Greco-Roman pagans had tales of visiting deceased friends and family in the underword or raising a spirit (Homer, *Odyssey* 11; Virgil 6.548-636; Philostr., *VA* 4.16). See Sarah Iles Johnston, *Restless Dead: Encounters Between the Living and the Dead in Ancient Greece* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999). In pre-Ptolemaic Egypt, the dead might receive written communication from their living friends and family, in the form of letters from the living requesting assistance. Griffiths, *Conflict* 77; Edward Wente, trans., *Letters from Ancient Egypt*, ed. Edmund Meltzer (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1990), 210-17.

[627] Indeed, Greco-Roman pagan skepticism regarding the retention of identity following death is one of the reasons that the Christian belief in resurrection raised so much controversy, being a sticking point, for instance, in the trial of Phileas, according to one fourth century martyrology (*Acts of Phileas, Papyrus Bodmer XX*, 4). In traditional Egyptian paganism, the dead could even be the subject of legal proceedings pursued on behalf of the living in the afterlife. See Wente, 210. The retention of identity observed with Greco-Roman hero cult and the cult activities planned for Peregrinus seem to have been exceptions, not the rule. Some Greco-Roman pagans did believe that the dead retained their identities to an extent, but Lucian mocked these beliefs (Lucian, *Necyomantia* 15). Also see chapter five.

[628] Lucian, *De Luctu* 7-10. On Serapis' identification with Pluto, ruler of the dead, see the second chapter.

[629] During the course of this trial, instead of confessing his sins, the deceased would make a negative confession, admitting to all of the sins he had *not* committed. If he was deemed unworthy of enjoying the afterlife, he would either suffer various torments or be devoured. Diodorus Siculus claimed that the living also conducted a trial of the deceased to determine his or her worthiness for burial (Dio Sic., 1.92). Burton doubts that anyone was actually denied burial on the basis of their supposed sins. See Burton, 270. On passages copied during Roman rule in connection with negative confessions see Robert Ritner, "Book of the Dead 125 'The Negative Confession,'" in Simpson, 267-68. For examples of negative confessions see Lichtheim, *Maat*… 103-44. On judgement after death and navigation through the afterlife in traditional Egyptian paganism see John Taylor, *Journey through the*

so-called gnostic texts, where the living were provided with detailed instructions for facing the challenges associated with death.[630] Egyptian beliefs seem to have also influenced early Christian concepts regarding the appearance assumed by deceased individuals and the geography of the afterlife. Antony the Great allegedly claimed that he experienced a vision of human souls flying—an image that would have appealed, perhaps, to audience members familiar with the Egyptian concept of the *ba*, an entity somewhat like the soul, which was sometimes depicted with bird characteristics—over a lake into which the wicked souls were falling, a body of water reminiscent of the lake of judgment in the Egyptian afterlife.[631] If Christian notions of postmortem judgment were in fact influenced by Egyptian paganism, Christians certainly never acknowledged the fact. At most, they accused Greco-Roman pagans of acquiring their notions about immortality from the Hebrews via Egypt.[632]

Unsurprisingly, in light of the discussion in the previous chapter, Christians appear to have been more interested in discrediting Greco-Roman pagan views of the afterlife than Egyptian pagan views on the subject.[633] Yet Christian martyrologists were only too happy to invoke Egyptian examples when it came to the postmortem

---

Afterlife: Ancient Egyptian Book of the Dead (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010), 204-37. For a first century CE demotic tale describing a journey to the afterlife and observation of the trial see *Setne II*.

[630] *The First Apocalypse of James V,3*, 32-35; *The First Book of Jeu* 39 (89), 50 (124). Cf. Clem. Al., *Strom.* 7.17. Also see William Schoedel, "Introduction," in Robinson 260; Frankfurter, *Roman Egypt*, 261; Scott-Moncrieff, 176-79, 191-92. Recall, however, that the favorable attitude of traditional Egyptians towards the world seems to preclude the possibility, mentioned in the second chapter, that gnosticism, at least in the ascetic variants that appeared to renounce the world, reflected traditional Egyptian pagan thought. On the ancient Egyptian and early Coptic Christian views of the afterlife Jan Zandee, *Death as an Enemy According to Ancient Egyptian Conceptions* (NY: Arno Press, 1977).

[631] Pall., *LH* 21.16–21.17; Jonathan Zecher, "Antony's Vision of Death?: Athanasius of Alexandria, Palladius of Helenopolis, and Egyptian Mortuary Religion," *Journal of Late Antiquity* 7 (2014): 164-67. A similar vision, with slight alterations, can be found in *The Vita Antonii*, 66. On the Egyptian lake of judgment see Taylor, 217.

[632] Justin, 1.20; Pseudo-Justin, *Cohort.* 27; Theod. Cyr., *Graec.* 11.27. Cf. Hdt 2.123. For similar accusations as a form of competitive historiography see the previous chapter.

[633] Was this because Egyptian paganism posed a greater challenge towards Christians when it came to promises of salvation? See below and chapter five.

punishments allegedly planned for the pagans who persecuted Christians. According to Lactantius, Christians wondering about the torment in store for these persecutors had merely to consider the vengeance exacted against the Egyptians who tried to bar Moses' departure from Egypt. A similar fate awaited the pagans responsible for inflicting torment upon Christians (Lactant., *Div. inst.* 7.15). No doubt such claims went a long way towards restoring the confidence of Christians, whose convictions must have been sorely tried by persecution.[634] Christians desiring justice must have found further consolation in the claims of Origen and Dionysius of Alexandria, both of whom declared that martyrs were employed in the postmortem judgment of the deceased.[635] If true, this meant that persecutors would have to endure trial and sentencing at the hands of their own victims.

To appreciate the full implications of this claim, we need to consider the degree to which Christian visions of postmortem judgment were in fact inspired by apocalyptic discourse. The apocalypse was a popular theme in antiquity but subject to a great deal of debate.[636] Greco-Roman and Egyptian pagans disputed whether the universe was destined to come to an eventual end or was instead subject to a series of cyclical calamities. Regardless of a person's position on that question, there appears

[634] Not only would the persecutors be punished, Origen explained, but the apostates too would be condemned to hell (Orig., *Ex. m.* 4, 18).

[635] Origen, *Ex. m.* 30; Euseb., *Hist. eccl.* 6.42.5; McGuckin, "Martyr," 38; Middleton, 90-92.

[636] For the definition of apocalyptic literature and a review of scholarly approaches see John Collins, ed., "What is Apocalyptic Literature?" in *The Oxford Handbook of Apocalyptic Literature* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 1-18; Steven Friesen, "Apocalypse and Empire," in Collins, 163-79. On the punishment of persecutors see Sib. Or. 2.254-2.261; *The Apocalypse of Elijah*, Ach. 41,1; *Apocalypse of Peter*, 9.

to have been a consensus that postmortem judgment, if it took place at all, occurred immediately after death, not at some final judgment.[637]

According to the Egyptians, an apocalypse—whether this was the end of the universe or merely a cyclical calamity—could be put off through daily temple rituals. But Egyptian apocalyptic discourse reminded audiences that peace was fleeting and that the reemergence of conflict would prompt the gods' flight from Egypt and an inversion of the political, social, and natural order. The latter included the imposition of punishments similar to those associated with postmortem judgment, the difference being, of course, that this punishment was inflicted upon the undeserving when it appeared in an apocalypse, but it was inflicted upon the deserving when it appeared in a narrative intended to warn audiences about the fate awaiting wrongdoers in the afterlife. Rhetoric like this constituted highly malleable propaganda. For instance, an apocalyptic prophecy reportedly delivered to a pharaoh in c. 1390-1353 BCE appears to have actually been crafted as propaganda by a later pharaoh who was seeking to portray his reign as a period of order and peace following a series of political and social upheavals so intense that they supposedly invited comparison to an apocalypse. The prophecy was later reused by various parties who sought to accuse their opponents of ushering in the apocalyptic levels of chaos described in the prediction. The targets of this propaganda appear to have shifted, moving from the Ptolemies and/or anti-Ptolemaic Theban rebels—the malleability of the discourse allowing either option—later moving to the Romans, and finally to the Christians. In its last

[637] Origen, *Con. Cels.* 1.20, 4.11; Chadwick, *Early*, 116-117; Zivie-Coche, "Pharaohnic," 67; Droge, *Homer*, 159-60; David Kuck, *Judgment and Community Conflict: Paul's Use of Apocalyptic Judgment Language in 1Corinthians 3:5-4:5* (New York: E. J. Brill, 1992), 119, 148-49; Gerald Downing, "Cosmic Eschatology in the First Century: 'Pagan,' Jewish and Christian," *L'Antiquité Classique* 64 (1995): 99-109.

incarnation, the prophecy was reused by Christians against pagans, a warning about the departure of the gods from Egypt being reinterpreted as a cause for celebration, with Christians not only appropriating pagan discourse, but inverting the traditional meaning of this imagery to undermine fundamental notions about how the universe worked.[638] This inversion was characteristic of the Christian approach to apocalyptic imagery in general. They too warned that good people—Christians—would suffer when the end came, but they assured audiences that eventually justice would be served. The good would be rewarded, and the wicked would be punished for the torment that they had inflicted upon the good.[639]

So Christians were not unique in their attraction towards apocalyptic literature,[640] but they set themselves apart by the graphic nature of their language when working in this genre. Traditional Egyptian apocalypses, Jewish visionary texts, Platonic and Stoic accounts of cyclical or final calamities, and Sibylline prophecies predicted earthquakes, floods, rivers turning to blood, famines, lightening, fire, murder, cannibalism, and social anarchy,[641] but this violence lacked the visceral quality of texts like the c. fourth century CE Coptic *Apocalypse of Elijah*. This *Apocalypse* incorporated traditional Egyptian apocalyptic imagery—the Nile turning

---

[638] "Oracle of the Potter;" *Asclepius 1-29 (VI,8);* "Asclepius;" Aug., *De civ. D.* 8.26. For discussion see Dieleman, "Egyptian Literature, 439-40; Fowden, 6-7, 38-39; Frankfurter, *Elijah,* 179; Moyer, *Limits*, 125-40.

[639] See for instance the below discussion of the *Apocalypse of Elijah.*

[640] Simmons argues that traditional Greco-Roman philosophers took these eschatological concerns quite seriously during the first few centuries of the Common Era. See Simmons, *Universal,* 131-86.

[641] Children who are smashed against walls are the worst of the predictions in "Admonitions of a Great Sage," in Simpson, 188-210. Cf. "The Prophecies of Neferty," In Simpson, 214-20. *Dan*. 7-12; *Matt*. 24; 1 *Enoch* 100; 2 *Baruch*; *Oracle of the Potter* 1-35; Sib. Or. 2.6-24, 3.644-45, 5.55-59, 225; Seneca the Younger, *De Consolatione ad Marciam* 26.5-7; Seneca the Younger, *Quaestiones naturales* 3.29. Compared to the *Apocalypse of Elijah*, not even the burning flesh, the bodies eaten by birds, and the locusts that inflict pain like scorpion bites of *Revelations* (*Rev*. 9:5, 14:10, 16:2, 16:8, 17:16, 19:17-18, 20:14) or the corpses stacker higher than dams or the bloodshed, fire, plague, scourging and pain, of the Nag Hammadi *Asclepius* seem that graphic (*Asclepius, VI* 71-79).

to blood, for instance—but it augmented this imagery with gruesome details, warning that, when the end came, people would find themselves subjected to terrible agony, their eyes removed with heated irons, their nails ripped off one at a time, and lye and vinegar shoved in their noses (*Apocalypse of Elijah*, 14, 17).

These punishments coincide so closely with those routinely inflicted upon the Christian martyrs that Frankfurter believes that the *Apocalypse of Elijah* was actually composed in response to one of the mid-third century persecutions in Egypt.[642] Not for nothing, then, did this *Apocalypse* proclaim that martyrs were miracle-workers, that the demon-like man who was destined to carry out the persecution was a drinker of human blood, and that the men and women who fled persecution would be denied reward (*Apocalypse of Elijah*, 14-15, 17). Drawing sharp lines between martyrs (and their supporters) and everyone else, the *Apocalypse* proffered virulent testimony as to just what constituted Christian identity. The graphic nature of the language facilitated this effort to draw boundaries, no doubt galvanizing a receptive audience more effectively than the vaguer, less brutal language employed by non-Christians working in the same genre.

Like apocalypses, Christian tours of hell (whether they were part of apocalyptic final judgments or judgments occurring immediately after death[643]) were frequently more graphic than their pagan counterparts, and therefore, perhaps, more effective as propaganda. Admittedly, this discussion does not take into account visual imagery related to mortuary beliefs or funerary inscriptions, but if we focus on

---

[642] Frankfurter, *Elijah*, 146-47; Albert Pietersman, Susan Comstock and Harold Attridge, "Introduction?" in Pietersma, 11-20.

[643] For Jesus' descent into hell in connection with questions regarding the fate of pagans who died before the birth of Jesus see chapter 5. Also see Harold Attridge, "Liberating Death's Captives," in Goehring, 103-16.

postmortem punishment in other genres, Christians do appear to have stood out. Aside from a few exceptions—like the first century CE demotic *The Adventures of Setne and Si-Osire (Setne II)* and passages in the plays of Seneca the Younger—pagans were exceedingly vague when it came to portraying the punishments awaiting the deceased.[644] Lucretius (c. 99 BCE-c. 55 BCE) claimed that it was suffering in *this* life that mattered, a person's own conscience applying the tortures of the rack.[645] Lucretius' language might have inspired psychologically horror, but it lacks the visceral quality of the somatic suffering that, according to pagans like Plutarch, was necessary if justice was really going to be dealt to wrongdoers (Plut., *De sera num. vin.*). After all, it was to some extent a given in the Greco-Roman mindset that effective punishment was physical. For this reason, Socrates supposedly argued that the dead would possess flesh—so that they would be susceptible to postmortem punishment for their crimes (Plato, *Grg*. 525-27; Plato, *Phd.* 112a-115e)—proffering a view that challenged Homeric (and later Roman) notions regarding the bodiless wraiths to which humans would be reduced upon death (Hom., *Od.*, 11.219; Luc., *Nec.* 15; Origen, *Con. Cels.* 5.14). Like Socrates, Christians insisted that the dead would have flesh[646] and would therefore be susceptible to bodily suffering. This line

---

[644] Hom., *Od*.11.576-81; Aristophanes, *Frogs* 146; Pindar, *Olympian Odes* 2.55-80; Plato, *Gorgias* 525-27; Pl., *Phd.* 112a-115e; Pausanias, 10.28-32. Lucian, *Cataplus* 29; Luc., *Nec.* 14; Lucian, *Verae historiae* 2.29-32; Sib. Or. 2.288-310; Plutarch, *De sera numinis vindicta* 565B-567F. Examples of more graphic treatments: Ov., *Met*. 4.408-81; Lucretius 3.970-1025; Virgil, *Aeneid* 6.548-636; Seneca the Younger, *Thyestes* 130-75; Seneca the Younger, *Hercules Furens* 650-807; *Setne* II 2/10. Also see Himmelfarb, 92-94; Jan Bremmer, "Descents to Hell and Ascents to Heaven in Apocalyptic Literature," 341-45; Alan Bernstein, *The Formation of Hell: Death and Retribution in the Ancient and Early Christian Worlds* (London: Cornell University Press, 1993). Admittedly, Christian depictions of the afterlife were not uniformly graphic. See for instance Matt 25:46; *The First Apocalypse of James V* 27-29; *Apocalypse of Paul V,2* 22-23. The latter is not to be confused with the *Apocalypse of Paul* referenced below.

[645] Lucretius 3.970-1025. Cf. Cic., *Tusc.*, 1.16 (36-37); Ov., *Met.* 15.153-75; Seneca *Ep*. 24.18, 117.6; Luc., *Luct*. 10.

[646] Was this in part an effort to assuage people who were worried about their martyrs? See Aeneas of Gaza, *Theophrastus* 67.18.

of thinking ensured a fitting revenge for the martyrs who were condemned for, among other things, their belief in resurrection (*Acts of Phileas, Papyrus Bodmer XX,* 4). The very resurrection that aroused so much skepticism in the eyes of pagan persecutors would ensure that these persecutors would eventually pay for their crimes.

To be sure, a restoration of the flesh precedes the initiation of torture in the c. early second century *Apocalypse of Peter*, a tour of hell so graphic that it stands apart from other texts of its kind.[647] According to this apocalypse, liars who supported the persecution of Christians would be punished in the afterlife by having their lips cut off while fire entered their mouths and entrails. The persecutors themselves would be half-submerged in fire, and their entrails would be consumed by worms.[648] The c. late fourth century *Apocalypse of Paul* is similarly graphic, claiming that those who refuse

[647] *Apoc. of Peter* 4. The *Apocalypse of Peter*, not to be confused with a text of same name found in the fourth century Nag Hammadi cache, was popular enough to draw the attention of several ancient authors. For instance, Euseb., *Hist. eccl.* 6.14.1; Soz. *HE* 7.19. It might have actually been composed in Egypt. If composed elsewhere, it was nevertheless put into Coptic at some point, though scholars believe that the Ethiopic versions (from which the current discussion draws) are closer to the original. On other ancient authors who reference the apocalypse, the language, and the provenance see J. K. Elliott, "Apocalypse of Peter," in Elliott, 593-95; Moreira, 50-53. Though Christian apocalypses, like apologies, took little interest in traditional Egyptian paganism, the *Apocalypse of Peter* claimed that those who worship animals are destined to wear chains of fire (*Apoc. of Peter,* 10).

[648] *Apoc. of Peter*, 9. The suffering takes on a comic tone at points, with references to excrement, for instance, being reminiscent of classical Attic comedy. A comic touch suggests the sort of vindictive delight in the suffering of others that was considered a hallmark of sadism and cruelty, as noted above. See István Czachesz, "The Grotesque Body in the Apocalypse of Peter," in *The Apocalypse of Peter*, eds. Jan Bremmer and István Czachesz (Leueven: Peeters, 2003), 108-26. Cf. Luc., *Nec.* 17. But consider the lack of staged violence against slaves in plays. Parker takes this as a sign that such things were not considered funny. See Parker, 163-93. Also consider indications that traditional Egyptian pagans considered the consumption of excrement a very real danger in the afterlife and took steps to prevent it. See, for instance, Spell 203, in the Coffin Texts.

to accept the doctrine of resurrection are destined to be eaten by worms.[649] Later Christian tours of hell were even more graphic.[650]

Presumably the audiences for Christian tours of hell and apocalypses were predominantly Christian. Some non-Christians clearly perceived this sort of literature as a threat that directly or indirectly encouraged revolutionary activities.[651] But we should not assume that this literature always alienated non-Christians. Like the martyrologies, apocalyptic literature could very well have drawn an audience that was simply looking for a good story. Literary and cinematic theories on the appeal of violence and horror suggest several reasons why this sort of discourse might have been appealing even to non-Christians. One theory proposes that people are drawn to narratives like this because these stories facilitate a reinforcement of gender roles, as women who are disturbed by violent and fear-inducing spectacles seek out the comfort of men, thereby buttressing submissive-dominant gender roles. Could

---

[649] *Apocalypse of Paul*, 42. Being eaten by worms forever would be a fitting fate for those who, like Celsus, joked that, if the doctrine of resurrection was true, it was the worms who consumed the corpses that would have to be resurrected (Origen, *Con. Cels.* 5.14). The *Apocalypse of Paul* was probably composed in Egypt. See Elliott, 616; Jan Bremmer, "Christian Hell: From the Apocalypse of Peter to the Apocalypse of Paul," *Numen* 56 (2009): 315-16. The *Apocalypse* was very popular. On ancient authors who mention it, including Sozomen (Sozom., *Hist. eccl.* 7.19), see Elliott, 617; Himmelfarb, 18-19.

[650] For an example of a lurid later tour of hell, see the fourth-seventh century *Vision of Ezra*. On the date and provenance of the *Vision of Ezra* see J. R. Mueller and G. A. Robbins, "Vision of Ezra," in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, ed. James Charlesworth (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1983), 1:581-86.

[651] Framed as a prophecy, this literature fell into a category of oracular and astrological discourse that was likely to rouse the suspicion of the Roman government. Concerned that oracles and astrologers might have been encouraging treason or rebellion, the Romans occasionally took steps to prevent their patronage in Egypt. Amm. Marc. 19.12.3-20; Jacco Dieleman, "Coping with a Difficult Life: Magic, Healing, and Sacred Knowledge," in *The Oxford Handbook of Roman Egypt*, edited by Christina Riggs (NY: Oxford University Press, 2012), 342. Similar fears might have motivated Dionysius of Alexandria's efforts to discourage Christians in Arsinoe from taking Revelations too literally (Euseb., *Hist. eccl.* 7.24). Yet apocalyptic literature need not represent an attack on the status quo. On the use of Egyptian apocalyptic for propaganda under the Pharaohs, Ptolemies, and Egyptians see Lichtheim, *Maat*, 43; Braun, 23, 32, 37, 41; Dieleman, "Egyptian Literature," 433-42. Also consider the argument that Revelations does not so much dismantle the imperial hierarchy and the mechanisms of oppression (like slavery and prison) so much as advocate a change in leadership, with the structures of domination and oppression remaining largely intact as personnel changes. See Anathea Portier-Young, "Jewish Apocalyptic Literature as Resistance Literature," in Collins, 152; Friesen, 166. Consider too a passage in the *Apocalypse of Peter*, which claims that servants who do not obey their masters will be tortured with fire and forced to gnaw on their tongues (*Apocalypse of Peter*, 4, 10-12), a warning that hardly suggested an interest in overthrowing the economic order.

discourse about the afterlife have really frightened female audience members into seeking the comfort of men? Perhaps not, but this discourse—particularly if linked to the martyrologies—might have excited the same audience members who were drawn to sadistic images of sexual violence against martyrs.[652] Another theory, initially suggested by Aristotle, claims that audiences enjoy narratives that facilitate the experience of vicarious emotions that would be avoided in real life but produce a feeling of catharsis.[653] Presumably, this explains why elites might have been interested in Greco-Roman novels (and perhaps martyrologies) depicting the violent subjugation of fellow elites.

Yet another theory for the attraction of violence and horror suggests that audiences enjoy narratives that allow them to confront their fears in a safe, narrative environment, and that they derive comfort from the spectacle of justice as the source of this fear is bested. This explanation makes sense in connection with Christian audiences for an apocalypse. Surely, they would have felt a sense of vindication at the thought of a pagan persecutor being condemned to postmortem torment.[654] To a pagan audience, however, this condemnation would have been satisfying only to the extent that the audience was successful in suspending disbelief and assuming a Christian perspective, a strategy that, as noted above, some audience members will pursue for the sake of enjoying a narrative.

---

[652] Consider for instance *Apoc. of Peter*, 7.7.

[653] Aristotle, *Poetica* 1449b.

[654] This does not preclude the possibility that a Christian audience might have sympathized with a dead pagan. For narratives suggesting sympathy with the pagan dead, see the discussion of monks confronting pagan ghosts in chapter five.

An alternative theory proposes that audiences are drawn to violence and horror simply because people are fascinated by monsters. An audience does not necessarily need to see the monster in a particular story destroyed—and in fact, the monster survives at the end of many of today's most loved works of horror—the audience simply wants to see it.[655] Curiosity alone inspires interest. This theory would explain the interest of pagans in Christian apocalypses and avoids sticky questions about whether or not the audience was able to suspend disbelief.

But just who was the monster in an apocalypse? To a Christian, a pagan persecutor certainly would have seemed monstrous enough, but pagan persecutors were not the ones inflicting punishment in the afterlife. The martyrs were responsible for dealing out punishment here, and they did not limit their wrath to pagans.[656] Imagine the curiosity that must have been inspired by the monster-martyr for Christian and pagan audiences alike. In pagan tours of hell, the uninitiated endured ridiculously light punishments, being forced to carry about leaky vessels (Paus. 10.31.9). In Christian tours of hell, the uninitiated were consumed by worms (*Apoc. of Paul*, 42). The monster-martyr responsible for inflicting this torment was all the more terrifying insofar as, unlike his victims, he was impervious to damage. The

---

[655] This debate over the fascination with horror and violence is misguided insofar as theorists attempt to assert that one and only one theory is correct. Fagan argues that the audience's reaction to arena spectacle could change over the course of a day, and surely this is true for narratives associated with horror and violence as well. People watch, listen and read for different reasons. On gender reinforcement see Fagan, *Lure*, 238-39. On the catharsis theory, see Chariton, 8.1; Fagan, *Lure*, 199; Morgan, "Make-Believe," 183. On the attraction of horror insofar as it allows the viewer to identify with passivity (*contra* theorists who argue that such spectacles are solely objectifying and exploitative) see Leffler, 57, 88. On the sensation-seeking theory see Clark McCauley, "When Screen Violence Is Not Attractive," in *Why We Watch: The Attractions of Violent Entertainment*, ed. Jeffrey Goldstein (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 158. On the attraction of horror insofar as it allows the viewer to face his phobias see Leffler, 88-91. On fascination with the monster see, George Ochoa, *Deformed and Destructive Beings: The Purpose of Horror Films* (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2011), 83.

[656] Christians were destined to suffer right alongside pagans for their crimes in the afterlife. *Apoc. of Peter*, 12; *Apoc. of Paul*, 36. Also see Bremmer, "Christian Hell," 309.

wounds he had received during the course of his interrogation and/or execution had done nothing to quell him. If anything, they made him all the more terrifying, for like many a modern horror movie monster, the martyr could not be killed.[657]

To a pagan, of course, the monster in a Christian tour of hell was in some ways Christianity itself, the faith that promulgated these horrifying notions of postmortem judgment. Tellingly, a final theory for the fascination of horror proposes that audiences are drawn to horror because it evokes a sense of awe akin to the wonder associated with certain religious contexts.[658] To appreciate this awe, the audience has to suspend disbelief, but the burden for this is shifted to the narrative. A good horror story will be so frightening—that is, convincing—that the audience unconsciously suspends disbelief. To the extent that fear fuels

---

[657] The Christian theory of resurrection was all the more frightening insofar as it claimed that efforts to prevent proper burial would not be effective in preventing dead martyrs from seeking revenge. Compare to Te Velde's contention that traditional Egyptian paganism treated Seth's assault on Osiris as if it was counteractive. By killing Osiris, Seth turned himself into a sacrifice. Te Velde, *Seth*, 96. On the use of scars in the pursuit of justice within a Roman context see for instance Tac., *Ann*. 1.35. On the identification of scars and deformities with magical power, deviance, and social inferiority see Johannes Stahl, "Physically Deformed and Disabled People," in Peachin, 715-34; Maud Gleason, "Mutilated Mesengers: Body Language in Josephus," in Goldhill, 84. On Christians from Egypt using the scars received during persecution to gain social leverage against unwounded Christians see Epiph., *Pan*. 68.8.4 and the following chapter.

[658] On the religious quality of violence and horror see Carroll, 1; Weisbrod, 74; William Day, *In the Circles of Fear and Desire: A Study of Gothic Fantasy* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1985), 32; Edmund Burke, "A Philosophical Inquiry into the Origins of Our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful," in *The Portable Edmund Burke*, ed. Isaac Kramnick (New York: Penguin Books, 1999), 29-63; Rudolph Otto, *The Idea of the Holy* (1923, repr., London: Humphrey Milford, 2001); H. P. Lovecraft, *Supernatural Horror in Literature* (1945, repr., New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1973). Justification for the application of a religious model for the attraction of modern horror to antique texts might be provided by the derivation of modern horror *from* these texts. On Greco-Roman texts that were influential in the development of the gothic literature that turned into modern horror see Leffler, 64; Marquis de Sade, "An Essay on Novels," in *The Crimes of Love: Heroic and Tragic Tales, Preceded by an Essay on Novels*, ed. and trans. David Coward (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 3-20; Thomas de Quincey, "On Murder Considered as One of the Fine Arts," in *On Murder*, ed. Robert Morrison (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 8-9. For other similarities between gothic literature, martyrologies, apocalypses, and Greco-Roman novels, consider the conflation of sex with horror, the theme of sexually repressed creatures attempting to defend their chastity, and the use of the omens, visions, and dreams to deconstruct one reality and to construct a new reality inhabited by monsters. See Day, 23, 26, 44; Leffler, 239; David Punter, *The Literature of Terror: A History of Gothic Fictions from 1795 to the Present Day* (New York: Longman, 1980), 408-409, 417. Not for nothing, then, does Vivian refer to a passage in one of Peter of Alexandria's martyrologies as "the stuff of a Gothic romance" (Vivan, 44). Admittedly, the religious theory for the attraction of horror has fallen out of favor recently (see below), but it is also clear that scholarly explanations of the attraction to horror are driven by the personal tastes of the scholar in question. Scholars who do not like horror look for explanations associated with deviance, while others pick the explanation that seems to best fit their favorite kind of horror (see Ochoa, for instance). In the interests of academic integrity, therefore, I freely admit that I am partial to the horror found in gothic literature and the fiction of H. P. Lovecraft.

a religious sense of awe,[659] this suspension of disbelief is akin to temporary conversion to faith in the monster as an object of (religious) fear. This fear substantiates belief in something that would otherwise be rejected out of hand. In other words, fear is a kind of belief. Horror convinces a person to believe in a monster because it convinces him that the monster is frightening.[660]

Fear was often used in antiquity to induce desired patterns of behavior. Good behavior was supposedly inspired by the spectacle of criminals enduring torture and execution.[661] Greco-Roman pagan and Christian sources claimed that warnings about postmortem punishment had a similar effect.[662] Complaints in pagan circles about the use of stories to inspire fear in deities like Serapis[663] imply that fear was being used in a religious context, perhaps even to encourage religious adherence. If surviving literature is any indication, however, Christians were much better at producing this propaganda than pagans.[664] Christian apocalypses might not have actually scared people into converting, but

---

[659] Note that I do not claim that this is the only function of horror. However, an association betwen fear and religious belief would have been perfectly at home in antiquity, when the compassion of deities was fleeting. Noël Carroll questions the degree to which a fascination with horror can be traced to religious sentiment. He points out that fear of the monster rarely prompts worship in modern horror and that audiences could certainly seek out religious experiences directly, there being no need to rely on fiction. See Noël Carroll, *The Philosophy of Horror or Paradoxes of the Heart* (New York: Routledge, Chapman and Hall, Inc., 1990), 166-67. This argument ignores, first, the possible existence of an audience that is interested in religion but is wary of making overly bold investigations, and, second, the degree to which worship is essentially an investment in protection of some sort (protection from harm is exactly what is sought by both the protagonist of modern horror and the ancient religious practitioner who carried out religious rituals in order to avert calamity). Lovecraft's refusal to engage a supernatural source of horror—his monsters were really aliens—is proof enough that horror can function via the production of a religious sense of awe without necessarily embracing a particular religion. That is, horror is useful because it allows one to think about religion without necessarily committing to religion. On the ability to fear something in which we do not believe, see Leffler, 217-26.

[660] For an example of a character whose horror aids his "conversion," see Longus, 2.26-27. On the role of the sublime in persuading an audience, see Longinus, *De Sublimitate* 1.3-4.

[661] John Moschus, *Pratum spirituale* 71. For an introduction to this text see chapter five.

[662] Pl., *Resp.* 1.330D-E; Pl., *Grg.* 525; Diod. Sic. 1.2.2; Chariton 4.2; *Martyrdom of Apollonius,* 36-42; *Asclepius VI* 77; *AP* 3.3 N 136; *Vita bohairice Pachomii* 88. Also see Kuck, 113-15, 131-32. For an introduction to the *Vita bohairice Pachomii* see chapter five.

[663] Julian, *Oratianes* 4 136A-B.

[664] This might be an accident of preservation, but it might also reflect Christian opposition to the sort of secrecy that was found in the Orphic traditions and mystery cults that, like Christianity, appear to have attracted adherents by promising happiness in the afterlife. Indeed, the willingness of Christians to openly advertise the horrors awaiting the men and women who failed to accept their offer of salvation might have been crucial to the success of Christians in garnering converts. On fears associated with the afterlife as a factor in the attraction of

this discourse surely would have attracted attention, if only because these stories were so very violent. It is impossible to know with any certainty whether or not narratives like this laid the groundwork for any conversions, but surely conversion would have been far less probable had Christians lacked their flair for crafting compelling narratives.

Conclusion

According to Aristotle, a plausible but unconvincing narrative is less entertaining than an impossible but convincing one (Arist., *Poet.* 24.19-20 1460a). By corollary, the more entertaining a Christian narrative was, however improbable, the more convincing it would be.[665] Narrative transport theory suggests that compelling narratives are by definition engrossing, the audience being drawn—transported—into the narrative in a way that can affect their real world beliefs and behaviors.[666] As mentioned above, enjoyment of a narrative is often linked to identification with one or more characters, and emotions have cognitive functions. An audience member who suspended disbelief and emotionally identified with a martyr so as to increase the entertainment value of a martyrology or a tour of hell would have

---

Orphism, which supposedly promised an escape from suffering after death and was, incidentally, traced by some apologists to Egypt see Diod. Sic. 1.92-95; Pseudo-Justin, *Cohor.* 14; Euseb., *Prep. ev.* 1.6 17c-18a; Theod., *Graec.* 1.21; Lars Albinus, *The House of Hades: Studies in Ancient Greek Eschatology* (Oakville, CN: Aarhus University Press, 2000), 105-108; Martin West, *The Orphic Poems* (New York: Clarendon Press, 1983); Radcliffe Edmonds, *Myths of the Underworld Journey: Plato, Aristophanes, and the 'Orphic' Gold Tablets* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 29-110; Miguel Herrero de Jáuregui, *Orphism and Christianity in Late Antiquity* (NY: Walter de Gruyter, 2010). On early Christians identifying Jesus as the "true" Orpheus see David Dunn-Wilson, *A Mirror for the Church: Preaching in the First Five Centuries* (Grand Rapids, MI, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2005), 45-46. As a testament to the popularity of Orphic texts in Late Antique Egypt see Damascius, *Vita Isidore* 7.111. On the Eleusinian mysteries and their connection with fears related to the afterlife see Albinus, 155-91. On funerary imagery in Roman Egypt related to initiation and postmortem resurrection see Venit, 124-59. See the final chapter for a discussion of the appeal of universal salvation.

[665] Regarding characters from recent popular horror movies, Thomas Sipos, asks "Do theists find Samara [a ghost] frightening yet fascinating, but Jigsaw [a human serial killer] merely sordid and vicious? Are atheists more likely unnerved by Jigsaw but merely anoyed by Samara?" Thomas Sipos, *Horror Film Aesthetics: Creating the Visual Language of Fear* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers, 2010), 251. On the contrary, an atheist's interest in Samara might be aroused by the very fact that she is so unbelievable. Enjoyment can be derived from engagement in an intellectual contest with the narrator, whose skill is demonstrated by spinning a tale so compelling that the non-believer successfully suspends belief with regard to something about which it would otherwise be impossible to suspend disbelief. Since it is much easier for an atheist to believe in a serial killer than a ghost, the storyteller who can convince an atheist that a ghosts exists is more gifted than a storyteller who can convince an atheist that a serial killer exists.

[666] Green, "Transportation" 356-57. On the audience's skill at suspending disbelief with regard to the so-called "fatal charades" see Plut., *De sera num. vin.* 554b.

been encouraged, at least temporarily, to adopt the cognitive, belief-based judgments justifying the martyr's actions. The more compelling the tale, the more likely a person was to return to it, repeating the suspension of disbelief and imagining emotions that would have triggered actual physiological responses. Thus, the best tales would have inspired a level of engagement that produced lasting effects.

In some ways, a Christian version of a Christian martyrdom would have been more entertaining than a pagan version of the same event. In the hands of Lucian, for instance, a Christian martyrdom, like *The Death of Peregrinus*, would have probably included a few high points, since even criminals can seem noble on occasion, but there would have been several low points as well, to demonstrate the pathos of human eccentricity, as showcased by the voluntary pursuit of death, and the tale would have ended on a down note, with the martyr's demise, augmented perhaps by a few amusing (vicious) side notes. In the hands of a Christian, though, a martyrology was an exciting love story—the lovers being the martyr and God, of course—of rebellion, arrest, imprisonment, courtroom hijinks, brave defiance in the face of bloody (sometimes sexual) torture, *and* horrific postmortem revenge. Lucian's version might have been more sophisticated, but it was in some ways less fun. The Christian versions were so entertaining, in fact, that they continued to be drafted and expanded upon well after the end of pagan persecution.[667]

Christian narratives attracted interest by playing on the same fascination with deviance that drew ancient audiences to the Greco-Roman novels, mimes, the *Acta Alexandrinorum*, gladiatorial bouts, and similar spectacles. Christians were also noteworthy for their graphic depictions of violence. Ancient audiences certainly had

[667] Even if these later martyrologies were composed for polemical reasons, these polemical interests would have been served by the use of an appealing narrative. Some Coptic martyrologies still bear the stamp of certain oral techniques that would have fostered communication and enjoyment of the contents as oral performances. See Ewa Zakrzewska, "Masterplots and Martyrs: Narrative Techniques in Bohairic Hagiography," in *Narratives of Egypt and the Ancient Near East: Literary and Linguistic Approaches*, eds. Frederik Hagen, John Johnston, Wendy Monkhouse, Kathryn Piquette, John Tait and Martin Worthington (Walpole, MA: Peeters Publishers and Department of Oriental Studies, 2001), 506-16.

an appetite for violence, but the need for propaganda justifying the persecution of Christians is proof enough that pagans were not mindless thugs. The audience was susceptible to persuasion. Judith Perkins argues that this period was unique in the generation of discourse treating pain and suffering as a worthy subject of concern.[668] In this context, it is certainly significant that Christians offered such good explanations for suffering, depicting pain not merely as something to be avoided or ameliorated, nor as the stuff of an occasional ritual, but as a means to salvation and therefore meaningful in and of itself. Good storytelling, which includes the generation of explanations like this, could not have been the only factor in the Christianization of the Roman Empire, but it might very well have been important.

[668] Perkins argues that, although suffering as a subject became more popular, Christian hagiographical literature was unique in suggesting that suffering was normal. Perkins, 204.

Chapter 4: Histories: Anti-Pagan Violence and Secularism

The previous chapter closed with the Christians beginning to go on the offensive, with stories about the punishment awaiting the Church's enemies after death. The current chapter explores the development of anti-pagan efforts in the form of real-world sallies against pagans, pagan property, and pagan space, as documented in histories, orations, letters, sermons, hagiographies, legal codes, and the archaeological record. Scholars have made great headway in determining just "what really happened" during the course of fourth and fifth century conflicts, sorting through the tangled narratives regarding the deconstruction of the Serapeum, for instance, to establish the most trustworthy timeline of events. Instead of trying to establish a single, cohesive account, this chapter shifts the focus back to the tangled narratives and debates about what happened in order to explore the ways in which obfuscation was itself central to the development and subsequent interpretation of events. The recent work of social scientists is incorporated to illuminate gaps in the evidence, with a hope that this will help us avoid the teleological bias that is implied by a desire to establish "what really happened." After exploring the reception of these events by pagans—particularly the extent to which these events might have encouraged conversion—this chapter looks at the extent to which a Christian secularization of pagan culture might have functioned as another kind of violence, a removal of religious valence representing an assault upon the identity of target imagery. Conflicting testimony on the nature of the so-called secular sphere from both pagan and Christian sources indicates a situation far more complex than

suggested by scholarly treatments of the subject, which all too often seem to conflate the Late Antique secular with its modern Western incarnation.

This discussion begins by laying out the background of pagan-Christian interaction in a post-persecution world. Three test cases of religious violence are then analyzed in three stages—mobilization, trigger, and mob violence—to flesh out the mechanisms by which Christians became responsible for perpetrating levels of violence comparable to the earlier anti-Christian persecutions. As in the previous chapter, an effort is made to measure the graphic nature of the language used to describe violence. Then, the evidence for forceful conversions is considered, with an eye towards understanding why pagans might have been more susceptible to violence as a tool of conversion than Christians. The discussion concludes with a look at efforts to construct a non-religious sphere of activity as a safe-guard against this sort of violence.

Christian-pagan relations were closely linked to internal Christian disputes. Heretical thinking was supposedly fueled by pagan philosophy, pagans and heretics merging in a perverse mélange.[669] As if that was not enough, persecution at the hands of pagans was blamed on heretics who had incited the pagans' wrath with their bizarre behavior,[670] and persecution itself gave rise to new forms of so-called heresy.

---

[669] Tert., *De praes. haer.* 7; Sozom., *Hist. eccl.* 1.18. The situation was complicated by the way in which debates between Christian and pagan apologists contributed to the Christological controversy that was lying at the root of many heresies (consider the questions the former raised with regard to the nature of divinity, as discussed in chapter two). For instance, Wilken argues that Eusebius' debate with Porphyry prevented the former from proclaiming the doctrine of homoousious. Wilken, 133-34. Also see D. H. Williams, "Necessary Alliance or Polemical Portrayal? Tracing the Historical Alignment of Arians and Pagans in the Later Fourth Century," in *Papers Presented at the Twelfth International Conference on Patristic Studies*, ed. Elizabeth Livingston (Louvain: Peeters, 1997), 178-94.

[670] Euseb., *Hist. eccl.* 4.7.10-14. Cf. Sozom., *Hist. eccl.* 3.19. Also see the previous chapter and Ramsay MacMullen, *Christianizing the Roman Empire (A.D. 100-400)* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984), 92. Christian apologists claimed that some pagans used the very existence of heresy as an argument against Christians, for if something was "true" it should not provoke disagreement (Athenagoras, *Leg. pro Christ.* 14; Clem. Al.,

One such heresy arose when a bishop from the Thebaid named Melitius (d. post-325) denounced Peter, the patriarch, for fleeing Alexandria during the early fourth century persecution, and for not taking a harsher stance on the subject of repentance following apostasy. Melitius' opponents responded by claiming that Melitius had not left the so-called orthodox Church of his own volition. Instead, Melitius was expelled for, of all things, apostasy. The division between Melitius and his opponents was further exacerbated by a supposed alliance between the Melitians and the Arians, the latter heresy arising from a Christological dispute between Arius (c. 256-336), a presbyter stationed in the suburbs of Alexandria, and Alexander (patriarch 312-326), Peter's successor as patriarch (and Athanasius' predecessor).[671]

Martyrdom and the Christological controversy were linked in people's minds to the extent that martyrdom was thought to be justified by Jesus' suffering *as* a human. That is, if Jesus was not human or if he was somehow distinct from God—central points in the Christological controversy—then the truth-value of the human, bodily, pain endured during the torture and/or an execution of Christians declined in significance. The martyrs' pain mattered, in part, because it was akin to the pain

---

Strom. 7.15; Origen, *Con. Cels.* 3.12; 5.61-63). Christians used the same argument (the existence of schism) against pagans (Tatian, *Orat.* 25; Justin, 1.4; Justin, *Dialogus cum Tryphone* 2; Pseudo-Justin, *Cohor.* 5-8; Theoph., *Ad Autol.* 2.5; Athenagoras, *Leg. pro Christ.* 14; Clem. Al., *Strom.* 8.1; Arnobius, 2.10; Lactant., *Div. inst.* 3.15, Euseb., *Prep. ev.* 14.2 718a-d). On Greco-Roman pagan attempts to explain away the presence of schism in paganism (disagreements among the philosophical schools and the differences between, for instance, Persian and Greco-Roman traditions), see for example Iambl., *Myst.* 9.4. Also see Droge, *Homer*, 69-70. The acknowledgement of schism is an interesting reversal of the tendency to ignore difference in order to facilitate alienation and to expedite decision-making. On the latter see below and Martin Marger, *Race and Ethnic Relations: American and Global Perspectives* (Stamford: Wadsworth, 2000), 98.

[671] Socrates, *Hist. eccl.* 1.6; Sozom., *Hist. eccl.* 2.21; Epiph., *Pan.* 68.1.1-6.6; Vivian, 18-20; Malcolm Choat, *Belief and Cult in Fourth-Century Papyri* (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols Publishers, 2006), 128-29. Bagnall argues that while Athanasius depicted his conflict with Arius as an issue of doctrine, it was really a dispute over the patriarch's right to control the preaching of the presbyters, and this is why the conflict was so difficult to resolve. See Bagnall, *Early*, 6-7.

suffered by God in the form of Jesus.[672] And because pain had a truth-value, martyrdom was taken as proof of orthodoxy.[673]

When Eusebius' orthodoxy came into question during the 335 Council at Tyre, the evidence against him included his success in avoiding any real punishment during the early fourth century persecution, despite the fact that he was arrested in Egypt. Imagine Eusebius' feelings of inadequacy upon finding himself confronted in Tyre by Potamon (fl. early 4th cent.), a Christian from Egypt who, having lost his eye in the persecution, was suspicious as to how Eusebius had managed to avoid a similar fate.[674] It is not hard to imagine how surviving persecution, especially without any wounds, might have given rise to tension with shades of guilt, perhaps even survivor guilt,[675] emotions that would have been fostered by the obsessive, even pathological,

---

[672] A willingness to use corporeal violence and to suffer corporeal violence in defense of one's position in the course of internal Christian persecutions was a testament to the continued importance of bodily pain as a test of truth. See Carlos Galvao-Sobrinho, "Embodied Theologies: Christian Identity and Violence in Alexandria in the Early Arian Controversy," in Drake, 323-24.

[673] Origen, *Con. Cels.* 6.32; Athan., *De incar.* 1.48. Also see Moss, *Myth*, 222, 229.

[674] Epiph., *Pan.* 68.8.4. Scholars studying the subject of mutilation argue that this phenomenon affects not only the victim (producing pain at the moment of infliction, threatening the victim's social position as others react to the impairment, and undermining the victim's ability to care for himself) but also others (creating a text that might be read via mutilated flesh). See Cole's critique of medical discourse and the work of disability theorists who, he argues, in emphasizing the pathology of disfigurement, reinscribe the narratives of disfigurement drafted by the perpetrators of this violence. Cole advocates discourse emphasizing instead the agency of the victims. Ernest Cole, *Theorizing the Disfigured Body: Mutilation, Amputation and Disability Culture in Post-Conflict Sierra Leone* (Trenton, NY: Africa World Press, 2014), xxvii, 57-72. On disability studies see for instance Tobin Siebers, *Disability Theory* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 2008); Colin Barnes, Michael Oliver, and Lee Barton, *Disability Studies Today* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2002). When Christians in Egypt were subjected to mutilation instead of execution in the early fourth century, with eyes removed and legs mutilated, the damage was not serious enough to stop them from working—the victims were in fact put to work in mines (Euseb., *Hist. eccl.* 8.12.10; Euseb., *De mar. Pal.* 8.1; Sozom., *Hist. eccl.* 1.10)—but work was made much harder as a result of their disabilities. The loss of an eye not only affected how the victim was perceived by others, but also left him in a permanent state of insecurity thanks to his loss of complete peripheral vision. But post-persecution, mutilated Christians (or others speaking on the victims' behalf) re-appropriated the very agency that mutilation was meant to destroy by *embracing* the perpetrators' intended message—the mutilated body *was* the Christian body—and using the disfigured body to secure the power that mutilation was meant to impair.

[675] The scholarly debate over the nature of survivor guilt—whether or not there is such a thing and, if it does exist, its source and the manner in which it manifests itself—is particularly heated. See for instance Henry Krystal, *Massive Psychic Trauma* (NY: International Universities Press, 1969); Terrence Des Pres, *The Survivor: An Anatomy of Life in the Death Camps* (NY: Oxford University Press, 1976); Bruno Bettelheim, *Surviving and Other Essays* (NY: Vintage Books, 1980); W. G. Neiderland, "The Survivor Syndrome: Further Observations and Dimensions," *Journal of the American Psychological Association* 29 (1981): 413-25; Ruth Leys, *From Guilt to Shame: Auschwitz and After* (Princeton: Princeton University Press 2007); Didier Fassin and Richard Rechtman,

mourning associated with martyr cult.[676] It makes sense that Christians (and recent pagan converts) might have wanted to alleviate this guilt by rooting out the heretics who were associated with persecution, the memories preserved by martyr cult thus fueling disputes over orthodoxy.

The endurance of persecution not only conferred authority when it came to defining orthodoxy, but it also attracted the attention of elites. Emperor Constantine allegedly bestowed Paphnutius (fl. early 4th cent.), a bishop from the Thebaid, with honors at one of the Church Councils, kissing the scar on Paphnutius' face where an eye had been removed during the persecution (Socrates, *Hist. eccl.* 11). Given the respect accorded to victims like Paphnutius, it is not surprising that debates broke out over just who deserved to be called a martyr.[677] When George the Cappadocian (patriarch 357-361), Athanasius' rival for the patriarchy, was torn apart by pagans, the heresiologist Epiphanius (c. 310/320-403) went to great lengths to deny George's claim to the title of "martyr." Epiphanius argued that George was killed not for religious reasons, but for economic and political crimes committed against the

---

The Empire of Trauma: An Inquiry into the Condition of Victimhood (Princeton: Princeton University of Press, 2009); Menachem Ben-Ezra, "Traumatic Reactions from Antiquity to the 16th Century: Was There a Common Denominator?" *Stress and Health* 27 (2011): 223–40. For the influence of survivor guilt on apocalyptic literature see Derek Daschke, "Apocalypse and Trauma," in Collins, 457-72; Catherine Wessinger, "Apocalypse and Violence," in Collins, 422-40.

[676] That Christians who lived long after the last persecution continued to feel regret over the lost opportunity to face this test, see a story reported in a seventh-century collection of Syrian *Sayings* about a fourth century monk living in Egypt who, despite the cessation of persecution, possessed aspirations for martyrdom (*Paralipomena* 5 [8-11]). Cf. *Vita prima graeca Pachomii* 85. To the extent that martyrdom was assimilated to sacrifice, requirements that the animal destined to be sacrificed (in the Opening of the Mouth ritual, for example) indicate his acceptance of this fate implied some guilt on the part of the sacrificers. See Lorton, "Theology," 162-63. Cf. Macrobius, *Saturnalia* 3.5.8. This suggests a link to martyrologies in which the martyr urges his persecutors on, a motif that became more common in the later texts and implies absolution for any survivors who might have been feeling guilt over not suffering a similar fate, perhaps because there were no pagan persecutors left but also because of the would-be martyr had not stood up to the heretical persecutors who continued to operate.

[677] Middleton, 20. On the use of these claims to draw boundaries see Moss, *Ancient,* 26. On the construction of a "victim" identity and its role in negotiating status see Prus, 88.

Alexandrians.[678] When Cyril of Alexandria proclaimed a monk as a martyr in the early fifth century, the announcement provoked criticism, for the monk was not the victim of a pagan persecutor. The monk died because he had attacked a Christian prefect.[679]

Inter-Christian violence like this buoyed interest in the anti-Christian persecution conducted by pagans, because violence was still being used to draw lines. The accusation that an opponent in an internal dispute was engaging in persecution facilitated the conflation of heretics with the pagans who were already considered outsiders, and therefore facilitated efforts to expel these heretics from Christian communities. Violence clarified boundaries that were obviously blurred.[680] Hence, it is no accident that accounts describing the struggles of the so-called orthodox against persecution by so-called heretics look so very much like the martyrologies discussed in the previous chapter. Athanasius and his supporters, for instance, conflated

---

[678] Epiph., *Pan.* 76.1.1-8. On the possibility that George did become the subject of a martyr cult see David Woods, "The Origin of the Cult of St. George," in Twomey, 141-58.

[679] Socrates, *Hist. eccl.* 7.14. Compare to the North African controversy over Christians supposedly starting fights so that they could be killed and be proclaimed as martyrs. See Brent Shaw, *Sacred Violence: African Christians and Sectarian Hatred in the Age of Augustine* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

[680] As Epiphanius supposedly discovered in Egypt, heretics looked so much like the orthodox that they could easily escape notice. For this reason, heresiologists like Epiphanius had to pen handbooks so that one could readily identify the heretics moving in one's midst (Epiph., *Pan.* 26 17,8-9). For a discussion of Epiphanius' treatment of the heresies in Egypt see Young Kim, "Epiphanius of Cyprus and the Geography of Heresy," in Drake, 245-46. The scholarly consensus is that both orthodoxy and heresy are constructs, for every religious person, whatever his beliefs, considers himself orthodox and labels dissenters as heretics. See for instance Walter Bauer, *Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity*, trans. Georg Strecker (Philadelophia: Fortress Press, 1976); Holum, 147-74; Caroline Humphries, *Orthdoxy and the Courts in Late Antiquity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007); Eduard Iricinischi and Holger Zellentin, eds., "Making Selves and Marking Others: Identity and Late Antique Hersiologies,"in *Heresy and Identity in Late Antiquity* (Tübingen, Germay: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 5-11, 17; Averil Cameron, "The Violence of Orthodoxy," in Iricinischi, 107. For a warning with regard to the danger of putting too much trust in the sources when it comes to identifying Arian and non-Arian space in Alexandria, see David Gwynn, "Archaeology and the 'Arian Controversy' in the Fourth Century," in *Religious Diversity in Late Antiquity*, eds. David Gwynn and Susanne Bangert (New York: Brill, 2010), 229-64. On a similar note, Bagnall, among others, points out that the term "Arian" was itself a form of invective and that the so-called Arians were unlikely to have referred to themselves as such. Bagnall, "Models," 31.

Athanasius' opponents with the pagan persecutors of yesteryear, and likened the patriarch himself to the martyrs.[681]

Meanwhile, of course, fellows like Athanasius were attempting to obscure the degree to which they themselves could be perceived as persecutors. Most of our evidence comes from the so-called orthodox camp, but rare glimpses from the opposition show that heretics were the victims of persecution, at least in their opinion.[682] Arius wrote to the bishop of Nicomedia complaining that Alexander had driven him into exile and threatened his life (Theod., *Hist. eccl.* 1.4). The Melitians complained to each other of the crimes committed against them by Athanasius' supporters.[683] Cyril of Alexandria's opponent at the Council of Ephesus, Nestorius (c. 386-450), accused Cyril of resorting to violence to turn the members of the council

[681] Rufinus, *Hist. eccl*. 10.18-20, 10.34-35; Socrates, *Hist. eccl.* 1.27-32, 2.3, 2.11, 2.17-26, 3.13-14, 4.13; Sozom., *Hist. eccl.* 2.22-25, 2.28, 2.31, 3.5-9, 4.9-11, 5.6, 6.5, 6.12; Theodoret, *Historia ecclesiastica* 1.25-29, 2.6-10, 3.5; Griffiths, "Athanasius," 1030-33; Davis, *Papacy*, 55-62; Timothy Barnes, *Athanasius and Constantius: Theology and Politics in the Constantinian Empire* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993). Like the martyrs, Athanasius must have inspired some interest as a symbol of deviance, though the degree to which he did so is still a matter of debate. The changeable nature of imperial positions on the Christological controversy undermines the possibility that anyone would have allied himself with Athanasius solely out of a fascination with deviance. For further discussion see Griffiths, "Athanasius," 1028; A. H. M. Jones, "Were Ancient Heresies National or Social Movements in Disguse?" *Journal of Theological Studies* 10 (1959), 280-98; Ewa Wipszycka, "Le Nationalisme a-t-il existé dans l'Égypte byzantine?" *Journal of Juristic Papyrology* 22 (1992): 83–128; W. H. C. Frend, *Heresy and Schism as Social and National Movements* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972); Davis, *Papacy*, 87. We cannot press this point too far, but it is impossible to ignore the fact that anyone harboring animosity towards emperor Constantius II would have been entertained by Athanasius' account of the emperor purchasing the support of Alexandria's pagans with a promise to safeguard pagan idols and then turning a blind eye when pagans attacked Christians inside a church associated with the Caesareum. According to Athanasius, the pagans dubbed Constantius II one of their own and toasted the Arians as allies (Athan., *Hist. Ar*. 54-57). With narratives like this circulating, it is no surprise that we should come across apocalyptic texts like the *Apocalypse of Paul*, in which sinful Christians, not pagans, received the lion share of retributive violence in afterlife. See Bremmer, "Christian Hell," 298-325. And not for nothing does Drake attribute the rise of Christian militancy against pagans to inner-Christian polemic. H. A. Drake, "Lambs into Lions: Explaining Early Christian Intolerance," *Past and Present* 153 (1996): 28-35.

[682] For instance, one of the texts from the fourth century Nag Hammadi cache mentioned false Christians (presumably the so-called orthodox) who were persecuting the faithful (the so-called gnostic Christians responsible for composing this text). *Second Treatise of the Great Seth VII,2*, 59.

[683] *P.Lond. VI* 1914. Also see Michael Gaddis, *There is No Crime for Those who Have Christ* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 277-78. On Athanasius' use of the military against so-called heretics see Griffiths, "Athanasius," 1031.

against Nestorius.[684] And when Nestorius was exiled, he was sent to the Great Oasis in Egypt, where Christian martyrs had been exiled a century earlier by pagan persecutors.[685]

Pagans as well as so-called heretics were all involved in the three incidents on which the next part of this chapter will be focusing: the attacks on George the Cappadocian and Hypatia (d. 415), and the "fall" of the Serapeum. Though some of our evidence can be traced back to the patriarchs, particularly Athanasius, the chief sources are the histories of Rufinus of Aquileia (340/345-410), Socrates Scholasticus (d. post-439), Sozomen (c. 400-c. 450), Malalas (c. 491-578), and John of Nikiu (fl. late 7th cent.).[686] The pagan historians and biographers Ammianus Marcellinus, Eunapius (fl. 4th-5th cent.), Zosimus (fl. 490s-510s), and Damascius (c. 458-post 538) also provide some useful information.[687] Some of these writers heavily influenced each other. Socrates Scholasticus, for instance, relied heavily on Rufinus, who wrote a continuation to Eusebius' history and was therefore the earliest source on many of the events discussed here, like the "fall" of the Serapeum. Sozomen did not explicitly

---

[684] Nestorius, *Liber Heraclidis* 197-200. On the Council of Ephesus see Holum, 147-74.

[685] Evagrius Scholasticus, *Historia ecclesiastica* 1.7 [13].

[686] Socrates Scholasticus and Sozomen were both writing in Constantinople. Unlike Socrates Scholasticus and Sozomen, Theodoret was a bishop. Notably, all three historians were favorable towards Athanasius. On Socrates Scholasticus, Sozomen, and Theodoret see Chesnut. For Socrates Scholasticus and Theodoret see Theresa Urbainczyk, *Socrates of Constantinople: Historian of Church and State* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997); Theresa Urbainczyk, *Theodoret of Cyrrhus: The Bishop and Holy Man* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2002). On Malalas see Elizabeth Jeffreys, Brian Croke, and Roger Scott, *Studies in John Malalas* (Sydney: Australian Association for Byzantine Studies, 1990). On John of Nikiu see Maged Mikhail, "An Orientation to the Sources and Study of Early Islamic Egypt (641-868)," *History Compass* 8 (2010): 929-50.

[687] On Ammianus Marcellinus see Jan Drijvers and David Hunt, *The Late Roman World and Its Historian: Interpreting Ammianus Marcellinus* (London: Routledge, 1999). On Zosimus see Walter Goffart, "Zosimos, the First Historian of Rome's Fall," *The American Historical Review* 76 (1971): 412-41. On Eunapius see Robert Penella, *Greek Philosophers and Sophists in the Fourth Century A. D.: Studies in Eunapius of Sardis* (Leeds: F. Cairns, 1990); Kenneth Sacks, "The Meaning of Eunapius' History," *History and Theory* 25 (1986): 52-67. On Damascius see Polymnia Athanassiadi, "Persecution and Response in Late Paganism: The Evidence of Damascius," *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 113 (1993): 1-29; Polymnia Athanassiadi, "Introduction," in *The Philosophical History* (Athens: Apamea Cultural Association, 1999), 19-70.

reference Socrates Scholasticus but clearly relied on him, as did Theodoret. Therefore, it was significant when Sozomen's account of events departed from Socrates Scholasticus' account, or when Socrates Scholasticus' account differed from that of Rufinus, since this suggests a dispute over just "what really happened."[688] Disagreements like this, and agreements between a pagan like Ammianus Marcellinus and Rufinus, demonstrate that a simplistic distinction between pagan and Christian or orthodox and pagan is of little use in sketching a portrait of fourth-fifth century religious violence.

"What Really Happened"

The case of George the Cappadocian demonstrates just how difficult it is to grasp exactly what really happened during the Alexandrian outbreaks of pagan/Christian violence during this period. By the time of George's appointment as

[688] Spatial considerations have limited both the investigation of the dependencies between these authors and the number of times that the reader will be reminded of these dependencies. Aside from an exploration of their treatments of violence (specifically, the graphic nature of their language), the results are lacking in sensitivity with regard to an exploration of the motivations for the composition of particular accounts, including the extent to which the authors were responding to each other. Since an exploration of these motivations has already been performed by scholars such as Watts, I feel that it was important to address instead two points that have not been adequately addressed in scholarship to date, namely the evidence provided by the ancient sources as to the stages by which the violence was escalated and—taking it as a given that a particular account might have reflected some degree of bias and was perhaps a response to earlier accounts—an exploration of how the disagreements among the sources reflected fundamental challenges to the authority of memory and history itself. While dependencies between the writers and personal biases no doubt influenced various accounts, we should not assume that later accounts were necessarily less trustworthy. After all, as discussed below, some of Socrates Scholasticus' instructors had been involved with the "fall" of the Serapeum, so he might have had access to information unavailable to Rufinus, who was writing earlier. If identity is really as malleable as this study argues, then it is misguided to insist that a historian will always be subject to a particular bias. Some historians appear to have overcome their personal biases on occasion (compare, for instance, Socrates Scholasticus version of the persecution of pagans under Valens to Sozomen's more sympathetic, and perhaps objective, treatment of the subject, discussed below). Scholars such as Watts have implied that the personal biases of writers like Socrates Scholasticus generated what was essentially a manipulation of memory, but to my knowledge no scholars have attempted to situate the manipulation of these memories within the context of a discussion of how traumatic violence affects memory or how this manipulation might have affected Alexandrian attitudes towards Christian/pagan interactions. Hopefully, the reader will agree that, in the end, the "flattening" effect created as I move back and forth between earlier and later sources is more than compensated for by the contributions that this study makes to scholarship regarding the outbreak of violence and its repercussions on the community. See Edward Watts, *Riot in Alexandria: Tradition and Group Dynamics in Late Antique Pagan and Christian Communities* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010); Edward Watts, "The Murder of Hypatia: Acceptable or Unacceptable Violence?" in Drake, 33-42.

patriarch, the Christological controversy had resulted in multiple claimants for the title. Athanasius was the so-called orthodox claimant but had lost direct control over Alexandria's churches because imperial favor had shifted towards claimants that were, according to Athanasius, guilty of Arianism. As the so-called Arian appointee to the patriarchy, George enjoyed imperial support but not, it would appear, much popular support, for he was murdered by an Alexandrian mob. But as we will see, the ancient sources are thoroughly divided over the real motivation for his murder.

The situation is only somewhat clearer with regard to the "destruction" of one of the most famous temples in the ancient Mediterranean, the Alexandrian Serapeum.[689] Circa 391,[690] the patriarch of Alexandria, Theophilus (patriarch 385-412), supposedly destroyed the Serapeum and idolatrous statuary throughout the city. Yet the sources disagree over Theophilus' role and the motivation for the violence.[691] And while it is clear that the Serapeum was to some extent dismantled, the degree to which it was actually destroyed is uncertain. According to Sozomen, the temple was turned into a church. According to Rufinus, a church was built on one side and a separate martyrium on the other.[692] Archaeology suggests that no structures were

---

[689] On the significance of Alexandria and the Serapeum in the pagan Mediterranean see the mid-fouth century *Expositio totius mundi et gentium* 34-37; Johannes Hahn, "The Conversion of the Cult States: The Destruction of the Serapeum 392 A.D. and the Transformation of Alexandria into the 'Christ-Loving' City," in Hahn, 335-36.

[690] This date is the subject of some debate. See Hahn, 340, 344.

[691] For efforts to reconcile the differing accounts see Tito Orlandi, "Uno scritto di Teofilo di Allesandria sulla distruzione del Serapeum?" *La Parola de Passato* 23 (1968): 295-304; Jacques Schwartz, "La fin du Sérapeum d'Alexandrié," in *Essays in Honor of C. Bradford Welles* (New Haven: American Society of Payrologists, 1966), 98-111.

[692] Rufinus, *Hist. eccl*. 11.22, 24, 28-29; Socrates, *Hist. eccl.* 5.16; Sozom., *Hist. eccl.* 7.15. Scholars debate whether the church/martyrium in these sources was actually put up on the grounds of a Serapeum in Canopus. See A. Baldini, "Problemi della tradizione sulla 'distruzione' del Serapeo di Alessandria," *Rivista storica dell'antichita* 15 (1985): 97-152; Johannes Hahn, *Gewalt und religiöser Konflict: Studien zu den Auseinandersetzungen zwischen Christen, Heiden und Juden im Osten des Römischen Reiches (von Konstantin bis Theodosius II)* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2004); Hahn, "Conversion," 335-66; Peter Grossman, "Modalitäten der

erected on the site of the Serapeum at all. Literary accounts indicate that parts of the temple remained in place (the stones were allegedly too heavy to be removed). Furthermore, the military apparently took refuge there from rioting Alexandrians in the mid-fifth century, and in the late fifth century, pagans allegedly put the site to ritual use.[693] Theophilus nevertheless gained renown as the man responsible for overseeing the destruction of the Serapeum, a claim that obviously resonated with his followers, inspiring, among other things, an early fifth century illustration depicting the patriarch standing upon a statue of Serapis.[694]

Theophilus' nephew, Cyril of Alexandria, was mixed up in anti-pagan violence as well. To this day, scholars have yet to agree on Cyril's role in the 415 attack on Hypatia, a female pagan philosopher who was pulled from her carriage by a mob and killed (Socrates, *Hist. eccl.* 7.15). Confusion on this point is evocative of the general ambiguity surrounding the transitions taking place during this period as Christians went from being the victims of violence to the perpetrators. But if anti-pagan attacks were well-orchestrated assaults carried out under the direction of Christian leaders like Cyril, how did these leaders manage to garner all that power?

Leadership and Mobilization

Though ancient sources often accused the Egyptians of being prone to mob violence,[695] some of the sources suggest that the attacks involving George, the

---

Zerstörung und Christianisierung pharaonischer Tempelanlagen," in Hahn, 303-304. See the following chapter for a discussion of Theophilus' alleged closure of a school of Egyptian priestly writing at Canopus.

[693] Eunap., *VS* 470-73; Evag., *Hist eccl.* 2.5 [51]; John Rufus, *Life of Peter the Iberian* 99; Judith McKenzie, Sheila Gibson, A. T. Reyes. "Reconstructing the Serapeum in Alexandria from the Archaeological Evidence," *The Journal of Roman Studies* 94, (2004): 108-109.

[694] Watts, *Riot*; Davis, *Papacy*, 64; Hahn, "Conversion," 350.

[695] See for instance Amm. Marc. 22.11.4. Also see Haas, 11.

Serapeum, and Hypatia might not have taken place without the prompting of a Christian leadership. Peter Brown and Raymond Van Dam have done much to illuminate how Christian leaders established their authority by inserting themselves into the Late Antique power structure, serving as patrons to previously untapped constituencies, and claiming moral authority over elites.[696] Shenoute of Atripe (c. 348-c. 464), head of White Monastery in the region of Panopolis, appears to have used these strategies to carve out his power, establishing a constituency based on his opposition to the economically exploitative practices[697] of an alleged pagan who, though never explicitly named in Shenoute's writings, is customarily referred to today as Gessius, in keeping with an identification made by Besa (5th cent.), Shenoute's disciple and successor as head of White Monastery.[698] Shenoute's difficulties with Gessius show some of the challenges that were facing Christian leaders who were still trying to establish their authority during this period,[699] and it behooves us to

[696] Brown, *Poverty*; Peter Brown, *Power and Persuasion in Late Antiquity: Towards a Christian Empire* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1992); Raymond Van Dam, *Leadership and Community in Late Antique Gaul* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985); Raymond Van Dam, *Becoming Christian: The Conversion of Roman Cappadocia* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003).

[697] Besa, *Life of Shenoute* 81-82, 85. On Shenoute's role as a representative of the poor and the economic aspects of his confrontation with the mysterious unnamed wealthy pagan mentioned below see J. W. B. Barns, "Shenute as a Historical Source," in *Actes du X Congrès International de Papyrologues Varsovie-Cracovie 3-9 Septembre 1961* (Wroclaw : Zakl. Narod. im. Ossolińskich, 1961), 151-56; Frank Trombley, *Hellenic Religion and Christianization c. 370-529* (NY: E. J. Brill, 1994), 2:214-19; Frankfurter, *Roman Egypt*, 77-82; Stephen Emmel, "Shenoute of Atripe and the Christian Destruction of Temples in Egypt: Rhetoric and Reality," in Hahn, 168, 181. On Shenoute's career see Stephen Emmel, "From the Other Side of the Nile: Shenute and Panopolis," in *Perspectives on Panopolis: An Egyptian Town from Alexander the Great to the Arab Conquest,*" eds. A. Egberts, B. P. Muhs, J. van der Vliet (Boston: Brill, 2002), 95-114. On Shenoute's writings see Stephen Emmel, *Shenoute's Literary Corpus* (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 1993).

[698] Besa, *Life of Shenoute* 125-27. This Gessius has evoked a great deal of scholarly controversy. He has been identified alternatively as a governor of the Thebaid c. 378, a fellow instructor of Palladas in Alexandria, and a student and correspondent of Libanius. However, all of this remains speculation. See Emmel, "Nile," 95-114; C. M. Bowra, "The Fate of Gessius," *The Classical Review* 10 (1960), 91-95.

[699] For instance, Shenoute had to appear before some magistrates in regard to anti-pagan violence in a village (Shenoute, *Only I Tell Everyone Who Dwells in this Village*) and had to pen an open letter to Panopolis to defend his behavior with regard to Gessius (Shenoute, *Let our Eyes*). See Trombley, 212-15; Emmel, "Nile," 95-114; Emmel, "Atripe," 161-201. For discussion of the identity of the village regarding which Shenoute appeared before the magistrates Smith, "Aspects," 246-47).

remember that even the Egyptian patriarchs were frequently out of favor with imperial authority. In particular, the administration appears to have been made an effort to limit Theophilus and Cyril's ability to call upon the support of the monks and *parabalani*, the ecclesiastical hospital workers who seem to have doubled as strong-arm men. This implies that officials worried about the patriarchs using force to acquire their goals,[700] but assuming that at least some of the participants in this violence were not zealous monks or committed workers, how were their services enlisted?

This is especially difficult to understand with regard to individuals who, unlike members of the military, would not have gone through professional training to prepare them for violence. Presumably, the Alexandrians in question here included many "ordinary" men and women, lay people who were never members of the military.[701] No doubt propaganda was involved in recruitment, but how was this disseminated, especially if, as MacMullen argues, church-attendance across the empire during this period was low?[702] The Arians reportedly used catchy chants of a sort conducive to repetition. The patriarchs regularly sent letters to their flocks with updates regarding various heresies. Cyril employed copyists so that his sermons could be distributed in written form. Classrooms probably provided a good venue for the debate of some religious issues. Supposedly, the Christological controversy was attracting so much interest that it even made its way onto the stage and into

---

[700] Several outbreaks of violence can indicate a competition for authority over an existing market. See Jensen, "Learning," 643.

[701] Donald Dutton, *The Psychology of Genocide, Massacres, and Extreme Violence: Why 'Normal' People Come to Commit Attrocities* (Westport, CN: Praeger Security International, 2007), 82.

[702] Ramsay MacMullen, *The Second Church Popular Christianity A.D. 200-400* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2009); Moss, *Myth*, 228.

discussions in the marketplace.[703] The circulation of propaganda does not necessarily mean that audiences were being brainwashed, however.[704] Students must have disagreed with their teachers on occasion[705]—otherwise Christians would not have had pagans for teachers and vice versa—and there is evidence that congregations sometimes disagreed with preachers, becoming quite vocal in their complaints.[706]

For lack of explicit information on issues like this—the silence of the sources reflecting, perhaps, an effort to manage memory—it seems appropriate to consider the findings of social scientists, with the understanding that this research can only suggest how matters *might* have escalated; it does not constitute definite proof one way or the other. When attempting to explain a leader's ability to mobilize support, social scientists emphasize the role of charisma, coercion, rewards, expertise, and appeals to traditional forms of legitimacy (which for our purposes would include the customary Roman patron-client relationships enjoyed by an elite Roman who just happened to be a member of the Church).[707] All three of the patriarchs under discussion here, especially Athanasius, seem to have possessed charisma, as did Olympius (fl. late fourth century), an instructor who was credited with leading the

---

[703] On the Arian chants see Socrates, *Hist. eccl.* 9. On the rhetorical nature of such claims see Gwynn, 246n63. On theological disputes becoming a subject of entertainment on the stage see Euseb., *Vit. Const.* 2.61; Barnes, "Theater," 162; Webb, *Demons*, 100, 126-28; Costas Panayotokis, "Baptism and Crucifixion on the Mimic Stage," *Mnemosyne* 50 (1997), 308-309. On these disputes becoming the subject of jokes in the market-places see Toner, *Popular*, 191. On Cyril's "publications" see Haas, 184. Even if the content of Zachariah of Mytilene's *Ammonius* is biased towards Christianity, the framework of a debate involving an Alexandrian instructor seems plausible. On Olympius' public appeal see Haas, 164.

[704] See chapter six for discussion of Paralius.

[705] Damascius reports on a debate over a mathematical theorem that became so heated that the one of the debaters shunned the other's company (Dam., *Isid.* 5.93).

[706] Dunn-Wilson, 119; Isabella Sandwell, 15.

[707] Max Weber, *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization*, trans. A. M. Henderson and Talcott Parsons (NY: The Free Press, 1947), 358-86; Arnold Goldstein, *The Psychology of Group Aggression* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Ltd., 2002), 30. The patriarchs' traditional legitimacy would have been shored up by assertions that they were the latest in a long line of leaders going all of the way back to the apostles and Jesus, a line of descent established by Clement of Alexandria and Eusebius. Buell, 5-9, 97-98.

pagans during the violence surrounding the "destruction" of the Serapeum.[708] All three of the patriarchs in question, as well as Olympius, were in a position to offer rewards in the form of favors, including letters of recommendation or introduction, and intercession in social, legal, or economic matters. Their advancement to relatively elevated positions demonstrated their expertise in their chosen fields.[709] As for coercion, Theophilus and Cyril could call upon monks and the *parabalani* to offer physical support in the face of opposition. Athanasius' followers were often able to maintain physical control of various churches despite imperial efforts to oust them. When Athanasius was not the object of imperial wrath, he might have been able to call on the military for assistance,[710] as did Cyril, Theophilus, George the Cappadocian, and his successor as the so-called Arian patriarch Lucius (patriarch 367, then again 373-378).[711] For his part, Olympius might have been able to call upon the services of his pupils, for students in the ancient world were quite rowdy, brawls sometimes breaking out between the followers of rival teachers.[712]

Potential leaders who lack access to these forms of authority can sometimes still appeal to moral authority, which is not the same thing as the social capital discussed above, though it can very well lay the groundwork for the acquisition of social capital. Moral authority is created when a person successfully represents himself as the figure-head in a battle against deviance as he defines it. In pursuit of

---

[708] Dam., *Isid.* 3.42. On Olympius see Dam., *Isid.* 42A-F. On Olympius' leadership role during the violence surrounding the Serapeum see Rufinus, *Hist. eccl.* 11.22; Sozom., *Hist. eccl.* 7.15.

[709] According to Damascius, many people appealed to the teacher for advice (Dam., *Isid.* 3.42).

[710] Griffiths, "Athanasius," 1031.

[711] Eunap., *VS* 470-73; Socrates, *Hist. eccl.* 2.28, 3.3, 7.7; Sozom., *Hist. eccl.* 4.30;Theod., *Hist. eccl.* 4.19. For further discussion of the *parabalani*, see below.

[712] Watts, *Riot,* 4.

this authority, a moral crusader disseminates information regarding the nature of the so-called deviance, supplies evidence on his behalf of his claims, seeks endorsements from influential persons, and, if need be, exaggerates the danger posed by the alleged deviance. As the community begins to recognize the moral crusader's authority on this issue, his social authority increases. He begins to assume control over the physical resources allocated to suppress the alleged deviance, thereby gaining concrete influence within the community.[713]

A moral crusader's identification of a deviant need not be particularly accurate, it need merely be salient. As mentioned above, heresy and paganism were often conflated. The association did not reflect reality, *per se*, but it was both salient and efficient. The supposed crimes of one could be imputed to the other, facilitating the process of alienation.[714] By denying the diversity found within the ranks of their Christian foes and among the many different kinds of pagans living in Egypt, Christian leaders streamlined the demonization of their opposition. A well-known strategy for dealing with difference involves simplifying the "Other" to stereotypes. Denying complexity aids processes of classification and expedites decision-making by limiting options.[715] So, when confronted with a purported pagan or heretic, an orthodox Christian would not have wasted valuable time asking himself what kind of

---

[713] Prus, 40, 59, 62, 65-66. Also see Antoine Buyse, "Words of Violence: "Fear Speech," or How Violent Conflict Escalation Relates to the Freedom of Expression," *Human Rights Quarterly* 36 (2014): 787-91. Not for nothing were George and Theophilus accused of being especially interested in securing funds and of dismantling pagan temples. The latter would have supplemented their incomes, and if these funds were channeled into the construction of Christian edifices (Theophilus appears to have done just this) such a practice would have further established the patriarch's position as a patron in the community by providing work.

[714] For instance, Theod., *Hist. eccl.* 1.3; Theophilus, *Sixteenth Festal Letter* 8; *Second Synodal Letter* 2, 5; *Seventeenth Festal* 14. On the literal dimension to this demonization—Christians accusing their opponents of being possessed by demons—see Gaddis, 180-81.

[715] Michael Waltman and John Haas, *The Communication of Hate* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2011), 2-3, 36-61; Marger, 98; Prus, 100.

pagan or heretic he was dealing with or how this particular sort ought to be treated, he would simply act as if the Other represented the most dangerous kind of pagan-heretic.

Modern studies suggest that repeated incidents of low-level aggression—social ostracism, gossip, hazing, teasing, baiting, and cursing—can be equally or even more detrimental to the victim than a single incident of high-level aggression.[716] Christian leaders frequently engaged in name-calling. Alexander accused heretics of an alliance with the devil (Theod., *Hist. eccl.* 1.3). Theophilus likened Origen (and by implication, the monks who were still fond of Origen) to the pharaoh who chased after Moses (Theophilus, *Sixteenth Festal Letter* 14). In turn, Theophilus' opponents nicknamed him the "Egyptian pharaoh."[717] Obviously, the terms used to communicate hatred remained consistent even when the speakers and the victims switched places. There was a common language for identifying and castigating so-called deviants.

It would help us to assess the nature of this low-level aggression if we could establish some sort of way to measure communication objectively. According to J. Habermas, plain and undistorted communication requires that a statement follow normative standards within the community, be made in sincerity (not sarcastically, for instance), be true (that is, the speaker must believe it to be true), and comprehensible (though the listener may ask questions for clarification). When communication is distorted, the speaker does appear to have met these conditions, thereby facilitating the statement's acceptance, but he has actually violated at least one of the

[716] Goldstein, 39.

[717] Palladius, *Dialogus de vita sancti Joannis Chrysostomi* 6; Norman Russell, Theophilus of Alexandria (New York: Routledge, 2007), 182n186; Haas, 207.

conditions.[718] This model sheds light on the strategies by which Christian leaders were attempting to manipulate their audiences. A patriarch might have actually believed that a pagan or heretical foe was driven by demons,[719] and a pagan might have actually believed that Christians were insane,[720] but when Theophilus and his Christian opponents accused each other of reintroducing the paganism of the Pharaoh who had pursued Moses out of Egypt, it is unclear how they could have honestly believed that this statement was anything but a gross distortion.

Insofar as language like this riles tempers, inflammatory rhetoric no doubt contributed to the hostilities that finally culminated in the deaths of George and Hypatia, and the "destruction" of the Serapeum. Epiphanius insisted that he was not committing "slander" (*diaballomen*) against George when he accused the man of economic abuses (Epiph., *Pan.* 76.1.1-8). The vehemence of Epiphanius' disavowal suggests just how often such accusations *were* being used as slander. The Church historian Philostorgius (368-c. 439) was only too happy to levy slanderous-sounding accusations against Athanasius, blaming the latter for George's death.[721] In Philostorgius' defense, Athanasius certainly seems to have enjoyed enthusiastic support in Alexandria during this period. Athanasius might not have explicitly encouraged violence against George, but the former's anti-Arian rhetoric might have

---

[718] J. Habermas, "Reflections on Communicative Pathology (1974)," in *On the Pragmatics of Social Interaction: Preliminary Studies in the Theory of Communicative Action*, trans. Barbara Fultner (Cambridge, Mass: The MIT Press, 2001), 90-91, 152-55; Sarah Sorial, "Hate Speech and Distorted Communication: Rethinking the Limits of Incitement," *Law and Philosophy* 34 (2015): 311-12. Accepting the postmodern criticism that "undistorted communication" may be an impossible ideal, Sarah Sorial argues that Habermas' model provides an objective standard for defining a piece of discourse as something other than a straightforward or reasoned instance of academic or political debate. Sorial, 316.

[719] Theod., *Hist. eccl.* 1.3. Also see Gaddis, 180-81.

[720] See the previous chapter.

[721] Philostorgius, *Historia ecclesiastica* 7.2. Cf. Socrates, *Hist. eccl.* 5.7. On Philostorgius' anti-Athanasian stance see Gwynn, 44n7.

contributed to George's demise, if only by discouraging non-Arian Christians from stepping in and lending George some aid when he was attacked.

The "destruction" of the Serapeum was surely facilitated by accusations that pagans were engaging in human sacrifice, sorcery, and debauchery. During Athanasius' service as patriarch, pagan philosophers in Alexandria allegedly sacrificed and cannibalized children, using the children's entrails for divinatory purposes (Socrates, *Hist. eccl.* 3.13). When George began dismantling a Mithraeum—work that supposedly prompted a band of pagans to murder him, according to one account—the workmen reportedly discovered human skulls used for divination,[722] and it was Theophilus' work on a Mithraeum that, according to Socrates Scholasticus, instigated the riot that led to the fall of the Serapeum.[723] Demolition of the latter allegedly triggered the destruction of shrines through the city, leading to the discovery of baby skulls and illicit temple practices, including the seduction of high-status women.[724] As the reader may recall, human sacrifice and debauchery were

[722] Socrates, *Hist. eccl.* 3.2. Chuvin thinks that this might have a basis in fact. Archaeologists found part of a human skull in a Mithraeum near Strasbourg. Chuvin, 41.

[723] Socrates, *Hist. eccl.* 5.16. If the attack on George really was prompted by his efforts to dismantle a Mithraeum, this might be the same Mithraeum that Theophilus later took apart. Sozomen claimed that George's death put the work on the Mithraeum on halt (Sozom., *Hist. eccl.* 5.7).

[724] Rufinus, *Hist. eccl*. 11.24. This is retroactive justification: evidence found after the "fall" of the Mithraeum and the Serapeum justified the "fall" of the Mithraeum and the Serapeum. And, because the "fall" of the Mithraeum predated the "fall" of the Serapeum, the evidence found when dismantling the former justified dismantling the latter. Compare to four hagiographical accounts of anti-pagan violence where justification for anti-pagan violence was justified beforehand. According to Zachariah of Mytilene's fifth century *Vita Severi*, a temple in Menouthis near Alexandria was destroyed because it was associated with violence that had erupted in classrooms in Alexandria (Zachariah of Mytilene, *Vita Severi* 32-36). According to the sixth century *Life of Aaron*, the pagans of Philae were so hostile to the Christians that no clergy would consent to stay in the region. The new bishop, Macedonius, struck back by destroying a falcon-headed idol (*Life of Aaron*, 29-31 [12a-13a]). According to a panegyric attributed to the patriarch Dioscorus, Macarius of Tkōw destroyed a temple in a village where pagans had been sacrificing children (Pseudo-Dioscorus, *The Panegyric of Macarius of Tkōw* 5.2-11). According to a sixth/seventh century hagiography, Moses of Abyos cast the god Bes out of a temple after learning that Bes had been crippling passersby (*Life of Apa Moses*). On the accusation of child-killing as a form of demonization see David Frankfurter, "'Things Unbefitting Christians:' Violence and Christianization in Fifth-Century Panopolis," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 8 (2000): 287. On the possibility that George sought to dismantle the Serapeum See Hahn, *Gewalt*, 68-71.

among the accusations that the pagan apologists had levied at the Christians.[725] And though their complaints were falling on deaf ears, pagans were still making these sorts of accusations. Lamenting Theophilus' erection of a martyrium after the patriarch had destroyed temples in and around Alexandria, the pagan Eunapius accused Christians of stealing the remains of criminals and venerating them as martyrs, implying that Christians were engaging in sorcery, since this activity frequently employed human remains.[726]

Although there is no direct evidence, Maria Dzielska conjectures that Cyril fueled a smear campaign against Hypatia, in the course of which he accused her of witchcraft, a crime that John of Nikiu listed as one of her offenses.[727] According to Damascius, Cyril was in fact jealous of Hypatia's popularity.[728] Whatever the case, it is striking that Socrates Scholasticus did not try to accuse the patriarch of openly preaching against Hypatia, though the historian insisted that Cyril was responsible for her death. Perhaps Cyril followed Shenoute's example, avoiding charges of slander by refusing to explicitly name his opponent.[729] It is easy to imagine Cyril delivering sermons criticizing elite pagan intellectuals, with elusive references that the audience would have quickly connected to Hypatia.

---

[725] See chapter two.

[726] Eunap., *VS* 470-73. On sorcery involving human remains see chapter five.

[727] Maria Dzielska, *Hypatia of Alexandria*, trans. F. Lyra (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995), 90-91. John of Nikiu 84.100. Cf. Malalas, *Chronographia* 359 14.12.

[728] Dam., *Isid.* 3.43 E. Frankfurter sees Christian-on-pagan violence as an age-based power struggle, at least in part, with the youth attempting to seize authority from an older generation committed to a traditional system of prestige based on paganism. Frankfurter, "Unbecoming," 289. Note that in the violence that broke out in Cambodia under Pol Pot, the highly educated were especially targeted for violence. See Buyse, 782-83; Dutton, 110. However, fourth and fifth century Christian leaders were often as highly educated as their pagan targets, and education crossed religious lines. For instance, Hypatia's student Synesius became bishop of Cyrene and exchanged letters with Theophilus and Cyril as well as Hypatia. See Dzielska, 88, 95.

[729] Emmel lists several of the epithets that were applied to the unnamed pagan with whom Shenoute was contending Emmel, "Nile," 99. See below for further discussion.

Socrates Scholasticus was more forthcoming on the subject of Hypatia's involvement in city politics. Apparently, popular rumor (alas not Cyril specifically) claimed that Hypatia was encouraging the prefect Orestes (fl. early fifth cent.), to pursue a dispute with Cyril. During the course of this dispute, a group of monks rallying around Cyril confronted Orestes in public and accused him of being a pagan. Socrates Scholasticus implied that this accusation was derived from comments made by Cyril in a more private setting. In all honesty, Orestes had been baptized, but this service had been performed by an ally of John Chrysostom (c. 349-407),[730] who had fallen out of favor with Cyril's uncle, Theophilus, over the treatment of some Egyptian monks whom Theophilus accused of Origenism, a branch of thought that, as mentioned above, was associated with paganism in Theophilus' opinion. Clearly, internal Church politics were exacerbating the alleged dispute between Cyril and Orestes, whether or not Hypatia was encouraging Orestes to abstain from church services, as John of Nikiu claimed.[731]

In any case, matters escalated when one of Cyril's supporters, a monk named Ammonius, threw a rock at Orestes. It is hard to imagine that Ammonius could have been acting on Cyril's orders when he resorted to violence, for an attack upon the

[730] Dzielska, 145n 97. Theophilus' animosity towards John Chrysostom came about because of John's apparent support for the monks who fell out with Theophilus in connection with the Origenist controversy (Socrates, *Hist. eccl.* 6.9-17; Sozom., *Hist. eccl.* 8.13-27). On the dispute between Theophilus and these monks see the following chapter.

[731] John of Nikiu 84.88. If it is true that Orestes was avoiding church, he could very well have decided to do so on his own initiative, especially if he was offended by Cyril's church politics. Issues of heresy seem to have complicated conflicts with paganism for both Shenoute and (the legendary) Macarius of Tkōw. On the former, see the below discussion regarding Shenoute's possible conflation of Gessius' Arianism with paganism. On the latter, see Pseudo-Dioscorus, *The Panegyric of Macarius of Tkōw* 4.1-2, 5.11, 15.5, 15.8, 16.1. Also see David Frankfurter, "Urban Shrine and Rural Saint in Fifth-Century Alexandria," in *Pilgrimage in Graeco-Roman & Early Christian Antiquity: Seeing the Gods*, eds., Jaś Elsner and Ian Rutherford (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 444, 446; Davis, *Papacy*, 85-88. Cf. Besa, *Life of Shenoute* 17, 128-30. Haas argues that Peter Mongus' assault on the temple at Menouthis united, at least temporarily, the so-called orthodox and heretics. Haas, 328. On this assault, see below.

prefect was probably too audacious even for Cyril. Nevertheless, when the prefect had Ammonius tortured and the monk died as a result of his injuries, Cyril publicly proclaimed the monk a martyr. Though no source claims that Cyril explicitly blamed Ammonius' death on Hypatia, Socrates Scholasticus' implication was clear: Cyril ordered the attack on Hypatia as revenge, her murder serving as a proxy attack upon Orestes.[732]

Viewed through a modern lens, all of these incidents look as if they were incited by hate speech, with allegations encouraging participants to lash out at so-called deviants. But is it appropriate to apply the modern concept of "hate speech" to antiquity?[733] According to Article 20 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, "Any advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence shall be prohibited by law."[734] Pundits warn that language can qualify as hate speech even if it does not advocate physical aggression.[735] Through rhetoric fostering alienation, hate speech establishes boundaries, inspiring favoritism for the in-group and a corresponding bias against the

[732] Socrates Scholasticus described the leader of this group as a reader (Socrates, *Hist. eccl.* 7.14-15). John of Nikiu described him as a magistrate (John of Nikiu 84.100). Philostorgius stated simply that the Hypatia was torn to pieces by the Homousians (Philostorgius, *Historia ecclesiastica* 8.9).

[733] Note that Sorial argues that, per Habermas' theory of distorted communication, seemingly rational accusastions can still constitute hate speech. Sorial, 299-324. The accusations that Christians and pagans were flinging at each other were sometimes true to an extent. Christians actually claimed to consume the body and blood of Christ during their holy mysteries, and human remains were found during the course of an archaeological excavation of a Mithraeum. See Chuvin, 41. For a provocative—especially with regard to the below argument regarding secularism—suggestion regarding the protections accorded to religious discourse in secular societies, consider Britt's recommendation that so-called secular societies avoid a "simplistic dichotomy of 'religion' and 'secularity'" and take action against groups that use the umbrella of religion in order to protect hate speech. Brian Britt, "Curses Left and Right: Hate Speech and Biblical Tradition," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 78 (2010): 633–61. Contradictorily, perhaps, the premium placed on everyone having the freedom to express his views is such that some pundits oppose legislation against hate speech for fear that it will limit free speech. Buyse, 792-93.

[734] Buyse, 792.

[735] Buyse, 784. Note the link between "hate speech" and violence in the lynchings of Sam Hose in Georgia in 1898 and Claude Neale in Florida in 1934. Dutton, 75-75, 79.

out-group.[736] It discourages the sort of empathy that makes intra-group violence less likely.

We may not have evidence of any sermons in which Athanasius, Theophilus, or Cyril instructed their congregations to attack certain individuals physically,[737] but name-calling in Christian circles was frequently attached to behavioral injunctions. Athanasius' predecessor, Alexander, not only accused Arius of heresy, he encouraged other Christian leaders to shun the so-called heretic (Socrates, *Hist. eccl.* 6; Sozom., *Hist. eccl.* 1.15). Antony the Great allegedly said that Arianism heralded the coming of the Antichrist, and he advised his followers to ostracize the Arians (*Vita Antonii* 68). Even if leaders were only encouraging this sort of low level aggression, the effects, repeated on a regular basis, could have been devastating. As Christians became more successful at isolating themselves from heretics, pagans, and Jews (and vice versa), the possibility of empathy would have declined, and violence would have become more likely.

Shenoute went so far as to contend that idolaters were not protected from the Christian injunction against cursing people because "they [idolaters] are not people" (NƷЄN PШMЄ aN).[738] Denying the humanity of pagans, or people supposedly akin

[736] Goldstein, 5-7.

[737] All appear to have been more interested in heretics and Greco-Roman pagans than Egyptian pagans. For Athanasius and Cyril see chapter two. Theophilus supposedly wrote a handbook regarding the "fall" of the Serapeum but it is no longer extant. See Tomasz Polański, *Christian Art in Oriental Literatures: Greek, Syriac and Coptic Sources from the 4th to the 7th Century* (Grazer Beiträge: Zeitschrift für Klassische Altertumswissenschaft, 2013), 113. For a list of Theophilus' writings see Agostino Favale, *Teofilo d'Alessandria: Scritti, vita e dottrina* (Torino: Società Editrice Internazonale, 1958).

[738] Shenoute, *God Says through Those who are His*. Note that while Shenoute's policy of avoiding use of his opponent's name has certainly caused difficulties for modern scholars, it would have served a double function for Shenoute: saving him from accusations of outright slander while at the same time facilitating efforts to dehumanize—what is more dehumanizing than the denial of a name?—the target of his wrath. Cf. Athan., *Hist. Ar.* 64.

to pagans, Shenoute removed the prohibitions that should have prevented violence. Another time, when accused of overstepping the bounds of good behavior, Shenoute replied: "There is no crime [brigandage] for those who have Christ" (NθЄ ΓaP ЄTЄMNMNTΛHCTHC ЦOOΠ NNЄTЄOYNTaY IC).[739] This is a terrifying statement given that—as the Church disputes demonstrate—the fellows who *thought* that they had Christ differed widely in their opinions. And all too often these disputes[740] appear to have led to violence. The vehement speeches of preachers like Shenoute surely helped to sharpen group boundaries, increasing a polarization that facilitated this violence.

But to qualify as "hate speech," language must transgress normative standards.[741] Given the frequency with which accusations of religious perversion, cannibalism, and the like were being levied, it is tempting to assume that normative

---

[739] Shenoute, *Not Because a Fox Barks*. Gaddis, who uses the line quoted above as the title of his recent book on fourth and fifth century religious violence, suggests translating "brigandage" as "crime," a move that he justifies with a discussion of the criminal associations inherent in references to brigandage. Gaddis, 211. This move seems reasonable in light of the previous chapter's discussion of brigandage. For a discussion of Shenoute's text see Trombley, 214.

[740] Or, at least, disputes cast in religious terms. See above for discussion of the degree to which there might have been underlying political factors.

[741] Modern courts have sought to judge charges of "hate speech" (discussed below) based on the standard of "societal norms." These norms are difficult to define today, given the diverse nature of society, and we are limited as to the evidence available on this subject for antiquity. See I. Sluiter, and Ralph Mark Rosen, *Free Speech in Classical Antiquity* (Boston: Brill, 2004). Jeremy Waldron argues that hate speech should be defined as an assault upon the victim's dignity. Jeremy Waldron, *The Harm in Hate Speech* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009), 5-6. But such assaults—or at least accusations that opponents had trespassed on one's *dignitas*—were common in antiquity, suggesting that this would not have been enough to identify a particular comment as hate speech. Nevertheless, this approach may prove helpful. When Epiphanius assured his readers that he was not "slandering" George the Cappadocian (Epiph., *Pan.* 76.1.1-8), this implies that there *were* standards for speech and that one could be censured for transgressing them. Warnings against verbal aggression in traditional Egyptian and Greco-Roman paganism, Judaism, and Christianity. Philo, *Quaestiones et Solutiones in Exodum* 2.5; Quint., *Inst.* 12.9.9; *AP* N 253 = *AP* Sys. 1.31. Compare to a demotic text copied in first century C.E. "The Instruction of Papyrus Insinger." This suggests the existence of standards, at least for policing *internal* discourse. These standards did not entirely stop the use of curses and invective against outsiders, and the latter would have been particularly effective in the erection of boundaries to distinguish between insiders and outsiders. See Britt, 633–661; John G. Gager, ed., *Curse Tablets and Binding Spells from the Ancient World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992); M. Weiss, "The Pattern of the 'Execration Texts' in the Prophetic Literature," *Israel Exploration Journal* 19 (1969): 150-57.

standards had fallen so low that no language, however inflammatory, could have been shocking enough to inspire violence. Yet, Socrates Scholasticus' obvious aversion to violence—discussed in more detail below—implies discomfort over the levels of force being employed, particularly by Christians in the so-called name of God. It is hard to imagine that Socrates Scholasticus would have endorsed Shenoute's statements, and his censure might not have been based solely on a difference of opinion when it came to doctrinal matters. This suggests the circulation of the notion that proper religion was, by definition, peaceful religion.[742] On these grounds, then, Shenoute's language did transgress normative standards.

Unfortunately, hate speech is so malleable that it can be difficult to define standards. Proponents of modern legislation against hate speech complain that the definition of hate speech in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights is too narrow. They argue that hate speech is entirely arbitrary in its identification of targets, and does not focus solely on national, racial, or religious identity. The victims might not even perceive the characteristic targeted for identification as meaningful or as evidence of membership in a group.[743] There is evidence for this antiquity as well. Pagan-Christian boundaries in antiquity obviously functioned along religious lines, but distinctions were also made based on ethnic and geographic factors, as well as concepts involving hygiene. As chapter five discusses, ethnicity was thought to have a religious dimension. Clement of Alexandria, Eusebius, and Epiphanius all used

[742] Therefore, when characterizing the parties involved with violence during this period, it is important to avoid treating these entitites as if they were unanimous or mindless on the subject of employing force. See below for an attempt to sketch out the potential diversity of the mobs involved with the murders of George and Hypatia and the "fall" of the Serapeum.

[743] Sorial, 299, 322. See also Robert Post, "Hate Speech," in *Extreme Speech and Democracy*, eds. I. Hare and J. Weistein (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 123–38. On the ascription of group membership to people who do not perceive themselves as members of the group with which they have been identified see Prus, 100.

genealogical methodologies in order to differentiate between heresy and orthodoxy, implying that internal Christian disputes involved ethnic boundaries of some kind.[744] A large proportion of Epiphanius' catalogue of heresies just happened to fall in Egypt.[745] Not for nothing did people enjoy accusing Christians in the region of mimicking a pagan pharaoh.[746] Perhaps an Egyptian origin was enough to inspire suspicion as to a person's orthodoxy. Strikingly, both Eusebius and Epiphanius characterized heresy as a disease that could be passed from person to person (and via books), as though the maintenance of orthodoxy was a question of hygiene.[747] But instead of quarantining the heretics until they were cured—that is, converted—early Christian extremists advocated elimination of the carriers of the contagion, lest that contagion spread. Conversion to orthodox Christianity was plainly considered suspect, as demonstrated by the unwillingness of the orthodox to readmit so-called heretics into the Church following repentance.[748] The extreme measures advocated in these cases would have been fueled by accusations that pagan-heretics were demon-driven, baby-killing sorcerers and persecutors of the orthodox. These allegations were nothing less than a call for action, warnings that Christians would either have to kill or be killed.[749]

---

[744] Buell, 5-9, 97-98; Richard Flower, "Genealogies of Unbelief: Epiphanius of Salamis and Heresiological Authority," in *Unclassical Traditions*, eds. C. Kelly, R. Flower, M. S. Williams (Cambridge: Cambridge Philological Society, 2011), 2:76.

[745] Kim, 245-46.

[746] Palladius, *Dialogus de vita sancti Joannis Chrysostomi* 6; Theophilus, *Sixteenth Festal Letter* 14.

[747] Euseb., *Hist. eccl.* 2.1.12. Cf. Epiph., *Pan*. 26 1,1-2; Julian, *Con. Gal.* 327B. Also see Flower, 79-83.

[748] For instance, Athanasius refused to support Arius' readmission. Socrates, *Hist. eccl.* 23.

[749] As Antoine Buyse points out, fear lends itself easily to the generation of hatred and can be a first step in that direction, for it often requires less effort to inspire. For this reason, Buyse argues that we ought to be looking for "fear speech" rather than "hate speech" as a trigger for violence. Buyse, 785.

None of this means that religious violence was inevitable. But militant Christians do appear to have seized authority in the debate over how to handle interaction with pagans and heretics.[750] When violence did break out, the conflict would have polarized participants still further. Moderate parties would have become increasingly susceptible to accusations of treachery. And as violence became more and more common, the threshold of provocation required to trigger future violence would have fallen.[751]

Triggers

Can we be more specific about the precise triggers for this violence?[752] Despite allegations that the Alexandrians were prone to fighting, diverse crowds gathered every day and were usually nonviolent.[753] Modern theories for mob violence cite the influence of environmental factors (crowding in small places and high ambient temperatures), high states of emotional arousal, increasing agitation as riotous behavior spreads from a few instigators to the group at large (almost like a contagious infection), the unexpected convergence of persons sharing a similar set of conscious or unconscious needs (riotous behavior resulting as an expression of frustration regarding these unmet desires or as a strategy for obtaining the needs in question), the circulation of incendiary rumors that seem to call for a violent

[750] Drake, "Lambs," 19, 28.

[751] Buyse, 781-82; Dutton, 112.

[752] Note however, that even in a modern context, it can sometimes be difficult if not impossible to determine the actual trigger for mob violence. See Otto Adang, "Initiation and Escalation of Collective Violence: An Observational Study," in *Preventing Crowd Violence*, ed. Tamara Madensen and Johannes Knutsson (London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2011), 62. Also see Stanley Lieberson and Arnold Silverman, "The Precipitants and Underlying Conditions of Race Riots," *American Sociological Review* 30 (1965): 887-98.

[753] William Dunne Barry, "Faces of the Crowd: Popular Society and Politics of Roman Alexandria, 30 BC - AD 215" (Ph.D. diss., The University of Michigan: 1988), 85.

response, stimulation from highly motivated activists, and context-specific sociocultural and economic factors.[754] The latter might include various deprivations suffered by the participants—again, shared conscious or unconscious needs—with aggression erupting out of frustration over a real or perceived absence of goods, services, or rights to which the agitated parties feel entitled but can find no legal means of acquiring.[755]

Anachronistic though it might seem to apply modern theories to ancient behavior, a strategic application will hopefully remedy the disappointing vagueness in scholarship to date on the outbreak of the three incidents of violence discussed here. As it is, scholars studying religious violence in Late Antiquity have not, as a rule, been explicit as to whether any of these theories might be applicable to ancient behavior, at the same time failing to elucidate some important ways in which antiquity might have differed from the modern world. However, scholars such as Robin Lane Fox appear to have implicitly adopted the deprivation model, blaming anti-Christian persecution, for instance, on economic and political stress.[756]

The immediate trigger for George the Cappadocian's murder is difficult to determine, so it is hard to know if any of these theories might shed light on his fate. According to Ammianus Marcellinus, when George suggested the destruction of a pagan temple, the pagans retaliated by hatching plots against him (Amm. Marc.

---

[754] Goldstein, 105-19.

[755] Chris Messer, "The Tulsa Race Riot of 1921: Toward an Integrative Theory of Collective Violence," *Journal of Social History* 44 (2011): 1218; Michele Salzman, "Rethinking Pagan-Christian Violence," in Drake, 283. For a modern comparator, consider the April 2015 riots in Baltimore, Maryland which broke out following the death of an African American in police custody. An article published in *The Journal of the American Medical Association* attributes these riots to political inequalities, structural poverty, and disparities in healthcare. Leana S. Wen, Joshua M. Sharfstein, "Unrest in Baltimore: The Role of Public Health," *The Journal of the American Medical Association* 313 (2015): 2425-26.

[756] For example, Fox suggests that high taxes triggered the violence against Christians in Alexandria the year prior to the Decian persecution. Fox, 452.

22.11.7). Other sources suggest that George's renovation of a Mithraeum led to immediate violence (Socrates, *Hist. eccl.* 3.2; Sozom., *Hist. eccl.* 5.7; Julian, *Ep.* 21 [378D-380D]). Epiphanius and Sozomen claimed that a further impetus was provided by news that George's patron, the emperor Constantius II (reigned 337-361), had died (Epiph., *Pan.* 76.1.1-8; Sozom., *Hist. eccl.* 5.7). But if Ammianus Marcellinus is to be believed, the plotters only took action when they learned of the death of Artemius, the prefect of Egypt who was one of George's supporters.[757] This implies that George's murderers believed that they had no legal recourse for addressing George's perceived crimes as long as his protectors were still alive. Yet according to the fourth-century anonymous *Historia acephala*, George's assailants actually pulled him from a prison, where he had been languishing for almost a month.[758] If this is true, then the mob that seized George could hardly have protested an absence of legal alternatives for addressing its grievances,[759] though the mob might very well have doubted that a prosecution would entirely sate its thirst for retribution.[760]

The immediate trigger for violence is also difficult to determine when it comes to the "destruction" of the Serapeum. According to Sozomen, a Christian procession of the contents of a plundered Mithraeum incited pagans to attack

---

[757] Amm. Marc. 22.11.8. This issue is complicated, however, by evidence that Ammianus Marcellinus was mistaken about the date of Artemius' death. See C. B. Armstrong, "The Synod of Alexandria and the Schism at Antioch in A.D. 362," *The Journal of Theological Studies* 22 (1921): 209-11. Consider in light of 1) evidence that lynchings are more common when police presence is low (Dutton, 77); 2) the evidence provided below regarding police and military collusion in lynchings in the United States of American and the violence perpetrated by George the Cappadocian, Athanasius, Theophilus, and Cyril; and 3) evidence suggesting that the arrival of a police force is a trigger for mob violence (Tamara Madensen and John Eck, "Crowd-Related Crime: An Environmental Criminological Perspective," in Madensen, 134; Barry, 94-96).

[758] *Historia acephala*, 6.8.

[759] On pagans supposedly using the courts, or at least courtroom rhetoric, to plead their rights to worship in the early fifth century, see MacMullen, *Christianizing*, 100-101.

[760] Compare to the evidence of *police collusion* in the 1898 lynching of Sam Hose and the 1934 lynching of Claude Neal. See Dutton, 75, 79. Obviously, mobs, both ancient and modern, saw fit to circumvent the legal system even when this system appeared to be acting in their favor.

(Sozom., *Hist. eccl.* 7.15). Socrates Scholasticus confirmed that a procession of some kind was involved, but it is unclear just when this procession took place. Whatever the timing, the procession supposedly provoked an assault by pagans who were acting according to a prearranged plan (Socrates, *Hist. eccl.* 5.16). This implies coordinated pagan leadership, but none of the accounts mention any pagan leaders other than Olympius, and he is not mentioned prior to the seizure of the Serapeum.[761] There would have been ample opportunity for Olympius to seize authority of the pagan contingent after it took to the Serapeum, especially if we accept Rufinus' assertion about the ensuing stand-off lasting several days (Rufinus, *Hist. eccl.* 11.22). If Olympius' leadership was at best ad hoc, this would explain Sozomen's accusation that Olympius escaped from the Serapeum prior to the defeat of the pagan cause (Sozom., *Hist. eccl.* 7.15). Flight is hardly evocative of the zealotry expected of a man theoretically involved with the pagan offensive from the very beginning. Moreover, mob violence on this occasion does not appear to have been a politically savvy strategy. It is not the kind of tactic that an intelligent fellow like Olympius was likely to recommend. That being said, perhaps Olympius had been laying the groundwork for an outbreak of violence, expressing hostility towards the Christians and voicing views that found a receptive audience among his students, if no one else.[762]

---

[761] Sozom., *Hist. eccl.* 7.15. Damascius credited Olympius with good leadership skills, but did not give the philosopher a role in organizing the initial pagan assault (Dam., *Isid.* 3.42). Damascius might have been attempting to divert responsibility for violence from Olympius, but he was more than willing to criticize pagans on these grounds elsewhere. Consider, for instance, his comments on Pamprenius' efforts to foment rebellion (Dam., *Isid.* 5.77, 7.112-13).

[762] To be sure, it is tempting tospeculate that the Serapeum was chosen as the fallback point because the pagan activists were, for the most part, students and the Serapeum housed classrooms. Socrates Scholasticus reported that one of his own instructors, a man by the name of Helladius, boasted that he had killed Christians at some point during the excitement, but Socrates did not indicate whether this was before or after the Serapeum had been seized (Socrates, *Hist. eccl.* 5.16). On the library and classrooms located at the Serapeum see Watts, *City,* 144-51; Judith McKenzie, *The Art and Archaeology of Alexandria and Egypt, c. 300 B.C.-A. D. 700* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 99-100. On the library also see the next chapter.

Accountability is also difficult to assess on the Christian side of things. Faced with the demolition of their temples, it is easy to imagine pagans feeling as if they lacked non-violent means of redressing their grievances, especially with imperial favor swinging in the direction of Christianity. But if Theophilus was actually taking it upon himself to dismantle these temples, he might not have been acting with the full support of the law. Socrates Scholasticus, Sozomen, and Rufinus agree that Theophilus had the emperor's permission to proceed (Rufinus, *Hist. eccl.* 11.22; Socrates, *Hist. eccl.* 5.16; Sozom., *Hist. eccl.* 7.15), but this kind of work was usually entrusted to government officials, not bishops or patriarchs.[763] According to Zosimus, the Serapeum was dismantled by the praetorian prefect, not Theophilus,[764] whereas Eunapius blamed both Theophilus and the prefect (Eunap., *VS* 470-73). Socrates Scholasticus, Sozomen, and Rufinus condescended to mention the involvement of the military and the magistrates, but only after the pagans had seized the Serapeum (Socrates, *Hist. eccl.* 5.16; Sozom., *Hist. eccl.* 7.15; Rufinus, *Hist. eccl.* 1.22). Tellingly, the pagans refused to abandon the Serapeum until receipt of news regarding the emperor's response to the incident (Sozom., *Hist. eccl.* 7.15; Rufinus, *Hist. eccl.* 11.22), suggesting that the pagans fostered some hope that they might be accorded the emperor's approval. If this was not simply a delaying tactic, it implies that the pagans were not convinced that the Christians had the law on their side.

[763] Garth Fowden, "Bishops and Temples in the Eastern Roman Empire A.D. 350-435," *The Journal of Theological Studies* 29 (1978): 53-54, 70; Russell, 9; Watts, *Riot*, 192n5; Hahn, "Conversion," 340-50. On the debate over whether or not Shenoute's actions towards Gessius were responsible for provoking the 423 law condemning acts of violence or theft targeting Jews or pagans who have not broken any laws, see for instance Emmel, "Atripe," 180; Béatrice Caseau, "Religious Intolerance and Pagan Statuary," in *The Archaeology of Late Antique 'Paganism*, eds. Luke Lavan and Michael Mulryan (Boston: Leiden, 2011), 487-88.

[764] Zosimus, *Historia nova* 4.37.

The military appears to have played no role in the attack on Hypatia, an event for which the immediate trigger remains unclear.[765] Any protection that she might have enjoyed thanks to her relationship with the prefect was apparently of no avail. So if her assailants resorted to violence for want of legal recourse for their grievances,[766] this was not because they were at an appreciable disadvantage, especially since no one appears to have been prosecuted for Hypatia's murder. Scholars continue to debate whether or not a restriction placed on Cyril's use of the *parabalani* following Hypatia's death was meant as punishment for his involvement in the murder.[767] But for lack of explicit evidence on this issue, it seems safe to assume that Hypatia's murder demonstrated—and possibly facilitated—the shift of power in Cyril's favor.

Unfortunately, we do not possess information about other factors that might have contributed to these outbreaks of violence. Perhaps hostilities always occurred on particularly hot days, or in the midst of especially crowded streets. If so, it nevertheless seems obvious that Cyril, like Athanasius and Theophilus (and perhaps Olympius), was encouraging an atmosphere in which violence was more likely to occur. But some scholars argue that mob violence results less from rational decision-

---

[765] Proposals for the trigger include: revenge for the death of Ammonius, Hypatia's supposed use of witchcraft, fallout following an outbreak of Jewish-Christian violence (Socrates, *Hist. eccl.* 7.13), Cyril's mounting frustration and jealousy over Hypatia's influence (Chuvin points out that, if this was the trigger, it took a rather long time for Cyril to lash out; Chuvin, 89), and a clash over Hypatia's efforts to lend advice regarding the question of the proper date for celebrating Easter (Ari Belenkiy, "An Astronomical Murder?" *A&G* 51 [2010]: 2.9-13). Regarding the final theory, note that, in 382, a death penalty was imposed on Christians who celebrated Easter on the "wrong" day (MacMullen, *Christianizing,* 93).

[766] Some Christian leaders were discouraging Christians from utilizing state courts, and, at least according to pagan critics like Libanius, a few Christians were taking it upon themselves to settle disputes through violence rather than by appealing to the courts. Lib. 30.20, 25-26; Sandwell, 130, 155. For further discussion of the reasons behind the attack Hypatia also see Alan Cameron and Jaqueline Long, *Barbarians and Politics at the Court of Arcadius* (Berkeley: University of CA Press, 1993), 59; Michael Deakin, *Hypatia of Alexandria: Mathematician and Martyr* (Amherst, New York: Prometheus Books, 2007).

[767] Dam., *Isid.* 3.43; Holum, 99-100; Dzielska, 94-95; Haas, 314-15; Eric Fournier, "Exiled Bishops in the Christian Empire: Victims of Imperial Violence?" in Drake, 164-65. Also see Watts, *Riot,* 208-10.

making—of the sort expected from a group's leadership—than from the inherent irrationality of the mob itself. According to this line of thinking, violence is indicative of the mob mentality. It permits acts that would be unthinkable in more isolated settings. Is mob psychology really to blame for the religious violence observed in fourth and fifth century Alexandria?

Mob Violence

According to one model of mob psychology, mob violence erupts when members of the crowd[768] lose their sense of individuality. They opt for a group identity and distribute their sense of personal responsibility to the crowd at large, so that no one person feels overburdened by a consciousness of guilt for his actions. The size of the crowd itself generates a sense of power, and participants feel a mounting desire to act that eventually gives way to violence.[769]

This theory has invited harsh criticism, not least because not all crowds are violent. Peaceful demonstrations are possible. Moreover, groups often possess subgroups and can disagree with leadership about group goals. Rational planning is frequently involved in at least the initial stages of an outburst of mob violence, since the groups most capable of collective action—because the members possess similar goals—rarely gather spontaneously, even if group activities can take on spontaneity

[768] Scholars have developed a taxonomy for distinguishing between crowds and mobs. Since my argument does not hinge on this distinction—indeed I argue that we do not have adequate information for determining how many people were involved in the violence discussed here or the exact nature (or homogeneity) of their behavior—I am not invoking these distinctions. For a discussion of different types of crowds and triggers to behavior see for instance Alexander E. Berlonghi, "Understanding and Planning for Different Spectator Crowds," *Safety Science* 18 (1995): 239-47.

[769] Gustave Le Bon, *The Crowd: A Study of the Popular-Mind* (NY: Viking Press, 1960).

once the group has gathered. And collective action may reflect not so much the effacement of identity as the expression of identity.[770]

If the members of a crowd do not entirely lose their sense of individuality and can disagree with other members of the crowd about their intentions and interests, then the crowd is not a mindless, static collection of zealots. While modern scholars are rather critical of the contagion model for mob violence—mocking the notion that behavior is akin to an illness spreading among the participants merely through communication—a modified form of the contagion model seems viable. This would allow for some measure of rational decision-making and would account for the dynamic nature of crowd activity, as participants react to events. According to this line of thinking, violence breaks out in crowd settings due not to an unanimous decision on the part of the masses but rather from the actions of a small group of people in the crowd who provide a forward push, escalating the situation in a manner that encourages the rest of the crowd to take action.[771]

How large were the crowds participating in the violence involving George, the Serapeum, and Hypatia?[772] Population estimates for Alexandria during this period vary widely, and no doubt war, natural disasters, and seasonal factors caused large swings. However, a conservative estimate places the population at 200,000 people, and we should assume that this number changed regularly.[773] How many of these

---

[770] Fagan, *Lure*, 88-92; Stephen Reicher, "From Crisis to Opportunity: New Crowd Psychology and Public Order Policing Principles," in Madensen, 14-15.

[771] Randall Collins, *Violence: A Micro-Sociological Theory* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), 413; Barry, 94-96.

[772] On the difficulties associated with estimating crowd sizes even today see Ray Watson and Paul Yip, "How Many Were There When It Mattered? Estimating the Sizes of Crowds," *Significance* 8 (2011): 104-107.

[773] Haas, 46. The population was certainly large enough to furnish ample numbers for multiple sides of a conflict. A century after George was killed, the patriarch Proterius (d. 457) was killed by a mob, but he supposedly

were Christian? As the previous chapter indicated, we should be cautious about accepting scholarly estimates. Yet if these are to be believed, then the majority of Egypt was Christian in the mid-fourth century and almost all of Egypt was Christian by the mid-fifth century. These estimates might not be applicable to Alexandria itself or to particular quarters of the city, but they provide a starting point for speculations about the number of people involved with religious violence during this period.

Unfortunately, it is difficult to correlate the rate of conversion to the severity of the violence during this period. Leaving aside outrageous accusations of cannibalism (Socrates, *Hist. eccl.* 3.13), only a few acts of anti-Christian pagan violence are recorded in Alexandria following the cessation of official pagan persecution. When compared to the catalog of religious violence attributed to non-pagans or attributed to both heretics and pagans during Alexander and Athanasius' turns as patriarch, the pagans do not appear to have been appreciably more violent than Christians.[774] Given the ferocity with which pagans supposedly carried out the early fourth century anti-Christian persecution, it is surprising that pagans did not commit more anti-Christian acts of violence during this period. It is also surprising that pagans had to rely on the support of Christians to carry out some of these acts.[775]

---

still had enough followers for over ten thousand of his supporters to attack the rival claimant for the patriarchy. Pseudo-Zacharias Rhetor, *Historia Miscellanea* 4.2, 9. In calibrating the extent of this violence, Lavan reminds us of the thousands killed in politically-motivated violence during this period. Luke Lavan, "Introduction," in Lavan, liv.

[774] See appendix. It is important to note that a reference to the conversion of a temple of Bendis (or Mendis) into a church in 368-370 avoids any mention of bloodshed, an effort on the part of the pagans to prevent this conversion, or the destruction of idols or temple features (Athanasius, *Festal Index* 41-42). Although the seizure of property is certainly a form of violence (see below), care should be taken not to conflate this sort of activity with violence against people or to assume that all property seizures provoked a protest or involved bloodshed. On a different note, I did not come across any records of explicit violence against Jews in Alexandria during this period. However, Haas believes that the Jews were also victims of the religious coercion attributed to George the Cappadocian. Haas, 288.

[775] That is, assuming that the accusations of collaboration had any basis in fact.

Perhaps the rate of conversion was so rapid that pagans quickly became numerically disadvantaged. If so, when violence broke out in relation to the Serapeum at the end of the century, it was *in spite of* not *because of* the size of the pagan constituency. Alternatively, perhaps more or less peaceful co-existence between Christians and pagans was in fact a more viable option than anti-pagan Christian rhetoric implied.

Let us consider the size of the crowd and the issue of mob psychology for each of our test-cases, one by one. If the trigger for the assault on George was a procession of pagan imagery, then the attackers must have been primarily pagan, at least at first. If the assault was inspired by George's rivalry with Athanasius, then the attackers must have been primarily so-called orthodox Christians, again at least at first. If the trigger was news of Constantius' (or Artemius') death or pent-up hostility regarding George's corrupt and violent behavior, then the attackers could have included both pagans and non-Arian Christians. Christopher Haas suggests that Jews might have been involved as well.[776] According to Sozomen, both pagans and non-Arian Christians hated George, but pagans hated him more (Sozom., *Hist. eccl.* 4.30), implying that George's assailants were solely or chiefly pagans.[777] Whatever the case, if the situation was as dynamic as the above model of mob psychology suggests, then the make-up of the crowd might have shifted as events unfolded. Assuming that pagans formed the brunt of the initial force against George, once they attacked, others

[776] Haas, 288-89. But see Alston's cautionary comment regarding Haas' approach to ethnic-based violence. Alston, *City*, 232-35.

[777] A letter sent by Julian to Alexandria in response to the violence implies the same, for the letter appears to be addressed solely to the city's pagans, that is, the city's Greeks (Julian, *Ep.* 21 380D). But Julian was well-aware that "Greek-ness" could be used as a middle-ground with Christians, much as he might eschew their right to make use of so-called Greek education. See chapter five. It is also worth considering that Julian only addressed himself to Alexandria's pagans because, already expecting the worst of Christians, he wanted pagans to set a good example by their behavior.

might have joined in, if only by passively refusing to offer George assistance.[778] This is in keeping with Ammianus Marcellinus' assertion that a more or less undifferentiated mass of Alexandrians was responsible for the assault (Amm. Marc. 22.11.8).

But how many people were actually involved? It is impossible to be certain. According to Socrates Scholasticus, George was not the only victim of the mob's attack, though the historian did not give any numbers. Ammianus Marcellinus named two other Christian victims. If George was indeed removed from prison, this suggests that a fairly large crowd was involved. The participation of a large mob is implied by the allegation that, before they were disposed of, George and his fellow victims were led on camels throughout the city and subjected to blows as they travelled, with passersby apparently seizing the opportunity to take part in the grisly ordeal.[779]

How large were the crowds involved with the violence surrounding the "destruction" of the Serapeum? Norman Russell believes that the intensity of the fighting—discussed in more detail below—proves that there was still a fairly sizable population of pagans in the city, at least enough to put up a good fight.[780] If, as Rufinus, Socrates Scholasticus, and Sozomen indicated, mass conversions followed the "destruction" of the Serapeum (Rufinus, *Hist. eccl.* 11.24; Socrates, *Hist. eccl.* 5.17; Sozom., *Hist. eccl.* 7.20), then this too suggests that there were ample numbers of pagans in the vicinity prior to the outbreak of violence. Christian numbers might

---

[778] Chuvin suggests that George's Christian opponents might have in fact been capable of feeling some sympathy for George's pagan targets. Chuvin, 43.

[779] Socrates, *Hist. eccl.* 3.2; Sozom., *Hist. eccl.* 5.7; Amm. Marc. 22.11.8-10; Epiph., *Pan.* 76.1.1-8. Perhaps these participants merely joined in as events unfolded. If enough people joined the mob, the instigators would have had an opportunity to retreat. Some might have even seized this option, having suffered second-thoughts about the escalation of violence.

[780] Russell, 4.

have been bolstered by monks visiting from the countryside. The pagan rhetorician Libanius (314-393), who taught in Antioch, complained that monks were being employed to destroy temples,[781] and Theophilus seems to have occasionally used monks for just this.[782] In this case, however, monastic involvement might have been delayed until well after the violence had ceased,[783] for the monks were expelled from Alexandria prior to the outbreak of hostilities[784] and they were not mentioned as participants in the fighting by any of the historians.

Unfortunately, contradictions in the sources make it difficult to determine the breadth of the violence. If the pagan assault was planned ahead of time, as Socrates Scholasticus asserted, and a Christian procession was indeed the target, the crowds on each side could have been fairly sizable. Sozomen indicated that many Christians were killed but made no mention of pagan casualties. The wounded, according to Socrates Scholasticus, were innumerable, and the number of Christian dead dwarfed the number of pagan dead. One of Socrates Scholasticus' pagan instructors allegedly boasted of having personally killed nine Christians during the tumult. If Rufinus is to be believed, the pagans were actually outnumbered by their Christian foes but gained the upper hand through sheer viciousness. Any notion that the pagans might have been "winning" the fight is contradicted by the fact that they felt the need to take refuge in the Serapeum.[785] The temple would have been a good place to find

---

[781] Lib. 30.8. See the following chapter on Libanius' trustworthiness on this point.

[782] *AP* 4.76 N 162. See next chapter for further discussion of monastic reaction towards the "fall" of the Serapeum.

[783] On monks being installed in a monastery erected by Theophilus in the area of another dismantled Serapeum, this one in Canopus, see Eunap., *VS* 470-73.

[784] Chuvin, 63.

[785] McKenzie, "Reconstructing," 108.

reinforcements, popular as it was, and additional pagans might have arrived over time, especially if, as Rufinus claimed, the stand-off went on for several days (Rufinus, *Hist. eccl.* 11.22; Socrates, *Hist. eccl.* 5.16; Sozom., *Hist. eccl.* 7.15).

How did combatants distinguish friend from foe? In antiquity, religious identity was often communicated through unique clothing, and sources suggest that people were sometimes mistaken for monks, clergy, or pagan philosophers based on their manner of dress.[786] But syncretic practices would have undermined the reliability of judgments based on appearance.[787] Today, police in the United States of America have admitted to making decisions about a person's intentions and criminal history based solely on his or her presence in a particular location.[788] It is worth nothing, therefore, that there might have been a fair number of Christians in the vicinity of the Serapeum when it was seized, visiting as either tourists[789] or as scholars drawn to the library.[790] Were any of these mistaken for pagans? Did they join the fighting? Were they allowed to go without suffering any harm? Or were they among the captured Christians who, according to Rufinus and Sozomen, were

[786] Libanius, for instance, distinguished the Christian monks by their black robes (Lib. 30.8). According to Socrates Scholasticus, when Julian died, the philosophers stopped wearing the distinctive pallium, implying that they thought that this article of clothing made them too identifiable once paganism had lost its champion (Socrates, *Hist. eccl.* 3.24). According to Sozomen, when trials for treasonous inquiries involving divination were carried out during the reign of Valens, philosophers fell under particular suspicion, and people avoided dressing like philosophers for fear of prosecution (Sozom., *Hist. eccl.* 6.35). When violence broke out against monks in Constantinople over John Chrysostom's expulsion, anyone dressed like a monk was allegedly in danger of attack (Zos. 5.23). Members of the Isis cult were distinguished by their shaven heads and linen clothing. Min. Fel., *Oct.* 23.1; Athenagoras, *Leg. pro Christ* 14; Tertullian, *De anima* 2. Zivie-Coche, "Pharoahnic," 101; Dieleman, *Priests*, 249.

[787] As chapter six explains, some Christians were accused of assuming articles of dress (like amulets) associated with pagans.

[788] Reicher, 9.

[789] On the the attraction of pagan edifices to ostensibly Christian viewers, see the below discussion regarding secularism.

[790] On the library associated with the Serapeum see chapter five.

tortured by the pagans (Rufinus, *Hist. eccl.* 11.22; Socrates, *Hist. eccl.* 5.16; Sozom., *Hist. eccl.* 7.15)?

At least some of the combatants must have recognized and known their opponents, as a reflection of the extent to which Late Antique Alexandria functioned as a face-to-face society. Did patron-client or teacher-student relationships have any influence on the fighting? When violence broke out in Rwanda in the 1990s, some of the aggression was clearly driven by private vendettas, with assailants seeking out particular victims. In other cases, combatants sought to spare friends or people to whom they owed particular favors. As the violence escalated, however, it became increasingly difficult to protect anyone.[791] Tempting as it is to speculate about similar phenomena with regard to the "destruction" of the Serapeum, we cannot exercise any certainty in the matter.

We cannot even venture a guess as to how the Christians organized themselves once the fighting broke out. Surprisingly, Rufinus, Socrates Scholasticus, and Sozomen made no mention of Theophilus or the military taking steps to protect the Christians, who were supposedly falling prey to a series of pagan raids. Theophilus was not even mentioned as a participant in the negotiations carried out after the temple was seized. Strikingly, Sozomen implied that the Christians actually feared the emperor's response to the violence, and the reader may recall that the pagans were wary of the emperor's response as well (Socrates, *Hist. eccl.* 5.16; Sozom., *Hist. eccl.* 7.15; Rufinus, *Hist. eccl.* 11.22). Such a reaction suggests a lack of forethought on the part of combatants, bolstering the notion that, while the initial

[791] Dutton, 101-102. On Olympius' influence among students as a factor see Haas, 164-65.

stages of the conflict might have involved some planning—as suggested by references to a coordinated pagan assault and Theophilus' supposed plot to dismantle all of the temples—matters got out of hand as a mob mentality took over for the participants and violence escalated.[792]

This makes it all the more impressive that both parties were able to come to a temporary truce in order to learn the emperor's reaction to the recent events, especially given the alleged pagan resistance to early attempts at negotiation and the amount of violence supposedly employed during the fighting (Rufinus, *Hist. eccl.* 11.22; Sozom., *Hist. eccl.* 7.15). Indeed, such a truce, and the apparent lack of a later retaliation, suggests that some of our sources exaggerated the violence that occurred. Ideally, the truce in this case would have been used to negotiate a mutually acceptable reconciliation. In modern conflict negotiations, peaceful outcomes are more likely to result when negotiations employ discourse emphasizing the equality of participants with regard to their duties and rights, while stressing membership in an overall group identity—which, for the combatants involved with the fighting around the Serapeum, might have meant appealing to a shared Roman identity rather than stressing a Christian-pagan binary—and the need for unity.[793] Instead of identifying one side or the other as a source of problems, successful negotiators single out problematic individuals (like Theophilus and Olympius, perhaps), and insist upon benign intentions for perceived slights. Violence is more likely to result from negotiations

[792] If, as Hahn argues, Theophilus really was responsible for the violence surrounding the Serapeum (Hahn, "Conversion," 350) then Christian anxiety over the emperor's reaction might have also reflected wavering confidence in the patriarch's leadership.

[793] A strategy Julian might have been attempting to utilize when he addressed himself to Alexandria's *Greeks* following the violence against George the Cappadocian (Julian, *Ep.* 21 380D). Was this more divisive than unifying?

when discourse relies on blame, censure, condemnation, or accusations (blaming one side for excessive violence, for instance); assigns unequal duties and rights (regarding, for example, the possession of access to religious space) according to sub-group membership; defines stable group identities based on stereotypes (like an alleged propensity for baby-killing); stresses claims as to victim and victimizer status; utilizes discursive techniques to undermine the legitimacy of an opponent's position or behavior; and constructs a sub-group identity that is so totalizing that it undermines a member's ability to sympathize with the group as a whole.[794] Even today, negotiation entails significant risk. A failure to reciprocate aggression for the sake of peace can be perceived as a sign of weakness and can invite attack.[795] So reliance on a balanced strategy is crucial.

Does the emperor appear to have taken these issues into consideration when he responded to the violence surrounding the Serapeum? The evidence is mixed. Allegedly, Theodosius I (r. 379-395) declared that the Christians who had been killed during the fighting were to be venerated as martyrs and he ordered (or confirmed an already existing order for) the closure of Alexandria's temples. But he also pardoned the pagans for any violence that they might have committed. Was this clemency truly a bid to encourage conversion, as the sources claimed, or were the city's pagans still too numerous or too influential for the employment of harsher measures?[796] Perhaps,

---

[794] Nikki Slocum-Bradley, *Promoting Conflict or Peace through Identity* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), 8-9, 12-14.

[795] Wood, "Conceptualizing," 91; Matthew Martin, Katie Neary Dunleavy, and Carrie Kennedy-Lightsey, "The Instrumental Use of Verbally Aggressive Messages," in Avtgis, 110.

[796] Theodosius had only recently been readmitted to communion following his demand for a massacre in Thessalonica, and he might have been eager to publicize his clemency with regard to the outbreak of violence in Alexandria. On the massacre see Chuvin, 63-65; Haas, 162; Adolf Lippold, *Theodosius der Grosse und seine Zeit* (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1968).

but the emperor's decision to close the temples does not indicate the sort of respect for rights that modern conflict negotiators recommend. The results were devastating. As the Serapeum and other temples were dismantled, large numbers of pagans supposedly either fled or converted (Rufinus, *Hist. eccl.* 11.22; Sozom., *Hist. eccl.* 7.15).

Assuming that Christians truly dominated Alexandria after this, why did Hypatia warrant attention? The deprivation model of mob violence does not entirely explain violence perpetrated by superior parties who, theoretically, suffer no deprivations. Consider, for instance, the contradiction suggested by the lynching of African Americans in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, a phenomenon that was more common in areas where African Americans were a numeric and socioeconomic minority. The *perception* of deprivation appears to be the crux of the matter. A person can *feel* deprived even when this is not the case, and a person can blame someone for this deprivation when the fault really lies elsewhere.[797] So Christians might have outnumbered pagans in early fifth century Alexandria while nevertheless feeling as if they suffered deprivations, thanks perhaps to internal Christian discord (of the sort surrounding Hypatia's alleged ally, the prefect Orestes), which was blamed, aptly or not, on pagans like Hypatia. And, with a step back towards the traditional theories of mob violence that attribute hostility to the irrationality of the crowd, it is worth noting that, as J. Rist points out, Hypatia was

[797] The deprivation model indicates that a lynching is motivated by a mob's sense of disempowerment; participation in a lynching allows the mob to feel as if they have regained a sense of power. This is difficult to reconcile with evidence that incidents of lynching in the American past were more common in areas where the victim was a member of a minority, and presumably incapable of subordinating the members of the mob. Unfortunately, lynch mobs were fueled by rhetoric that distorted the facts in order to identify the victim as the source of the mob's disempowerment. Dutton, 76-82. Applying this model to the death of Hypatia, one might argue that Christians who were suffering a sense of disempowerment due to internal competition displaced their anger onto Hypatia.

murdered during Lent, meaning that the attackers' mental faculties might very well have been impaired by fasting.[798]

How many people does it take to kill a single woman? That is really what it comes down to with regard to the assault on Hypatia. In the prior assault on Orestes, the crowd was apparently quite large. Socrates Scholasticus claimed that the people of Alexandria rallied to the aid of the prefect and successfully frightened off the opposing monks, who numbered around five hundred. Would these Alexandrians have stepped up in Hypatia's defense? Socrates Scholasticus indicated that at least some Christians questioned Cyril's decision to make a martyr out of Orestes' assailant (Socrates, *Hist. eccl.* 7.14). Would this skepticism have fueled efforts to resist Cyril's attempt to remove Hypatia? The band responsible for killing Hypatia need not have been very large unless people were expected to come to Hypatia's aid. The ruckus made as Hypatia was seized surely would have drawn attention, even if the initial group of attackers was not that large, since Hypatia was supposedly taken to a site not far from the agora and the main thoroughfare of the city. Was crowd control required? Dzielska points out that Hypatia probably had a large number of supporters among Alexandria's elites and, as noted in the previous chapter, bystanders were expected to intercede to stop illicit acts of violence.[799]

Perhaps the attack began with a small band that grew as people spontaneously joined in, yelling their support or actually taking turns scraping off Hypatia's flesh, just as they had allegedly joined in on the attack upon George as he was paraded

---

[798] J. M. Rist, "Hypatia," *Phoenix* 19 (1965): 223. For the argument that matters simply got out of Cyril's hands see Davis, *Papacy,* 73; Watts, *Riot,* 210.

[799] Dzielska, 88-90, 96; Haas, 2, 314-15.

through town. To be sure, Malalas' account implied that all of Alexandria participated in Hypatia's murder.[800] The opportunity for crowd participation appears to be one of the reasons that torture plays such a central role in lynching. If suffering is prolonged, more people can participate.[801] Therefore, even though it should have been relatively easy for a few people to have carried off Hypatia's murder, we cannot determine how many people were actually involved or use that to speculate about the number of pagans left in Alexandria at the time.[802] And it is again difficult to determine where the burden of blame should rest, with the leadership of men like Cyril or the mentality of the mob.

If relatively large crowds were involved with the murder of Hypatia and the other incidents of violence discussed above, then these incidents were, as Haas argues, examples of a highly ritualized discourse between public officials and the city. An appeal to what looks like group consensus lends mob violence the appearance of a community exercise, uniting the populace—if only for an instant—in denouncing the victim(s) as a threat to civic harmony. [803] But if the crowds were not very large, then small cells of people were seizing the opportunity to leverage violence to their advantage, perpetrating acts with such widespread repercussions that the entire community was implicated. If mob violence is indeed directed by a small

---

[800] Malalas 359 14.12. Note that this comment might have carried derogatory implications. Consider the negative connotations of "mob behavior" in elite discourse. For instance, Sen., *Ep.* 7.

[801] Dutton, 83. In 1898, around 2000 men and women shouted their support as Sam Hose was tortured. After his body was burned and torn apart, the spectators fought over souvenirs from the corpse. When Claude Neal was tortured and lynched some thirty-six years later, the crowd took turns kicking his corpse. Photos were taken of Neal's body and distributed as souvenirs. See Dutton, 74-76, 80. Such behavior reminds one not to become too carried away with the notion that pagans and early Christians were reenacting ancient Egyptian execration rites or attempting to prevent martyr cult when they destroyed the corpses of their victims. They were, at least in part, simply acting out their aggression. On religious violence as a form of execration and efforts to prevent (proper) burial of the body, see the previous chapter and below. Cf. Lavan, xvi.

[802] Dutton, 78.

[803] Haas, 241.

forward push, then even if large crowds were involved, small cells were still responsible for directing much of what transpired. Thus, we should not take it as a given that these highly charged incidents reflected an already existing shift in Alexandrian identity. They reflected, instead, the degree to which identity was contested; these incidents could not have taken place had matters already been decided, for insufficient numbers would have prevented escalation.[804] Yet if both sides had relatively high numbers during the period in question, why do we not hear of *more* outbreaks of violence? Either the sources grossly under-reported this violence or the Alexandrians were not as prone to violence as the propaganda suggests.

There certainly must have been at least a few Alexandrian Christians who did not support the use of violence as a matter of policy. To Lactantius and Arnobius, it was a point in the favor of Christianity that Christians never forced anyone to worship their deity (Lactant., *Div. inst.* 5.20; Arnobius 2.65). Origen discouraged Christians from attacking even idols possessed by demons (Origen, *Con. Cels.* 8.41). The 306 Council of Elvira declared that Christians who were killed for attacking an idol would not be considered martyrs. While this disavowal of militancy is only to be expected from early fourth century Christians, occupying, as they did, a minority position,[805] the use of force remained foolhardy from a practical standpoint even after Christianity began to gain the upper hand. Pagans like Julian used outbursts of Christian violence

[804] Not even prison riots inspire unanimity. In the 1971 prison riot in Attica, New York, some of the prisoners refused to participate, while others sought to prevent the violence from escalating. See Dutton, 85-87. African Americans have sometimes assisted white lynch mobs in the United States in order to avoid inviting retribution themselves. See Larry Griffin, "Causal Interpretation in Historical Sociology," *American Journal of Sociology* 98 (1993): 1114.

[805] Schaff, *Socrates*, 267n613; MacMullen, *Paganism*, 12.

as proof of fanaticism (Julian, *Con. Gal.* 205E-206A). Libanius warned emperor Theodosius that the destruction of temples would encourage pagan resistance and achieve only token conversion (Lib. 30.27-29). Some Christians fretted that the aggression of the "orthodox" would drive Jews, pagans, and heretics to join forces. And Christian emperors grew wary of Christians claiming that there was no crime for those who have Christ; in 423, legislation condemned violence against peaceful Jews and pagans.[806]

So who were the militant Christians who were pushing for violence? Were they new converts seeking to use violence as a demonstration of their commitment to Christianity?[807] They could hardly have been suspected of harboring pagan or heretical sympathies after they had gone so far as to commit murder in defense of orthodox Christianity.[808] Recall the case of the monk who threw a rock at the prefect in the days leading up to Hypatia's murder. The monk's name—a reference to the Egyptian deity Amon—suggests that he was either born a pagan or that his parents were not averse to syncretic paganizing tendencies. Either situation might have made Ammonius feel as if he needed to advertise his identity as a Christian. Whether or not Cyril ordered Ammonius to attack the prefect physically, such a bold act was the sort of thing he might have expected from a new recruit trying to prove himself. Surely,

---

[806] *Codex Theodosianus* 16.10.24. See Holum, 124; Fowden, "Bishops," 77-78; Ando, "Apologetics," 198; Watts, "Murder," 335.

[807] Drake, "Lambs," 24-25; Frankfurter, "Unbecoming," 288.

[808] Similar thinking seems to have governed the more recent recruitment process for Algerian anti-colonial combatants: the new recruit was compelled to commit a criminal act that would ensure that the actor could not return to life within the colonial regime without risking prosecution and execution. See Bruce Lawrence and Aisha Karim, eds. *On Violence: A Reader* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007), 89. On the role of violence in the construction of identity see Thomas Sizgorich, *Violence and Belief in Late Antiquity: Militant Devotion in Christianity and Islam* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009), 4-5.

Cyril was aware of the influence his anti-Orestes' rhetoric was exercising (Socrates, *Hist. eccl.* 7.14).

By advocating the adoption of a totalizing identity, Church leadership encouraged Christians to embrace an outlook that left room for nothing else. This approach is entirely at odds with the conception of identity described in the introduction, with identity resembling a deck of cards, each item of which one may choose to "play" or not "play" at any given time. Insisting that Christians limit themselves to only a few cards, Church leadership fostered an environment in which violence was more likely to break out, even if leaders were not openly advocating violence. Totalizing identities lend themselves to violence because intolerance refuses to admit the legitimacy of alternatives.[809]

Yet the crowds that engaged in religious violence in Alexandria during this period must have been incredibly diverse. Participants and observers would have included Christians raised in the faith, new converts, outright heretics (who considered themselves orthodox), suspect heretics, as well as pagans and Jews of all different ilk, and parties prone to syncretism. In this context, violence—as the expression of a totalizing identity—would have in some ways erased diversity,

[809] M. D. Litonjua, "Religious Zealotry and Political Violence in Christianity and Islam." *International Review of Modern Sociology* 35 (2009): 330-31. With regard to the distinction between tolerance and intolerance, note the distinction made in this study between "accepting alternatives" and "accepting the legitimacy of alternatives." Intolerance is involved not when a person chooses to adhere to his chosen faith or lack thereof, but when he insists that others follow his example. This point is worth making in light of scholarship that defines "tolerance" so loosely that the concept includes coercive acts that would hardly be considered under the umbrella of this concept today. While some scholars acknowledge the problem with this approach, the severity of the issue is ignored for the sake of what appears to be an effort to absolve ancient men and women of the charge of intolerance. See for instance the implications of Aude Busine, ed., "Introduction: Religious Practices and Christianization of the Late Antique City," in *Religious Practices and Christianization of the Late Antique City (4th-7th Cent.)* (Boston: Brill, 2015), 5. Among other things, this sets a standard for so-called "tolerance" that is quite disturbing in the context of modern religious violence. Marinides discusses possible alternative terminology but argues that "tolerance" in antiquity should be defined as the use of non-coercive measures. These might include exclusionary behavior. Nicholas Marinides, "Religious Toleration in the *Apophthegmata patrum*," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 20 (2012): 237. Unfortunately, this ignores the degree to which exclusion in of itself might have a coercive effect.

establishing a totalizing identity where previously there was ambiguity. While modern scholars have largely rejected the notion that people lose all reason while in the midst of a crowd, most scholars agree that participation in mob activity can be transformative. A person who begins as a passive observer or even a critic may become caught up in the activity and transformed by it.[810] If mob violence reflected the degree to which identity was still contested, it must have also decided the issue in Christianity's favor for many participants and observers.

Transformation requires time. By breaking up the violence involving George, the Serapeum, and Hypatia into stages—first, the use of hate speech; second, the trigger; and third, actual mob violence—I have delineated the steps during which a transformation might have taken place. At least some of the participants must have woken up the day of the "incident" with no idea of what was going to transpire or how they and their city would be transformed in the process. By focusing on the end result—as though the "fall" of the Serapeum, for instance, demonstrated the ascendancy of Christianity rather than the fight by which Christianity assumed ascendancy—scholars obscure the complexity of events.

To some degree this is a function of the historical narrative, the structure of which involves implicit explanatory claims, with sequences of events suggesting that each subsequent event transpires *because* of the one preceding, even if the word "because" and other linking terms are not explicitly employed. But a narrative does not possess sufficient explanatory value for our purposes.[811] I have attempted to

[810] Reicher, 14; Messer, 3; Dutton, 108-109.

[811] Griffin, 1099. See also Hayden White, "The Question of Narrative in Contemporary Historical Theory," *History and Theory* 23 (1984), 1-33; Wiseman, 122-49.

overcome this limitation by, for the most, avoiding a search for the "likeliest scenario" in any given case. Other scholarly accounts tend to employ more straightforward narratives, with contradictory evidence discarded in favor of the scholar's chosen alternative.[812] Yet, I cannot help but feel that attempts to reconstruct "what really happened" oversimplify the course of events, undermining our ability to appreciate the ambiguities that constitute our evidence for the very debates that were taking place during the events in question.[813] In other words, we lose touch with the contest over identity that was transpiring if we ignore the disagreements in the sources, the inconsistencies that no doubt reflected the welter of conflicting rumors that must have been running around the city as events unfolded, rumors that people would have acted upon, as well as arguments after the fact about just what had happened. These disagreements in the sources—including differences in the application of narrative techniques regarding the depiction of violence, discussed below—are themselves historically significant, reflecting the contest for identity which the events themselves constituted. If we focus only on the end results of violent incidents or dismiss this violence as evidence of a mob mentality—the actors being incapable of rational thought or change—we become guilty of the kind of totalizing discourse that, in stereotyping the actors, played such an integral part in motivating this violence in the first place.[814]

---

[812] See the secondary scholarship referenced in the above section under "What Really Happened."

[813] For a similar criticism of the approach adopted by social scientists, see Sandwell, 28. One must note that the latter reproach, as it simplifies the diversity of the social scientists that are its target, is guilty of its own criticism. I must confess, however, a bias, because my undergraduate degree is in anthropology.

[814] Such a caveat seems particularly important given both the recent outbreak of ethnically-motivated violence against religious institutions in the United States of American and the role of scholarship in encouraging students to avoid stereotypes, to respect diversity, and to engage in open, fair debates. The importance of this role should be all the more apparent given the scholastic setting of violence involving the Serapeum and later fifth century religious violence that allegedly led to the dismantling of a temple in Menouthis, near Alexandria (the

Narrating Property and Personal Violence

This section of the discussion examines the language that was employed to describe violence. As I hope that the last chapter demonstrated, the graphic depiction of tortured flesh can go a long way towards capturing an audience's attention and sympathy. By corollary, if violence against sacred space, architecture, and statuary was thought to possess some truth-value, then we ought to come across graphic depictions of violence against sacred precincts. Even if the destruction of a particular edifice was incomplete and anti-pagan property violence was sporadic, with most temples just left to waste, a few noteworthy incidents of property violence could have had a devastating psychological effect.[815] So how was violence against property depicted? Surprisingly, both Christian and pagan sources were exceedingly vague on this point. For instance, George the Cappadocian supposedly despoiled at least one temple and paraded the contents through Alexandria. No mention was made of any physical damage to the temple structure in the main surviving sources. The real damage was inflicted by the exposure of sacred items to profane eyes.[816]

When reporting the "destruction" of the Serapeum, Rufinus paused for an extended description of the temple's condition before it was dismantled, stressing its accoutrements, one assumes, so that the spectacle of the "demolished" temple would stand out all the more starkly. Yet, Rufinus devoted very few lines to a discussion of

---

latter will be discussed briefly below and more fully in chapter six). Not for nothing, then, does Peter Brown argue that education in the Greco-Roman world actually promoted tolerance. See Peter Brown, *Authority and the Sacred: Aspects of the Christianization of the Roman World* (Cambridge: Cambridge, University Press, 1995), 29-54. For an alternative perspective, suggesting that intellectual debates involving the circle of the Alexandrian instructor Ammonius Sacca actually contributed to the early fourth century persecution, see Digeser, *Threat.*

[815] Lavan, xxix-xl.

[816] Socrates, *Hist. eccl.* 3.2; Sozom., *Hist. eccl.* 4.30. Cf. Rufinus, *Hist. eccl.* 11.22; Socrates, *Hist. eccl.* 5.16; Sozom., *Hist. eccl.* 7.15.

the temple "ruins," saying only that the temple was levelled. He concentrated instead on the efforts involved in dismembering the famous statue of Serapis.[817] Rufinus was slightly more graphic regarding architectural damage to other temples in Egypt, asserting that these were all torn down, column by column (Rufinus, *Hist. eccl.* 11.28). His fellow Christian historians were likewise vague about the violence inflicted upon the Serapeum and other Egyptian temples.[818] The pagan Eunapius was more florid, but he was also exceedingly vague, directing his most specific comments to the floor of the Serapeum, which he said was left in place because the blocks were too heavy to move (Eunap., *VS* 470-73). Evocative though this image is of a paganism too deeply rooted to be supplanted, Eunapius nevertheless missed a golden opportunity to garner the audience's support by belaboring the spectacle of a once magnificent edifice now left in ruins.

Lest one think that I am asking too much in expecting to find graphic depictions of violence against sacred precincts, consider Philo's description of the

---

[817] Rufinus, *Hist. eccl*. 11.23-27. For a discussion of this scene as a metaphorical attack on a human, see below.

[818] Socrates, *Hist. eccl.* 5.16-17; Sozom., *Hist. eccl.* 7.15; Theod., *Hist. eccl*. 5.22. These historians surely missed an opportunity to exploit more fully the spectacle of pagan temples falling into ruin as proof that paganism was defunct. Perhaps they intentionally skirted the subject, knowing that detailed descriptions of broken columns, shattered lintels, and smashed pediments might have invited criticism from an audience who, regardless of their religious persuasion, might have been horrified at the destruction of an impressive edifice. Alternatively, perhaps Christians were worried that a detailed description of temple ruins, especially if these ruins were still accessible to visitors, might stir up interest of the sort showcased in Damascius' account. Even if this interest was only antiquarian, it might have offended Christian religious sensibilities insofar as it suggested that there was something in paganism (if only its ruins) that was worth preserving. Consider claims that pagans were still using the grounds of the Serapeum for worship in the fifth century (John Rufus, *Life of Peter the Iberian* 99 [R72]), Shenoute's complaints that a pagan was performing similar rituals on the grounds of a ruined temple of Atripe (see below), and Damascius' story about people rescuing a buried statue (Dam., *Isid.* 3.53). On the attraction of ruins *as* ruins see for instance Aleida Assmann, *Cultural Memory and Western Civilization: Functions, Media, Archives* (NY: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 298-312. Also see the below discussion regarding antiquarianism. Note, however, the disgust expressed at efforts to belabor a temple's antiquity in one text, the speaker wondering if the reference was meant to point out that the region enjoyed the gods' goodwill to such an extent that the environs (including the temple) had never been sacked (Macrob., *Sat.* 3.6.6-8). This complaint implies a preference for newer edifices, or perhaps merely annoyance over rhetorical tricks, or frustration over the appearance of evidence for the efficacy of paganism (assuming that Macrobius was a Christian, a matter of much debate among modern scholars).

violence that broke out in mid-first century Alexandria, with frenzied mobs wreaking havoc on Jewish meeting-houses, demolishing some and burning others to the ground in flagrant disregard for the danger that the fire posed to the surrounding edifices (Philo, *Leg.* 132-134). Athanasius' narrative of the 356 attack on a church shows that even partial destruction could be exploited to notable effect. Encouraged by Arians, pagans allegedly carried off the church's curtains, a table, the throne, the seats, and other items. Dropping these in the street, they set fire to the lot of it and threw incense onto the flames in reenactment of a sacrifice.[819]

As for violence against people, unfortunately we have limited evidence from the camps of so-called heretics. However, we do have a few sources, including a letter exchanged by so-called Melitians, accusing Athanasius' followers of a series of attacks, the details of which were left vague, though the victims were supposedly left on the brink of death.[820] Where the evidence is more abundant, from the so-called orthodox camp, it is no surprise that patriarchs, such as Athanasius and Peter II (patriarch 373-380), were much more explicit than the Church historians in their depictions of violence suffered by (orthodox) Christians in Egypt. As moral crusaders who depended on depictions of violence in order to garner support, it was incumbent upon the patriarchs to depict this violence in as striking a manner as possible.[821]

---

[819] Athan., *Hist. Ar.* 56. Cf. Socrates, *Hist. eccl.* 2.11, 2.15; Sozom., *Hist. eccl.* 3.6-7; *Vita Antonii* 82. Sacred space could also be harmed via sacrilegious acts, the perversity of which defiled the area where they were performed. See for instance Athan., *Hist. Ar.* 57; Theod., *Hist. eccl.* 4.19; *Vita Antonii* 82.

[820] *P.Lond.* VI 1914 in Bell, *Jews* 58-71. Cf. Socrates, *Hist. eccl.* 2.8, 2.15; Sozom., *Hist. eccl.* 3.5.

[821] Athan., *Encylical Letter* 3-4; Athan., *Hist. Ar.* 10-13, 55, 72; Athanasius, *Apologia de Fuga* 24; Theod., *Hist. eccl.* 4.19. Interestingly, Athanasius and Peter II seemed reluctant to name the women who had suffered at the hands of the pagans and heretics, though they did name a few male victims. Perhaps the violence against these women was sexual in nature and the lack of specificity reflect an effort to protect the victims. Or, perhaps female martyrs had simply ceased to carry the valence they had enjoyed when Dionysius of Alexandria, Eusebius, and Palladius had so eagerly drawn attention to exemplars like Potomaiena, Quinta, Apollonia, Mercuria, and Dionysia. Or perhaps anonymity was a rhetorical ploy by which Athanasius and Peter II meant to make the violence seem more widespread than it actually was. On one occasion, Athanasius did name a female

It made sense, too, that the historians would have been vague when depicting the violence levied against so-called heretics like George the Cappadocian. Since, as argued in the previous chapter, graphic depictions of violence can bolster the truth-value of pain as evidence for the validity of religious faith, it was not in the interest of narrators to credit their religious opponents with great suffering. Surprisingly, given that Ammianus Marcellinus appears to have acknowledged that pagans were responsible for George's murder, the pagan historian was more graphic in his depiction of George's death than the so-called orthodox Christian historians. The latter were capable of graphic depictions of violence, as demonstrated by their accounts of other Christians murdered around the same time. So their lack of specificity regarding George's murder appears to have reflected an unwillingness to pay George any undue attention lest he look like a martyr.[822]

---

victim of unspecified torture (Athan., *Festal Index* 32). A similar silence regarding the identities of Christian victims was observed in accounts of the violence surrounding the "destruction" of the Serapeum, and it is especially curious here given the emperor Theodosius' declaration that the victims were martyrs (Rufinus, *Hist. eccl.* 11.22; Sozom., *Hist. eccl.* 7.15). Note that Peter II claimed that the bodies of some of the women who were murdered in 367 were so badly mutilated—torn to pieces and scattered throughout the city—that the corpses were never found. A conspiracy-minded person would be wont to suggest that the bodies were never found because they did not exist. Today, allegations of government involvement in torture and murder are sometimes dismissed as propaganda; hence, the importance of publicizing the names of the victims in order to prove such claims. See Binford, 3-11, 49-67. Exposure of the plot to frame Athanasius for murdering an opponent (Rufinus, *Hist. eccl.* 10.16; Socrates, *Hist. eccl.* 1.27; Sozom., *Hist. eccl.* 2.23) is proof enough that Late Antique men and women would have had good reason to exercise caution before accepting accusations of torture and murder without ample evidence. Thus, the failure to specify the names of supposed victims raises several questions: Is this evidence that the source is not credible? Does it simply reflect the source's disinterest in diverting attention from the patriarch and onto martyrs? Or does it reflect the source's failure to exploit a powerful tool for capturing the audience's support? By denying these victims' names, one might even argue that the patriarchs participated in their victimization. On the denial of names to female victims as a form of gender violence see Cole, 39-40.

[822] Socrates, *Hist. eccl.* 3.2; Sozom., *Hist. eccl.* 5.7; Epiph., *Pan.* 76.1.1-8; Amm. Marc. 22.11.8. On the subject of George's possible recognition as a martyr see Woods, 141-58. For an example of a more explicit depiction of violence against a Christian, consider Sozomen's graphic language regarding the fate of three Christians killed by pagans in Gaza, a tale Sozomen claimed deserved narration in light of the space he had given to George's murder (Sozom., *Hist. eccl.* 5.9). Another interesting comparator for accounts of George's murder is provided by the 457 murder of Proterius, the Chalcedonian patriarch of Alexandria, a murder that Pseudo-Zachariah of Mytilene claimed should be likened to that of George the Cappadocian (Pseudo-Zacharias Rhetor, *Historia Miscellanea* 4.2 [171a]). Cf. Evag., *Hist. eccl.* 2.8 [56-59].

Understandably, Christian sources were less interested in Valens' (r. 364-378) so-called persecution of pagans than his persecution of the "orthodox."[823] Socrates Scholasticus admitted that many pagans were executed during Valen's crack-down on certain pagan rites, but the historian made no mention of the torture that attracted so much of Ammianus Marcellinus' ire. Sozomen was only slightly more explicit than Socrates Scholasticus, but given Sozomen's reliance on the latter, this is telling. While Zosimus obviously shared Ammianus Marcellinus' outrage over Valen's anti-pagan campaign, he devoted far less space to the incident than his fellow pagan historian, and his language was anything but graphic.[824]

The Church historians were vague yet again when it came to depicting the personal violence associated with the "fall" of the Serapeum (Rufinus, *Hist. eccl.* 11.22; Socrates, *Hist. eccl.* 5.16; Sozom., *Hist. eccl.* 7.15). They were more explicit on this point, however, than Eunapius, who denied that any blood was shed at all (Eunap., *VS* 470-73). Assuming that the street fighting referenced in the other sources did occur, and that there were at least some pagan victims, Eunapius missed a good opportunity. Perhaps he avoided the topic because pagans were thought to be partly or

[823] Note, however, that accounts of Valen's anti-orthodox persecution were vaguer in the Church histories than the account attributed to the "orthodox" patriarch of Egypt at this time, Peter II. For the latter see Theod., *Hist. eccl.* 4.19. Rufinus' vagueness is all the more surprising given that he was an eyewitness (Socrates, *Hist. eccl.* 4.24) and that he accused the Arians of committing crimes that not even the pagans would have countenanced (Rufinus, *Hist. eccl.* 11.3). Cf. Sozom., *Hist. eccl.* 6.12. For want of specific details as to this violence, Socrates Scholasticus fell back on a quotation from the New Testament (Socrates, *Hist. eccl.* 4.22-23; Heb. xi. 36–38.). While his language might have facilitated the audience's reception of the text—embuing the narrative and the events it describes with a sense of authority by evoking a biblical context—it must have occurred to at least some of his audience members that this could very well be a rhetorical ploy and that his account was not, perhaps, entirely trustworthy.

[824] Socrates, *Hist. eccl.* 4.19; Amm. Marc. 29.1.18-2.28; Zos. 4.13-15; Sozom., *Hist. eccl.* 6.35. Narratives describing violence suffered by Christians at the hands of heretics display the same propensity (noted in the previous chapter) for claiming that the suffering was indescribable (Socrates, *Hist. eccl.* 4.22-23; Theod., *Hist. eccl.* 2.12), perhaps in part because the observers were forbidden to mourn (Theod., *Hist. eccl.* 4.19). However, when Socrates Scholasticus was reporting the so-called persecution of pagans during the reign of Valens, he appears to have used silence for a different reason. Cutting his account of the violence short, he claimed that this was all he was going to say on the subject (Socrates, *Hist. eccl.* 4.19). His silence appears to have indicated not trauma, but a refusal to grant any value to trauma.

wholly at fault for the outbreak of fighting, but if so, it is strange that he did not seize the opportunity to present a defense for the actions of these pagans.

Socrates Scholasticus failed to specify the methods employed to torture Ammonius, the monk arrested for throwing a stone at the prefect, Orestes. The historian did, however, comment on the seriousness of the wound Orestes suffered from this assault, though the injury does not appear to have been life-threatening. This is all the more telling given Socrates' silence on the torture that resulted in Ammonius' death. Lack of specificity as to Ammonius' wounds appears to have reflected Socrates Scholasticus' refusal to accept that the monk was a martyr, despite Cyril's assertion of the same. The historian's language when it came to narrating Hypatia's death was mild, compared to the other accounts of violence from the pagan, Christian, and Jewish sources discussed here and in the previous chapter. Socrates Scholasticus appears to have been particularly disturbed over the notion of Christians engaging in religious violence.[825] However, Socrates Scholasticus *was* more detailed regarding Hypatia's death than was usual for him, the graphic nature of his language no doubt reflecting his belief that the incident reflected badly on Cyril. According to his account, Hypatia was stripped, stabbed, and torn to pieces.[826] John of Nikiu confirmed that Hypatia was stripped and dragged to death, but John included additional details, apparently not, in this case, because he thought the incident

[825] Holum, 99.

[826] Socrates, *Hist. eccl.* 7.14-15. Socrates Scholasticus was also vague in his description of the Jewish-Christian violence that led up to these events, including the prefect's torture of a Christian instructor at the supposed behest of the Jews; an alleged Jewish attack upon Christians in the streets; and a Christian counteroffensive that, under Cyril's leadership, drove the Jews from the city, allowing the Christians to plunder their goods (Socrates, *Hist. eccl.* 7.13).

reflected badly on Cyril, but because John believed that Hypatia deserved her fate.[827] Presumably, the pagan writer Damascius had a vested interest in offering the most graphic description of Hypatia's murder. But he was exceedingly vague. Instead of waxing lyrical on the death of a veritable pagan martyr and the depravity of her Christian persecutors, he simply noted the rumor that Hypatia's eyes were removed as she died. He made no effort to prolong the scene or to provide specifics as to the manner of her death (Dam., *Isid.* 3.43 E).[828]

Damascius' account of a crackdown on pagans in Alexandria at the end of the fifth century was only slightly more effusive.[829] According to Damascius, when pagan instructors by the name of Horapollo[830] and Heraiscus (fl. late 5th cent.)[831] were arrested by the authorities, they were suspended by their hands and inflicted with (unspecified forms of) torture. Despite the entreaties of the interrogators, the pagans refused to implicate any other pagans for their alleged crimes. Damascius' brother was also arrested and beaten with rods and a cudgel, but he held his tongue as well (Dam., *Isid.* 7.117, 119). It is unclear if these arrests were related to a school-related tussle involving one of Horapollo's students. This youth was mocking pagan practices

---

[827] John of Nikiu, 84.100-102. John of Nikiu's reliance on Socrates Scholasticus is unclear. He appears to have had access to Coptic sources on Hypatia's death. Watts, "Murder," 333-42.

[828] Cf. Malalas 359 14.12. On the dismemberment of Hypatia as an enactment of ritual mutilation see Frankfurter, *Roman Egypt*, 279-80.

[829] For the circle of late fifth century Alexandrian pagans see Garth Fowden, "The Pagan Holy Man in Late Antique Society," *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 102 (1982): 46-48, 53-54; Athanassiadi, "Persecution," 1-29; Jean Maspero, "Horapollon et la fin du paganism égyptien," *Bulletin de l'Instituite Francaise d'Archeologie Orientale* 11 (1914): 163-95.

[830] On whether or not this was the author of the *Hieroglyphica*, discussed in chapter two, see Cavero, 10.

[831] On whether or not this Horapollo was the author of the *Hieroglyphica*, discussed in chapter two, and brother-in-law and nephew of this Heraiscus see Laura Cavero, *Poems in Context: Greek Poetry in the Egyptian Thebaid 200-600 AD* (NY: Walter de Gruyter, 2008), 9-10. For the circle of late fifth century Alexandrian pagans in which Horapollo, Heraiscus, and Damascius moved see Fowden, "Holy Man," 46-48, 53-54; Athanassiadi, "Persecution," 1-29; Jean Maspero, "Horapollon et la Fin du Paganism égyptien," *Bulletin de l'Instituite Francaise d'Archeologie Orientale* 11 (1914): 163-95.

associated with a shrine in nearby Menouthis when enraged pagan students attacked him, delivering so many blows that the student only escaped with the aid of some Christians, who used the assault as a pretext for dismantling the shrine in Menouthis.[832] In his account of this incident, the hagiographer Zachariah of Mytilene (c. 465-c. 536) showed that he was more adept in, or at least more willing to engage in, the exploitation of violence as propaganda than Damascius, whose reticence on the torture inflicted upon pagans at this time is all the more shocking when one considers the fact that one of the victims was his own brother. Damascius was not above using florid language when recounting similar incidents.[833] Thus, Damascius' reticence,[834] like that of Eunapius[835] and Zosimus,[836] is suggestive of a stiff-upper lip mentality that—as much as it might have been appreciated by members of an elite circle, who, like Cicero's ideal wise man, would have prided themselves on their invulnerability to suffering—no doubt backfired when it came to securing a larger audience's support.[837]

---

[832] Zachariah of Mytilene, *Vita Severi* 22-36. For further discussion regarding this incident see chapter five and below.

[833] Elsewhere, Damascius told of an Alexandrian teacher by the name of Hierocles who, when he was tried and beaten in a court in Constantinople, supposedly threw some of his blood at the judge, saying that the latter ought to enjoy the drink as a treat following the meal of Hierocles' flesh that the judge had already consumed (Dam., *Isid.* 3.45). See. Watts, *Riot*, 57; Athanassiadi, "Persecution," 18-19.

[834] Damascius' text reflects the later editing of a Christian, so perhaps more graphic language was removed. On this editing process see Athanassiadi, "Introduction," 60-62.

[835] For instance, Eunap., *VS* 478-81. Here, Eunapius named the method of torture and claimed it was awful, but provided none of the graphic details that Eusebius exploited to such effect.

[836] For instance Zos. 4.13-15.

[837] As noted in the previous chapter, Ammianus Marcellinus did engage in graphic depictions of violence, but he does not seem to have overly privileged the suffering of pagans over Christians and he mitigated the shock-value of trial-torture-execution scenes with bloody scenes of battle.

Polarization, Violence, and Conversion

This section of the discussion speculates about the reception of pagans who were supposedly driven to convert in the course of anti-pagan violence. Persuasion, not force, was allegedly the preferred means by which pagans were brought into the fold, but scholars continue to debate the degree to which force was actually employed. I do not attempt to resolve that question, but I do ask why pagans were not able to follow the example set by Christians and rally behind a so-called pagan martyr cult, or to pursue some other means by which to preserve paganism. The factors that I consider in connection to this issue include the potential effectiveness of pagan propaganda, socioeconomic and political pressures, and the significance of violence against pagan sacred sites.

Since violence is supposedly indicative of polarization, it is intriguing to learn that pagans supposedly converted in large numbers following the "destruction" of the Serapeum.[838] The explanations offered for conversion varied. Rufinus claimed that the pagans were so shocked at the items that were being revealed as the pagan shrines were being dismantled—baby skulls, for instance, being discovered in hidden compartments—that they fled to Christianity (Rufinus, *Hist. eccl.* 11.24). Socrates claimed that pagans were inspired to convert by the discovery of hieroglyphs within the Serapeum that allegedly proclaimed the superiority of Christianity (Socrates, *Hist. eccl.* 5.17). Sozomen asserted that pagans only began attending church because their

[838] Compare to hagiographical accounts regarding conversions following the collapse of pagan temples outside of Alexandria. Pseudo-Dioscorus, *The Panegyric of Macarius of Tkōw*, 5.2-11; *Life of Apa Moses*. The *Life of Aaron* implied that Macedonius' destruction of an idol contributed to the conversion of two pagan priests by undermining their confidence (*Life of Aaron*, 32-43 [13b-18a]). Even if this account reflects some invention, it indicated how Christians imagined that conversion took place. These texts, including the degree to which they can be trusted, are discussed in more detail below.

temples were closed and private pagan worship was forbidden (Sozom., *Hist. eccl.* 7.20). Was the demand for religious experience really so grave that a pagan would settle for a church service for want of licit alternatives? Or were pagans visiting church services solely out of curiosity?

Whatever the case, it is hard to imagine that the ordeal of visiting a church was entirely comfortable at first, especially for pagans brought face-to-face with their victims or assailants from fighting in the street.[839] The preacher had an important role in setting the tone, and some strategies for doing this are suggested by a 404 sermon delivered by Augustine to a congregation that supposedly included pagan visitors.[840] Interestingly, Augustine's language would have defused Christian-pagan tension by redirecting hostility towards heretics. Augustine encouraged the congregation to shun sacrifices and idolatry, but he also encouraged the congregation to ostracize heretics and schismatics. Though he mentioned a few of the anti-pagan arguments discussed in chapter two, Augustine did not dwell on paganism and certainly did not engage in any virulent attacks or encourage anyone to engage in verbal or physical attacks upon pagans. Rather, Augustine asked his Christian constituents to pray for the non-believers and to inspire conversions by modelling good behavior.[841]

---

[839] On the potential embarrassment experienced within a Christian congregation in reaction to the presence of members who had joined only as a result of temple destruction see Fowden, "Bishops," 78.

[840] Edmund Hill, *Sermons*, ed. John Rotelle (Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 1990), 3:383-84n1.

[841] In a point that I hope will not be lost upon the reader (given the discussion of apocalyptic discourse in the previous chapter), Augustine opened the sermon with a reminder of the eternal punishments that await sinners, arguing that if one could not yet bring himself to love God he should at least fear him. Augustine, *Sermo* 360B Mainz 61, 1, 16, 21-23, 27-28. Alan Cameron argues that Augustine's sermon was directed not at pagans but at unbaptized converts. Alan Cameron, *The Last Pagans of Rome* (NY: Oxford University Press, 2011), 792. If Cameron is correct, Augustine's rhetoric seems far more hostile. Perhaps Augustine was trying to humiliate converts—by denigrating them as pagans—into completing the steps required for baptism out of frustration with their delays. If similar rhetoric was used in Egypt on converts who were inspired to join the Church by the "destruction" of the Serapeum, such language, again, seems extreme.

According to imperial officials, Church leaders were supposed to win pagans over through peaceable persuasion, as Augustine recommended, not through physical force.[842] Yet scholars continue to debate the role of force in the conversion of the Roman Empire.[843] It can hardly be denied that force played at least some role in exacerbating a pagan decline, with the "destruction" of the Serapeum and other temples supposedly causing the pagans to convert in droves.

But force failed to dissuade Christians from adhering to Christianity during periods of anti-Christian persecution. So, assuming that force was effective against pagans, why was it successful in this case? Some scholars argue that force *did* work against the Christians and that the dearth of *libelli* (certificates of sacrifice) in the archaeological record reflects a cover-up on the part of Christians who re-converted following apostasy.[844] Avoiding the debate surrounding these *libelli*, other scholars focus on disparities in the anti-Christian and anti-pagan persecutions. Michele Salzman points out that pagans faced a gradual decline in their rights, unlike Christians who, when subjected to persecution, were faced with an explicit choice

---

[842] Fowden, "Bishops," 56.

[843] A. Momigliano, ed., *The Conflict Between Paganism and Christianity in the Fourth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1963); Brown, *Authority*, 57-64; MacMullen, *Christianizing*, 50, 86-101; MacMullen, *Paganism*, 1-31; Drake, "Lambs," 3-36; Salzman, 265-66; M. Kahlos, *Forbearance and Compulsion: The Rhetoric of Religious Tolerance and Intolerance in Late Antiquity* (London: Duckworth, 2009); Lavan, "Introduction," xv-lxv. Some scholars have gone so far as to argue that monotheism is inherently violent. See Jan Assmann, *Of God and Gods: Egypt, Israel, and the Rise of Monotheism* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2008), 106-26; Hans G. Kippenberg, "Searching for the Link between Religion and Violence by Means of the Thomas-Theorem," *Method and Theory in the Study of Religion* 22 (2010): 97-115; James K. Wellman, Jr. and Kyoko Tokuno, "Is Religious Violence Inevitable?" *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 43 (2004): 291-96; Litonjua, 307-31. Other scholars, such as Drake, have argued that it is mass movements, religious or not, that are essentially violent. See Drake, "Lambs," 16-17. When it comes to determining the rate of conversion and the social status of converts, the measures undertaken by Constantine in support of Christianity must have been incredibly important, but scholars still debate the nature (coercive or not) and influence of these measures. See for instance T. D. Barnes, "Constantine's Prohibition of Pagan Sacrifice," *The American Journal of Philology* 105 (1984): 69-72; Scott Bradbury, "Constantine and the Problem of Anti-Pagan Legislation in the Fourth Century," *Classical Philology* 89 (1994): 120-39; Kahlos, *Forbearance*, 58-62; Chuvin, 30-33, 133-34; Drake, "Lambs," 20-21; Drake, "Lessons," 49-60; Gaddis, 49n87.

[844] Fox, 457.

between death or punishment and apostasy. For the most part, pagans avoided polarizing situations like this, and thus lacked the concomitant inspiration to construct a totalizing identity that would have been resilient to forceful conversion.[845]

As mild as the anti-pagan program might have been, targeted violence against high profile pagans such as Hypatia could have had a devastating effect.[846] Sociological evidence demonstrates that, in small social networks like that of the elite fifth century pagans in Alexandria, any death (particularly that of a key figure) can substantially impair the network's ability to maintain communication among members.[847] By the time of Hypatia's death, the pagan social network in Egypt had already suffered serious damage, pagans fleeing *en masse* when the Serapeum "fell" two decades earlier.[848] So it is worth noting that pagans here still had some supporters a century later. When the authorities began making arrests in the late fifth century, a man named Gessius (fl. late 5th cent.) offered protection to Heraiscus. The motivation for Heraiscus' arrest is unclear,[849] but assuming that it was religiously motivated, it is

[845] Salzman, 284. For a summary of the progression of imperial legislation over time see Chuvin, 1-177.

[846] Damascius claimed that Hypatia's fate reduced the respect shown to his own instructor, Isidore (Dam., *Isid.* 7.106). Athanassiadi takes this to mean that fear of death discouraged students from pursuing philosophy. Athanassiadi, "Persecution," 16. But social scientists argue that hate-motivated violence intimidates all the members of the victim's community. Waltman, 2-3, 36-61.

[847] Giovanni Ruffini, "Late Antique Pagan Networks from Athens to the Thebaid," in Harris, 253.

[848] Chuvin, 66; Hahn, "Conversion," 357; Watts, *Riot*, 193-94. A century later, Alexandrian pagans hid when they learned that their fellow pagans were being arrested (Dam., *Isid.* 7.117, 128), though scholars debate whether or not this was a religious or a political persecution (see below). Since, less than a century earlier it was the Christians who were fleeing, flight in of itself need not have been debilitating to paganism.

[849] It is unclear if these pagans were arrested because they were caught up in the Christian-pagan dispute involving a pagan shrine at Menouthis, or because they had been identified as political dissidents (recruitment efforts for a recent rebellion had sought out elite pagans in Egypt), or for some other reason. For the debate over the reasons for these arrests see for instance, Watts, *Riot*, 62-78; Chuvin, 111; Athanassiadi, "Introduction," 29. If it was not Heraiscus' paganism *per se* that made him a target, but rather his circle of associates, then paganism was still a factor, at least if we accept Damascius' portrait of this circle as men brought together by their mutual interest in pagan learning.

worth noting that Gessius might have been a Christian.[850] By the time that anti-pagan sentiment became so strong that pagans needed protection, there might not have been enough pagans left to provide it.[851]

Assuming, again, that these late fifth century arrests were religiously motivated, it seems strange that they were not used by pagans as propaganda to fuel a sort of pagan martyr cult that, in turn, might have helped to sustain resistance, as it did for the Christians. The Christian dead were generally more influential than their pagan counterparts, never really leaving the social network and acting as intercessors in the afterlife.[852] But Damascius recorded many anecdotes with hagiographical material of a sort otherwise associated with Christian martyrs.[853] When Heraiscus died, he was buried with the kind of ceremony that would have easily lent itself to the creation of a cult.[854] While some pagans questioned the salvific power of death, so did some Christians.[855] Why not use anti-pagan violence to galvanize belief, as the Christians did, creating martyrs out of the dead? This certainly would have been a

---

[850] Athanassiadi, "Persecution," 19-20. But note that Gessius supposedly buried Heraiscus with the customary (that is, pagan) honors (Dam., *Isid.* 7.128). Also see Watts, *Riot*, 76. If Gessius was a Christian, it is further evidence that religiously-based hostility was not inevitable.

[851] But note Athanasius' claim that pagans protected Christians during the early fourth century persecution as well (Athan., *Hist. Ar.* 64).

[852] And notably, like their pagan predecessors, heretical persecutors allegedly took steps to prevent the burial of their orthodox victims, as if hoping to thwart veneration of the deceased as martyrs (Athan., *Hist. Ar.* 13; Rufinus, *Hist. eccl.* 11.6; Socrates, *Hist. eccl.* 2.28, 3.2; Epiph., *Pan.* 68.11.2, 76.1.1-8; Amm. Marc. 22.11.10; Theod., *Hist. eccl.* 4.19; Evag., *Hist. eccl.* 2.8 [56]). Recall, however, that destruction of George the Capadocian and Hypatia's corpses seemed to reflect similar motivation, so corpse-desecration was not necessarily limited to heretics and pagans. Failure to exploit complaints regarding corpse-desecration—assuming that this apparent failure does not simply reflect lost sources—would reflect a missed opportunity on the part of George and Hypatia's communities.

[853] For instance, Dam., *Isid.* 7.111-12.

[854] Dam., *Isid.* 7.128; Athanassiadi, "Persecution," 19-20.

[855] See the previous chapter.

fitting strategy, given the extent to which pagan *exitus* literature—accounts of noble pagan deaths—had inspired Christian martyrologies.[856]

Unfortunately, pagans really had their work cut out for them if they were going to compete with the propaganda claims of the Christian martyrologists. As the previous chapter hopefully demonstrated, Christian martyrologists had an aptitude for depicting violence. Damascius' bland accounts of torture paled in comparison to Eusebius' graphic tales. Moreover, Damascius undermined the potential truth-value of pagan martyrdom by interspersing accounts of anti-pagan violence with anecdotes demonstrating the lack of unity and general corruption of the pagan community.[857] Without trustworthy leaders, a mobilization effort would have been doomed before it even started. And Damascius' bitter, if accurate, account fell far short of the optimistic propaganda needed to sustain resistance. This makes it all the more disappointing that Damascius' explanation for the arrests is missing. As the previous chapter argued, explanations like this are pivotal when attempting to rally an audience to face adversity with confidence. Whether Damascius attributed the arrests to the rebellious divisiveness of fellow pagans, to the animosity of Christians agitating about a shrine in Menouthis, or to some other unknown factor, the explanation might have done a great deal to buoy flagging spirits.

---

[856] Note that Damascius boasted that Isidore was like the Athenian Socrates because Isidore too was unable to obey the command of the tyrants who ordered him not to hold discourse (Dam., *Isid.* 7.116E).

[857] Dam., *Isid.* 7.117-18; Watts, *Riot,* 73; Athanassiadi, "Introduction," 30-32, 31n38. Compare to comments made by the pagan poet Palladas (fl. 4th cent.) (not to be confused with the Christian Palladius who penned the *Lausiac History*) complaining about the greed of the instructors associated with the Serapeum at the end of the fourth century (Palladas, *Anthologia Palatina* 9.174) and referring, perhaps, to his own bid for Theophilus' assistance in securing employment (Pall., *Anth. Pal.* 9.175). See Watts, *Riot,* 194. On the debate over whether or not Palladas converted to Christianity see the bibliography in Koen Demarsin, "'Paganism' in Late Antiquity: Thematic Studies," in Lavan, 29.

Economic and political factors might have also played a more decisive role for pagans faced with the question of conversion than it did for Christians urged to commit apostasy. Early Christians were ostensibly discouraged from seeking wealth or social prestige, so the hope of advancement should, theoretically, not have been enticing enough to inspire apostasy.[858] Elite pagan philosophers encouraged moderation, but traditional political power was contingent on the maintenance of the economic and socio-political resources that sustained patron-client relationships. Elites no doubt would have struggled to justify a loss of status for the sake of religious adherence, especially when the imperial religion that, by definition, was proper religion, became Christian. If the evidence brought to bear in determining the efficacy of a religion included the role of religious adherence in the acquisition and demonstration of social and political influence, then the pendulum was certainly swinging in the favor of Christianity.[859] It is striking, therefore, that Origen and Sozomen attributed some conversions to a desire to gain prestige (Origen, *Con. Cels.* 3.9; Sozom., *Hist. eccl.* 2.5). Damascius implied the same, complaining that greed was fueling the conversion of a number of pagans, including Horapollo. According to Damascius, the latter converted out of a desire for economic advancement, though adversity—an embarrassing divorce and professional disappointments—might have

[858] See the discussion in previous chapter regarding Aurelius Athanasius' apparent decision to commit apostasy for political reason. Also note that some pagans refused to convert even to advance their careers. One of Damascius' instructors, Severianus, boasted of an offer from the emperor Zeno for promotion in exchange for conversion, an offer which Severianus refused (Dam., *Isid.* 7.108). On the expression of disinterest in power as a strategy for acquiring that power see chapters five and six.

[859] Which was why the accusation that Christians were associated with the poor and those of inferior status was so damning. See chapter two. On social influence as a demonstration of religious efficacy see chapter six.

also been involved, a series of hardships undermining Horapollo's overall confidence and forcing him to question his religious commitments.[860]

Did violence against property likewise carry greater significance for pagans as an inducement to conversion than it did for Christians urged to commit apostasy? Violence against pagan sanctuaries was a common tactic for inflicting harm—psychological, magical, and material—even before the rise of Christianity. Because space is socially constructed, one could lay claim to territory by perpetrating violence against the sanctuaries of the deities who safeguarded that territory.[861] Moreover, since physical ritual plays a large part in the manifestation and expression of religious sentiment,[862] physical fighting over sacred space can be incredibly meaningful. This violence creates, defines, and reminds participants of claims upon the space within which this fighting takes place, and insofar as the violence is religiously-motivated, the outcome indicates divine support for spatial claims.[863] If nothing else, location

---

[860] Dam., *Isid.* 7.120. On the role of psychological disappointment in Horapollo's conversion see Haas, 153; Athanassiadi, "Persecution," 21-22. On pagans converting for social and political advancement see Athanassiadi, "Persecution," 17-18. On the pagan poet Palladas possibly appealing to Theophilus for assistance in securing a post see footnote 189 above; Alan Cameron, "Palladas and Christian Polemic," *The Journal of Roman Studies* 55 (1965):17-30; Hahn, "Conversion," 357-60.

[861] Or by performing rites to secure the favor of enemy deities. See for instance Macrob., *Sat.* 3.9; Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991); Tim Unwin, "A Waste of Space? Towards a Critique of the Social Production of Space…" *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 25 (2000): 17, 23; Steven Rutledge, "The Roman Destruction of Sacred Sites," *Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte* 56 (2007): 179-95. On Roman paganism as a "religion of place" see Beard, 167-68.

[862] On the sensory aspect of ritual behavior producing physiological effects that would have reinforced the impact of the rituals, see Robert McCauley, "Ritual, Memory, and Emotion: Comparing Two Cognitive Hypotheses," *Religion in Mind: Cognitive Perspectives on Religious Belief, Ritual, and Experience,* ed. Jensine Andresen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 133. On the performative nature of Greek paganism see Dimitrios Yatromankolakis and Panagiotis Roilos, "Provisionally Structured Ideas on a Heuristically Defined Concept: Toward a Ritual Poetics," *Greek Rituals Poetics,* eds. Dimitrios Yatromanolakis and Panagiotis Roilos (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004), 5-6. This is well in line with the work of anthropologists like Victor Turner, who have found that performance is integral to the processes by which groups construct social cohesion. See Victor Turner, "Dramatic Ritual/Ritual Drama: Performative and Reflexive Anthropology," *A Crack in the Mirror: Reflexive Perspectives in Anthropology,* ed. Jay Ruby (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1982), 85.

[863] Haas, 13. Fighting over sacred space was not inevitable. At one point, the Novatians supposedly shared churches with the so-called orthodox in Constantinople (Socrates, *Hist. eccl.* 2.38; Sozom., *Hist. eccl.* 4.20). On Cyril ejecting the so-called Novatians from their churches in Alexandria see Socrates, *Hist. eccl.* 7.7.

matters because it affects a person's ability access to supporters living or working nearby.[864]

Of course, the destruction of sacred sites was not an infallible test of religious validity. Temples (and churches) could be rebuilt. Stolen imagery could be recovered.[865] Traditional Egyptian pagans believed that the gods only occupied their statues part of the time. Priests occasionally shuffled statues around and would even bury cult statues when a sanctuary became too crowded.[866] So the destruction of an idol might not have necessarily constituted evidence in of itself that pagan beliefs were invalid. However, sacrifice was an integral part of the process for animating new idols in traditional Egyptian paganism, so the ban on sacrifice would have delivered a serious blow to traditional pagan rites.[867]

The situation looks even bleaker if we consider evidence suggesting that many of the temples in Egypt had fallen into decline by the fourth century. The victims of economic crises, political reforms, and practical necessity, some of Egypt's sacred precincts were being used to house government personnel and the military.[868] The

---

The Novatian schism originated, like the Melitian heresy, over a desire to eject those who had committed apostasy during the persecution under Decius from the Church. For Dionysius of Alexandria's letter to Novatus, discouraging schism, see Euseb., *Hist. eccl.* 6.45.1. Cf. Socrates, *Hist. eccl.* 5.19.

[864] For this reason, Haas stresses the importance of the Arians holding a majority in the Boukolia (in the eastern outskirts of Alexandria) and Arian/non-Arian competition over the Caesareum (closer towards the center of the city). Haas, 210, 289. Cf. Russell 5-6, 10. Note that Gwynn cautions against placing too much trust in the sources that suggest one can map Alexandria's religious topography, arguing that the constructed nature of religious identity during this period casts doubt upon any claims as to a certain sect holding a particular church. Gwynn, 229-64. Thus, it is probably safest to imagine that while spatial claims were being made—and these did matter—they mght not have matched up perfectly with reality.

[865] The Egyptians praised Ptolemy I for restoring the statues that had been seized by the Persians, and for seizing the Persian's gods as revenge. "The Satrap Stela," in Simpson, 1-10 393-94.

[866] Miroslav Verner, *Temple of the World: Sanctuaries, Cults, and Mysteries of Ancient Egypt* (NY: The American University of Cairo Press, 2013), 11. Both statuary and temple materials were put to reuse in secondary building projects in Pharoanic times. See J. H. F. Dijkstra, The Fate of the Temples in Late Antique Egypt," In Lavan, 406-7; Caseau, 498.

[867] On animal sacrifice in statue animation see Lorton, "Theology," 147-75.

[868] Bagnall, "Models," 33, 38.

ravages of time, damage inflicted through the course of war, and natural disasters all took their toll. Consider, for instance, the effect on patterns of worship when the palace district in Alexandria was abandoned in late fourth century.[869] Patrons might have continued to visit the district's plethora of pagan statuary, mosaics, reliefs, sacred annexes, private sanctuaries, and temples, but the overall patronage of pagan sites in this section of the city probably declined.[870] Not for nothing had the Mithraeum that so enthralled George the Cappadocian supposedly lain in disuse for some time before he set his sights upon it.[871]

It is tempting to assume that the temples had also fallen into disuse because pagans were converting to Christianity. Yet the traditional paradigm governing the use of religious space appears to have been changing for other reasons. After the second century CE, temple renovations around the Empire were being carried out as usual, but few *new* temples were being constructed. For emperors like Diocletian, the definitive feature of paganism appears to have been, not the patronage of sacred space, but sacrifice, a practice that aroused distaste even among other pagans. Meanwhile, the government was cracking down on the practice of divination and magic, both of which were pivotal in attracting clients to the temples. This disparity between imperial and non-imperial tastes must have had some impact on the maintenance of a commitment to paganism,[872] and the temples suffered the fall-out.

---

[869] Amm. Marc. 22.16.15; Haas, 340.

[870] If P. M. Fraser is correct regarding the source of a twelfth century account, over two thousand sacred pagan sites (including, Fraser contends, private sanctuaries as well as temples) were still known in Alexandria in the mid-fourth century. P. M. Fraser, "A Syriac 'Notitia Urbis Alexandrinae,'" *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 37 (1951): 103-108. Also see Hahn, "Conversion," 336-37.

[871] Socrates, *Hist. eccl.* 3.2. Cf. Rufinus, *Hist. eccl.* 11.22; Sozom., *Hist. eccl.* 5.7.

[872] On sacrifice see Lavan, xliii-xlvii. On the temples offering access to divination, see chapter five and the discussion regarding the temple of Abydos in this chapter. On the temples offering access to magic, this is the

Disuse of a temple, however, did not necessarily demonstrate a decline in religious sentiment, merely a transformation in how that sentiment was experienced. Damascius' account provided ample testimony as to a pagan interest in temples, even abandoned ones, well into the fifth century.[873] And given the low rate of anti-Christian acts of violence perpetrated by pagans in the fourth century, it is striking that two of these acts—the attack on George the Cappadocian and the attack that led to the "fall" of the Serapeum—were supposedly inspired by Christian efforts to dismantle a so-called abandoned pagan temple (Socrates, *Hist. eccl.* 3.2, 5.16).

Instead of accepting the decline of a temple as evidence that paganism was somehow invalid,[874] savvy pagans mitigated the damage by shifting the focus. For instance, during the fighting before the "fall" of the Serapeum, the pagan instructor Olympius supposedly announced that Serapis had abandoned his statue. Though pagans no doubt would have preferred to keep their gods close at hand, Olympius' assertion mitigated the degree to which the destruction of Serapis' idol could have been interpreted as proof of the deity's inferiority to the deity of the Christians who were inflicting this damage.[875] A pagan holy man stationed just outside of Alexandria who went by the name of Antoninus (fl. 4th cent.)—not to be confused with the

---

subject of some debate, with Wilburn pointing out that the priests who appear to have been offering spells to clients might not have had the official sanction of the temple to do so. Wilburn, 59-60. See chapter five.

[873] For instance, Dam., *Isid*. 3.53D. See Frankfurter, *Roman Egypt*, 40-41; David Frankfurter, "Iconoclasm and Christianization in Late Antique Egypt: Christian Treatments of Space and Image," in Hahn, 140; Chuvin, 37; Marget Miles, "Burnt Temples in the Landscape of the Past," in *Valuing the Past in the Greco-Roman World: Proceedings from the Penn-Leiden Colloquia on Ancient Values VII*, eds. James Ker and Christoph Pieper (Boston: Brill, 2014), 111-45.

[874] For the debate over conversions inspired by the "destruction" of pagan temples see for instance MacMullen, *Christianizing*, 99; Lavan, xv-lxv.

[875] Dam., *Isid.* 3.42 H. For Christian rhetoric claiming that the vulnerability of idols to damage in fact undermined the validity of paganism, see chapter two.

famous Christian monk Antony—reportedly predicted the fall of the Serapeum.[876] While Christians were taking predictions like this as a pagan acknowledgment of defeat (Sozom., *Hist. eccl.* 7.15), for loyal pagans these predictions proved that, although a particular temple might have fallen, paganism was alive and strong in the form of pagan holy men who, among other things, enjoyed the power of prophecy.

Two centuries earlier, Clement of Alexandria claimed that God could not be localized in a temple. According to Clement, people looking for God should cast their eyes on the Christian wise man.[877] It made sense that Christians of Clement's day would have been downplaying the importance of space, given that churches were vulnerable to pagan seizure.[878] Likewise, it makes sense that pagans in the late fourth century would have been expressing the same sentiment, when it was the temples that were vulnerable to seizure. By this point, of course, Christians had come to care a great deal about space, bickering with each other over the possession of churches and martyria, and, for the first time, receiving imperial property grants.[879]

---

[876] Eunap., *VS* 470-473; Haas, 168; Frankfurter, *Roman Egypt*, 28. One wonders if Athanasius' supposed call for the collapse of the Serapeum was at all influenced by stories about Antoninus' prediction, or vice versa.

[877] Clem. Al., *Strom.* 7.5. Clement's comment is reminiscent of the above-mentioned pagan shift in focus away from temples like the Serapeum to pagan holy men like Antoninus. For both parties, the concentration upon people rather than places might have been indicative of a relative disempowerment with regard to the maintenance of property rights. Some of the fourth and fifth century stories associated with the desert fathers, discussed in the following chapter, suggest a similar notion.

[878] Though, as noted above, emperors in the third and early fourth centuries showed little interest in funding pagan sacred space either. So perhaps the third and early fourth centuries were not conducive to the cultivation of sacred space for either Christians or pagans. Unfortunately, consideration of Jewish building trends during this period lay outside the scope of this project.

[879] R. A. Markus, "How on Earth Could Places Become Holy?: Origins of the Christian Idea of Holy Places," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 2 (1994): 257-71. Brakke argues that competition over the possession of sacred space was the reason behind Athanasius' occasional effort to downplay the significance of property-control (specifically, the property related to relics, but the argument applies to churches as well) as proof of religious validity. Brakke, 463, 466. Athanasius had too much difficulty maintaining control over Alexandria's churches for him to risk asserting the argument that possession of sacred space was proof of religious validity. However, his efforts to negotiate for church property show that he was well aware of its value. See for instance Socrates, *Hist. eccl.* 2.23. As much as the Christians might have wanted to disavow the significance of property rights when this argument could be used against them, they were only too happy to use it against their opponents. For instance, as chapter two noted, Christians were quite eager to use the decline of pagan temples against pagans.

So what is the upshot of all of this? First, Christians and pagans did not endure the same sort of pressures during the course of so-called persecution. Hence, it is somewhat unfair to criticize the pagans for being unable to withstand harassment that allegedly prompted the blossoming of Christianity.[880] Second, the surviving sources suggest that pagans did not exploit propaganda surrounding this persecution as effectively as they might have. Third, socioeconomic and political pressures might have carried more weight for pagans considering conversion than they did for Christians considering apostasy. Fourth, a decline in pagan temples might have preceded the rise of Christianity, but this does not constitute proof for a decline of paganism *per se*, merely its transformation. Considering the difficulty Christians had in maintaining possession of their own religious space during the internal Church disputes of this period—orthodox and heretical patriarchs jockeying for control of Alexandria's churches, for instance—the possession of sacred space in of itself could hardly have been taken as definitive proof as to the validity of a person's faith. Imagine the confusion experienced by a pagan who converted to Christianity when his temples were closed, only for his church to be seized by another Christian sect.[881] All of this implies a far more complicated process of conversion than suggested by the Christian sources.

In addition, Christians made much of a rumor that Julian's plans to rebuild the Temple of the Jews had been thwarted by divine intervention (Rufinus, *Hist. eccl*. 10.38-40; Socrates, *Hist. eccl.* 3.20).

[880] According to the fourth century, *Vita Antonii*, Antony the Great asked two pagan philosophers why paganism was unable to withstand persecution when Christianity continued to flourish (*Vita Antonii* 79).

[881] What did people do when their church was controlled by leadership with whom they disagreed? According to Sozomen, they simply inserted their own preferred wording regarding Christological doctrine at the appropriate points in the service, regardless of what the preacher and everyone else in the congregation was saying (Sozom., *Hist. eccl*. 3.20).

Remembering Violence

This section of the discussion is devoted to memory. I look at conflicting evidence regarding the effect of violence and trauma on memory, with an eye towards understanding how the violence that transpired in Alexandria might have affected the way that events were remembered. Some of the sources suggest that various individuals were actually criticized for their roles in this violence. Conflicts in the sources, however, suggest ongoing disputes about just what happened. This seems indicative of the polemical nature of the construction of memories. From here, I move onto some speculation regarding the manipulation of memories in connection with the transfer of the Caesareum into Christian hands, and argue that changing Christian-pagan attitudes would have affected the way that this transfer was remembered as the decades passed.

So how did memories regarding this religious violence affect participants and future generations? Scholars argue that identity, group membership, violence, and memory are integrally linked because memory provides the means for recognizing the group memberships that distinguish friend from foe.[882] Boundary maintenance and acts of hostility are justified based on memories of past suffering at the hands of our enemies. Because value-systems are predicated on constructions of the past, present circumstances play a large role in determining which memories are maintained and

[882] M. G. Cattell and J. J. Climo, *Social Memory and History: Anthropological Perspectives* (Walnut Creek: Altamira Press, 2002), 1. For the connection between identity and memory also see Maurice Halbwachs, *Collective Memory*, trans. Lewis Coser (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992); Patrick J. Geary, *Phantoms of Remembrance: Memory and Oblivion at the End of the First Millennium* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994); James Fentress and Chris Wickham, *Social Memory* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992). For scholarship on this subject regarding the early Muslim period see Antoine Borrut, *Entre Mémoire et Pouvoir: l'Espace Syrien sous les derniers Omeyyades et les premiers Abbassides (v. 72-193/692-809)* (Leiden: Brill, 2011); *Umayyad Legacies: Medieval Memories from Syria to Spain*, eds. Antoine Borrut and Paul M. Cobb (Leiden: Brill, 2010).

how they are narrated.[883] Consider, for instance, the cultivation of memory *as* trauma by Mothers Against Drunk Driving, a group which publicizes personal narratives about the dangers of drunk driving to discourage the audience from the future operation of vehicles while under the influence of alcohol.[884] Memory can also be used to encourage cohesion and group confidence. In the c. seventh century *Legend of Spyridon*, the appearance of Persian invaders in Alexandria inspired recollections regarding the toppling of some Alexandrian idols in the fourth century. The message was clear: Christians had survived paganism; surely they could survive the Persians.[885]

Unfortunately, the scientific community has reached something of an impasse when it comes to the study of memory. Conflicting research suggests that learning can be both impaired and enhanced by stress.[886] Memories associated with physical action are easier to recall than memories not associated with action,[887] and certain incidents can spark what researchers refer to as a flashbulb memory, a stark imprint of an event created by an emotional shock. Vivid though a flashbulb memory may

---

[883] Geary, 19.

[884] Tony Walter, "The New Public Mourning," in *Handbook of Bereavement Research and Practice: Advances in Theory and Intervention*, eds., Margaret Stroebe, Robert Hansson, Henk Schut, and Wolfgang Stroebe (Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association, 2008), 252. For a more disturbing comparator, and one that demonstrates just how devastating a distorted memory can be, consider the effects of false accusations about the role of the Jews in causing Germany's defeat in World War I as motivation for an unprecedented level of violence against Jews in the decades that followed. See Visser, 110.

[885] Theodore of Paphos, *La Legende de S. Spyriden eveque de Trimithonte*, 18-20. P. van den Ven speculates that the "destruction" of these idols was set during the patriarchy of Athanasius. See P. Van den Ven, "Introduction," in *La Legende de S. Spyriden eveque de Trimithonte* (Louvain: Bibliotheqe du Muséon, 1953), 106. Also see James Howard-Johnston, *Witnesses to a World in Crisis: Historians and Histories of the Middle East in the Seventh Century* (NY: Oxford University Press, 2010), 180-81.

[886] Lars Schwabe and Oliver T. Wolf, "Learning under Stress Impairs Memory Formation," *Neurobiology of Learning and Memory* 93 (2010): 183–88; M. Joëls, Zhenwei Pu, Olof Wiegert, Melly S. Oitzl, and Harm J. Krugers, "Learning under Stress: How Does It Work?" *Trends in Cognitive Sciences* 10 (2006): 152-58.

[887] Svein Magnussen and Tore Helstrup, *Everyday Memory* (Hove: Psychology Press, 2007), 152-53.

seem, research nevertheless suggests that it can lack accuracy.[888] The release of a stress hormone during the experience of intense emotion will improve the recall of events that were occurring at the time that the hormone was at its peak, but memory will be adversely affected for the periods preceding and following the peak release of the hormone.[889] Therefore, memories related to events preceding and following traumatic events are especially susceptible to manipulation.

Appealing though it is to assume that the presence of multiple witnesses diminishes the danger of manipulation, this is not necessarily the case. Research indicates that narratives constructed via collaboration, based on the testimony of multiple witnesses, are not necessarily more trustworthy than narratives for which there is more limited testimony. Contradictorily, however, the more people who collaborate in the construction of a memory, the more confidence these people tend to place in the memory.[890]

This means that the endemic nature of violence in fourth and early fifth century Alexandria would have undermined the degree to which the "destruction" of the Serapeum and the murders of George and Hypatia could have been considered periods of "intense" violence and thus conducive to the creation of flashbulb memories that would have served as memory aids.[891] If flashbulb memories were created, the intensity of the emotional arousal would have assisted recall of the main

---

[888] John Groeger, *Memory and Remembering: Everyday Memory in Context* (New York: Addison Wesley Longman Inc., 1997), 215-20. The argument might be made, however, that the results of experiments performed today are not applicable to antiquity, when greater efforts were made to cultivate memorization skills. On the latter, see the following chapter.

[889] Joëls, 152-58.

[890] Magnussen, 134-35.

[891] Perhaps "intensity" might be measured by the "graphic" nature of the accounts, as discussed above.

event, while leaving memories related to the surrounding periods subject to manipulation. As the number of witnesses for an incident increased, the confidence these witnesses placed in their narrative(s) would have risen, regardless of the actual reliability of the given account(s). Therefore, the conflicting nature of the historical narratives to which we have access, cited above as a reflection of the confusion experienced *as* events transpired, certainly reflected confusion *after* the fact as well. Presumably, multiple narratives were constructed—even if only a few versions made it into the historical record—and each faction would have acted as if its account was uniquely accurate.

Other than conflicts in the sources, is there any evidence for the manipulation of memories with regard to our three test cases? Violence certainly appears to have been exaggerated or downplayed in order to bolster an agenda. For instance, references to the so-called "destruction" of the Serapeum seem to have exaggerated the degree to which the temple was, in fact, demolished. When Eunapius noted the lack of bloodshed associated with Theophilus' assault upon the pagan temples in and around Alexandria (Eunap., *VS* 47-473), he was clearly ignoring the fighting surrounding the "fall" of the Serapeum. If Eunapius thought that avoiding the issue would help to absolve pagans of accusations regarding excessive violence in association with this incident, his strategy backfired, for Christians went out of their way to publicize the event. Assuming that this fighting actually took place, Eunapius might have been better served had he tackled the problem head-on and drafted a defense.

In some cases, a desire to defend assailants from accusations of excessive violence probably inspired the invention or exaggeration of crimes that were attributed to the victims. By drawing attention to Hypatia's rumored involvement with witchcraft, for example, John of Nikiu came close to absolving Cyril of wrongdoing, if not culpability, in her death. John might not have invented Hypatia's association with witchcraft, yet by simply mentioning the charge (as Socrates Scholasticus did not), John made sure that her murder appeared *justifiably* violent, not *excessively* so.[892]

Another strategy for justifying violence involved attributing responsibility for these acts to a well-respected authority. A story cropped up at some point, by the late fifth or early sixth century, boasting that Athanasius had called out for the "destruction" of the Serapeum on his deathbed.[893] Whether or not Athanasius really made such a statement, a story like this would have been very valuable to a person who was hoping to dismantle the Serapeum, or was guilty of having already done so, especially if this fellow was receiving criticism on this point. Edward Watts believes this story was in fact formulated and circulated after the Serapeum's "destruction" in order to dispel criticism regarding Theophilus' role in the project, for the patriarch was supposedly harboring a predilection for violence and an obsession with building projects, like the Christian edifice(s) built in place (or alongside) of the Serapeum.[894]

---

[892] John of Nikiu 84.100; Watts, "Murder," 333-42.

[893] *Storia della Chiesa di Alessandria* 2.12.1-14.9.

[894] Recall that Palladas likened Theophilus' obsession for building projects to that of the Pharoah against whom Moses contended. Palladius, *Dialogus de vita sancti Joannis Chrysostomi* 6.

If Theophilus' popular predecessor, Athanasius, could be recruited in support of Theophilus' activities, this would have gone a long way towards silencing critics.[895]

A similar sort of agenda would have been served by a sermon attributed to Cyril, Theophilus' nephew, about a treasure supposedly discovered by Theophilus in an abandoned temple. Apparently, this temple just happened to be decorated with three Greek letters, all *thetas* (ΘΘΘ), an inscription that Theophilus reportedly interpreted as divine sanction for his seizure of the temple, saying that they referred to God (Θεός, *theos*), the emperor Theodosius, and Theophilus himself. Since critics could hardly have complained about Theophilus funding building projects with the proceeds of a defunct temple basically labelled "Property of Theophilus," this story would have undermined efforts to censure Theophilus' behavior along these lines.[896]

Assuming that the three *thetas* in this sermon were actually references to the sun-discs that are so often found in Egyptian temples,[897] the sermon also demonstrated efforts to reinterpret pagan imagery so as to justify Christian property violence. Ankhs found in the Serapeum when this temple was being dismantled were reportedly interpreted by Christians as crosses. The misinterpretation of these ankhs provided retroactive justification for efforts to dismantle the Serapeum[898]—pagan

---

[895] Watts, *Riot,* 200-204. On the martyrium of John the Baptist built next to the Serapeum, see Theophilus, *The Church of the Three Young Men*. On the authenticity of this sermon and discussion of its link to the Serapeum see Polański, 111-13. On the transportation of the relics of John the Baptist to Athanasius for safeguarding from pagans, see Rufinus, *Hist. eccl.* 11.28. On the martyrium see Hahn, "Conversion," 352; Frankfurter, "Urban," 444.

[896] Cyril, *Miracles of the Three Young Men*; *History of the Patriarchs* 1.8, 1.11; László Kákosy, "A Christian Interpretation of the Sun-Disk," in *Studies in Egyptian Religion Dedicated to Professor Jan Zandee*, eds. M. Heerma van Voss, D. J. Hoens, G. Mussies, D. van der Plas, and H. Te Velde (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1982), 72-75.

[897] For instance, three sun-disks appear on some of the walls at the Roman temple at Dendara. Kákosky points out that such sacred writing would have lost its potency if its sacral meaning was revealed, as Theophilus did. Kákosy, 71-75. So Theophilus' translation of the symbol would have functioned to desacralize the image.

[898] Socrates, *Hist. eccl.* 5.17; Sozom., *Hist. eccl.* 7.15. Not for nothing did one of Theophilus' sermons mention how the cross was responsible for closing pagan temples (Theophilus, *Homily on the Crucifixion and the*

imagery being forced to testify against itself—and in the process, Christians were seizing an opportunity to project their own history back into an elusive distant past, overwriting the pagan memories attached to these very ancient symbols with Christian memories.[899]

This process of revision also had a spatial dimension. The Caesareum where Hypatia was taken was, according to Haas, such a powerful signifier for Alexandrian identity that taking her to this location was a bold statement of the city's realignment towards Christian identity.[900] Christians sought to over-write the long tradition of pagan memories associated with the site with new memories of anti-pagan violence.[901] Yet, the process of revision was far from clear-cut. Scholars debate whether or not the Caesareum was in fact the site of a temple of Saturn, the Christianization of which supposedly inspired a pagan protest during the patriarchy of Alexander, Athanasius' predecessor (Eutychius, *Annales* 433-35). If the temple of Saturn was not the Caesareum, or if the account regarding this protest cannot be trusted, as Judith McKenzie believes,[902] then there is no record of pagan resistance towards Christianization of the Caesareum until several years after it was transferred into the hands of the Christians, when, in 356 Arians supposedly encouraged pagans

---

Good Thief 244-50). Compare to the discovery of effigies of Muhammad in Egyptian tombs interpreted as predictions of the triumph of Islam. See Ulrich Haarmann, "Medieval Muslim Perceptions of Pharaonic Egypt," in Loprieno, *History*, 608.

[899] Compare to Alexander allegedly justifying his destruction of the idol of Cronus associated with the Caesareum by saying that it was actually a statue of the angel Michael (Eutychius, *Annales* 433-35).

[900] Haas, 313.

[901] Aude Busine, "From Stones to Myth: Temple Destruction and Civic Identity in the Late Antique Roman East, " *Journal of Late Antiquity* 6 (2013): 346.

[902] McKenzie, *Art*, 406-407n25. For a summary of the Caesareum debate see ibid., 242n43.

to attack Athanasius' followers.[903] If the Caesareum was such a powerful symbol of pagan identity, why did its Christianization invite so little protest?[904]

Perhaps pagans had simply ceased to invest the space with religious significance. According to Epiphanius, before the Caesareum was turned into a church, it was used as either a gymnasium or a palace (Epiph., *Pan.* 69.2.2-4). Perhaps the Caesareum held both religious *and* political significance, operating as *shared* space,[905] so that it was not immediately apparent to pagans—who were used to a communal notion of space—that a transformation of this space into a church meant that they would no longer be able to use the space in a religious manner. If only part of the Caesareum was entrusted to the Church at first, as Haas argues, and if this did not happen as early as the patriarchy of Alexander, but occurred only later during the patriarchate of Gregory (patriarch 339-346), then Christianization of the site would have seemed less jarring.[906] But even if the Christianization of this space was both rapid and immediately apparent to everyone involved, that does not necessarily mean that it would have provoked pagan animosity. The Caesareum was so closely associated with the emperor that it might have made sense to Alexandrians, and

---

[903] Athan., *Hist. Ar.* 54-57; Haas, 283-84.

[904] For comparison, the reader should recall that the space inside the Serapeum was not reused as a church, which suggests that the space was not deemed appropriate for Christian use as sacred space. Such space would not have been considered profane, *per se*. Because it carried a taboo, this space would have still carried religious connotations, but in this case the connotations would have been of a polluting nature. On churches erected in Egyptian temples avoiding reuse of areas associated with the holiest section of the pagan temple (in part for practical reasons) see Dijkstra, 402. Unfortunately, discussion of the reuse of Egyptian temples as churches is beyond the scope of this study. On this subject see for instance Djikstra, 403-31; Grossman, 299-334; R. P. C. Hanson, "Transformation of Pagan Temples into Churches," *Journal of Semitic Studies* 23 (1978): 257-67. For additional sources on this subject see Michael Mulryan, "'Paganism' in Late Antiquity: Regional Studies and Material Culture," in Lavan, 42-44.

[905] An argument that has implications for the below discussion regarding the division between secular and religious spheres of activity.

[906] Haas, 283. Note that Gregory, who was one of Athanasius' rivals for the patriarchy, was accused of Arianism. So the transfer of the site to Christian hands would have provoked controversy even among Christians.

therefore might not have offended pagan sensibilities, that a *Christian* emperor would designate this space for Christian rites. The Alexandrians would have been accustomed to a certain amount of shuffling with regard to the pagan imagery associated with the temple as emperors came and went, so some modification would not have been too shocking.[907] Moreover, despite so-called Christianization of the site, two obelisks continued to stand in front of the building until the 1870s.[908]

Of course, pagan animosity over the Christianization of the Caesareum might very well have increased over time. If so, then, even if the process of Christianization was gradual and peaceful, it might have no longer been recalled as such by pagans. Tellingly, Christian hagiographers seem to have been introducing violence into narratives of temple destruction long after the disappearance of the pagans without whom this violence could hardly have taken place.

Inventing Violence, Pagans, and Christians

This section of the discussion looks at hagiographical evidence for anti-pagan violence. Scholars have argued that the violence in these texts is largely "invented," if only because the rapid decline of pagans in Egypt would have undermined the degree to which anti-pagan violence was even feasible. Since it is my contention that the construction of a pagan identity went hand-in-hand with the construction of a

[907] Note too that Jewish imagery appears to have been located in the vicinity of the Caesareum, including a fourth/fifth century marble plaque bearing a menorah. See Zsolt Kiss, "Alexandria in the Fourth to Seventh Centuries," in Bagnall, *Byzantine*, 193. If pagans would not have objected to the introduction of Christian imagery, they might have objected more strongly to outright destruction of pagan imagery. Eutychius claimed that they posed just such an objection when Alexander destroyed the cult statue (Eutychius, *Annales* 433-35). While Haas accepts Eutychius' account of the destruction regarding the cult statue, he contends that Eutychius was wrong in identifying this site with the Caesareum. Haas, 209-10.

[908] For discussion of the obelisks and their role in mediating the viewers' reception of the Caesareum see Kenneth G. Holum, "The Gods of Sebastos: King Herod's Harbor Temple at Caesarea Maritima," in *Eretz-Israel: Archaeological, Historical and Geographical Studies*, vol. 31, ed. Zeev Weiss (Jerusalem: The Israel Exploration Society, 2015), 62; Haas, 341.

Christian identity, the "invention" of pagans implies that Christians were being "invented" as well. I consider the ramifications of this possibility and suggest that we use caution before dismissing the notion that paganism enjoyed a greater longevity than might otherwise be supposed.

According to a c. sixth century *Panegyric* attributed to a patriarch by the name of Dioscorus (d. 454), the Christian ascetic Macarius of Tkōw (fl. mid fifth century) destroyed a temple in a village where pagans had been sacrificing children. All of the pagan priests allegedly lost their lives in the conflict.[909] According to a sixth-seventh century *Life of Apa Moses*, a monk named Moses (c. 5th/6th cent.) sought to dismantle a temple to Apollo, and thirty pagan priests lost their lives in the ensuing altercation. Moses then set his sights on a temple in Abydos, where he disposed of the resident demon Bes, who was supposedly crippling passersby.[910] Despite the high body count, hagiographical accounts of anti-pagan violence were just as vague regarding the actual damage being inflicted as the accounts of Alexandrian anti-pagan violence in the Church histories discussed above. According to these hagiographies, pagans were being thrown into fires or they were dying in building collapses, but without, apparently, any sizzling flesh or mangled limbs. With one exception, the anti-pagan

[909] Pseudo-Dioscorus, *The Panegyric of Macarius of Tkōw* 5.2-11. On the date, provenance, and original language of the *Panegyric*, which exists in a Coptic manuscript with elements dating no earlier than the early sixth century, see D. W. Johnson, "Introduction," in *A Panegyic on Macarius Bishop of Tkōw Attributed to Dioscorus of Alexandria* (Louvain: Secrétariat du Corpus Scriptorum Chistianoum Orientalium, 1980), 5-13.

[910] R.-G. Coquin, "Moïse d'Abydos," in *Deuxième Journée d'Études Coptes, Strasbourg 25 Mai 1984* (Louvain: Peeters, 1986) 1-14; R.-G Coquin, "La 'Règle' de Moïse d'Abydos," in *Mélanges Antoine Guillaumont: Contributions à l'Étude des Christianismes Orientaux* (Geneva: Patrick Cramer, 1988), 103-110; Mark Moussa, "Abba Moses of Abydos" (M.A. diss., Catholic University of America, 1998). For additional sources see Sami Uljas, "A Fragment of the Life of Moses of Abydos in the British Library," *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 179 (2011): 117-22.

violence was actually carried out via a miraculous intervention from God, thereby absolving the Christians in the tales of any direct responsibility.[911]

Bloodless though these hagiographies appear, the violence still seems excessive to scholars who are struck by the dearth of archaeological evidence for either temple destructions or the conversion of temples into churches in Egypt. There *is* archaeological evidence for the destruction of idols,[912] like the statues that, according to Zachariah of Mytilene, were taken from a shrine at Menouthis by the patriarch Peter Mongus (patriarch 477-490) and destroyed.[913] A similar incident is described in the sixth century *Life of Aaron*, when the bishop of Philae, Macedonius (fl. 4th cent.), destroyed a falcon-headed idol seized from a temple (*Life of Aaron*, 29-31 [12a-13a]).

It is not hard to imagine Church leaders wanting to dismantle pagan shrines and to destroy idols, but these stories constitute such compelling propaganda for the leaders in question, and thus for the churches appealing to their memories, that scholars cannot but wonder if some invention was involved.[914] This suspicion is strengthened by the degree to which these stories appear to have distorted traditional

---

[911] Pseudo-Dioscorus, *The Panegyric of Macarius of Tkōw* 5.2-11; *Life of Apa Moses*. Compare to Rufinus' identification of a soldier as the assailant on the statue of Serapis (Rufinus, *Hist. eccl.* 11.23).

[912] Frankfurter, "Unbecoming," 284; Kristensen, 239-40; Elzbieta Rodziewicz, "Remains of a Chryselephantine Statue in Alexandria," *Bulletin de la Société Archéologique d'Alexandrie* 44 (1991): 119–30.

[913] Zachariah of Mytilene, *Vita Severi* 32-36. Watts has pointed out that the polemical nature of this text undermines its trustworthiness as a straightforward historical account. See Edward Watts, "Winning the Intracommunal Dialogues: Zacharias Scholasticus' *Vita Severi*," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 13 (2005): 437–64.

[914] On archaeological evidence and the *topos* of destruction see Lavan, xxiv-xxxvi; Dijkstra, 391, 397-99, 401. Caseau points out that the statues that were supposedly hidden in the temple at Menouthis in the *Vita Severi* sound rather like the deposits left after a temple was abandoned, not an active temple. Caseau, 491. On the biblical allusions in *The Panegyric of Macarius of Tkōw* and the *Life of Apa Moses* see Jennifer Westerfeld, "Christian Perspectives on Pharaonic Religion: The Representation of Paganism in Coptic Literature," *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt* 40 (2003): 5-12; Peter van Minnen, "Saving History? Egyptian Hagiography in its Space and Time," *Church History and Religious Culture* 86 (2006): 73-75.

Egyptian pagan worship, this distortion implying a lack of familiarity with a long defunct pagan faith.[915] Other hagiographical material, discussed in the following chapter, actually suggests that monks were reluctant to engage in anti-pagan violence. If so, then the Christians who were reportedly attacking pagans were, like the pagans they were fighting, figments of the hagiographers' imagination.

Shenoute's sermons also appear to have exaggerated anti-pagan violence during this period. As vitriolic as Shenoute's rhetoric was, the number of temples that he dismantled is in dispute. He appears to have removed idols from a temple in Pleuit[916] and so-called idols from the house of Gessius,[917] but the scholarly consensus limits Shenoute's actual temple destruction to a single case.[918] Like the heroes of the *Life of Aaron*, the *Life of Apa Moses*, and the *Panegyric of Macarius*, Shenoute appears to have acted alone or with only a small contingent of supporters when carrying out his attacks on pagan property. His description of a confrontation with magistrates over violence involving a temple in Pleuit—a case unrelated, perhaps, to his assaults upon the idols there—is the only text that comes close to suggesting the

---

[915] The apparently authentic elements of traditional Egyptian pagan worship include: references to animal worship and Isis in the *Vita Severi*, the cultic use of musical instruments and, if Frankfurter is to be believed, the evocation of the traditional Egyptian deity Shai, albeit with multiple distortions, in the *Panegyric* of Macarius, the evocation of the traditional Egyptian deity Bes of Abydos (who was implicated in the infamous fourth century trials for divination), and the falcon-headed deity in the *Life of Aaron*. See Amm. Marc. 19.12.3-18; Frankfurter, *Roman Egypt*, 128-30, 282-83; David Frankfurter, "Illuminating the Cult of Kothos: The *Panegyric on Macarius* and Local Religion in Fifth-Century Egypt," in *The World of Early Egyptian Christianity: Language, Literature, and Social Context*, eds. James Goehring and Janet Timbie (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2007), 176-88; Frankfurter, "Iconoclasm," 135-60.

[916] Besa, *Life of Shenoute* 83-84; Shenoute, *Only I tell Everyone who dwells in this village*. For the heated scholarly debate over the credibility of the accounts (including adherence to biblical precedent) and the sizes of the pagan and Christian contingents involved see Trombley, 212-15; Frankfurter, *Roman Egypt* 68-69, 209, 236; Smith, "Aspects," 244-46; Emmel, "Atripe," 165; Frankfurter, "Iconoclasm," 137-38.

[917] Besa, *Life of Shenoute* 125-27; Shenoute, *Not Because a Fox Barks*; Shenoute, *Let Our Eyes*. For the argument that Shenoute's opponent here was the same person he encountered on the grounds of the ruined temple of Atripe, see for instance, Emmel, "Nile," 110-19; Smith, "Aspects," 244n81. For a general reconstruction of Shenoute's conflict with this so-called pagan see Emmel, "Nile," 95-114; Emmel, "Atripe," 161-201.

[918] Shenoute, *On the Justice of God;* Shenoute, *Let our Eyes* 2.10. See Trombley, 212-13; Emmel, "Atripe," 162-65.

operation of the sort of large-scale mobs that were implied or explicitly attested for in the *Vita Severi* and the accounts from the Church histories discussed above (Shenoute, *Only I Tell Everyone Who Dwells in this Village*).

If monks were actually reluctant to engage in violence, and this violence was being exaggerated by fellows like Shenoute and the hagiographers, perhaps this was because there were no longer enough pagans around to sustain any real physical altercations. This hypothesis has provoked a flurry of debate. On one side, scholars such as David Frankfurter and Frank Trombley argue that we should take the evidence offered by Shenoute and the hagiographers seriously, as proof that paganism was thriving and putting up a vigorous resistance.[919] On the other side of the debate, scholars such as Roger Bagnall and H. Smith argue that the notion of pagans carrying out a vigorous anti-Christian campaign is the product of either a Christian distortion of reality or a misinterpretation of the evidence.[920] Smith points out that Shenoute's treatment of paganism, which made little mention of anything specifically Egyptian,[921] was largely comprised of details that could have been culled from a collection of hackneyed histories, travelogues, and novels.[922] Unimpressed by Shenoute's efforts to present himself as the hero of a beleaguered Christian community, Bagnall conjectures that Shenoute's arch-pagan foe, Gessius, was

---

[919] Trombley, 207-19; Frankfurter, *Roman Egypt*, 77-82, 128-30, 282-83.

[920] Bagnall, "Models," 23-42; Smith, "Aspects," 244-46. Frankfurter suggests that his opponents in this debate are guilty of actually distorting the evidence to produce an anti-Catholic polemic. Frankfurter, *Roman Egypt*, 202n26. Frankfurter's opponents also appear to question the degree to which syncretic religious trends constitute "true" religion. On this issue, see chapter two and below. Finally, in insisting that the hagiographers are guilty of Christian triumphalism, and thus rejecting their evidence for the survival of paganism, Bagnall contradictorily produces scholarship with a triumphalist ring. Arguing that paganism died quickly and without much of a fight, Bagnall implies that paganism was so inherently deficient that Christianity was bound to displace it without much resistance.

[921] For examples of Shenoute treating traditional Egyptian topics, see for instance Shenoute, *Invective against Hieroglyphs*. Also see Emmel, "Atripe," 170.

[922] Smith, "Aspects," 243-44.

actually an Arian, a so-called heretic whom Shenoute demonized via association with paganism.[923]

But if hate speech relies primarily on stereotypes rather than actual familiarity with or interest in the Other, neither lack of specificity nor inaccuracy with regard to paganism constitute proof that paganism was already dead. Recall the lack of specificity on this subject in the writings of the early apologists, who lived in a world where paganism was alive and well. Syncretic practices made it entirely permissible for so-called pagans like Gessius to refer to Egyptian deities under Greco-Roman names; so a dearth of Egyptian references in the evidence does not in of itself demonstrate the death of Egyptian paganism. After all, when confronted with the specter of a Christian emperor, pagans who felt that their socio-political positions were endangered by a disjuncture between personal and imperial piety might have gone out of their way to demonstrate a commitment to *Greco-Roman* forms of paganism as an evocation of their loyalty to the Roman Empire.[924]

Instead of choosing between Frankfurter-Trombley and Bagnall-Smith, Jitse Djikstra suggests that we adopt a middle-ground, taking Shenoute and the hagiographers not as evidence that the temples were being destroyed, *per se*—these temples were falling into decline for the reasons discussed above—but as evidence of the intense ire felt by Christians over the preservation of paganism *despite* the decline of temples. Exasperated over unfulfilled goals with regard to conversion, Christians

[923] Bagnall, "Models," 31. See Emmel's comments on this proposal. Emmel, "Atripe," 161-201.

[924] Archaeological evidence from the fourth century reflects a decline in the popularity of Egyptianizing funerary art and a corresponding increase in Greco-Roman pagan forms of funerary art. See Thomas, 36. Perhaps this is evidence of a deep-seated change in the "ethnicity" of the pagan constituency (so that the continued success of paganism depended on the fortunes of that "ethnicity") or in the nature of religious belief.

vented their irritation by imagining assaults upon pagan property.[925] Djikstra's theory seems to be a good way of resolving the contradiction between the literary sources, with their many temple destructions, and the archaeological record, which shows little evidence of this destruction.

If Djikstra is correct, Shenoute and the hagiographers discussed above were exaggerating religious violence, but they were not necessarily inventing pagans. Indeed, the following chapter argues that pagans might have been more prevalent than the sources suggest. At first glance, it seems illogical that Christians might have exaggerated religious violence while downplaying the prevalence of paganism. The paradox disappears if we consider how the prospect of peaceful co-existence alongside pagans would have challenged basic Christian notions about the irreconcilable differences separating Christians and pagans.[926] The violence reminded audience members that peaceful coexistence was not an option. And while it was in the interests of Christians like Shenoute to stress the danger posed by so-called pagans, it was also in their interests to give the audience (and themselves) attainable goals. Shenoute and the hagiographers responsible for the *Life of Aaron*, the *Panegyric of Macarius*, and the *Life of Apa Moses* effectively suggested that the pagan threat was real and dangerous—and therefore required a vigorous offensive—but they also minimized the challenge it posed by limiting (and under-estimating?) the size of the pagan contingent,[927] implying that resistance would quickly crumble.

---

[925] Djikstra, 401-402. Djikstra's treatment is to be commended for avoiding the sort of *ad hominem* attacks of which one side of this debate is guilty.

[926] See the following chapter for further discussion.

[927] So when the *Life of Aaron*, for instance, only mentioned a single working temple, we should not neccesarily assume that this meant that there was a sole temple left in operation in the fourth century. The

These tales might very well have satisfied immediate needs more effectively than a realistic call for a long sustained push.[928]

Obviously, pagans (whether dead or alive) were serving a vital function in Christian memory.[929] The circulation of stories about Shenoute's encounters with Gessius, which were repeated by Shenoute's disciple and hagiographer, Besa, would have discouraged Christians from engaging in activities that the narrator deemed pagan (or akin to paganism, that is, heretical).[930] Modern research on hate speech confirms just how effective this strategy can be. Inflammatory rhetoric both intimidates members of the out-group and directs in-group behavior.[931] Christians like Shenoute needed pagans, or at least pseudo-pagans, to serve as foils against which an idealized model Christian could be constructed. Without such foils, the injunctions regarding Christian behavior would have lost some of their bite.[932]

---

evidence of inscriptions actually implies that more temples were in operation at this time. See the following chapter.

[928] In the meantime, small victories—like Shenoute's so-called triumphs over Gessius—could be incorporated into a campaign of self-promotion. See chapter five for further discussion.

[929] Of course, if paganism was already dead, its image might have been all the more vulnerable to manipulation.

[930] Also note the role of heresy in the Panegyric of Macarius of Tkōw (Pseudo-Dioscorus, *The Panegyric of Macarius of Tkōw* 4.1-2, 5.11, 15.5, 15.8, 16.1). Also see Frankfurter, "Urban," 444, 446; Davis, *Papacy*, 85-88.

[931] Waltman, 2-3, 36-61. If Bagnall is correct about Gessius actually being a Christian, some members of the audience might have recognized Shenoute's conflation of heresy and paganism as a rhetorical strategy. But criticizing Shenoute's methods would have put them at risk of accusations regarding their own deviance. Notably, as dehumanizing as Shenoute's rhetoric was with regard to his (allegedly) pagan opponents, he only appears to have been guilty of violence against property. He does not appear to have physically attacked any pagans. He did, however, have a reputation for violence against fellow Christians, and enforced harsh physical discipline within in his monastery. On the latter see Rebecca Krawiec, *Shenoute and the Women of the White Monastery: Egyptian Monasticism in Late Antiquity* (NY: Oxford University Press, 2002). In one passage of Besa's *Life of Shenoute*, Besa claimed that Shenoute predicted that Gessius would be punished in the afterlife by having his blasphemous tongue become attached to his foot. At some point, Gessius must have passed away, for Shenoute also apparently told Besa that he saw—in a vision, one supposes—Gessius being punished in just this way (Besa, *Life of Shenoute* 88). While Gessius was alive, the prediction would have served as a threat. After his death, it would have served as consolation for his adversaries and a threat against anyone whom Shenoute or Besa perceived as an ally or imitator of the deceased Gessius. On Christians cursing their opponents see chapter six.

[932] A parallel may exist in early Islamic discourse. In keeping with Old Testament rhetoric, the Qu'ran associates paganism with activities that, to modern eyes, do not appear particularly pagan, such as marital infidelity and the love of money. More importantly, for our purposes, the Qu'ran accuses Christians and Jews of

Of course, the ideal Christian would have been expected to avoid associating with the deities (demons) inhabiting the temples and the statuary that the Church leaders were allegedly investing so much energy in destroying. So it is surprising to find that some so-called Christians were actually collecting statuary of pagan deities, and apparently saw nothing remiss in making references to pagan deities in correspondence and other literature. If the people consuming and producing pagan imagery were really Christians, then this imagery is not evidence for the survival of paganism, *per se*. Indeed, some scholars argue that the usage of so-called pagan imagery by Christians actually reflected a secularization of paganism.[933] We have to take this possibility into consideration if we are to have any hope of unraveling Christian-pagan relations and religious violence during this period.

Secularism or Late Antique Paganism?

The rest of the discussion in this chapter is devoted to the issue of secularism. While it may seem odd at first that we are shifting to this topic, it makes sense insofar as secularization of a religious image or religious space is a kind of violence, to the extent that it divests the target of part of its identity. This shift in the discussion is also necessary because so much of the evidence for Late Antique paganism is dismissed by scholars as evidence for the secular tendencies of a *Christian* populace. As we will see, lack of precision in terminology is responsible for confusion in the study of

---

idolatry, a charge reminiscent of attempts on the part of Christian to conflate heresy and paganism. The dearth of authentic-sounding references to paganism in the Qu'ran has led G. R. Hawting to make the somewhat controversial claim that the pagans in question were not pagans in the sense that they worshipped idols, but only in the sense that their behavior was thought to deviate somehow from an imagined ideal. G. R. Hawting, *The Idea of Idolatry and the Emergence of Islam: From Polemic to History* (NY: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 3, 22-24, 47, 75, 82, 86.

[933] For instance, Haas, 204; Cameron, *Last*, 6, 35, 111, 206, 256, 271, 357, 376, 401, 404-405, 474-75, 637, 697.

secularism in Late Antiquity. However, scholars working on this topic usually use the concept of secularism in one of three ways ways: to suggest a separation of church and state; to indicate a collection of acts deemed inherently sinful or space associated with sin; or to specify categories of profane (which is not always inherently sinful) behavior and space as opposed to sacred behavior and space.[934] This discussion looks at various ways in which scholars have attempted to trace evidence for these incarnations of secularism in Late Antiquity. I draw attention to what I think are several weaknesses in these attempts thus far. Introducing a well-known Jewish comparator and evidence for the ways in which an Egyptian context would have complicated the issue of secularism, I argue that scholars should make a more serious effort to justify and to clarify their usage of the concept of secularism.

Use of the term "secular" in an ancient Mediterranean context should always—but infrequently does—prompt discussion of a larger debate regarding the distinction between secular and non-secular spheres of belief/activity, and the extent to which such a distinction is either natural or socially constructed. Richard Lim is of the opinion that all societies have the potential of developing a secular sphere—by which he seems to mean a profane sphere of belief/activity that is not inherently sinful—and that such a sphere did in fact emerge during the rise of Christianity.[935] Scholars like Aude Busine have contended that the rise of Christianity was indeed a

[934] Admittedly, these definitions overlap and could probably be expanded. I have intentionally excluded discussion of the distinctions between the terms "secular," "secularism," and "secularization" as well as other incarnations such as *laïcité*. I do not believe such distinctions are required in order to conduct this discussion. Other scholarship on this topic in antiquity is so unsophisticated that a discussion of these nuances would be almost beside the point.

[935] Richard Lim, "Christianization, Secularization, and the Transformation of Public Life," in *A Companion to Late Antiquity*, ed. Philip Rousseau (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 499, 503. Scott Scullions advocates for the existence of a non-religious sphere—which he refers to as a "secular" sphere—of belief/activity prior to the emergence of Christianity. Scott Scullion, "'Pilgrimage' and Greek Religion: Sacred and Secular in the Pagan *Polis*," in Elsner, 111-30.

crucial factor in the emergence of this secular sphere. According to Busine's model, this sphere emerged, at least with regard to the use of civic space, by the third century CE. As Christianity proceeded, the religious sphere reasserted itself and non-religious civic space shrank.[936] But if a process like this really took place, it must have been far more complicated than this model suggests.

To begin with, the degree to which the populace as a whole would have accepted the non-religious connotations of civic space is by no means a given. Luke Lavan, who argues that the streets of the ancient city were in fact deemed "secular" areas of activity by the users of this space, cannot help but acknowledge a confounding factor in the form of statuary erected in various locations of the city according to the supposed functions of the deities depicted. For instance, a god related to the protection of merchants would go up in a market.[937] Surely, at least some of the merchants who frequented this market occasionally appealed to the assistance of that deity with a special reference to that statue. Furthermore, the streets

---

[936] Busine, "Introduction," 5. Unfortunately, Busine's model rests on some tendentious points. If the the rise of Christianity was responsible for the rise of secularism (Busine, "Introduction," 11), then this means that Christianity would have already been responsible for exerting a surprising level of influence by the third century, the era in which Busine places the emergence of the secular sphere. If the third century was related to a rise of secular space, perhaps it was related to the decline in the religious significance of location, a phenomenon discussed above as a development that cannot be traced to Christianity. Busine's argument that the secular sphere began to disappear after the rise of Christianity because of a lack of religious competition (Busine, "Introduction," 12) is also obscure. There was certainly still internal Christian competition at this point. And, as the above discussion demonstrates, pagan associations could be a liability in this competition. Moreover, it is unclear how Busine reconciles shrinking "secular" civic space with the continued popularity of "pagan (or secular)"—as scholars such as Averil Cameron put it—imagery in art and literature. Busine's oversight in this regard is all the more surprising insofar as the continued popularity of this imagery is well-articulated in Peter Brown's, "Art and Society in Late Antiquity," an article that Busine cites as a hallmark in scholarship on the development of the secular sphere. Finally, the timespan allocated for the emergence and later shrinkage (at least the initial stages of shrinkage) of the secular sphere in Busine's model seems far too slight—a mere century?—to bear the weight allotted to it by so many scholars to the secular. See Averil Cameron, "New Themes and Styles in Greek Literature, A Title Revisited," in Johnson, *Greek*, 14; Peter Brown, "Art and Society in Late Antiquity," *Age of Spirituality: A Symposium*, eds. Kurt Weitzmann and Hans-Georg Beck (NY: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1980), 17-28.

[937] Luke Lavan, "Political Talismans? Residual 'Pagan' Statues in Late Antique Public Space," in Lavan, 440. In suggesting that market-places were irrelevant to Christians, Busine seems to be going too far (Busine, "Introduction," 5). For instance, they cared a great deal about monks falling into *porneia* there (5.31 N 179). On Christian leaders commenting on behavior in the marketplace see Toner, *Popular*, 191.

were sites of religious violence. When Christians paraded the idols through these streets, the act constituted religious violence insofar as the streets were to an extent *not* sacred, but the streets *were* religious to the extent that they facilitated the performance of specifically Christian violence. They were Christian streets.[938]

Scholars who support the third century secularization thesis point out how temples appear to have been put to secular reuse during this period as military camps, tax offices, and libraries. And much is made of pagans who lobbied for the preservation of pagan temples by recommending that they be reused in this manner.[939] But the so-called secularization of religious space by pagans prior to the rise of Christianity does not appear to have entirely divested this space of its religious connotations. Nor is it clear that these efforts were directed towards this goal.[940] After

---

[938] Socrates, *Hist. eccl.* 5.16. Note that traditional Egyptian paganism limited the viewers of sacred images to a select few priests, exacerbating the problem of exposure. See Verner, 13-32. Cf. Sozom., *Hist. eccl.* 2.5, 7.15; Theod., *Hist. eccl.* 5.22. Also see Chuvin, 30; Frankfurter, *Roman Egypt,* 143. We should not assume that public exposure settled the issue once and for all, however. Not only did all imagery remain suspect in the eyes of some Christians (see below), but some idols continued to be partially animated. For example, the Tychaion in Alexandria was turned into a wineshop, inspiring laments from pagan sources, but in 619 the statue of Tyche prophesied the death of a Roman emperor. Lib., *Anth. Pal.* 9.180-83; Theophylact Simocata 8.13.7-11. Watts, *Riot,* 195; McKenzie, *Art,* 245-46; Haas, 423n72. Compare to a Tyche statue removed from the Tychaion in Caesarea Palestinae and reinstalled in a courtyard, where it apparently did not have a cult purpose, and where it continued to stand here until the sixth or seventh century. See Holum, "Caesarea's," 539-58; Kenneth G. Holum, "The Christianizing of Caesarea Palaestinae," in *Die spätantike Stadt und ihre Christianisierung: Symposium vom 14. bis 16 Februar 2000 in Halle/Salle,* eds. G. Brands and H.-G. Severin (Wiesbaden: Reichert, 2003), 158-59. On the treatment of statues of Tyche in general also see Lavan, "Political," 450-53, 470-71.

[939] Busine, "Introduction," 6; Lib. 30.42.

[940] Much is made of the transformation of the temple of Amun at Luxor to accommodate an army camp in 301-302. As much as this might look like a secularization (as implied by Bagnall, "Models," 31; Dijkstra, 403-404) of an abandoned structure—a dearth of inscriptions suggest that it have remained unused for several decades—this transformation was accompanied by the addition of a chapel for the imperial cult, and, as usual for Roman military camps, there was a shrine of the standards and space for ritual sacrifices. See Roger Bagnall and Dominic Rathbone, ed., *Egypt from Alexander to the Early Christians: An Archaeology and Historical Guide* (Los Angeles: The J. Paul Getty Museum, 2004), 191-92; Jaś Elsner, *Art and the Roman Viewer: The Transformation of Art from the Pagan World to Christianity* (NY: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 173-76; Beard, 324-28; Frankfurter, *Roman Egypt,* 36. Since Amun was identified with Zeus (and Alexander the Great), the choice of this temple for a military camp was quite apt, especially in light of recent invasions and revolts. Thus, what at first blush looks like evidence of religious decline was in fact a bold appeal to divine sanction: invaders and rebels would not have been facing just Diocletian and his army, but Amun as well. See Mohammed El-Saghir, Jean-Claude Golvin, Michel Reddé, El-Sayed Hegazy, Guy Wagner, *Le Camp Romain De Louqsor* (Cairo: Publications de l'Institut Francais d'Archéologie Orientale, 1986), 31; Aziz Atiya, ed., *The Coptic Encyclopedia,* vol. 1, s.v. "Army, Roman"; Ioli Kalavrezou-Maxeiner, "The Imperial Chamber at Luxor," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 29 (1975): 225-51. Regarding tax collection, recall the discussion in the previous chapter regarding the role of temple

the rise of Christianity, the pagans pleading for this so-called secularization process can hardly be taken as impartial judges as to just what would and would not constitute secularization. They were too invested in what was essentially a religious debate for us to take their word for it that a secularized pagan temple would neutralize the religious connotations of the space in question. This does not mean that pagans and non-pagans were incapable of valuing edifices simply for aesthetic reasons. It means simply that we cannot take it as a given that aesthetic interests lay behind every example of this phenomenon.

It is also important to point out that there were nuances to the ways in which space was either endowed with sanctity or divested of that sanctity. Traditional Egyptian temples were subjected to Opening of the Mouth rituals that brought the imagery to life. Consequently, the space possessed a sort of valence not necessarily found in Greco-Roman temple space.[941] Assuming that secularization was possible, the degree of violence implied might have differed based on whether it was directed at a Greco-Roman or Egyptian temple. As for secularization, this was not necessarily akin to modern notions of the concept, which imply a sort of neutrality. If the third

---

priests in this business. When the responsibility for tax collection was transferred to Christians (for the alleged collection of taxes, licit or not, by George the Cappadocian and Athanasius see Epiph., *Pan.* 76.1.1-8; Sozom., *Hist. ecc.* 2.22), the activity remained the purview of a religious class. That it happened to take place in a temple might have affected the way in which this space was perceived, but it was not as simple as a cut-and-dry secularization. Tax collection and financial matters were not, in of themselves, secular. Note that one of the men murdered alongside George the Cappadocian was supposedly put to death for knocking over an *altar set up in the mint* (Amm. Marc. 22.11.9). Regarding the religious functions of libraries see the following chapter.

[941] The temple of Horus at Edfu, completed in the first century BCE, was dedicated with an Opening of the Mouth. Afterwards, rituals to animate the images on the walls were regularly repeated at Edfu, as at the Roman temple of Hathor at Dendara, construction of which was completed in the second century CE. See Lorton, “Theology,” 151, 189-98; Morenz, 152; Aylward Blackman and H. W. Fairman, "Consecration of an Egyptian Temple according to the use of Edfu," *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 32 (1946): 75-91; Dunand, “Ptolemaic,” 226-28; Bagnall, *Alexander to*, 211-12, 227-30; Verner, 423-71. So when Christians mutilated humanoid figures on the walls of temples like this, they were performing an act of violence similar to that inflicted upon pagan statuary, both acts being interpreted as a corporeal punishment that was all the more potent because of the body’s ability to feel pain. See Kristensen, 240-43. See the following chapter for further discussion of traditional Egyptian concepts of temple space.

century truly witnessed a secularization of civic monuments, it is all the more striking that Christians deemed it necessary to incise these so-called "secular monuments" with crosses.[942] Was the addition of a cross really meant to sanctify space previously devoid of religious connotations? Perhaps these monuments were perceived by Christians as pagan religious space, whether or not pagans perceived them as such. In any case, the situation seems to have been far too complex for us to reduce the problem to a simple dichotomy between the sacred and the secular.

The tangled interpretations to which our evidence can be subjected are well-demonstrated by the ancient (and modern) debate over an incident recorded in the Mishnah about a rabbi by the name of Gamaliel (c. late 1st-3rd cent.).[943] This Gamaliel was asked how he could possibly feel comfortable using a bathhouse decorated by an image of Aphrodite. He delayed answering the question until he had left the bathhouse—saying that the discussion of sacred matters was inappropriate within that space—and once he had left the bathhouse, he explained that, first, Aphrodite had invaded his space, not the other way around, and, second, that profane acts were performed in front of her statue and thus she was not the object of worship; hence, his presence before Aphrodite's statue could not be deemed a violation of sacred strictures.[944] Gamaliel's behavior has been interpreted many different ways: as

[942] Lavan, "Introduction," xxxiv. According to Rufinus, when busts of Serapis were cut out of the buildings of Alexandria, crosses were put up in their place (Rufinus, *Hist. eccl*. 11.30).

[943] Scholars debate Gamaliel's dates and identity. See for instance, Lapin, 129; Azzan Yadin, "Rabban Gamliel, Aphrodite's Bath, and the Question of Pagan Monotheism," *Jewish Quarterly Review* 96 (2006): 160-61.

[944] *Mishnah Avodah Zarah* 3:4. Interestingly, in light of our discussion of the division between the sacred and the profane, some early commentators argued that, by claiming that one could not discuss Torah in a bathhouse, Gamaliel *was* discussing Torah; so if there was an injunction against doing so, he had violated it. See Seth Schwartz, "The Rabbi in Aphrodite's Bath: Palestinian Society and Jewish Identity in the High Roman Empire," in Goldhill, 355. Compare Tertullian's argument that a Christian could enter the Serapeum without becoming defiled (Tert., *De spec.* 8). There was a degree to which the entire city could have been considered sacred—and therefore devoid of secular space—though this too is contested in scholarship. Scullion, for instance,

an indication, for instance, that pagan statuary was indeed perceived as mere decoration;[945] as evidence of Jewish efforts to adapt to life in a world dominated by Greco-Roman pagans (therefore, Jews simply had to accept the fact that they had to share space with pagan imagery);[946] as a rejection of the conditions that might have been serving to isolate Jews (since a refusal to share space with pagan imagery would result in the physical and social isolation of Jews from the rest of the community);[947] as a reflection of internal debates over the engagement of Jews in certain behaviors or the development of different "rules" for Jews based on social status (with some rabbis, for instance, perhaps claiming rights that would not have necessarily been enjoyed by lower-status Jews);[948] as a reflection of Jewish knowledge or lack thereof regarding pagan religious practices (that is, some Jews simply might not have known that statues in the bath were sometimes treated in a manner that suggested worship, as discussed below);[949] as evidence for a historically contingent debate between a certain pagan philosopher and a certain rabbi, the latter using the arguments of the pagan philosophers (notably Plotinus) against idolatry so as to facilitate a personal rivalry;[950] as a particular rabbi's opinion, not necessarily indicative of rabbinic or

---

argues that there were areas that were clearly secular in pre-Christian Greek cities, while Rutledge argues for a more nuanced attitude towards Roman space. See Scullion, 115; Rutledge, 184.

[945] Michael Avi-Yonah, Hannah Katzenstein, and Tsafrir Yoram, *Art in Ancient Palestine: Selected Studies* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1981); Schwartz, 353-54; Yaron Eliav, "Viewing the Sculptural Environment: Shaping the Second Comandment," in *The Talmud Yerushalmi and Graeco-Roman Culture*, ed. Peter Schäfer (Tübngen: Mohr Siebeck, 2002), 420-23.

[946] Seth Schwartz, *Imperialism and Jewish Society, 200 B.C.E. to 640 C.E.* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001).

[947] Maurice Sartre, "The Nature of Syrian Hellenism in the Late Roman and Early Byzantine Periods," in Eliav, 25-50. For the debate over whether or not Jews were isolated because they avoided use of public bathhouses, for instance, see Lapin, 129; Eliav, 411-34.

[948] Aharon Oppenheimer, "The Jews in the Roman World," in Eliav, 51-68.

[949] Lapin, 12; Eliav, 421-23.

[950] Yadin, 169-70. Furstenberg notes that Gamaliel's argument regarding the "mistreatment" of the idols reflects early Christian arguments against idolatry. See Yair Furstenberg, "The Rabbinic View of Idolatry and the

Jewish attitudes as a whole;[951] and as part of a debate over what mattered the most when attempting to identify an object as an idol (either the treatment of the statue as an idol by others or an objective identification of the statue as an idol).[952]

The sheer diversity of opinions on the subject of Gamaliel's comments on the idol is impressive. These interpretations might not be directly transferrable to a Christian context, particularly in Late Antiquity when Christians were gaining social and political dominance. But since Christianity emerged from a subordinate position in a society dominated by Greco-Roman pagans, it is not entirely inappropriate to consider possible parallels between Christian and early rabbinic attitudes, especially insofar as the latter reflected awareness of the general subordination of Jews to Greco-Roman pagans. What I find most intriguing about the debate surrounding Gamaliel, however, is the sophisticated and nuanced nature of the arguments put forth, with scholarship that puts work on Late Antique paganism and Christianity to shame, particularly when it comes to the naiveté with which a so-called secularization of paganism is presumed to have occurred.

To be sure, not even Gamaliel's comments appear to have covered the entire range of possible options for interpreting pagan imagery. A law passed in 415 acknowledged that even statues located in a bath were sometimes subjected to worship.[953] Misguided as such worship was in the eyes of the lawmaker, this space

---

Roman Political Conception of Divinity," *The Journal of Religion* 90 (2010): 360. From this perspective, one might argue that Gamaliel's initial response—that Aphrodite invaded his space not the other way around—reflects the apologetic argument (see chapter two) that idolatry was a perversion of "true" religion, in which case the idols could very well have been said to have invaded the world.

[951] Yadin, 167.

[952] Eliav, 425.

[953] *Codex Theodosianus* 16.10.20; Lavan, "Political," 443. Also see C. Bonner, *Demons of the Bath* (London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1932).

was not necessarily free of religious energy, demonic or not. During the reign of Valens, a man was supposedly tortured and beheaded merely for touching the marble of a bath while saying a chant for stomach trouble (Amm. Marc. 29.2.28). This act could hardly have provoked such an extreme response if the space was deemed absolutely neutral.

A basic dichotomy between sacred and non-sacred imagery was further undermined by the varying degrees to which imagery was invested with sanctity. Egyptian imagery, like Egyptian sacred space, was subjected to Opening of the Mouth rituals.[954] Some Christians contended that pagan imagery never possessed an animating force and that any appearance of this (in the idols in the Serapeum, for instance) was due to the chicanery of priests. Situated within the context of a debate over the prevalence of secularism, this implies that pagan imagery, because it lacked a one-to-one correlation with divinity, was religiously neutral in the eyes of some Christians and therefore secular. But Christians like Rufinus moved seamlessly between arguments claiming that idols were devoid of life and narratives treating the idols in question *as if they were alive.* The violence inflicted by Christians on the allegedly lifeless idol of Serapis according to Rufinus, for example, suggests that a few of the perpetrators (and even Rufinus) were thinking of the idol as the living victim of a traditional execration rite.[955]

---

[954] On statue animation see Iversen, *Egyptian*, 38. Also see following chapter.

[955] Rufinus, *Hist. eccl*. 11.23. Cf. Socrates, *Hist. eccl*. 5.16; Theod., *Hist. eccl*. 5.22; *Life of Aaron* 31 [13b]; Pseudo-Dioscorus, *The Panegyric of Macarius of Tkōw* 5.11; Zachariah of Mytilene, *Vita Severi* 32-36. Also see Kristensen, 228-29, 236-37. On archaeological evidence for the destruction of idols in Alexandria see Frankfurter, "Unbecoming," 284; Kristensen, 239-40; Rodziewicz, 119–30. On the difficulty of determining whether or not an image has been defaced, destroyed, removed, or buried by Christians as an act of religious violence (as opposed to other reasons), see Lavan, "Introduction," ixx-xxxii; Caseau, 479-504; Djikistra, 398.

Various scholars have pointed out that pagan imagery was sometimes fashioned without any apparent intention to subject this imagery to worship, even before the rise of Christianity. These scholars have taken this as evidence for the existence of a secular sphere that everyone in antiquity presumably would have recognized.[956] Though such imagery certainly existed, it is not necessarily evidence of a universally accepted secular sphere. Like so-called secular monuments, imagery that does not appear to have received worship (for instance, images of non-deities) was sometimes clearly the target of Christian hostility. If the incision of a cross rendered the object safe for consumption as "mere decoration,"[957] then it was "secularized" by Christianization, not the other way around. And some idols might have been *Christianized* rather than *secularized*. The two processes should not be lumped together.

Furthermore, for some people, the line between static, mere decoration and enlivened, animated imagery appears to have been blurred. Artists and art aficionados debated whether or not an object could be in fact the thing it represented and therefore alive.[958] Even the statues of civic leaders could be invested with some element of divinity, as demonstrated by Artemidorus' recommendation that dreams about the statues of gods and community leaders be interpreted in the same fashion (Artemidorus, 3.63). Stories were exchanged about the statues of ordinary men, like

[956] Ine Jacobs, "Production to Destruction? Pagan and Mythological Statuary in Asia Minor," *American Journal of Archaeology* 114 (2010): 267-303. To be fair, the claim that everyone would have recognized a secular sphere is only implied in this text, but it is the scholarly treatment of this sphere as if it was a natural given to which I object. Imperial statues, the destruction of which could arouse the fury of even Christian emperors, are a special topic which cannot be addressed here. For discussion of that issue see for instance, Lavan, "Political," 457-68.

[957] On the incision of crosses or the removal of pieces as an act of religious violence see Kristensen, 230. For further discussion of the different ways in which statues were treated during this period see Jacobs, 267-303.

[958] Sijn Bussels, *The Animated Image: Roman Theory on Naturalism, Vividness and Divine Power* (Leiden: Leiden University Press, 2012); Elsner.

the renowned physician Hippocrates (c. 460-c. 370 BCE), magically coming to life.[959] Fellows like Lucian mocked such beliefs (Luc., *Philops.* 19-21), but that is not evidence for the existence of a natural, unquestioned secular sphere, only that such a sphere, if it existed, was the subject of debate.

In 392 the emperors appear to have taken a stab at creating a secular sphere of imagery as a bid for the prevention of violence. The private possession of statues was only outlawed if these statues were the object of worship,[960] meaning that the possession of imagery that looked secular—that is non-religious, representing "mere decoration"—remained legal. But how could an observer tell that an image received worship? How did Shenoute, for instance, know that Gessius' collection of statuary was the object of veneration? Shenoute supposedly found evidence in Gessius' house of traditional acts of worship involving lamps, bread, and incense.[961] The traditional Egyptian pagan content of this collection also appears to have been a factor[962] in Shenoute's conclusion that they were indeed objects of worship, the implication being that Greco-Roman pagan imagery might have been deemed acceptable for collection as decoration, but not Egyptian imagery. In a similar vein, Lea Stirling argues that Egyptian pagan imagery found outside Egypt in Late Antique contexts should always be interpreted as examples of religious, as opposed to decorative, imagery. Greco-

[959] Lucian, *Philopseudes sive incredulus* 19-21.

[960] *Codex Theodosianus* 16.10.12. Lea Stirling, *The Learned Collector: Mythological Statuettes and Classical Taste in Late Antique Gaul* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2005), 161. Around this time, according to Rufinus, all of the houses of Alexandria possessed busts of Serapis in the walls, entrances, and windows. If these busts were merely decoration, they were nevertheless destroyed as though they were objects of veneration rather than architectural features (Rufinus, *Hist. eccl.* 11.30).

[961] Shenoute, *Let our Eyes* 1.21. Today, archaeologists look for evidence of this sort (and evidence of an attempt at concealment) in order to determine whether or not an image found in a domestic context was actually the object of worship. See Stirling, 22-23.

[962] Emmel, "Atripe," 171-72.

Roman pagan imagery, however, should be interpreted more cautiously, since some of this could have been merely decorative. While it might be true that Greco-Roman religious narratives were better known throughout the Empire than Egyptian religious narratives, and the associated imagery might have therefore been more accessible and attractive (because it was familiar) to a Christian audience,[963] Macrobius' (fl. early 5th cent.) *Saturnalia* is proof that there were still intellectuals, and possibly Christian ones,[964] living outside of Egypt who were interested in Egyptian religion well into Late Antiquity. Nilotic mosaics found all over the Roman Empire are further proof of a Greco-Roman audience for Egyptian imagery.[965] Christians like Shenoute might have argued that such imagery was inherently religious, but if there was such a thing as "mere decoration," it does not seem appropriate to assume that Egyptian imagery was inherently excluded from this category.[966]

That being said, "mere decoration" also aroused suspicion. A 382 law afforded protection to certain pieces of pagan imagery in Osrhoene, and justified this with a reference to the imagery's artistic value. But patrons of this so-called artwork were forbidden to raise their eyes to the imagery, a stipulation suggesting that this viewing practice was associated with worship.[967] How can a person enjoy a piece of

---

[963] Stirling, 24.

[964] Macrob., *Sat.* 1.7.14-15, 1.18.10, 1.19.10-17, 1.20.13-18, 1.21-11-14, 7.13.8-10. For the debate over Macrobius' religious predilections see for instance Chuvin, 127-28; Jones, *Between*, 157-57; Cameron, *Last*, 231-72.

[965] M. J. Versluys, *Aegyptiaca romana: Scenes of the Nilotic and the Roman Views of Egypt* (Leiden: Brill, 2002).

[966] The Isis/Harpocrates images, for instance. If the phalluses supposedly preserved in Egyptian temples (see chapter two) would have been barred from collection on the basis that they represented genitalia, so too would the phalluses supposedly preserved in Greco-Roman temples. We should be wary of making assumptions based on the alleged ethnic associations of an image.

[967] *Codex Theodosianus* 16.10.8; Chuvin, 54.

art if he is not allowed to look at it?[968] Given the debates in some Christian circles about the acceptability of artistic representation altogether, even if this imagery was somehow reclassified as "mere decoration," it was not a given that this step would have rendered the imagery inoffensive.[969]

If we take secularism as an indication of a person's "indifference" with regard to religion,[970] the only people capable of treating something as "mere decoration" should be the individuals who are utterly ignorant of the debate over the religious function of imagery and the acceptability of artistic representations (or particular forms of representation). The high status men and women who collected works of art with pagan themes, not as a sign of latent paganism, but rather as a sign of their education and cultural sophistication,[971] could hardly have been accused of

---

[968] Deligiannakis admits that the line between "devotional viewing and secular viewing" was obscure. Georgios Deligiannakis, "Pagans, Christians and Jews in the Aegean Islands: The Christianization of an Island Landscape," in Busine, 190. One might argue that a refusal to view an image, mimicking as that does practices associated with the evil eye, actually suggests fear that the image has the power to harm viewers, thereby confirming that the image is in fact animated. See Rachel Neis, "Eyeing Idols: Rabbinic Viewing Practices in Late Antiquity," *Jewish Quarterly Review* 102 (2012): 538. Yet authorities had good grounds for suspecting the presence of religious motivation in some viewing practices, for certain pagan circles recommended simple contemplation of imagery as a means of communication with the divine. Consider Libanius' depression when he could not view the statues at a sanctuary he was visiting (Lib.., *Or.* 1.201 [Fr. 174]), presumably because doing so would have been illegal. Was his depression that of an art aficionado, a pagan seeking communion with the divine, or both? Damascius makes much of his teacher' rejection of idolatry—Isidore did not care to worship idols but rather focused on the gods present within himself (Dam., *Isid.* 2.36)—but Damascius claimed to have personally experienced what looks very much like ecstasy upon the sight of a particular image (Dam., *Isid.* 63A). Was this a religious experience? Compare to the attitudes of some Victorian secularists, who argued that a secular person must look to his own works to find the consolation that he would otherwise find in religion. See Lawrence Besserman, ed., "Preface," in *Sacred and Secular in Medieval and Early Modern Cultures: New Essays* (NY: Palgrave MacMillan, 2006), xvi. One might argue that these secularists were doing just what the early Christian apologists accused the pagans of doing, turning their works into deities.

[969] This is true even if this debate was as limited as some scholars believe. See Alexander Badawy, *Coptic Art and Archaeology: The Art of the Christian Egyptians from the Late Antique to the Middle Ages* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1978), 274; Polański 46-50; Ernst Kitzinger, "The Cult of Images in the Age before Iconoclasm," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 8 (1954): 83-150; M. C. Murray, "The Art of the Early Church," *Month-London-Review of Christian Thought and World Affairs* 30 (1997): 388-91; Paul Finney, *The Invisible God: The Earliest Christians on Art* (NY: Oxford University Press, 1994); Erwin Goodenough, *Jewish Symbols in the Graeco-Roman World* (NY: Pantheon Books, 1953).

[970] Lawrence Besserman, "Introduction Sacred and Secular in Medieval and Early Modern Cultures: Issues and Approaches," in Besserman, 6.

[971] Cameron, *Last*, 706; Stirling, 230. One might argue that the use of what looks like "pagan (or secular)" (Cameron, "Themes," 14) themes in visual and written communication was really a question of cultural tastes, not religion. See Charles Hedrick, *History and Silence: Purge and Rehabilitation of Memory in Late*

ignorance[972] with regard to the issues at hand. Many of them must have been familiar with both pagan and Christian arguments against certain kinds of religious

---

Antiquity (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2000), xix; Stéphane Gioanni, "La Culture Profane et la Littérature Monastique en Occident," in *Les frontières du profane dans l'antiquité tardive*, eds. Éric Rebillard and Claire Sotinel (Rome: École francaise e Rome, 2010), 177. While this possibility might have existed, it cannot be taken as a given in light of heated academic debates over the distinction between culture and religion. Consider the modern controversy over identifying Islam as a religion as opposed to a culture. See Olivier Roy, *Globalized Islam: The Search for a New Ummah* (NY: Columbia University Press, 2004). Also see Robert Shorrock, *The Myth of Paganism: Nonnus, Dionysus and the World of Late Antiquity* (London: Bristol Classical Press, 2011), 7-8. In comparison to Alan Cameron's treatment of secularism, MacMullen's analysis is rather nuanced (MacMullen, *Paganism*, 106-107). Note MacMullen's observation that Alan Cameron's tendency to identify all non-Christian references as "secular" suggests that Cameron's list of "valid religions" is limited to Christianity (MacMullen, *Paganism*, 215n81). Alan Cameron acknowledges that Shenoute perceived religion as separate from culture, but Cameron believes that Shenoute was unique in this regard (Alan Cameron, "Poets and Pagans in Byzantine Egypt," in Bagnall, *Byzantine*, 40). Elsewhere, Alan Cameron argues that Christian rhetoric insisting that one could not be a Christian and appreciate pagan imagery meant ignoring the existence of a silent majority who believed the opposite (Cameron, *Last*, 706). Perhaps so, but then this would have been something of a deviation from established notions regarding the link between culture and religion, for ancient notions of ethnicity complicated the religion-culture division. As discussed more fully in the fifth chapter, ethnicity in antiquity was taken to include what we would consider culture as well as religion. Thus, when Christians attempted to posit Christianity as a universal *ethnos*, this was a reference to both culture *and* religion, not one or the other. Religion was quite simply inescapable; there was no "atheist" *ethnos*. One might argue that Christianity made a distinction between culture and religion possible—once a person had adopted Christianity, any practice or belief that could not be directly tied back to Christianity or justified via Christianity (tendentious though this link might have been), could have been labelled culture (or pagan, or, as Cameron likes to call it, secular). But the formation of this sphere would have reflected the transformation of existing concepts, not a self-evident or natural category as Alan Cameron implies. Finally, it is manifestly contradictory that the term "secular" is used to identify the *presence* of religious imagery devoid of religious content and the *removal* of that religious imagery and religious institutions from culture and society. David Carr points out that semi-literate cultures, like the Roman Empire, invest writing with a mysterious aura; all written material, regardless of subject matter, becomes invested with a measure of divinity as a consequence. David Carr, *Writing on the Tablet of the Heart: Origins of Scripture and Literature* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 289-90. See the following chapter for further discussion. The Classical mythology that some modern scholars and ancient writers classify as secular certainly provided a middle-ground for pagans, Jews, and Christians. Deligiannakis, 190. But was this middle-ground really neutral? This issue evokes questions regarding the construction of power and the degree to which subordinate parties are capable of expressing themselves in a dominate idiom. See the following chapter for further discussion.

[972] Alan Cameron writes "the 'silent majority' who contined to commission and admire such silverware [decorated with satyrs] has left no record…Educated contemporary observers would not have batted an eye, but the uneducated, unfamiliar with traditional representations, would no doubt have been outraged." Cameron, *Last*, 706. This characterization seems to lack some nuances. "Not batting an eye" is not the same thing as "indifferent." That being said, the indifference of Late Antique Jews to issues like this might be inferred from the decline of debate regarding the incident involving Gamaliel. Personal communication from Professor Hayim Lapin. Also see Catherine Hezser, "Material Culture and Daily Life," *Rabbinic Texts and the History of Late-Roman Palestine*, eds., Martin Goodman and and Philip S. Alexander (Oxford: Published for the British Academy by Oxford University Press, 2010), 301-18. However, silence on the subject of this debate in Jewish sources might simply indicate that they were intentionally ignoring evidence for paganism, as I argue Christians were doing. See the following chapter.

Consider Lucian's *Imagines*: he argued that it was not impious to compare a living woman with the statue of a goddess because in so doing he was comparing this woman to a piece of art made by man, not with a goddess (Lucian, *Imagines* 23). Lucian was not ignorant of the issues and could hardly have been called indifferent to them either (see discussion in Bussels, 151-52), even if he did not care to accept a religious paradigm of interpretation. On the existance of Christians who could have been considered ignorant in this regard and thus indifferent to the subject see Jonathan Z. Smith, *Drudgery Divine: On the Comparison of Early Christianities and the Religions of Late Antiquity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990); MacMullen, *Paganism*, 106-107. Also consider the particular problem posed by artists who converted to Christianity before the

imagery,[973] and some of them would have been familiar with Christian arguments against the acceptability of imagery altogether.[974] By collecting this art, these patrons were proving that they were *not* indifferent to these matters. Rather, they had decided, consciously or unconsciously, that artistic representation was acceptable and that the collection of imagery, pagan or not, did not threaten their identities as Christians. To this extent then, this imagery was profane,[975] but it was not inherently sinful, distinguishing it from manifestations of the profane that were deemed sinful or polluting to everyone at all times, or at least to those engaged in sacred activities.[976] Since there were surely

---

development of an extensive catalogue of stock Christian imagery. It has been suggested that as new pictorial subjects—*Christian* pictorial subjects—emerged for these artists, the traditional images were redefined as secular. See Brooklyn Museum, *Pagan and Christian Egypt: Egyptian Art from the First to the Tenth Century A.D.* (1941; repr., Brooklyn: Arno Press, Inc., 1969), 9-10.

[973] See chapter two; Claude Leppeley, "The Use of Secularized Latin Pagan Culture by Christians," in Gwynn, 477-92.

[974] It must also be acknowledged that the treatment of traditional themes also changed during this period. New subjects appeared; crosses and clothing were added to traditional images; and traditional imagery was incorporated into Christian contexts. See Klaus Wessel, *Coptic Art*. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1965), 39, 154-55; Badawy, 222, 260; Elzbieta Rodziewicz, *Bone and Ivory Carvings from Alexandria French Excavations 1992-2004* (Le Caire: Institut Francais d'archéologie orientale, 2007), 23. For additional sources see Mulryan, 70-86. It must mean something that an image, even if it was deemed mere decoration, was nevertheless thought to require Christianization via some sort of alteration. The change alone is proof that it was not a matter of indifference to either the artist or the audience that a subject was being portrayed in a particular manner. Avoidance, appropriation, and reinterpretation governed the transformation of imagery during this period. For this transformation within clearly religious space (temples and churches) see the following chapter.

[975] For examples of scholarship employing this term with reference to antiquity see for instance Loren Samons, *Empire of the Owl: Athenian Imperial Finance* (Stuttgart: Steiner, 2000), 325-26. Also see the collection of essays in Éric Rebillard and Claire Sotinel, eds., *Les Frontières du profane dans l'antiquité tardive* (Rome: École francaise e Rome, 2010).

[976] For an ancient source on the distinction between the sacred and the profane see Macrob., *Sat.* 3. Cf. Tert., *De spec.* 17. Also see Émile Durkheim, *Elementary Forms of Religious Life* (NY: Free Press, 1966). Cf. Scullion, 113n3. Markus, whose approach is somewhat more nuanced than most, differentiates between profane space/behavior/objects that were not considered inherently sinful, which he equates with the secular, and those which were considered inherently sinful, for which he proposes to retain the term profane. He admits that these subtle distinctions were not necessarily captured in the Latin terminology. See Robert Markus, "The Secular in Late Antiquity," in Rebillard, 353-61. Markus argues that Augustine saw the Church as secular insofar as its activity was confined to the earth and temporal history. Markus argues that it was the Donatists' identification of the "secular world" (that is, the non-Christian world) with sin that led Augustine to define the "secular" as theologically neutral. Robert Markus, *Saeculum: History and Society in the Theology of St. Augustine* (NY: Cambridge University Press, 1970), 179. Also note that before the emergence of Christianity, "saeculum" commonly indicated a hundred year timespan or merely a long period of time. Because the Christian deity was eternal, the term "saeculum" necessarily assumed profane connotations, being limited in scope (however lengthy). Augustine used the term to indicate any period of time, whether before or after the rise of Christianity, that was distinct from the history of the salvific project as narrated in prophecy. See Markus, *Saeculum*, 7-15.

examples of the last two categories,[977] we should endeavor to appreciate nuances in the degree to which something might have been considered profane.

Without a doubt, some owners identified pagan imagery as non-religious in order to retain possession of it, knowing that an open acknowledgment of the item's religious connotations would result in its seizure. Because owners could hardly have justified the possession of this imagery on the grounds that it was religiously significant as pagan imagery, their testimony cannot be taken as clear-cut evidence for the existence of a non-religious sphere. This means acknowledging, of course, that by corollary, some Christians probably identified imagery as religious in order to lay claim to it.[978] Either way, the distinction between religious and non-religious spheres of belief/activity/objects was far too tendentious for us to assume the existence of unambiguous, widely recognized categories.

Side-stepping these issues, scholars like Béatrice Caseau attempt to trace the development of what looks like a secular sphere in terms of a division between

---

[977] Consider the phalluses supposedly put up in Alexandrian temples, and paraded by Theophilus in an effort to embarrass pagans during the conflict surrounding the "fall" of the Serapeum (Socrates, *Hist. eccl.* 5.16). Such an item would no doubt have fallen into the category of the profane and sinful to Christians, collectors included.

[978] Note the economic motives cited in the first century Jewish-pagan violence in Alexandria (Philo, *Leg.* 119-13), the mid-third and early fourth century persecutions of Christians in Egypt (Euseb., *Hist. eccl.* 6.41.1, 8.14.15), the Arian persecution of the orthodox in mid-fourth century Alexandria (Socrates, *Hist. eccl.* 2.28; Theod., *Hist. eccl.* 2.11), and Valens' persecution of philosophers (Zos. 4.14-15). Note, too, that the privatization of imagery previously located in the public sphere (see Caseau, 439) would have represented an inversion of the above process by which hidden imagery was made public. On the role of economic interest in debates over the identification of imagery as either sacred or profane, a designation as one or the other serving to justify seizure or possession, see Besserman, "Introduction," 14-15. On the value of the materials used to construct traditional Egyptian idols see Lorton, "Theology," 126. On the economic profits reaped by Christians seizing idols and attacking temples in Egypt and elsewhere see Lib. 30.11-12; Pall., *Anth. Pal.* 9.528; Socrates, *Hist. eccl.* 5.16; Eunap., *VS* 470-73; Polański, 113; Kákosy, 72-75; Westerfeld, 8. As mentioned above, Shenoute's conflict with Gessius also had an economic aspect, in the context of which Shenoute's seizure of Gessius' property takes on an entirely different appearance—suggesting a desire to deprive Gessius of financial, and only incidentally religious, resources—even if Shenoute did not keep the proceeds. Christians certainly benefitted from Macarius of Tkōw's alleged efforts to dismantle a pagan temple. After the temple was destroyed, the remaining pagans threw their property into wells and fled, leaving their abandoned dwellings for occupation by the Christians. Of course, such avaristic behavior on the part of the Christians might have been justified, given that the pagans had been killing children as part of a ritual to locate treasure (Pseudo-Dioscorus, *The Panegyric of Macarius of Tkōw* 5.2, 5.11). On the treasure-hunting motif in hagiographical literature see Westerman, 10.

private and public—rather than religious and non-religious—spheres of activity. She argues that the emergence of a secular sphere in antiquity can be observed in discourse declaring that religion was a private matter.[979] This implies the existence of something akin to an ancient notion of modern privacy rights. This is somewhat anachronistic. The insistence on what looks like privacy rights was in fact a disingenuous effort to avert religious violence without addressing the issue head-on. Since religious activity carried out in private was traditionally regarded with deep suspicion, this strategy was at best a diversion, not a genuine attempt at realigning categories of belief or activity.[980]

According to other scholars, the emergence of a secular sphere can be detected in the development of an ancient version of what looks like the modern separation between church and state. R. Markus argues that traces of the modern concept of securalism, as the exercise of state neutrality with regard to the practice of religion,[981] can be perceived in Augustine's plea for state neutrality in religious matters. If Augustine was serious about this,[982] he was by

---

[979] Béatrice Caseau, "Late Antique Paganism: Adaptation under Duress," in Lavan, 127-31. A focus on interior forms of devotion by philosophers like Plotinus fostered the sort of quiet faith that remained paganism's safest outlet once public rites were banned. So while Alan Cameron is correct that some pagans, like Plotinus, were probably embarrassed by pagan mythology (Cameron, *Last*, 356-57), the development of contemplation as a mode of worship—something that would not show up in the archaeological record—demonstrates that the absence of explicit evidence for worship cannot be taken as proof that an item was considered mere decoration or part of a secular sphere.

[980] See for instance Euseb., *Vit. Const.* 2.71; Epiph., *Pan.* 68.4.1; Lib. 30.18; Dam., *Isid.* 7.111. But also see Euseb., *Vit. Const.* 3.64-65. On the traditional suspicion of private religious practices see for instance Chuvin, 30-31, 71-72. Note how, after the sack of Rome in 410, Zosimus complained that the calamity could be blamed on Christian officials who refused the *public* performance of the pagan rituals that could have saved the city. Proper, efficacious religion, by definition in this case, was *state* religion and thus public. Zos. 5.41. Chuvin, 83.

[981] Akeel Bilgrami, *Secularism, Identity, and Enchantment* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014), 10; Richley Crapo, *Anthropology of Religion: The Unity and Diversity of Religions* (NY: McGraw Hill, 2003), 265-66. Some scholars of antiquity argue that the plurality of religions in antiquity is evidence that a secular sphere must have been active. See for instance Éric Rebillard and Claire Sotinel, "Introduction," in Rebillard, 3-14. The implication is that secularism is akin to tolerance, but there is a difference between tolerance of different totalizing beliefs and tolerance of different practices. In antiquity, different pagan beliefs and practices might have been looked down upon and even condemned as *superstitio* (see chapter six) but a person could very well have believed that the beliefs of diverse peoples were correct, even those belonging to the Jews and Christians.

[982] He was certainly not above calling for the state to suppress heresy. See Markus, *Saeculum*, 54-55, 134-46, 154-55.

no means voicing an opinion that was universally-held. Christians like Eusebius clearly hoped that the empire would become an instrument of salvation, a Christian empire.[983] And to the extent that secularism is defined as neutrality, meaning tolerance,[984] it is inappropriate to use the term to describe any ancient person, living as he would have been in a period when religious identity was so suspect, as demonstrated by the prevalence of persecution, and some religious identities, like so-called atheism, were inherently anathema.

Even if scholars like Richard Lim and Scott Scullion are correct about Greco-Roman states defining a non-religious sphere of activity as a matter of governance—laws distinguishing between religious matters and state matters[985]—these states nevertheless took a serious interest in dictating religious affairs as a matter of governance.[986] Indeed, until the Christian emperor Gratian (reigned 367-383) refused the position of *pontifex maximus*, the Roman emperor was the leading religious authority in the empire.[987] In the growing fissure between the emperor and religious leadership—especially as bishops and popes began to challenge the authority of the emperor—secularism, if it did exist, was perhaps fostered in the sense of a division between church and state, but this division must have remained

---

[983] Euseb., *Vit. Const.* 1.1. Also see Markus, *Saeculum,* 48. Cf. Sandwell, 131.

[984] *Contra* scholars who contend that neutrality and intolerance are reconcilable, as implied by Busine, "Introduction," 5. If, when push comes to shove, neutrality buckles, then it might be the sort of secularism that modern critics attack (that is, secularism that conceals anti-Muslim, pro-Christian bias under a mask of neutrality, as discussed below), but it is *not* the ideal of nuetral religiously indifferent secularism that scholars of antiquity sometimes treat it as.

[985] Lim, "Christianization," 497-511; Scullion, 111-30. For ancient sources discussing the distinction between the sacred and profane, consider legal references to the distinction between religious and profane space with regard, for instance, to burial grounds (on which see the next chapter) in *Digest* 11.7.8.

[986] The *idios logos*, a government official, was assigned during the reign of Augustus to oversee religious affairs. When *boulai* were granted to the *metropoleis* in the second century, these officials assumed oversight of the temples. The Egyptian priesthood was required to report to a government official every year, government permission was required for the circumcision of new priests, government officials oversaw various religious festivals, and papyri dated as late as the fourth century attest to government involvement in temple maintenance. See Alston, *City,* 201-202; Moyer, *Limits,* 270-73; Frankfurter, *Roman Egypt,* 41, 71, 76, 122. For a late second century application to a *strategos* as the first step in the process of appointment as a priest see *P.Tebtunis* 292. For an early second century list of temple revenue and priests submitted to the *strategos* every year see *P.Tebtunis* 298. The interest of a non-priestly class in religious matters can also be observed in papyri documenting trade guilds gathering for religious celebrations up into the fourth century. Frankfurter, *Roman Egypt,* 72. Finally, the political implications of religious activity are well-demonstrated by the crackdown on mid-fourth century visitors to the oracle of Bes at Abydos.

[987] Zos. 4.36. Also see Rutledge, 179.

controversial, with each side arguing for more turf. The emperor continued to play a role in religion, using the military to install patriarchs like George the Cappadocian and sending letters to the inhabitants of cities like Alexandria in order to encourage the rejection of patriarchs who had fallen out of imperial favor, like Athanasius.[988] Meanwhile, bishops were vying for what scholars sometimes call secular authority, meaning that these bishops were attempting to seize authority over economic, military, and/or administrative spheres of government.[989] The degree to which any of these spheres of activity were ever "secular"—if by that we mean free of religious trappings—can be contested.[990] Nonetheless, ancient sources *did* identify the assumption of fiscal, military, and administrative authority by the bishops as a problem,[991] and some scholars do explore the evolution of a secular sphere in these terms following the rise of Christianity.[992] But the participation of priests in worldly matters was certainly not a novelty for pagans.[993] So it was not the mixture of religious and

---

[988] See for instance Sozom., *Hist. eccl.* 2.22.

[989] For instance, Fowden, "Bishops," 57.

[990] Consider for instance the appearance of religious imagery on coinage whether pagan or Christian; the offering of religious oaths and sacrifices in the context of battle, followed by prayers and the erection of standards bearing the Christian cross; and the provision of state funding for building temples, and then for demolishing temples and building churches. Granted that there is a debate over which religion some of this imagery was meant to reference (see for instance Chuvin, 26-28), it was still religious. See Elsner, 252.

[991] For criticism of the Egyptian patriarchs in this regard see, for instance, Socrates, *Hist. eccl.* 7.7; Sozom., *Hist. eccl.* 2.22. The presumed absence of worldly interests (and the bias which that entailed) is one of the reasons that holy men and women were sought out for assistance in worldly matters. This dynamic constructed the very dichotomy (sacred versus wordly) that it undermined.

[992] Besserman, "Introduction," 7. Markus argues that Late Antiquity saw a process of desecularization in which an attachment to *civitas*—by which he seems to mean a social, political, and economic commitment to the city and the empire, and the derivation of personal identity from this commitment—was displaced by attachment to religious identities. R. A. Markus, "The Sacred and the Secular: From Augustine to Gregory the Great," *The Journal of Theological Studies* 36 (1985): 84-96. Taken to an extreme, sloppy use of the term "secular" with regard to these Late Antique developments would produce utter confusion: as the bishops assumed secular powers, secularization ceased. Translation: As the bishops assumed the state's fiscal, military, and administrative fuctions, a separation between church and state ceased to exist. With regard to the process of so-called desecularization, it seems dangerous to assume that a commitment to *civitas* before this point would have been devoid of religious sentiment, if only because the products of eugertism often included religious imagery. One should also take care to avoid an approach that veers too closely to a now defunct decline model that blames Christianity for a deterioration of *civitas* and the concomittant collapse of the Roman Empire.

[993] I admit, however, that it might have been a novelty for traditional Egyptian pagans. While priests in the pharaonic age were certainly involved with politics, the Greeks, and (to a greater extent) Romans endeavored to prevent this. The *Gnomon of the Idios Logon* stipulated that priests should occupy themselves solely with cult matters. *Der Gnomon des Idios Logos*, eds. Emil Seckel, Wilhelm Schubart, and Woldemar Uxkull-Gyllenband (Milano: Cisalpino-Goliardica, 1973). Also see Dieleman, *Priests*, 209; Wilburn, 61). Yet the image of a priestly class living separately from the rest of society might have been more of an ideal than the norm, and the legal steps

worldly matters that was new, but rather the rise of a religious class (including monks, priests, bishops, patriarchs, and so on) that did not, as a rule, participate in politics, the economy, or military matters; the criticism that arose when this class did become involved in such matters; and the mechanism by which it became involved (through the Church rather than government appointment).[994]

Finally, it is by no means a given that today's so-called secular societies have managed to entirely separate religious and worldly matters. A fierce international debate is currently raging over the degree to which secularism as it is currently practiced is actually devoid of religious content and can be considered a neutral or natural state of affairs. Some scholars argue that secularism, as it is practiced in the West, is actually a new form of Christianity and that the promotion of secularization is a form of religious imperialism. Embedded, as secularist discourse is, in a narrative of progress,[995] with secularism posited as a pseudo-evolutionary step in the process of

---

taken to ensure this suggest that the opposite was often the case. Priestly oversight of cult matters certainly involved economic maintenance of the temples and the priests who cared for them. As state support declined, priests would have had an incentive to advertise their services as holy men and women, playing up the stereotypical image of the exotic, isolated priest in order to attract clients. Not for nothing is this image more common in Greco-Roman texts than Egyptian ones. Dieleman, *Priests,* 9, 286. See for instance, Chaeremon's portrait of an Egyptian priestly class that secluded itself from society (Chaeremon, fr. 10). Cf. Luc., *Philops.* 35. On Chaeremon's portrait as an idealization of Stoic philosophers rather than Egyptian priests see for instance, Dieleman, *Priests,* 8, 251. On Chaeremon's portrait reflecting *topoi* common to Greco-Roman portraits of barbarian religious classes see van der Horst, *Chaeremon,* 56n1. As James Goehring's discussion of the economic activities of the Christian monks in Egypt demonstrates (see James Goehring, "The World Engaged: The Social and Economic World of Early Egyptian Monasticism," in Goehring, 134-44), the lofty image of a Christian ascetic cut off from the world seems less a reflection of reality and more a product of hagiographical polemic. See the following chapter for further discussion.

[994] Arnaldo Momigiliano contended that the lack of a pagan priestly class and the fact that religious instruction was not a significant part of education were indicative of the inherently secular nature of paganism. Arnaldo Momigliano, *On Pagans, Jews, and Christians* (Middletown, CN: Wesleyan University Press), 123. If Momigliano was correct, then worldly and religious matters were combined as a matter of necessity. As it so happens, the maintenance of priestly functions within particular families in traditional Egyptian paganism challenges Momigliano's first assumption. But I would argue that religious (what many scholars call "secular") instruction was a significant part of everyone's education. If by "religious" Momigliano means "ritual," then it was certainly a major part of the education of elite Egyptian priests.

[995] C. A. Hoffman's defense of the progress model is misguided. "Progress" is not inherently morally superior; anti-slavery platforms (to use Hoffman's example) can be justified on moral grounds having nothing to do with progress, in fact this is advisable given that the racist rhetoric behind evolutionary models of "progress" has been used to justify slavery; and care should be taken to avoid conflation of a historian's position regarding human rights in his own time with anachronistic judgments of the past. C. A. Hoffman, "Fiat Magia," in *Magic*

modernization, the promotion of secularism allegedly carries racist undertones, implying that states who do not embrace secularism (alias, modern Western post-Enlightenment Christianity) are intellectually and evolutionarily stunted, and this belief is used to justify violence against (non-Christian) non-secular states, with the assumption that these (non-Christian) non-secularist states are subject to the sort of backwards thinking that can only be countered by force.[996]

Alan Cameron's usage of the term "secular" is obviously meant to suggest that secularism can look religious (pagan) while having no real-world impact, for he denies that an attraction to pagan themes had more than a cursory connection to an anti-Christian social, political, or military campaign in Late Antiquity.[997] By this line of thinking, modern Western secularism might look Christian, but it has nothing to do with galvanizing military efforts against non-Christian states. In light of the discussion above, this is a tendentious claim which, if it is going to appear in ancient scholarship, even by implication,[998] ought to be defended, especially given that so many modern critics link the Christian slant of Western secularism to real-world consequences in the form of political and military propaganda, the very thing that Cameron disavows in connection to Late Antique secularism.

---

and Ritual in the Ancient World, eds. Paul Mirecki and Marvin Meyer (Boston: Brill, 2002), 182n10. On the evolutionary model of progress and its racist implications see Marger, 30-31.

[996] Asad; William Cavanaugh, *The Myth of Religious Violence: Secular Ideology and the Roots of Modern Conflict* (NY: Oxford University Press, 2009), 5; Graeme Smith, *A Short History of Secularism* (NY: I. B. Tauris, 2008), 3; Crapo, 238; José Casanova, "Public Religions Revisited," in *Religion: Beyond a Concept*, ed. Hent de Vries (NY: Fordham University Press, 2008), 109.

[997] Cameron, *Last*, 4, 704.

[998] And it *is* implied. Since Cameron makes so little effort to define secularism or to point out the differences between ancient and modern incarnations, the reader has no choice but to assume that he believes they are one and the same.

To the extent that a modern person believes that he is non-Christian and says that he is a secularist when his language is awash with Christian references and his behavior reflects Christian practices, this might approximate the position of the so-called secular Late Antique Christian who is so popular in scholarship: a person who (according to scholars) believed[999] he was Christian but used language awash in pagan references and adopted some pagan practices. But is "secular" really the best way to describe this person? If anyone is guilty of antiquarian pagan tendencies (not pagan religious faith), it was surely Christians like this, not Damascius, whose religious predilections have been dismissed by some scholars as mere antiquarianism.[1000] While the deterioration of knowledge regarding traditional Egyptian paganism is certainly observable from works like *The Hieroglyphica* attributed to Horapollo, which shows little understanding of actual hieroglyphs,[1001] this decline was accompanied by a fusion of syncretic traditions. Interest in a deteriorating body of learning looks very much like antiquarianism to a scholar who considers syncretism a bankrupt form of religion.[1002] But for scholars who recognize

[999] The fact that both sides of this debate—those who attribute pagan *beliefs* to users of pagan imagery and those who attribute Christian *beliefs* to users of pagan imagery—claim to enjoy clairvoyant insight into Late Antique minds is reason enough to consider their findings suspect. The more cautious approach of R. Shorrock and M. Kahlos, to be discussed in chapter six, seems more appropriate. Shorock and Kahlos take a helpful stab at moving this discussion beyond misleading secular-religious dichotomies by proposing that we simply accept that certain individuals in antiquity cultivated an ambiguos religious status. Shorrock, 123; Kahlos, *Debate*. Also see Sandwell, 24-25. For scholarship associating the use of pagan imagery with pagan beliefs see for instance A. Alföldi and Magyar Numizmatikai Társulat, *Die Kontorniaten: Ein verkanntes Propagandamittel Der Stadt-Römischen Heidnischen Aristokratie in ihrem Kampfe gegen das Christliche Kaisertum* (Budapest: Magyar Numizmatikai Társulat, 1943); Hedrick; H. Bloch, "A New Document of the Last Pagan Revival in the West," *Harvard Theological Review* 38 (1945): 199-244. For scholarship denying that pagan belief was associated to the use of pagan imagery see the forcible argument put forth by Cameron, *Last*, 6, 35, 111, 206, 256, 271, 357, 376, 401, 404-405, 474-75, 637, 697.

[1000] Haas, 171. Cf. van Minnen, 74. Partly for reasons that will be discussed below, I question use of the term "antiquarian" in this context. After all, how does one define or measure "real" religious sentiment? Also see Athanassiadi, "Persecution," 12.

[1001] See chapter two and Dieleman, *Priests*, 7; Fowden, *Hermes*, 64, 184-86; Iversen, *Myth*, 48

[1002] See chapter six.

syncretism as a sign of religious vitality, fourth-fifth century Alexandrian paganism was, if not exactly flourishing, then certainly not dead, the incorporation of Christian, Syrian, and Arabian influences showing the growth of paganism in new and exciting ways.[1003] By comparison, it was the self-avowed Christian interested in pagan imagery for aesthetic and historical reasons who was the antiquarian.

Secularism, as the concept is currently employed by ancient scholars, means so many different things, including the removal of religious significance from objects and space, the use of religious references devoid of religious content, and involvement in worldly matters whether or not this was thought to be inherently sinful. Yet Alan Cameron admits that it is simplistic to insist on a dichotomy between Christian and pagan imagery.[1004] Peter Brown argues that it is often impossible to distinguish between the secular and the non-secular, the pagan and the non-pagan, during this period.[1005] So instead of settling for ambiguity, why not be more precise? The term "antiquarian," for instance, might be used to describe the penchant of Christians for pagan imagery and language. The term "worldly" could be used to

[1003] Note Christian violence against temples of Mithras, Dionysus, and Priapus, some of whom (especially Dionysus) had Egyptian associations, though it is unknown whether or not these associations were active in the temples in question. Note, too, that when Julian condemned the attack on George, he reminded the Alexandrians that they were Greeks (Julian, *Ep.* 21 380D). Whether he meant that they shared a religion, or a culture, or a biological race, or all of the above, he seems not to have recognized any Egyptian elements. Of the pagans who fled Alexandria after the "fall" of the Serapeum and named by Socrates, one was associated with the worship of Zeus, and another with a traditional Egyptian ape-god (Socrates, *Hist. eccl.* 5.16). On Christian, Syrian, and Arabian influences see Epiph., *Pan.* 51.22.8-11; Dam., *Isid.* 3.41, 5.72 F, 5.76E, 7.128, 8.128, 8.138; Athanassiadi, "Introduction," 34; G. W. Bowersock, *Hellenism in Late Antiquity* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1990), 23-28. The lack of a clear "ethnic" basis for paganism as a whole raises an important question with regard to the ethnic-basis for the violence of this period. If ethnicity represents already existing social networks based on kinship ties (imagined or not) that might be called upon to act in the case of religious violence, lack of a clear "ethnic" basis might have undermined the pagan ability to mobilize.

[1004] Cameron, *Last*, 697.

[1005] Brown, "Art," 18.

demarcate participation in profane activities, sinful or not.[1006] Use of these terms will still leave us with the challenge of sketching how these concepts or spheres of activity were constructed—several Egyptologists have challenged the degree to which traditional Egyptian pagan life could have accommodated a non-religious sphere of activity or thought[1007]—but it will help us to avoid some of the confusion sparked by conflicting definitions of the term "secularism" and the modern debate over just how this concept is applied.

Conclusion

While I have questioned our ability to know with absolute certainty all of the particulars of any one conflict in the history of religious violence in fourth and fifth century Alexandria, I have nevertheless endeavored to suggest a model for explaining just how this violence came about. Moral crusaders encouraged varying levels of aggression against particular targets, stereotyping their opponents and creating an atmosphere in which violence was more likely to break out. The actual triggers for violence are difficult to pinpoint, but this ambiguity is historically significant, indicating the function of multiple, sometimes conflicting potential triggers that varied from person to person or group to group, as participants had the time to consider their actions and possibly change their minds.

The traumatic nature of a violent event meant that it assumed significance in the historical memory, but this memory was subject to manipulation. Pagans clearly converted in the aftermath, perhaps in part because of a deficit in the sort of

[1006] "Profane history" could be used for Augustine's category for events and time transpiring outside the salvific project, whether or not this was deemed sinful. Markus, *Saeculum,* 7-15.

[1007] Baines, 87. Cf. Loprieno, "Defining," 49.

galvanizing discourse that had inspired Christian resistance in the face of persecution. The accompanying transformation of imagery and of sacred space was by no means straightforward. Adaptation of preexisting forms to Christian life—by rejection, adoption, reinterpretation, or modification, all of these representing a kind of violence upon those preexisting forms—demonstrates that the audience was anything but indifferent in these matters. To downplay the complexity of these issues by suggesting that an object was mere decoration (always *naturally* and *obviously* decoration to everyone) or that space was merely profane (always *naturally* and *obviously* profane to everyone) is to miss out on both the extent to which this treatment represented a kind of violence and the critical debate that was taking place over the way in which people constructed categories and interacted with their world.

Chapter 5: Hagiographies: Overturning the Wisdom of the Wise and Colonizing the Periphery

Allegedly, the Christian monks upon whom the current chapter focuses differed greatly from the Christians of the previous chapters. Unlike the apologists and the learned Christians who patronized so-called "secular" (more aptly titled "antiquarian") pagan culture, the ideal monk was hailed as a man with no learning or culture. He was a martyr, but his suffering was inflicted not at the hands of pagan persecutors allied with the government but through his own pursuit of an ascetic regime which provoked attacks from demonic foes. He was disinterested in the pursuit of the power associated with the patriarchs and was opposed to violence. By converse, his pagan opponents were learned, cultured, addicted to bodily pleasure, power-hungry, and prone to violence. Yet the situation was not this clear-cut. Contradictions and blurred boundaries suggest that this Christian-pagan dichotomy was constructed to facilitate both internal Christian power struggles and external conversion projects, as Christians sought to achieve the conversion of non-Greco-Romans. Posed on the brink of the known world, the monks of Egypt were ideal for missionary work, bringing Christianity to those of Egyptian and Ethiopian descent. The monks crossed over the boundary between the past and the present, erasing Egypt's traditional pagan past to recreate the biblical past on contemporary Egyptian soil. They even crossed the threshold between life and death, conquering the realm of the pagan afterlife soul by soul. Discomfort over the imperialistic implications of this activity has fueled a flurry of scholarly debate that has stalled—like the debate over the monks' actual level of learning—in binary oppositions, as scholars take opposing

sides on the question of evidence for ethnic prejudice in early Christianity. The more fruitful approach suggested here considers the ways in which early Christian discourse flouted binary interpretations. The polyphonic nature of this discourse is one of the reasons why it was so popular and influential, with stories that would have appealed to a diverse audience.

What does this discussion add to existing scholarship? It begins by assessing the monks' alleged aversion to violence, a quality others scholars have noted, then moves on to an analysis of the monks' learning, as contrasted against that of the pagan philosophers who sometimes sought out these monks for debate. A new synthesis of several lines of evidence illuminates how the image of the contradictorily learned/unlearned monk played upon preexisting concepts about the nature of wisdom and internal Christian rivalries. Competition with learned pagans helped to establish boundaries both internal and external. Since Egypt was credited in some circles as the source of Greco-Roman learning, this section of the discussion has important implications for what follows, a look at how pilgrim narratives ignored physical evidence of this Egyptian learning in the monastic landscape, as if the monks had managed to transport themselves back in time, to a pre-pharaonic past. This phenomenon has been noticed by previous scholars, but they have failed to explore the degree to which this complicates questions as to the demise of paganism. When monastic interest in the pagan past did enter into hagiographical literature, this interest was often limited to the pagan dead, with monks reusing pagan tombs as dwellings and supposedly conversing with pagan ghosts. Though other scholars have discussed the monastic interest in pagan funerary space and ghosts, the imperialistic

implications of these activities have yet to be fully appreciated. The question of imperialism brings this discussion to the final section, which looks at the conversion of the Ethiopians and Nubians who represented alterity not only to the Greco-Romans but to those of Egyptian descent as well. While Egyptologists have long appreciated the existence of an Egyptian rivalry with Ethiopians and Nubians during the pre-Christian period, the significance of this rivalry for early Christian conversion accounts has not been completely realized. I suggest some new interpretations for the hagiographical material and point out the polyphonic nature of the discourse. In so doing, I provide a means by which we can move beyond the faction-ridden state of current scholarship.

Before we proceed, some background is required. Scholars have debated the degree to which Christian monasticism was inspired by traditional Egyptian pagan, Greco-Roman pagan, Jewish, and East Asian models.[1008] While I avoid taking a position in this debate, I continue the effort begun in the previous chapters to explore the ways in which boundaries were blurred between, on the one hand, pagans, Christians, and Jews, and, on the other hand, Greco-Romans, Jews, and Egyptians, while also adding Ethiopians and Nubians to the mix.

[1008] James Goehring, *Ascetics, Society, and the Desert: Studies in Early Egyptian Monasticism* (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 1999), 1-38; Douglas Burton-Christie, *The Word in the Desert: Scripture and the Quest for Holiness in Early Christian Monasticism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 36-43; Dunand, "Ptolemaic," 306-10; C. Bradford Welles, "The Garden of Ptolemagrius at Panopolis," *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association* 77 (1946): 204; Hugh Evelyn-White, *The Monasteries of the Wadi 'N Natrun* (New York: Arno Press, 1973), 2:4-9; Hermann Weingarten, *Der Ursprung des Mönchtums im nachconstantinischen Zeitalter* (Gotha: FA Perthes, 1877). Also see Fowden, "Pagan Holy Man," 33-59; Robert Kirschner, "The Vocation of Holiness in Late Antiquity," *Vigiliae Christianae* 38 (1984): 105-24; Peter Brown, The Rise and Function of the Holy Man in Late Antiquity" *Journal of Roman Studies* 61 (1971): 80-101; Patricia Cox Miller, *Biography in Late Antiquity: A Quest for the Holy Man* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983).

The main sources for this discussion are the *Vita Antonii*,[1009] the *Life of Aaron*, the *Vita prima graeca Pachomii*, the *Vita bohairice Pachomii*, the *Paralipomena*, the *Life of Paul of Thebes*, Palladius' (363/364-420/430) *Historia Lausica*, the *Historia monarchorum in Aegypto*, the *Apophthegmata patrum*, and the *Pratum spirituale*. The *Vita Antonii* and the *Life of Aaron* were mentioned in previous chapters. Pachomius (c. 292-346), the subject of the *Vita prima graeca Pachomii*, the *Vita bohairice Pachomii*, and the *Paralipomena*, gained renowned as a founder of a communal form of monasticism. Scholars still dispute the relationship between the hagiographies composed about Pachomius and the relative date at which they were written. However, it is safe to assume that these texts were composed in Late Antique Egypt by monks who relied on information obtained by interviewing Pachomius' associates, as well as previously written records.[1010] Jerome (c. 347-c. 420), the author of the *Life of Paul of Thebes*, was deeply interested in Egyptian monasticism, and besides composing a hagiography of Paul of Thebes—who supposedly predated Antony as the first monk—translated Pachomius' monastic *Rules* (*Praecepta*) into Latin, a translation that served to foster a boom in Western monasticism.[1011]

[1009] On the explosion of translations that were quickly generated see G. J. M. Bartelink, ed., *Athanase d'Aexandrie: Vie d'Antoine* (Paris: Èditions du Cerf, 1994), 95-100; Samuel Rubenson, *The Letters of St. Antony: Origenist Theology, Monastic Tradition and the Making of a Saint* (Lund: Lund University Press, 1990), 127-28; Barnes, *History*, 160-61. On the *Vita Antonii* in general see Hermann Dörries, *Die Vita Antonii als Geschichtsquelle* (Gottingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1949); Rubenson, 126-44; William Harmless, *Desert Christians: An Introduction to the Literature of Early Monasticism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 76-77, 103-104; Graham Gould, "The *Vita Antonii* and the Origins of Christian Monasticism in Fourth-Century Egypt," *Medieval History* I (1991): 3-11.

[1010] On Pachomius' career and the various *Lives* composed in his honor see Harmless, 115-63; Armand Veilleux, ed., *Pachomian Koinonia* (Kalamazoo MI: Cistercian Publications, Inc., 1981), 1:1-22; Philip Rosseau, *Pachomius: The Making of a Community in Fourth-Century Egypt* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985).

[1011] On whether or not Paul of Thebes actually existed see Barnes, *History* 181-82; Harmless, 105. For Jerome see J. N. D. Kelly, *Jerome: His Life, Writings, and Controversies* (New York: Harper & Row, 1975); Susan Weingarten, *The Saint's Saints: Hagiography and Geography in Jerome* (Boston: Brill, 2005). For discussion of Jerome's attitude towards Greco-Roman learning (an important topic in the discussion below) see Samuel Rubenson, "Philosophy and Simplicity: The Problem of Classical Education in Early Christian

The rest of the texts studied in this chapter are attributed to pilgrims who visited Egypt and collected stories about the monks living there. The first author, Palladius, based his *Historia Lausica*, written in Greek, on stories he supposedly collected from monks he met in Egypt while pursuing his own study of monasticism. The anonymous Greek *Historia monarchorum in Aegypto*, dated to c. 400, repeats many of Palladius' stories, but claims to reflect original research, and resembles a travelogue, describing the journey of seven Palestinian monks down the Nile over the course of five months from 394 to 395. Rufinus of Aquileia, author of one of Church histories discussed in the previous chapter, also visited Egypt around this time and translated the *Historia monachorum* into Latin, adding some details from his own travels. Variations on these stories appeared yet again in the c. late fifth or early sixth century Greek *Apophthegmata patrum*, or the *Sayings of the Desert Fathers*, which purports to reflect the oral testimony of Coptic-, Greek- and Latin-speaking informants regarding the activities of monks living in Egypt during the fourth and fifth centuries.[1012] The c. 600 *Pratum spirituale* was put together by John Moschus (c. 550-619) and, like the pilgrim accounts, is a collection of stories, presumably gathered by John, who fled Egypt in 615 when the Persians invaded.[1013]

A great deal of scholarship has gone into studying the processes by which all of these accounts were collected and recorded, with arguments continuing to rage

---

Biography," in *Greek Biography and Panegyric in Late Antiquity*, eds. Thomas Hägg and Philip Rousseau (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 120-21n30.

[1012] Harmless, 167-274; Rubenson, *Letters*, 147-52; Andrew Cain, "The Greek *Historia monachorum in Aegypto* and Athanasius' *Vita Antonii*," *Vigiliae Christianae* 67 (2013): 349-63.

[1013] John Wortley, "Translator's Note," in *The Spritual Meadow* (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1992), ix-xx. On John Moschus see Phil Booth, *Crisis of Empire: Doctrine and Dissent at the End of Late Antiquity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013), 90-139; Brenda Llewellyn Ihssen, *John Moschos' Spiritual Meadow: Authority and Autonomy at the End of the Antique World* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014).

regarding the reliability of the extant texts.[1014] The discussion below assumes that these stories were supposed to be true and that it was believed that visitors[1015] could have collected similar accounts had they contacted informants living in the region where these accounts were set. For the sake of convenience, these accounts will be referred to as either "pilgrim accounts" or as "hagiographical" material, the term "hagiography" being taken to mean no more than that these texts were composed about people pursuing a religious vocation in a way that consciously set them apart from others. Usage of the term "hagiography" should not be taken as a commentary on the veracity of the account or a reference to the sanctity of the protagonists, especially since some of these accounts challenge that sanctity. Finally, it is assumed that the attitudes expressed in any given text potentially reflect not merely (or not even) the attitudes of an actual desert father, as either the subject of the story or the

[1014] On the *Sayings*, see for instance Wilhelm Bousset, *Apophthegmata: Studien zur Geschichte des ältesten Mönchtums* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1923); Guy Jean-Claude, *Recherches sur la tradition grecque des Apophthegmata patrum* (Bruxelles: Société des Bollandistes, 1962); Antoine Guillaumont, *Études sur la spiritualité de l'Orient chrétien* (Maine-& -Loire: Abbaye de Bellefontaine, 1996); Lucien Regnault, *Les pères du désert à travers leur apophtegmes* (Sabl-Sur-Sarthe: Solesmes, 1987); John Wortley, "Introduction," in *The Book of the Elders: Sayings of the Desert Fathers: The Systematic Collection* (Trappist, Kentucky: Cistercian Publications, 2012), ix-xxi; Burton-Christie, 76-103; Graham Gould, *The Desert Fathers on Monastic Community* (New York: Clarendon Press, 1993), 5-25; Rubenson, *Letters*, 145-62; Harmless, 169-71; 248-50, 291; William Harmless, "Remembering Poemen Remembering: The Desert Fathers and the Spirituality of Memory," *Church History* 69 (2000): 485n12; Marinides, 263n108.

[1015] The definitions and nature of "pilgrimage" and "pilgrim" are debated, but as the below discussion does not overly focus on the experiences of pilgrims as pilgrims or on the nature of pilgrimage, an extended discussion of the definitions for these terms is superfluous. For a discussion of cross-disciplinary approaches to pilgrimage see Simon Coleman, "Pilgrimage," in *The Blackwell Companion to the Study of Religion*, ed. Robert Segal (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), 385-96. For an anthropological discussion of pilgrimage that is several decades old but is still, in my opinion, the best theoretical treatment of the subject see the work of the Turners. For example, Victor Turner and Edith Turner, *Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture: Anthropological Perspectives* (NY: Columbia University Press, 1978). For pilgrimage in antiquity see for instance Bernhard Kötting, *Peregrinatio Religiosa: Wallfahrten in der Antike und das Pilgerwesen in der alten Kirche* (Münster: Regensberg, 1950); Robert G. Ousterhout, *The Blessings of Pilgrimage* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1990); Kerkeslager, 99-228; Wayne McCready, "Pilgrimage, Place, and Meaning Making by Jews in Greco-Roman Egypt," in *Travel and Religion in Antiquity*, ed. Philip Harland (Waterloo, Ont.: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2011), 69-82; Blake Leyerle, "Landscape as Cartography in Early Christian Pilgrimage Narratives," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 64 (1996) 119-43; Laurie Douglass, "A New Look at the Itinerarium Burdigalense," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 4 (1996): 313-33; Matthew Dillon, *Pilgrims and Pilgrimage in Ancient Greece* (London: Routledge, 1997); and the sources listed below for travel in Greco-Roman Egypt.

informant providing the story, but also the attitudes of non-monastic informants employed in the Church leadership, the translators supposedly employed by the pilgrims to communicate with the monks,[1016] the pilgrims who allegedly put the stories down in writing, and the translators and editors of the written text. It is also assumed that the audience might have played a role in shaping some accounts, with narratives reflecting the storyteller/writer/translator/editor's awareness of the likely response of a listening or reading audience.[1017] It is telling, then, that so many of these stories seem susceptible to more than one interpretation.

As mentioned above, although the title is disputed, Antony is often credited as the father of Christian monasticism.[1018] The men who supposedly followed in his footsteps were allegedly joined by women who likewise showed an inclination for asceticism and withdrawal from society.[1019] For the sake of convenience, the below discussion collapses male and female figures into a single category, referring to both

---

[1016] Elders supposedly provided pilgrims with translators fluent in Coptic, Latin, and Greek to serve as escorts through the region (*Hist. mon.* 8.62). Antony's hagiographer made a point of saying that the monk's translators were excellent (*Vita Antonii* 74). Cf. Pall., *HL* 21.15. For the problem posed by translation, consider both the disadvantages faced by a subordinate population forced to express itself clearly in the language of the dominant population (see the below discussion of subaltern discourse) and the contrary impulses of the translator: The need to translate divine wisdom accurately *because* it is divine (consider, for instance, the legend regarding the translation of the Old Testament under Ptolemy Philadelphus, mentioned below) and Greco-Roman translation practices which praised the translator's ability to express his own voice over his accuracy. On the latter see Siobhán McElduff, *Roman Theories of Translation: Surpassing the Source* (NY: Routledge, 2013).

[1017] The audience's reaction is certainly easy to detect in stories about audience members begging for the desert fathers' testimony (on which see below). Responses probably varied audience to audience, but in light of the below discussion regarding evidence for social competition in the pilgrim accounts, it is worth noting that since the narrative nature of the pilgrim accounts would have encouraged the audiences of the pilgrim accounts to identify with the pilgrims (on identification with characters of narrative see the third chapter), the seemingly submissive nature of the roles assumed by the pilgrims vis-à-vis the desert fathers would have predisposed audiences towards acceptance of the desert fathers' claims, or at least the claims attributed to the desert fathers by the pilgrim accounts. Pilgrims gained authority for their accounts by demonstrating submission to the desert fathers who were themselves subject to potential manipulation on the part of these pilgrims.

[1018] The earliest reference to "monk" occurs in a papyrus dated to 324, a legal complaint listing the monk as a witness (and intercedent) in a violent altercation (*P.Coll. Youtie* 77).

[1019] Juliussen, 35-47, 78-88; Gillian Gillian, *'This Female Man of God' Women and Spiritual Power in the Patristic Age, A.D. 350-450* (New York: Routledge, 1995); Susanna Elm, *'Virgins of God' The Making of Asceticism in Late Antiquity* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994); Patricia Cox Miller, "Is There a Harlot in This Text? Hagiography and the Grotesque,"in *The Cultural Turn in Late Ancient Studies: Gender, Asceticism, and Historiography,* ed. Dale Martin and Patricia Cox Martin (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005), 86-102.

under the umbrella of desert fathers, ascetics, and monks, terms that are used interchangeably, not because the distinctions are irrelevant, but simply because of spatial and subject constraints.

Monastic lifestyles ranged from complete isolation (or at least an ideal of complete isolation) to larger communities, where monks shared dwellings and/or visited one or another and interacted with outside communities on a fairly regular basis. The below discussion is focused on the so-called desert fathers living on the edges of habitable space, but monasticism was also found in populated regions and cities. Evidence from tax receipts and correspondence amply demonstrate the close ties that often existed between monks and their surrounding communities.[1020]

Hagiographers emphasized and perhaps even overstated the isolation of the desert fathers because this isolation augmented the degree to which the monks appeared to have separated themselves from the rest of society. This, in turn, enhanced the monks' aura of sanctity.[1021] Rufinus' description of Scetis, a popular monastic settlement located approximately eighty miles south of Alexandria, provides a telling portrait of what was thought to be a typical monastic settlement: it was a wilderness, characterized by the scarcity of water and so devoid of life as to lack any distinguishing features by which one might be able to navigate, travelers having nothing but the stars to direct their course. The area was even subject to barbarian

---

[1020] According to the *Historia monachorum*, 5000 monks were living inside the walls of Oxyrhynchus (*Hist. mon.* 5.4). Harmless, *Desert*, 275-83; Goehring, *Ascetics*, 20-31; Goehring, "World," 134-44; Derwas Chitty, *The Desert a City: An Introduction to the Study of Egyptian and Palestinian Monasticism under the Christian Empire* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1966), 1-45; Darlene Hedstrom, "Divine Architects: Designing the Monastic Dwelling Place," in Bagnall, 368-79; Elisabeth O'Connel, "Transforming Monumental Landscapes in Late Antique Egypt: Monastic Dwellings in Legal Documents from Western Thebes," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 15 (2007): 241-42; Bagnall, *Egypt from Alexander*, 108-15, 121; Evelyn-White, 17-42.

[1021] Goehring, *Ascetics*, 73, 75, 80. This, of course, touches upon the separation of sacred and profane space discussed in the previous chapter. For "inverted magnitudes" in pilgrimage see For "inverted magnitudes," see Brown, *Cult*, 87.

raids, some of which were mentioned in various *Sayings*,[1022] where the violence underscored the contrast between the peaceful Christian monks and their cruel pagan opponents.

That being said, unlike the narratives discussed in the two previous chapters, hagiographies devoted to the desert fathers are notable for the relative lack of violence observed in interactions between Christians and pagans. While the desert fathers allegedly engaged in heated physical altercations with demons,[1023] their interactions with flesh-and-blood pagans rarely involved any bloodshed.[1024] This seems to contradict the assertion of the pagan rhetorician, Libanius, who claimed that monks were standing at the forefront of anti-pagan violence.[1025] Brown contends that Libanius was exaggerating monastic violence, because the monks were an easier target for Libanius than the Church leaders who were in fact responsible for the violence but enjoyed the protections of status.[1026] If Brown is correct, then the dearth of monastic violence could be taken as evidence for the rapid decline of paganism. The monks could hardly have come to blows with pagans if there were no more pagans left around with whom to contend. Yet, as the previous chapter pointed out, some scholars believe that hagiographers were *inventing* pagans to facilitate the narration of dramatic temple destructions. Below, I argue that the absence of Christian-pagan violence in monastic hagiography actually reflected internal

---

[1022] On these raids see Harmless, *Desert*, 274-83. Also see below for discussion of Ethiopian Moses' demise in a raid.

[1023] See the following chapter.

[1024] Marinides, 235-68.

[1025] Lib. 30.8. According to Eunapius, the monks facilitated Alaric's conquest of Greece (Eunap., *VS* 475).

[1026] Brown, "Christianization," 647.

Christian competition, with violence against outsiders serving as an assertion of authority both within and outside of the Church. However, we should also consider the possibility that a dearth of monastic violence reflected a simple lack of physical interaction with the outside world.[1027] Alternatively, it might have reflected a genuine monastic aversion to violence, or the hagiographers' efforts to idealize the monks as paragons of a peaceful Christian faith. Whatever the case, the relative absence of anti-pagan violence in the monastic hagiographies does not necessarily constitute proof for the decline of paganism.

The monastic reputation for peace deserves further attention, because it had a bearing on interactions not only with pagans, but also, as we shall see, with rivals in the Church hierarchy. The desert fathers were thought to be exemplars of the forbearance that, according to Greco-Roman pagan authors like Seneca the Younger, was characteristic of wise men (Seneca, *Ira*). Many a *Saying* tells of a monk exercising masterful self-control, not complaining or defending himself when falsely accused of a breach of social etiquette or a crime, and not reacting when unduly imposed upon.[1028] The prospect of religiously-motivated violence appears to have been a source of anxiety in monastic circles. Questions were apparently prompted by a passage in *Exodus* about Moses murdering an Egyptian. According to one of the *Sayings*, Moses was only able to make peace with his action once he realized that he had acted according to God's will (10.145 N 674; *Exod*. 2:12). As a divine mandate for violence, this *Saying* is reminiscent of Shenoute's claim, discussed in the previous

[1027] Marinides, 262.

[1028] 10.12 Agathon 5; 15.39 Macarius the Egyptian 1; 15.104 N 329; 16.22 N 343; 16.25 N 342; 17.26 N 352. Christian and pagan holy men also settled disputes. Compare *Hist. mon.* 8.30-37 and Philostr., *VA* 4.9.

chapter, that "there is no crime for those who have Christ" (Shenoute, *Not Because a Fox Barks*). But this *Saying* is striking because it suggests that people were not simply taking it as a given that such a mandate existed. Some audience members appear to have felt that it was inappropriate for a man of God to engage in violence.[1029]

Other *Sayings* condemned the use of language containing reproach or criticism, which is to say that they condemned anything that we might interpret today as the sort of "hate speech" that, according to the previous chapter, facilitates religious violence.[1030] There were exceptions, however, with some desert fathers recommending that so-called heretics be shunned (1.34 Matoēs 11; N 330; 1.27 Chomai; 10.32 Theodore of Phermē 4). And some forms of violence might have simply been ignored, because they were not considered particularly noteworthy, especially violence against social subordinates for disciplinary purposes.[1031] As a rule, anger was thought to be characteristic of pagans and heretics, not orthodox Christians, because pagans and heretics were the only ones allegedly engaging in persecution (Socrates, *Hist. eccl.* 4.36; *Hist. mon.* 8.37). All of this suggests that we should be wary of believing that the monks were completely averse to violence.

Of course, this does not mean that we should ignore evidence for the peaceful co-existence of Christians and pagans. Indeed, the hagiographies provide telling

---

[1029] Particularly violence directed at Egytians, who of course would have been monks as well, and might have felt threatened by the *Exodus* narrative. Cf. Pall., *HL* 15.3.

[1030] 20.8 Ōr 2; 4.9 Achilles 4; 4.65 N 372; 9.25 N 475; 10.159 N 386; 10.165 N 238; Megethios 4; *AP* 11.50. Lest one imagine that it was a given that someone living in seclusion would be free of anger for want of anyone with whom to contend, see 7.40 N 201.

[1031] 15.18 Zachariah 4. Also see Carr, 182; Caroline Schroeder, *Monastic Bodies: Discipline and Salvation in Shenoute of Atripe* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007). Note that Greco-Roman pagan elites expected the ideal wise man to discipline his subordinates but to do so without anger (Seneca, *De Ira*).

evidence of amicable social interactions between the two. In some cases, family ties were involved. One *Saying* identified a monk as the son of a pagan priest (5.44 N 191) but did not indicate whether the monk's conversion to Christianity caused a rift in the family. Zachariah of Mytilene's *Life of Severus* implied that conversion was behind the rift between a monk living near Alexandria and his pagan relatives, but this rift did not stop the monk's pagan brother from seeking the monk out for guidance (Zachariah of Mytilene, *Vita Severi* 15). According to the *Life of Aaron*, two of Macedonius' initial followers were alienated from their pagan father upon their conversion to Christianity, but a reconciliation was brought about by the father's conversion (*Life of Aaron*, 48 [20a-b]).[1032]

These stories imply that the maintenance of amicable relationships required conversion. Other stories suggest a less dogmatic attitude. According to one *Saying*, a Christian monk sheltered a pagan priest for the night and was rewarded with helpful advice as to how he might go about improving his relationship with God.[1033] While the hagiographer responsible for recording this incident (or his informant) might have been guilty of some invention, the basic outline of the story is nevertheless credible. The desert fathers received many visitors, including, no doubt, curious pagans. If the pagan in this *Saying* was no more than a narrative foil—facilitating the expression of an internal Christian criticism regarding monastic practice—it is nevertheless striking that the *Saying* made no effort to undercut paganism itself. Consequently, the *Saying* (inadvertently?) implied that paganism was a viable religious option, with potentially

[1032] Compare to the correspondence of Isidore of Pelusium (c. 365-c. 435), a monk who exchanged letters with Cyril of Alexandria and elite pagans. See Peirre Évieux, *Isidore de Péluse* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1995); Elizabeth Conner, "Mapping a Late Antique Republic of Letters" (PhD diss., University of Maryland, 2015).

[1033] 11.109 Olympios 1. Cf. 16.25 N 342.

efficacious strategies for communicating with the divine. This insinuation is all the more surprising in light of the one area where the desert fathers certainly *did* compete with pagans, that is, for titles as wise men uniquely gifted in communication with the divine.

Wise Men

This portion of the discussion begins by laying out the basic opposition between the allegedly unlearned Christian monk and the learned pagan philosopher. It proceeds to examine just how a monk acquired what learning he did have, namely through ascetic practices, memorization, and divine intervention. This learning is then compared to the sort of education that was traditionally acquired through formal training. The typical monk's supposed lack of formal education made him a paragon of the Christian aversion for Greco-Roman learning. But this was in part a ploy, since Christians valued Greco-Roman learning and books in general. They collected books and placed a high valence on the written word. The issue was not learning *per se*, though propaganda suggested as much. It was in fact the content of this learning, and perhaps, more importantly, the individuals entrusted with the authority to determine the content of this learning and the nature of its transmission. Church leaders sought to limit the collection of books and the dissemination of the teachings that eventually made it into the pilgrim accounts, ostensibly out of a desire to avoid heresy, but certainly also out of a desire to assert their own authority. They insisted on the esoteric, non-school-based nature of the monk's learning, on the one hand, because this was evocative of the enigmatic religious wisdom attributed to the renowned Egyptian priests—and Christians wanted to appropriate pagan claims to this sort of

knowledge—and, on the other hand, because this helped Church leaders reserve a measure of authority when it came to matters customarily entrusted to the elites who possessed school-based learning. Thus, the effort to draw lines between the pagans and Christians on the basis of learning was fueled to a certain extent by internal Christian competition.

Debates constituted the most obvious incarnation of the contest over wisdom between Christian monks and pagan philosophers. Evagrius Ponticus (c. 345-399), who settled for a while in the monastic community of Kellia (near Scetis) and served as one of Palladius' mentors, allegedly sought out debates with learned pagans, going as far as Alexandria in order to contend with the city's best and brightest.[1034] Antony was so famous that the pagan philosophers supposedly came to him.[1035] The ensuing debates were apparently reminiscent of the disputes recorded in the apologies, though Antony's hagiographer did not bother reporting any of the arguments posed by the pagan philosophers in great detail, saying only that Antony accused them of falling back on cunning syllogisms.[1036] The hagiographer gave more space to Antony's side of the debate, recording lines of argument that would have been familiar to the audience of the Christian apologies discussed in chapter two. Among other things,

---

[1034] *Hist. mon.* 20.15. For examples of other learned monks in Egypt see Jerome, *Paul of Thebes* 4; Pall., *HL* 11.1, 21.3, 58.3; *Hist. mon.* 6.3; 15.7 Arsenios 6; Socrates, *Hist. eccl.* 6.7; Sozom., *Hist. eccl.* 3.14.

[1035] Compare the late fourth century *Vita prima graeca Pachomii*, 82. Would the pagan philosopers who visited the desert fathers be considered pilgrims? Philostratus' *Life of Apollonius of Tyana*, in which a pagan wise man allegedly went around visiting men renowned for their learning, suggests that it is possible that pagan philosophers visited the Christian desert fathers. For an encounter between Apollonius and a pagan wise man reminiscent of the meeting between Antony and the pagan philosophers, see Eunap., *VS* 460-461.

[1036] *Vita Antonii* 72. Antony also claimed that the philosophers obfuscated matters with confusing rhetoric (*Vita Antonii* 74). If something was true, Antony seemed to think, then it could be expressed in plain words (*Vita Antonii* 78) and need not rely on the speaker's facility in manipulating an audience or verbal tricks (*Vita Antonii* 80). This sentiment was something of a trope in antiquity, for the apologists had made the same argument (Arnobius 1.58-59; Zacharias, *Ammonius* 144-57) as had pagans. As mentioned in chapter two, pagan intellectuals criticized the poetic style, knowing that florid language was highly effective in the manipulation of an audience. Whether or not this was a valid concern, such arguments served a second function, protecting the thinker from criticism as to his own failings when it came to demonstrating his eloquence.

Antony condemned animal worship, mocked the religious commemoration of Isis' search for Osiris' remains, and criticized Egyptian magic. Also, like the apologists, Antony showed just as much if not more interest in Greco-Roman paganism than traditional Egyptian paganism.[1037] The overt similarities in the rhetoric of Antony and the apologists[1038] suggest that Antony must have possessed some traditional Greco-Roman learning. Yet the monk denied that he had received an education (*Vita Antonii* 72), insisting that his lack of learning made it all the more remarkable that pagan philosophers thought he was worth visiting. Antony argued that this paradox should prompt his visitors to consider conversion, the intellectual superiority of a reported simpleton constituting evidence for the efficacy of Christianity when it came to imparting wisdom. If the hagiographer is to be believed, the philosophers *were* impressed by Antony's display, but no mention was made of them actually following Antony's advice and converting.[1039]

How did a desert father like Antony acquire his wisdom if not through formal schooling? Asceticism was the monk's training of choice, with the pursuit of self-discipline actually taking on the appearance of an education in some of the *Sayings* (14.26 N 698; 10.7 Arsenius 5). This would have made some sense to elite Greco-Romans. Moderation was thought to be part and parcel of the virtue that was

[1037] *Vita Antonii* 72-80. Note the lack of interest in paganism, let alone traditional Egyptian forms of paganism, in the letters attributed to Antony, discussed below.

[1038] Rubenson, *Letters*, 132-41.

[1039] *Vita Antonii* 73, 80. A similar story was told of another desert father by the name of Serapion, who supposedly went to Athens—where the schools were just as renowned, if not more so, as those in Alexandria—and impressed the philosophers there (by his show of virtue, which was traditionally thought to be the product of education) despite having no formal learning (Pall., *HL* 37.8).

supposedly cultivated through formal schooling.[1040] For the desert fathers, the link between asceticism and learning was underscored by an analogy between ascetic labors and the study of Scripture. The monks recited prayers and Scripture[1041] as just one of the many repetitious actions that—like tying knots in a rope or kneeling for long hours—required such a concentration of body and mind that it acquired ascetic aspects, giving memorization a spiritual function above and beyond inculcation into the content of just what was being memorized. Thus, memorization served a function in the practitioner's spiritual progress.[1042]

Many stories brought divine intervention into the picture, claiming that knowledge of Scripture was acquired by ascetics thanks to the intervention of God. Particularly gifted ascetics supposedly gained the ability to recite entire books of Scripture despite being illiterate.[1043] This feat seems quite impressive today, reliant as we are on so many written cues, with little incentive to develop our ability to retain

---

[1040] For a comparison of the Greco-Roman pagan and Christian wise man see Malley, 226-35, 399-423. On the Egyptian pagan tradition, where wise men could be recognized by their adherence to virtue, see Dieleman, *Priests*, 216, 222; Dieleman, "Egyptian," 436-38. Also see chapter two.

[1041] Pall., *HL* 17.10; *Vita bohairice Pachomii* 14; Pachomius, *Praecepta* 37. On recitation versus silent meditation see Burton-Christie, 117-24; Norman Russell, *The Lives of the Desert Fathers: The "Historia monachorum in aegypto" (*Kalamazoo, Michigan: Cistercian Publications, 1981), 128n4; Cuthbert Butler, *The Lausiac History of Palladius: A Critical Discussion Together with Notes on Early Egyptian Monasticism* (1898; repr., Ed., Hildestheim: Olms, 1967), 175n85.

[1042] Sozom., *Hist. eccl.* 1.12; 10.7 Arsenius 5; Pachomius, *Praecepta* 13-14; 37; 116. A link between memorization and asceticism is reinforced by stories that posit the latter as a feature of the life of monks who sought out isolation (Pall., *HL* 58.1). On reading and recitation in Judaism during this period see Harry Gamble, *Books and Readers in the Early Church: A History of Early Christian Texts* (New Haven: Yale University Press 1995), 208-11, 322-23n11-12. On neuroscientific research on meditation and recitation in relationship to education see Tobin Hart, "Interiority and Education: The Neurophenomenology of Contemplation," in *Meditation and the Classroom: Contemplative Pedagogy for Religious Studies*, eds. Judith Simmer-Brown and Fran Grace (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2011), 132-35.

[1043] For examples of unlearned monks with great memories see Pall., *HL* 4.1-2; *Hist. mon.* 2.5, 10.7; Sozom., *Hist. eccl.* 6.28. For examples of monks with great memories (without references as to whether or not this was the result of formal training) see Euseb., *De mar. Pal.* 13.6-8; Pall., *HL* 18.25; 18.19 N 567. Cf. Pall., *HL* 32.12. Compare stories regarding illiterate monks with knowledge of Scripture to pagan stories about Egyptian magicians with the ability to read sealed letters, Greek spells from Roman Egypt granting the user the ability to do the same, and Christian heresiologists explaining how such feats were faked (*Setne* II, 2/30-3/30; *PGM* V.213-303; Luc., *Alexander* 20, 49; Hippolytus, *Refutatio Omnium Haeresium* 4.34).

memories. The majority of people in antiquity, however, could not have relied on physical texts for recall, at least not to the extent that we do today, and had no choice but to invest an effort in cultivating their memories. For this reason, feats of memorization were less impressive in antiquity than today. Even animals were thought to possess remarkable memories.[1044]

Yet, the elites—the people with the most access to literacy—actually divinized memory (Quint., *Inst.* 11.2.7; Philostr., *VS* 523-524) and questioned the value of writing. Attributing the invention of a written script to the Egyptians, Plato claimed that this discovery was a source of lamentation, for the Egyptians feared the deleterious effects that writing would have on memorization and learning.[1045] Elites had a good reason for cultivating their memories. Rhetors depended on memorization for success, their reputations resting in part on the ability to deliver speeches without referring to notes. As chapter three indicated, every man active in politics at this time was to some extent a rhetor, but even pagan wise men renowned for their book learning were praised for their impressive feats of memorization.[1046] So we should not assume that literacy and memorization[1047] were necessarily opposed. The cultivation of the one was closely linked to the cultivation of the other.[1048]

[1044] For a discussion of animals and memory (in the context of a discussion not aimed at Christians) see Aelian, *NA* 7.48; Quint., *Inst.* 11.2.6.

[1045] Plato, *Phaedrus* 274d-275b. Cf. Quint., *Inst.* 11.2.9-10, 11.2.40-41; Clem. Al., *Strom.* 1.14. Also see Carr, 95-97; Denise Buell, *Making Christians: Clement of Alexandria and the Rhetoric of Legitimacy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999), 72-75; Cribiore, 232; Frances Yates, *The Art of Memory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966).

[1046] Iambl., *VP* 29, Philostr., *VA* 1.7, 1.14; Philostr., *VS* 471, 495, 523-524, 604,618; Porphyry, *VP* 3.

[1047] Or literacy and orality/aurality, the latter being distinguished from the memorization of written material.

[1048] For sources see Carr, 6-7n11; Gamble, 29-30. Of course, the cultivation of memorization techniques in antiquity means that memories may not have been as vulnerable to manipulation as the previous chapter suggested.

For this reason alone, the accomplishments of the unlearned monks with regard to the memorization of Scripture would have seemed noteworthy. But it was not enough for the desert fathers to match the feats of the pagan wise men. They needed to surpass the pagans. This seems to explain why the hagiographers emphasized the monks' illiteracy. The illusion of a dichotomy between literacy and (oral/aural) memorization made the monks' abilities seem more impressive. Since the desert fathers could not read, the hagiographers explained, it was a given that knowledge of Scripture came through divine intervention. Such claims ignored, naturally, the endless hours that these monks had spent hearing and reciting the same passages over and over again.[1049]

Theories about the physiological basis for wisdom underscored the idea that wisdom and virtue were connected, fueling the notion that wisdom was indicative of the religiosity on which virtue depended. Today, we are prone to associate wisdom with the brain, not the heart. In antiquity, there was some debate on the subject, but the heart was often considered the seat of wisdom for pagans, both Greco-Roman[1050] and Egyptian, as well as Jews and Christians. In traditional Egyptian paganism, the secret learning needed to navigate the afterlife and to achieve immortality was impressed upon the heart. The latter was allegedly weighed at the time of judgment to verify a person's virtue and his eligibility for immortality. Heart amulets, which were used in burial rites well into the Greco-Roman period, were sometimes inscribed with

[1049] The enormous effort that was involved in this sort of endeavor is indicated by a story describing how a monk allegedly spent whole days contemplating just a few verses of a single Psalm (*Hist. mon.* 10.5-6).

[1050] The issue was actually the subject to some debate in Greco-Roman circles. See A.G. Long, ed., "Subtexts, Connections and Open Opposition," in *Plato and the Stoics* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 106-27; Ph. J. van der Eijk, *Medicine and Philosophy in Classical Antiquity: Doctors and Philosophers on Nature, Soul, Health and Disease* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

texts from the *Book of the Dead*, the spells that the deceased needed to avoid obstacles like the Lake of Fire that, as chapter three mentioned, awaited the wicked.[1051] In this sense then, wisdom *was* virtue.

When Eusebius complimented an Egyptian martyr by saying that this martyr had recorded Scripture not in "stone tablets…but rather in the tablets of the heart,"[1052] the Church historian was citing Scripture, but anyone knowledgeable of traditional Egyptian burial rites would have appreciated the significance of inscribing Scripture upon the heart. The Bible had replaced the *Book of the Dead* for ensuring immortality. Interestingly, some Coptic renderings of the term "Scetis," the location of one of the popular monastic settlements in the fourth and fifth century, resemble the Coptic term ⲤⲔⲒϩⲎⲦ, meaning "to measure/weigh the heart." If Scetis was the place a person went to weigh his heart,[1053] this would have been a particularly poignant reference, especially given the injunction for ascetics to live as though they were already dead[1054] and to let their behavior be guided by knowledge of the postmortem judgment that lay ahead (7.25 Synklētikē 8).

Aside from knowledge of Scripture, granted through divine intervention, the unlearned desert father seems to have embodied the ignorant Christian who, according to critics like Celsus, relied on faith over wisdom to direct his religious

---

[1051] For a Demotic text dating from late Ptolemaic Egypt on weighing the heart see *P.Insinger* 5/7-10. Also see Miriam Lichtheim, "Didactic Literature," in Loprieno, 262; H. Te Velde, "Looking at the Condemning Heart of 1 John 3.18-20 through the Eyes of an Ancient Egyptian," in Hilhorst, 218; Iversen, *Egyptian*, 9-12; Carr, 8, 73. On heart amulets and scarabs and their role in funerary rites in Greco-Roman Egypt see Rogério Sousa, *The Heart of Wisdom: Studies on the Heart Amulet in Ancient Egypt* (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2011) 73-75; Dunand, *Mummies*, 78-80.

[1052] πλαξὶ λιθίναις…ἀλλ' ἐν πλαξὶν ὡς ἀληθῶς χαρδίας. Euseb., *De mar. Pal.* 13.4-8; 2 Cor. 3:3. Cf. Clem. Al., *Strom.* 6.15; *Jeremiah* 31:33.

[1053] Evelyn-White, 27-28; Harmless, *Desert*, 173, 181n31.

[1054] See below.

choices.[1055] This notion rested on a false dichotomy between faith and learning in the minds of pagans and Christians alike. No less a learned figure than Clement of Alexandria argued that knowledge was contingent upon faith.[1056] Traditional pedagogical methodology ensured that a certain amount of faith was built into the learning process. For most students in the United States of America today, training in reading proceeds alongside training in writing, with an emphasis on pattern recognition (whole-word literacy). All of this is meant to foster a student's ability to engage one-on-one with a text, without the oversight of an instructor, so that a student can pursue learning on his own. In antiquity, a person learned to write by transcribing strings of letters often devoid of semantic content, with the expectation that a student would only engage with a text with the oversight of an instructor. Interpretations and explanations as to a text's content and exposure to the physical text were usually provided only after significant portions of the text had been memorized.[1057] This methodology ensured the maintenance of an instructor's authority. Students were simply not given enough tools to proceed on their own.

This mimetic model of learning—based on memorization *followed* (hopefully) by understanding—was transported to the religious context, with adherents copying their instructors with the hope (based on faith) of acquiring true religious wisdom.[1058]

[1055] Origen, *Con. Cels.* 1.9, 3.44. See the next chapter.

[1056] Clem. Al., *Strom.* 5.1. Cf. Clem. Al., *Strom.* 1.8.1-2; Clem. Al., *Prot*. 9. Also see Salvatore Lilla, *Clement of Alexandria: A Study in Christian Platonism and Gnosticism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971), 131-36. See the next chapter for further discussion of faith and learning. Also see the first chapter regarding faith.

[1057] Carr, 181; Raffaella Cribiore, *Writing, Teachers and Students in Graeco-Roman Egypt* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996); H. Gregory Snyder, *Teachers and Texts in the Ancient World: Philosophers, Jews and Christians* (NY: Routledge, 2000), 26-29.

[1058] Consider the *Shepherd of Hermas*, which was composed in Rome in the mid-second century and was already circulating in Egypt by the late second century. This tract records a series of visions in which a man named Hermas received instruction in the Christian faith from one of the Sybils, who supplied Hermas with a

Monks memorized Scripture and imitated the ascetic labors of more advanced monks, who were themselves said to be imitating Old and New Testament figures.[1059] The more a monk improved his imitation of these ascetic role-models, the more he advanced in terms of acquiring wisdom, the reward for ascetic excellence being knowledge of Scripture granted through divine intervention. As monks moved forward in terms of both asceticism and wisdom, their authority increased, with junior monks naturally hoping to imitate them. Unfortunately, this step, instruction, became the source of some controversy as Christians competed for authority.

Leaving aside, for the moment, the question of monastic instruction, let us turn instead to an examination of just what constituted monastic wisdom, other than Scripture and an aptitude for asceticism, and a comparison between this wisdom and the traditional learning of Greco-Romans and Egyptians. Celsus' mockery notwithstanding, the argument could be made that knowledge of the divine—regardless of faith—simply could not be taught, for many pagans and Christians seem to have agreed that the divine was, by definition, ineffable.[1060] As mentioned in chapter two, the notion that divinity was beyond the comprehension of humans

---

book that he endeavored to copy letter for letter even though he did not understand what he was copying, the implication being that religious wisdom would be acquired in the process. *Shepherd of Hermas*, Vision 2. Cf. Clem. Al., *Strom.* 6.15; *The Gospel of Truth* I,3 and XII,2 22-23. See also Cribiore, *Gymnastics*, 175.

[1059] On Christian patterns of mimesis see 10.109 Abba Hyperechios; 10.73 Poemen; Jaeger, 93; Richard Layton, *Didymus the Blind and His Circle in Late-Antique Alexandria: Virtue and Narrative in Biblical Scholarship* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2004), 9. On Greco-Roman school-based mimesis see Quint., *Inst.* 10.2.1-4; Cribiore, *Gymnastics*, 130-33; Layton, 8. On adherence to similar practices in traditional Egyptian learning see Carr, 71-72. For the popularity of this model among social scientists studying religion today see the next chapter.

[1060] The untutored monks' alleged mastery of ascetic virtue, despite a lack of the traditional philosophical training that supposedly made this virtue possible, could not help but have implications for a larger debate over the existence of innate virtue or innate knowledge and the degree to which teaching could effectively instill virtue and knowledge of the divine. Lactantius, for instance, suggested that virtue could not be taught (Lactant., *Div. inst.* 3.3), while Julian believed that all men have some innate knowledge of divine matters (Julian, *Con. Gal.* 52B). So Antony was not necessarily treading new ground when he dismissed the value of formal education for instilling virtue, saying that human souls were naturally good and that they deviated from righteousness solely through corruption (*Vita Antonii* 20). Cf. *Vita Antonii* 73; Sozom., *Hist. eccl.* 1.13.

fostered the generation of enigmatic language in religious discourse. Or, rather, enigmatic language (including allegory) was thought to be evocative of the degree to which humans could not comprehend the divine. Religious wisdom was thought to be so esoteric that adepts were endowed with an inordinate amount of authority, for the very nature of the discourse hindered dissemination, privileging the few men who were able to master it.[1061]

According to Neoplatonists, the ideal wise man was gifted in the interpretation of the enigmatic symbols by which religious truths were communicated (Iambl., *Myst.* 7.3). Both the traditional Egyptian wise man and the Greco-Egyptian wise man were fluent (or thought to be fluent) in the ambiguous language of hermetic discourse.[1062] For Clement of Alexandria, the Christian wise man *par excellence* was he who could understand what remained incomprehensible to others and decipher enigmas and omens (Clem. Al., *Strom.* 5.8, 6.8, 6.15). Monks, too, appear to have been attracted to the idea that religious discourse was inherently enigmatic. [1063] Evidence for this is provided by a fourth century cache of documents from Nag Hammadi, which might

[1061] So criticism of enigmatic language in religious discourse was in part a reaction against authority. Suspicious though some Greco-Roman pagans might have been of enigmatic language, learned pagans were expected to be familiar with allegorical methodology, especially given its importance in leading philosophical schools, like that of the Stoics. See chapter two.

[1062] Fowden, *Hermes*, 22-26.

[1063] Although Antony supposedly condemned allegorical interpretation, and Origen's allegorical methodology became implicated in a dispute over heresy between Theophilus and some monks in Egypt, this same methodology was defended by Dionysius of Alexandria and Cyril in disputes with Christians in the Fayoum over the interpretation of Scripture. Consider the enormity of Dionysius of Alexandria's admission when, confronted with the problem of Christians in the Fayoum who appeared to be taking *Revelation* a bit too literally, he confessed that there were some aspects of divine teaching that he did not understand. Rather than test these teachings, he said that he would simply take them on faith (Euseb., *Hist. eccl.* 7.25). If these matters were beyond even the patriarch, who were less well-learned Christians to question them? Clearly, the juxtaposition of faith and learning was being used to assert authority. On Theophilus' dispute with these monks see Socrates, *Hist. eccl.* 6.9-17; Sozom., *Hist. eccl.* 8.13-27; Russell, *Theophilus* 19-27. Stephen Davis, "Biblical Interpretation and Alexandrian Episcopal Authority in the early Christian Fayoum," in *Christianity and Monasticism in the Fayoum Oasis*, ed. Gawdat Gabra (NY: The American University in Cairo Press, 2005), 45-61.

have originated from a monastic circle.[1064] Many of the texts from this cache, like *The Thunder: Perfect Mind*, contain riddles and esoteric language[1065] that seem to mock the notion of comprehension. This literature reflects a counter-intuitive form of thinking that, according to Ilkka Pyysiäinen, is the *sine qua non* of religious belief.[1066]

Cast thus, as a kind of learning that transcends learning, religious wisdom undermined traditional hierarchies of knowledge. To Celsus, the preference for so-called ignorance over wisdom was disturbing insofar as it challenged the value of the traditional learning to which elites had access by virtue of their position on the social scale. Its social implications aside, for Christians, the warning that Scripture would destroy wisdom (*Isaiah* 29.14; *I Cor.* 1:19-20; Clem. Al., *Strom*. 1.88.1-8) was at least in part a commentary on the gulf between man, who is by definition limited, and the divine, which is by definition limitless.[1067] As we shall see, however, the traditional hierarchy of learning privileged by Celsus' statement held sway for Christians as well, coming into play in disputes between the supposedly unlearned monks and the Church hierarchy.

This is not entirely surprising, since there was hardly a dearth of traditional learning in monastic circles. There were quite a few learned desert fathers (Jerome,

---

[1064] Rubenson, *Letters*, 123-25; Gamble, 171-72, 306n98-103; Goehring, *Ascetics*, 208-15; Harmless, *Desert*, 160-66; Lance Jenott and Elaine Pagels, "Antony's Letters and Nag Hammadi Codex I: Sources of Religious Conflict in Fourth-Century Egypt," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 18 (2010): 557-89; Tito Orlandi, "A Catechesis against Apocryphal Texts by Shenute and the Gnostic Texts of Nag Hammadi," *The Harvard Theological Review* 75 (1982): 94-95.

[1065] *The Thunder: Perfect Mind* VI,2; George MacRae, "The Thunder: Perfect Mind VI,2," in Robinson, 295-96.

[1066] Ilkka Pyysiäinen, "Religion and the Counter-Intuitive," in *Current Approaches in the Cognitive Science of Religion*, eds. Ilkka Pyysiäinen and Veikko Anttonen (NY: Continuum, 2002), 110-23. Also see Jeffrey Kripal "Mysticism," in *The Blackwell Companion to the Study of Religion*, ed. Robert Segal (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), 321-36; Illka Pyysiäinen, "Holy Book: A Treasury of the Incomprehensible," *Numen* 46 (1999): 269-90.

[1067] According to Rufinus, the infinite nature of the incorporeal divine can be perceived with the eyes of the *heart* (Rufinus, *Hist. mon.* 1.22-28).

Paul of Thebes 4; Pall., *HL* 11.1, 21.3, 58.3; *Hist. mon.* 6.3; 15.7 Arsenios 6; Socrates, *Hist. eccl.* 6.7; Sozom., *Hist. eccl.* 3.14). If we widen our net to include non-monastic Christians, the number of learned Christians rises still more. Pagans and Christians shared the same classrooms, with Christian instructors like Origen teaching subjects that were explicitly Christian as well as subjects, like geometry, that were not necessarily Christian *per se* (Euseb., *Hist. eccl.* 6.18-19).

The ambiguous nature of the line between Christian and pagan learning gave rise to tension on both sides. Some Christians argued that traditional Greco-Roman learning was in fact an appropriate area of study for Christians,[1068] and that it even contained some truths (Clem. Al., *Strom.* 1.29.1, 6.10), the source of which could be traced back to divine intercession (via oracles, for example, Clem. Al., *Strom.* 1.28.3, 6.13) or to the education acquired by Greek sages in Egypt (meaning, of course, the teachings left behind by Moses).[1069] Far from contradicting Christian teachings, some traditional Greco-Roman learning confirmed it (Origen, *Con. Cels.* 1.2). Yet Christian teaching was a "shorter path" to the wisdom and virtue that was said to be the reward of traditional Greco-Roman learning (Clem. Al., *Prot.* 8, 10-11). Moreover, Christian

[1068] Basil of Caesarea, *Address to Young Men* 4.1. Compare to Clem. Al., *Strom.* 6.11, 13; Euseb., *Hist. eccl.* 6.3.8-9, 6.18.2-6.19.1. Scholars argue that Jerome's *Life of Paul of Thebes* was composed in part to challenge the denigration of learning found in Antony's hagiography. Rubenson, "Philosophy," 121-22. For a general discussion of Christian apologetic attitudes towards and reliance on traditional Greco-Roman learning see for instance, Whittaker, xii-xiii; Chadwick, *Early Christian;* Droge, *Homer*, 50-52, 162; Price, 119; Lilla, 3-7; R. M. Ogilvie, *The Library of Lactantius* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), 109-10; E. P. Meijering, *Orthodoxy and Platonism in Athanasius: Synthesis or Antithesis?* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1968), 2, 128-31; Malley, 399; Niketas Siniossoglou, *Plato and Theodoret: The Christian Appropriation of Platonic Philosophy and the Hellenic Intellectual Resistance* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 2-5; McCracken, 29-30.

[1069] Tatian, *Orat.* 31-40; Euseb., *Prep. ev.* 11.11 523b-c. The debate over traditional Greco-Roman learning also had a chronological dimension. When Porphyry challenged the dates associated with Moses—arguing that Jewish learning was actually derived from the Phoenecians—he was doing so in part to undermine the notion that Judeo-Christian learning could have had any influence upon Greco-Roman learning. Droge, *Homer* 176-77. For discussion of the Christian argument that what eventually became Greco-Roman learning was in fact carried off by the Jews during the Exodus as part of the "spoils of Egypt" see Lawrence Frizzell, "'Spoils from Egypt,' Between Jews and Gnostics," in *Hellenization Revisited: Shaping a Christian Response within the Greco-Roman World*, ed. Wendy Helleman (New York: University Press of America, 1994), 389-90.

teaching was accessible by everyone, whereas traditional Greco-Roman learning was only accessible by elite philosophers and was not in and of itself sufficient for salvation.[1070] Some Christians argued that even if traditional Greco-Roman learning had once been a useful area of study, it had become irrelevant now that Scripture was made available to the Gentiles through the intercession of Christ.[1071] Other Christians advocated a complete rejection of traditional Greco-Roman learning. They inverted the elitist hierarchy of knowledge to argue that it was the simple uneducated man who, through Christ's intercession, constituted the paragon of wisdom-*cum*-virtue.[1072]

Christians in each category sometimes overlapped[1073] and attitudes towards traditional Greco-Roman learning shifted. But these attitudes were pivotal to the construction of Christian-pagan boundaries. Utter rejection suggested a totalizing identity that could brook no variations. Appropriation could be taken as either a sign of confidence or accommodation.[1074] The debate between these alternatives, and the

---

[1070] Pseudo-Justin, *Cohor.* 8; Clem. Al., *Strom.* 6.8; Malley, 415. For this reason, philosophers like Justin Martyr and Clement of Alexandria had been forced to drift from one teacher to another until they found Christianity (Justin, *Dial. cum Trypho* 1- 8; Clem. Al., *Strom.* 1.11.2).

[1071] Clem. Al., *Prot.* 11. See below Clement contradicting this statement elsewhere.

[1072] Athenagoras, *Leg. pro Christ.* 11; Theod. Cyr., *Graec.* 5.76. Compare to *Vita Antonii* 20. Scholars have noted other trends. For instance, Greek writers were often more positive to traditional Greco-Roman learning than Latin writers. Jaeger, 34.

[1073] For instance, Celsus accused Christians of being uneducated *and* accused them of stealing tenets from traditional Greco-Roman learning (Origen, *Con. Cels.* 3.44, 6.16). Clement of Alexandria said that training in traditional Greco-Roman learning paved the way for Christian learning *and* that it was irrelevant (Clem. Al., *Prot.* 11; Clem. Al., *Strom.* 1.17.4, 1.18.4, 5.13).

[1074] Rhetoric of this sort played a similar function in early Islamic discourse. Arabs/Muslims who sought to distinguish themselves *as* Arabs/Muslims sought to disavow a connection between their learning and that of the Greco-Romans/pagans/Christians. Arabs/Muslims who sought to appropriate Greco-Roman learning used chronological arguments to demonstrate the derivation of this learning from Persian sources. For an introduction to the role of social competition in the debate in early Islamic circles over the Greco-Roman, Persian, Arab and Egyptian origins of learning see George Saliba, *Islamic Science and the Making of the European Renaissance* (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 2007), 33-40. Saliba's work provides an important corrective to older scholarship that inappropriately downplays the contributions of Arabs/Muslims to scientific thought. Unfortunately, Saliba is too eager to dismiss origin stories that credit Greco-Roman influence on Arab/Muslim learning. This approach is problematic because some Arabs/Muslims appear to have been drawn towards the maintenance of links with a Greco-Roman tradition, not because they wanted to become Greek or Roman (or Byzantine), but because the patronage of Greco-Roman texts fostered their communal identity as *learned* thinkers. For a more syncretic approach, see for instance Van Bladel, 160.

many others no doubt possible, had implications for internal Christian identity, with Christians accusing each other of stumbling into heresy through an overreliance on traditional Greco-Roman learning.[1075]

Julian was a particularly daunting figure in this regard. He provided ample proof that a Christian could be seduced into apostasy by philosophy, with his disavowal of Christianity being blamed on his tutelage at the hands of pagan instructors.[1076] Like the Christians discussed above, Julian tried to use traditional Greco-Roman learning to draw lines between Christians and pagans. Over a century earlier, Celsus had admitted that Christians were capable of expressing philosophically sound maxims, but he claimed that this was only because these Christians had stolen these tenets from traditional Greco-Roman schools of thought (Origen, *Con. Cels.*, 6.16, 7.58). By banning Christian teachers from the schools,[1077] Julian sought to prevent this sort of plagiarism, thereby averting what he perceived to be a Christian appropriation of pagan identity.[1078] At the same time, Julian asserted

[1075] For instance, on the accusation that Origen fell into heresy through overreliance on philosophy see Theophilus, *Sixteenth Festal Letter* 6, 9. Pagan philosophers were even accused of intentionally sowing discord by participating in debates over the Christological controversy. See Sozom., *Hist. eccl.*. 1.18.

[1076] Socrates, *Hist. eccl.* 3.1. And Origen was accused of turning his Greco-Roman learning against the pagans, thereby warping that learning, or so the pagan argument ran (Euseb., *Hist. eccl.* 6.19.2-11), only for Origen's fellow Christians to accuse him of falling into heresy by an overreliance on the same learning. Epiph., *Pan.* 64.72.9. Compare to Ammonius Saccas, who was supposedly born to Christian parents and according to Porphyry converted to paganism, a charge that Eusebius denied (Euseb., *Hist. eccl.* 19.6-10). On the generation of boundaries via accounts of the conversion/apostasy of Ammonius Sacca, Porphyry, and Origen see Jeremy Schott, "'Living Like a Christian, but Playing the Greek': Accounts of Apostasy and Conversion in Porphyry and Eusebius," *Journal of Late Antiquity* 1 (2008): 258-77.

[1077] Rufinus, *Hist. eccl.* 10.33; Socrates, *Hist. eccl.* 3.12; Sozom., *Hist. eccl.* 5.18; Julian *Ep.* 36; Amm. Marc. 22.10.7, 25.4.20. Also see Philip Amidon, *The Church History of Rufinus of Aquileia* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 58; Malley, 121.

[1078] This strategy was also a response to Christian discourse attempting to establish the validity of Christianity by identifying it as an ethnicity, and a universal one at that, an issue discussed below.

the supremacy of Greco-Roman pagans (whom he identified with school-based learning) over Christians.[1079]

In light of this battle over the proper heirs of so-called Greco-Roman learning, it seems obvious that the desert fathers' reputation for unschooled learning functioned as part of a larger debate regarding the maintenance of boundaries between Christians and pagans. Because traditional learning was identified by some pagans and Christians with paganism, the ideal Christian was an unlearned Christian. But traditional learning clearly exercised an attraction for Christians; otherwise, Julian's efforts to ban Christians from the schools would have been superfluous. This must have influenced how the unlearned monks were perceived, even by their fellow Christians. Indeed, as we shall see, learned Church leaders appear to have relied on a traditional hierarchy of knowledge in order to assert authority over these monks.

Thus far, this discussion has focused on oral/aural learning, with only a brief reference to physical writing. No attention has been paid to the actual production of books. Because formal schooling and literacy were so closely linked to physical writing, the collection of physical texts also had implications for boundary maintenance between pagans and Christians, and between monks and pagan philosophers (as well as heretics and Church leaders). Some of the manuscripts discovered in the cache at Nag Hammadi treated divine revelation as a matter of interaction with physical books. Revelation involved the expression and explanation of secret knowledge contained in these texts, and divine mandates sanctioned the

[1079] Julian *Con. Gal.* 229-230A. Complaining that it was ignorance and a lack of education that drove the Christian emperors to destroy pagan temples (Julian *Or.* 7 228B-C), Julian implied that Christians were incapable of exercising the reason that was acquired through the study of traditional Greco-Roman learning.

subsequent copying of this information.[1080] Other sources claimed that writing itself was of divine origin. The invention of written alphabets was attributed to divinely-inspired men like Moses, for instance, or the Egyptian god Thoth.[1081]

The exclusion of Egyptian pagans from the discussion above regarding formal education should not be taken to mean that Egyptians did not place value in writing. If anything, writing seems to have carried greater resonance for traditional Egyptian pagans than for traditional Greco-Roman pagans, at least with regard to religious practice.[1082] Book lists were written on Egyptian temple walls, a ritual function was served by the recitation of sacred books, and spells sometimes called for the user to actually eat papyrus covered in a text thought to be invested with spiritual power.[1083] Libraries were attached to traditional Egyptian temples, and there is evidence that the temples might have played a role in educating the youth.[1084] Under Roman rule, an applicant to the Egyptian priesthood had to prove his ability to read hieratic and

---

[1080] *The Apocryphon of James* I,2, 1-2; *The Discourse on the Eighth and the Ninth* VI,6, 54-63. When Dionysius of Alexandria visited Arsinoe to dispel those seemingly heretical beliefs circulating around *Revelation*, the locals brought him a text by a certain Nepos to justify their position (Euseb., *Hist. eccl*. 7.24). Frankfurter interprets this passage to mean that the locals handed the text to Dionysius to read and explain, meaning that they could not read it for themelves and did not trust themselves to verbally recall the contents. If so, the incident is noteworthy as evidence for the significance with which even the illiterate might invest a written text, in some cases treating it as though it is endowed with magical properties. See Frankfurter, *Elijah*, 270-74; Davis, "Biblical," 46-61; Carr, 10; Gamble, 237-41.

[1081] On Moses see Euseb., *Prep. ev*. 9.26 431c. Cf. Clem. Al., *Strom.* 1.153.4. On Thoth see Plato, *Phaedrus* 274d-275b; Iversen, *Myth*, 42.

[1082] It is true that some Greco-Roman pagan book collections had a religious function, like the Orphic text owned by one of the subjects of Damascius' history (Dam., *Vit. Isid*. 7.111), and libraries were sometimes attached to Greco-Roman temples, like the Serapeum in Alexandria. A distinction remained, though, for the content of Greco-Roman temple libraries was not necessarily related to temple activities. Nor were these books usually produced by or for the temple as were the books associated with traditional Egyptian temples. See Burton Christie, 68n50; Gamble, 196; Mary Beard, "Writing and Religion: Ancient Literacy and the Function of the Written Word in Roman Religion," in *Literacy in the Roman World*, ed. J. H. Humphrey (Ann Arbor: Michigan University Press, 1991), 35-58; Snyder, 46-50.

[1083] *Setne I*, 4/1. Also see Vos, 40; Zivie-Coche, "Pharaonic," 100-101; Carr, 80-83; Robert Ritner, "The Religious, Social and Legal Parameters of Traditional Egyptian Magic," in *Ancient Magic and Ritual Power*, eds. Marvin Meyer and Paul Mirecki (New York: Brill, 1995), 50; Wilburn, 65-70. For the curative properties of paper made from papyrus see Plin., *HN* 24.88 (51).

[1084] Diod. Sic. 1.48, 1.81; Burton, 153; Carr, 81; Cribiore, *Gymnastics*, 22-23; Frankfurter, *Roman Egypt*, 238-64.

demotic before he could be considered eligible for employment as a priest.[1085] David Carr argues that all of this would have fostered the formation of temple-based Egyptian textual communities that facilitated cultural resistance to Greco-Roman rule. By limiting the number of books (and thus the range of knowledge) endowed with sanctity—as reflected in the book lists on temple walls—and by imposing stricter rules of access to Egyptian temple libraries than imposed by Greco-Roman temple libraries like the Alexandrian Serapeum,[1086] the Egyptian priesthood erected boundaries between Egyptians and non-Egyptians, priests and non-priests. Of course, this was something of a ploy, for it increased the allure of Egyptian priests (some of whom were no doubt of Greco-Roman descent[1087]) as religious experts. The more elusive Egyptian pagan learning seemed the more desirable it became in the eyes of potential clients, who were seeking spells supposedly based on traditional Egyptian learning. But the spells peddled in Roman Egypt actually show a breadth of cross-cultural learning that is by no means captured on the restricted book lists found on the

---

[1085] Dieleman, *Priests*, 210. For instance, see a papyrus written in Greek and dated to 162 CE that confirmed that a certain Marsisuchus—presumably an applicant for the priesthood—could read "Egyptian letters" and hieratic, as demonstrated by his use of a book produced by the sacred scribes (*P.Tebtunis* 291). See Bernard Grenfell, Arthur Hunt, Edgar Goodspeed, eds., *The Tebtunis Papyri* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1907), 2:56.

[1086] Carr, 196-97. Carr makes a similar argument for reading and book collecting practices in temple- and synagogue-based Jewish textual communities. Carr, 201-86. Virtually nothing is known about authorship in pharaonic Egypt but in the Greco-Roman period, the temple probably dominated production of texts. Dieleman, *Priests*, 221n88; Tait, "Demotic," 175-90. Greco-Roman textual communities certainly existed and were no doubt often concentrated around certain types of reading—Orphic texts, for instance—but would they have seen their participation in these communities as challenges to the mainstream in the same way as a traditional Egyptian pagan or Christian (and Jewish) textual community might have? If not, presumably the situation changed in the fifth century. On a second century textual community in Oxyrhynchus see Cribiore, *Gymnastics*, 146. For an amusing example of the vitriol that a collector was inviting if he refused to lend his books see Lucian, *Adversus indoctum* 30. On Greco-Roman reading habits see John Humphrey, ed., *Literacy in the Roman World* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1991); Alan Bowman and Greg Woolf, eds., *Literacy and Power in the Ancient World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); William A. Johnson and H. N. Parker, eds., *Ancient Literacies: The Culture of Reading in Greece and Rome* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009); William A. Johnson, *Readers and Reading Culture in the High Roman Empire: A Study of Elite Communities* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010).

[1087] That is, given the evidence for cultural and social mixing, especially under the Ptolemies, and the ambiguity of ethnic distinctions, on which see below.

temple walls.[1088] Thus, boundaries were just as blurred for Egyptian pagans as they were for Christians and Greco-Roman pagans.

The obvious syncretism demonstrated by this corpus of Late Antique Egyptian spells could be taken as evidence for a flourishing religious life. But it is tempting to blame the decline of traditional Egyptian paganism on this syncretism, particularly when comes to the demise of the traditional Egyptian script. The other possible culprit, of course, is Christianity. It is true that the spread of Christianity in Egypt coincided with the rise of the Coptic script. But many a pagan text was composed in Old Coptic,[1089] so the rise of Christianity is not directly to blame for the death of demotic, hieratic, or hieroglyphs. Theophilus allegedly closed a school for traditional Egyptian priestly script at Canopus (Rufinus, *Hist. eccl.* 11.26). Yet textual evidence suggests that this script was already in serious decline by the late fourth century. With the use of hieratic and hieroglyphs preserved for a priestly class, the pool of potential trainees would have been limited. The problem of transmission would have been further exacerbated by warnings against translation. In some cases, a warning like this was clearly meant to enhance the allure of a given text, implying, as it did, that the audience had managed to obtain an illicit translation. But since the actual translation of hieroglyphs, hieratic, or demotic into Greek or Coptic or Latin would have implied

[1088] Geraldine Pinch, *Magic in Ancient Egypt* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1995), 162-63. Tait argues that the Greek spells and demotic are usually found in separate contexts, that there was little overlap in production. Tait, "Demotic," 179-80.

[1089] Wilburn, 59; Malcolm Choat, "Coptic," in Riggs, 583; Sarah Clackson, "Coptic or Greek? Bilingualism in the Papyri," in *The Multilingual Experience in Egypt, from the Ptolemies to the 'Abbasids*, ed. Arietta Papaconstantinou (Burlington, Vermont: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2010), 75-79; Roger Bagnall, "Linguistic Change and Religious Change: Thinking about the Temples of the Fayoum in the Roman Period," in Gabra, 11-20; Jan Quaegebeur, "De la préhistoire de l'écriture Copte," *Orientalia Lovaniensia Periodica* 13 (1982): 125-36; Rubenson, *Letters*, 109; Frankfurter, *Roman Egypt*, 248-56.

a decline in the ritual power of the text in question,[1090] the decline of traditional Egyptian script, however it came about, no doubt contributed to the decline of some traditional Egyptian religious knowledge and to the decline of a one-to-one correlation between the sanctity of knowledge and the occult nature of the script in which it was communicated. The fourth century boon in the distribution of spells written in Greek but incorporating traditional Egyptian pagan imagery,[1091] meanwhile, appears to have had no appreciable effect in stemming the spread of Christianity.

A non-Egyptian script might not have been invested with as much sanctity as hieratic or hieroglyphs, or even demotic, but reading was clearly fundamental to the lives of many Christians in Egypt, who were presumably reading Christian texts in Coptic, Greek, or Latin. Pachomius supposedly received instructions from an angel telling him to ensure that the monks under his direction be taught to read as part of their routine.[1092] Based on Christian correspondence, book exchanges and literary discussions were standard features of Christian social interaction, perhaps even the

---

[1090] Although religious texts were ideally composed in hieratic, they were increasingly composed in demotic as well. On the religious valence of the traditional Egyptian language see chapter two. See below for further discussion of the implications of the shift to Coptic. Also see Choat, who notes that the adoption of Coptic by so-called orthodox Christians, Gnostics, and Manichaeans suggests the scope of competition for a Coptic-based constituency. Choat, "Coptic," 589. Theophilus' alleged closure of a school of traditional Egyptian priestly writing (probably hieratic, though priests had begun composing religious works in demotic by this point) fits in well with the below argument regarding the imperialistic implications of Christianization. But it should be noted that early Christian imperialism in Egypt, if it was imperialism, appears to have been far less brutal than the imperialism of more recent centuries, when First Nations (Native American/American Indian) children, for instance, were taken from their homes and forced into institutions where they were schooled in Christianity, required to learn an entirely new language (not merely their own language written in English letters), and physically compelled to forget their native tongues. See David Wallace Adams, *Education for Extinction: American Indians and the Boarding School Experience*, 1875-1928 (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1995). The reader may recall from chapter two that Hieroglyphics had become increasingly complicated in the Greco-Roman period. Though this may have been a strategy for excluding non-Egyptians, it may have contributed to the decline of the language as transmission became more and more difficult. Loprieno, *Ancient Egyptian*, 23.

[1091] Harris, 282-83, 297-99, 312, 317, 319. On magic, see the following chapter.

[1092] Sozom., *Hist. eccl.* 3.14; Pall., *HL* 32; Pachomius, *Praecepta* 139-40.

motivation for interaction in some cases.[1093] Although pagans sometimes formed what could be considered textual communities, scholars like Robin Lane Fox have argued that Christians were more likely to be literate than pagans, and that this literacy was in fact responsible for the spread of Christianity and its eventual success. Fox's theory has not received widespread support, the current scholarly consensus being that Christians were no more literate, on average, than pagans.[1094] Nonetheless, it is no doubt significant—at least in the context of the current discussion—that anecdotes regarding the desert fathers were providing so much fodder for new books, and that these books were being copied and distributed for study and discussion.[1095] Indeed, hagiographies facilitated a mimetic process of education wherein the monks who had used Scripture to imitate Old and New Testament figures were now the objects of imitation for the audiences of hagiography.[1096]

[1093] *P.Oxy.* LXIII 4365. Cf. Tert., *Apol.* 39.3-4; *Hist. mon.* 23; Pall., *HL* 60.2, 63.3. Some texts from the Nag Hammadi cache appealed to an aura of secrecy evocative of the exclusive readership associated with the Egyptian temples. As a rule Christian apologists went to some lengths to reject this approach, arguing that Christian learning was open to everyone. This would require expansion of a textual community beyond the strictly literate. See chapter two and Lightfoot, 17.

[1094] Fox, 304. But see William Harris, *Ancient Literacy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989), 305. The success of Christianity has been attributed in part to the adoption of a codex format that was easier to use than older book formats. We should not imagine that the codex was particularly convenient, however, especially by today's standards. It was much more unwieldy than the average modern book, and ancient writing methods—which showed little regard for punctuation or spacing between words—meant that really competent readers would have been limited to people who had already mastered a text, meaning that they had probably memorized significant portions of it. If we limit the audience of a book to the individuals who would have been capable of physically reading it, this potential audience was probably not large enough to foster a very significant book-based conversion, simply because average literacy rates throughout the Empire were so low. Bagnall, *Books,* 70-90; Burton-Christie, 44-45; Gamble, 6, 11-20, 49-81; Stephens, 413; John Kloppenborg, "Literate Media in Early Christ Groups: The Creation of a Christian Book Culture," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 22 (2014): 21-59; Grafton, 1-200; Harris, 300; Carr, 3-4; Cribiore, *Gymnastics,* 189-90; Herbert C. Youtie, "ὑπογραφεύς: The Social Impact of Illiteracy in Graeco-Roman Egypt," *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 17 (1975): 201-21; Frederic Kenyon, *Books and Readers in Ancient Greece and Rome* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1951); William Klingshirn, *The Early Christian Book* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2007); Colin H. Roberts, *Manuscript, Society, and Belief in Early Christian Egypt* (London: Oxford University Press, 1979).

[1095] Paphnutius, *Life of Onnophrius* 37 (21a-b). Vivian speculates that the Paphnutius to whom this life was attributed was situated at Scetis in the late fourth century. The hero of this *Life* was a monk who Paphnutius just happened upon in the desert. Tim Vivian, "Introduction," in *Histories of the Monks of Upper Egypt and The Life of Onnophrius* (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1993), 53.

[1096] *Life of Aaron,* 138 (56b). On the pilgrims identifying the monks with figures from Scripture see Georgia Frank, *The Memory of the Eyes: Pilgrims to the Living Saints in Christian Late Antiquity* (Berkeley:

Christians were avid book collectors, just like Egyptian pagans,[1097] Greco-Roman pagans, and Jews.[1098] The resources required for book production meant that the construction of a library was well-suited for competition between elites seeking to demonstrate their financial resources and their possession of the cultural and intellectual acumen that went into selecting items for a collection. It was only fitting that imperial biographers mention the emperors' involvement in such a high status occupation. The *Life of Constantine* credited the emperor with commissioning fifty copies of Scripture (Euseb., *Vit. Const.* 4.36.). The meager number of volumes in this commission—by today's standards—compared to the acclaim the commission earned in Eusebius' eyes serves as a reminder as to just how costly a book could be in antiquity.[1099] Wanting to praise Theodosius II's (reigned 402-450) piety, Socrates Scholasticus complimented the emperor's support for the book trade: Theodosius allegedly collected more sacred literature than Ptolemy Philadelphus (309–246 BCE), the ruler whose love of literature reportedly prompted the foundation of the library of Alexandria and the commission of the first translation of the Old Testament into

---

University of California Press, 2000), 163-67. Miller points out the lack of differentiation among the monks (Patricia Cox Miller, "Strategies of Representation in Collective Biography: Constructing the Subject as Holy," in Hägg, 228-29), a factor that would have facilated memorization and imitation of the models.

[1097] That is, Egyptian pagans appear to have been avid book collectors within the confines of the temple. Outside of the temple, their habits of book collecting are more difficult to trace.

[1098] Philo, *VC* 3 (475-76); Maxine Grossman, *Reading for History in the Damascus Document: A Methodological Method* (Leiden: Brill, 2002); Carr, 201-86; Gamble, 196; Snyder, 138-88.

[1099] If Eusebius was embarrassed over the paltry number, he would have not have been so specific. For imperial interest in book collecting, consider a letter Julian sent following George the Cappadocian's death to secure possession of George's library (Julian *Ep.* 23). On Greco-Roman pagan, Jewish, and Christian book collecting see Gamble; Jason Konig, *Ancient Libraries* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013); T. K. Dix, "'Public Libraries' in Ancient Rome: Ideology and Reality," *Libraries & Culture* 29 (1994): 282-96; S. Johnstone, "A New History of Libraries and Books in the Hellenistic Period," *Classical Antiquity* 33 (2014): 347-93; Lionel Casson, *Libraries in the Ancient World* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001); Raymond J. Starr, "The Circulation of Literary Texts in the Roman World," *The Classical Quarterly* 37 (1987): 213-23; L. D. Reynolds and N. G. Wilson, *Scribes and Scholars: A Guide to the Transmission of Greek and Latin Literature* (NY: Oxford University Press, 2013), 1-43; Snyder, 46-217.

Greek.[1100] Meager as the desert fathers' possessions were, books—particularly books of Gospel—were one of the few things they might possess (6.7 Theodore of Phermē I; 15.116 N 565), and some of these books were quite valuable (16.2 Gelasius 1). Monasteries, like Shenoute's, were attached to scriptoria,[1101] and some Christian monks supported themselves by copying books.[1102]

When seeking advice as to which books to acquire, the discerning Christian collector could turn to Eusebius' Church history, which doubled as a book catalogue, listing the books written by or attributed to important personages.[1103] Eusebius' Church history was all the more valuable insofar as it identified which books were considered heretical.[1104] The latter posed a special problem for the Christian collector,

---

[1100] Socrates, *Hist. eccl.* 7.22. On Ptolemy Philadelphus and the translation of the Old Testament see *Letter of Aristeas*, trans. R. J. H. Shutt, in Charlesworth, 7-35; Joseph. *Ant.* 7.2; Tert., *Apol.* 18.5-7; Euseb., *Hist. eccl.* 5.7.11-15. For skepticism regarding this tradition see Adler, 63; Johnstone, 357; Snyder, 166-69. Bagnall argues that the ancient sources exaggerated the significance of the library. Roger Bagnall, "Alexandria: Library of Dreams," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 146 (2002): 348-62. On the fate of the library see Amm. Marc. 22.16.13; Mostafa El-Abbadi and Omnia Mounir Fathallaho, *What Happened to the Ancient Library of Alexandria?* (Leiden: Brill, 2008).

[1101] Tito Orlandi, "The Library of the Monastery of Saint Shenute at Atripe," in Egberts, 211-32; Stephen Emmel, "Reconstructing a Dismembered Coptic Library," in Goehring, 145-61; Frankfurter, *Roman Egypt*, 238-64; Mark Sheridan, *From the Nile to the Rhone and Beyond: Studies in Early Monastic Literature and Scriptural Interpretation* (Roma: Pontificio Ateneo Sant'Anselmo, 2012), 54-57; H. E. Winlock and W. E. Crum, *The Monastery of Epiphanius at Thebes* (NY: Metropolitan Museum of New York, 1926); Hugh Evelyn-White, *The Monasteries of the Wadi 'N Natrun* (New York: Arno Press, 1973), 1:xxi-xlviii.

[1102] 15.129 N 519-20. Cf. Mark the disciple of Silvanus 1. Also see Bagnall, *Books*, 60.

[1103] Euseb., *Hist. eccl.* 6.13, 6.46. See below discussion of Ibn al-Nadīm's (d. 990-91) *Kitab al-Fihrist*. For a similar suggestion with regard to Jerome see Irene SanPietro, "Jerome's De Viris Illustribus and the Beginnings of a Christian Curriculum," *Society for Classical Studies*, 147th Annual Meeting, January 6-9, 2016. For an example of another Church historian following Eusebius' example with regard to the construction of a book catalogue see Socrates, *Hist. eccl.* 4.23. In providing these lists, Eusebius was following the example of pagan biographers, who included literary contributions among the worthy accomplishments of great men (Suetonius, *Divus Iulius* 55-56; Suet., *Tib.* 70; Suet., *Divus Claudius* 41-42).

[1104] For Christians, a book collection was invaluable to the maintenance of orthodoxy, since a lack of familiarity with Christian writings increased the chances that a person would stray (Euseb., *Hist. eccl.* 5.28.4). Copious reading could steer a person away from heresy, a fact reportedly demonstrated by the avid reading practices of Melania the Elder (d. 411), a visitor and wealthy patron of the monks of Nitria (Pall., *HL* 55.3). But how could Christians like Melania tell if a text was orthodox? Heretics were known to employ Scripture, corrupting it to suit their needs, rearranging sections and inter-collating forged passages (Tert., *De praes. haer.* 16). Many of the so-called Christian revelations floating around were thought to be heretical forgeries (Epiph., *Pan.* 38 2,4). Some of these had even been commissioned by pagan emperors to vilify Christian beliefs, or so the Christians said (Euseb., *Hist. eccl.* 9.5.1). Pagan critics claimed that the Christians were counterfeiting documents like the *Revelation of Zostrianus* to lend Christianity a false air of prestige, Zostrianus being a renowned sage of the distant past (Porphyry, *VP* 16). Christian book catalogues addressed problems like this, not only by identifying

who had to weigh the sheer pleasure of owning a book against the danger this book might pose as a vector of heresy. Some Christians went so far as to advise the destruction of questionable tracts.[1105] Others, like Epiphanius, sought out heretical and pagan literature so that they could refute it. The Nag Hammadi cache might have actually been put together by someone hoping to dispose of dubious items, perhaps prompted by Athanasius' dissemination of a list of books that, in the patriarch's opinion, defined the Christian canon.[1106]

Unsurprisingly, the desert fathers warned against the perusal of heretical writings (14.16 Sōspatros 1). Imagine how embarrassing it would have been for a paragon of the Christian faith to be found dipping his nose into a book of heresy, especially if he was not supposed to be particularly literate. But the existence of this

---

which works had been written by pagans or heretics (Euseb., *Hist. eccl.* 5.28.15-18), but also by laying claim to Scripture as the sole property of the so-called orthodox, defining the accepted canon and commentaries, and tracing these texts through an authoritative line of teachers harkening back to the apostles (Euseb., *Hist. eccl*. 3.25, 6.13; Tert., *De praes. haer*. 15, 35-40). For evidence that pagan were also worried about maintaining "orthodox" book collections, spurious pagan texts, and the contradictions they introduced see Iambl., *VP* 5, 31. On forgeries in antiquity see A. J. Droge, "The Lying Pen of the Scribes: Of Holy Books and Pious Frauds," *Method & Theory in the Study of Religion* 15 (2003): 117-47; Angela Haighton, "Roman Methods of Authentication in the First Two Centuries AD," *Journal of the Society of Archivists* 31 (2010): 29–49; Bart Ehrman, *Forgery and Counter-Forgery: The Use of Literary Deceit in Early Christian Polemics* (NY: Oxford University Press, 2012).

[1105] For instance Constantine condemned Arius' writings to the flames. Socrates, *Hist. eccl.* 1.9. As book burning had been employed by the pagans for Christian tracts (Euseb., *Vit. Const.* 3.1; Euseb., *Hist. eccl*. 8.2.1) and other texts of a dubious nature (Lucian, *Alexander* 47; Suet., *Aug*. 31.1), it is not surprising that Christians began levying charges of book burning against each other, Athanasius, for example, being accused of having a hand in the burning of sacred books (Socrates, *Hist. eccl*. 1.27). On burning a copy of Scripture (*AP* N 53) as a sign of devotion in a saying see Burton-Christie, 114. Also see Daniel Sarefield, "Bookburning in the Christian Roman Empire: Transforming a Pagan Rite of Purification," in Drake, 287-96.

[1106] Athan., *Festal Letter* 39. After seeing Athanasius' letter, the owners of the Nag Hammadi cache might have decided that it was safer to dispose of the collection rather than risk persecution for the possession of these books, even if the collection had only been put together to refute heresy. Gamble, 172-74. Cf. Jenott, 585. A desire to save the collection via burial rather than destroy it may also suggest that the collection was the product of genuine interest as opposed to hostility, implying that the collector had eclectic tastes and used books to bridge rather than to erect boundaries. To appreciate the differences between a book catalogue that seeks to erect boundaries and one that seeks to bridge them, consider a comparison of Eusebius' Church history to a true book catalogue like Ibn al-Nadīm's (d. 990-91) *Kitab al-Fihrist.* The latter shows 1) a continued interest in the presentation of biographies, with Ibn al-Nadīm's grouping of readers, writers, editors, and collectors suggesting the existence of textual communities, and 2) comparatively less interest in passing judgment regarding either the texts or their audiences, suggesting a love of books that transcends religious differences, a not insignificant issue, as the below discussion regarding ethnicity demonstrates. Ibn al-Nadīm, *The Fihrist of Al-Nadīm; A Tenth-Century Survey of Muslim Culture*, trans. Bayard Dodge (New York: Columbia University Press, 1970). For this reason, I believe that Paul Heck goes too far in insisting upon the imperialistic functions of the *Kitab al-Fihrist.* Paul Heck, "The Hierarchy of Knowledge in Islamic Civilization," *Arabica* 49 (2002): 27-54.

injunction implies that more than a few monastic libraries included works of so-called heresy.[1107] Offering up an injunction of his own, Antony allegedly told his disciples that Scripture was all a person needed (*Vita Antonii* 16), implying that the true Christian would avoid everything else. This made sense insofar as heresy was thought to originate in speculation outside Scripture (Tert., *De praes. haer.* 7-14; 10.149 N 227). Thus, the desert fathers cautioned against generating commentary on Scripture (15.11 Arsenios 42).

But this injunction against producing commentary is a somewhat surprising stipulation since, as living exemplars of Scripture who had memorized wide swaths of the text (Sozom., *Hist. eccl.* 1.12; 10.7 Arsenius 5), the desert fathers should have been ideally placed for explaining just how to put Scripture to work in a person's life. Instruction of this sort appears to have been dearly needed. A future desert father reportedly convinced his wife to adopt an ascetic lifestyle by reading to her from the New Testament and, because she lacked Scriptural training, adding his own thoughts to the passages that he read aloud.[1108]

Here, the discussion comes full circle, and we can return to the subject set aside so many pages earlier, namely, the desert fathers' teachings and the rivalries this instruction inspired. The popularity of the *Sayings*—as demonstrated by the circulation of so many pilgrim accounts—is undoubtedly proof that the desert fathers were being sought out for the very advice that some of the *Sayings* warned against generating. Various *Sayings* recommended actually studying the *Sayings* alongside

[1107] Unless the injunction was aimed at the audience of the pilgrim accounts. Gamble, 170.

[1108] Pall., *HL* 8.2. Cf. Acts 8:26-35. Compare to Lucian's portrait of Peregrinus, who supposely gained status among the Christians because he was able to read their books (Lucian, *De mort. Peregr.* 11). Also see Gamble, 9-10.

religious books (*AP* 15.136) or in place of books (6.16 Serapion 2; 10.24 Eupreprius 7). Not for nothing do these *Sayings* so closely resemble the wisdom literature produced in traditional Egyptian pagan, Greco-Roman pagan, and Jewish circles.[1109] The desert fathers were emerging as serious competitors when it came to the distribution of religious learning. To this end, the ostensibly oral nature of the *Sayings*[1110] would have functioned as a point in the desert fathers' favor. In light of the above-mentioned suspicion regarding written material, the oral, face-to-face transmission of the *Sayings* would have given the monks peddling these *Sayings* (and the pilgrims who appealed to these chains of authority) an edge over solely text-based sources that eschewed such strategies.[1111]

We should not underestimate the authority wielded by an elder who produced *Sayings*.[1112] The desert fathers were regularly challenging Church leadership. It is by no means shocking to learn that allegedly heretical patriarchs like Lucius were

---

[1109] Iambl., *VP* 29; Dieleman, "Egyptian," 437-38; Carr, 184; van Minnen, 68-69; Heike Behlmer, "Ancient Egyptian Survivals in Coptic Literature: An Overview," in Loprieno, 576-77.

[1110] On the oral nature of the *Sayings* see Sofia Tovar, "Linguistic Identity in Graeco-Roman Egypt," in Papaconstantinou, 36.

[1111] The chain of informants for a *Saying* resembled the chain of informants used to verify the authenticity of a religious text in book catalogues like that of Eusebius. In both cases, the goal was to establish a link to a learned authority, a desert father or an apostle. The market for forgeries meant that even learned Greco-Roman pagan circles in Alexandria might privilege face-to-face verbal verifications of authenticity over written ones. On the latter see Buell, *Making*, 71-75. On face-to-face transmission as a method of authentication with regard to the desert fathers see Harmless, *Desert*, 249. Cf. Miller, "Strategies," 211. On chains of transmission (privileging face-to-face transmission) in Jewish, Greco-Roman pagan, and early Muslim texts see Lapin, 38-63; Amram Tropper, "The Fate of Jewish Historiography after the Bible: A New Interpretation," *History and Theory* 43 (2004): 179-197; B. Gerhardsson, *Memory and Manuscript: Oral Tradition and Written Transmission in Rabbinic Judaism and Early Christianity* (Copenhagen: Munksgaard, 1964); J. L. Crenshaw, *Old Testament Wisdom: An Introduction* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1981); A. Brent, "Diogenes Laertius and the Apostolic Succession," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 44 (1993): 367-89; Snyder, 15-18; Tarif Khalidi, *Arabic Historical Thought in the Classical Period* (NY: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 5, 22-23, 39-43; Fred Donner, *Narratives of Islamic Origins: The Beginnings of Islamic Historical Writing* (Princeton: The Darwin Press, Inc., 1998), 5-34; Rina Drory, "The Abbasid Construction of the Jahiliyya: Cultural Authority in the Making," *Studia Islamica* 83 (1996): 33-49. Face-to-face transmission implies an apprenticeship model. On the latter among the desert fathers see Gould, *Desert*, 25, 73-74, 58-63.

[1112] On the role of power in the teacher-student relationship see Richard Valantasis, "Constructions of Power in Asceticism," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 63 (1995): 809. On this relationship between monastic elders and disciples see Gould, *Desert*, 26-87.

apparently clashing with the desert fathers (Sozom., *Hist. eccl.* 6.20). It is interesting, however, to discover that even a supposedly orthodox patriarch like Theophilus could find himself embroiled in a serious conflict with the monks who hypothetically represented paragons of orthodoxy.[1113] Doctrinal issues notwithstanding, heresiological debates represented a simple struggle for social and political power.[1114] The conflict between a patriarch and a monastic community over purported heresy was in large part a dispute over just who really enjoyed ultimate authority in religious matters: the monk who allegedly relied on wisdom acquired through divine intervention (but sometimes possessed school-based learning as well) or the patriarch who more closely resembled the traditional Greco-Roman authority figure (complete with more formal learning than the allegedly unlearned monk) and who expected to be accorded the respect customarily associated with his status, the inversion of a traditional hierarchy (of knowledge and status) be damned.[1115]

This contest for authority explains some of the contradictions implied by the use of learning to generate pagan-Christian boundaries, contradictions that are showcased by the relationship between Athanasius and Antony. Ancient sources

---

[1113] On Theophilus' dispute with these monks see Socrates, *Hist. eccl.* 6.9-17; Sozom., *Hist. eccl*. 8.13-27; Russell, *Theophilus*, 19-27. Note that Egypt did not employ metropolitan bishops to act as intercessors between local bishops and the patriarch. This posed a challenge for rivals hoping to rally resistance to an unpopular patriarch. Bagnall, *Books*, 5-6; Wipszycka, "Church," 331-49. Yet, monks continued to flout the patriarch's authority, with the divinely-sent visions mandating the selection of monastic heads masking the extent to which this choice was being taken out of the hands of the patriarchs. See for instance *Life of Aaron* 58 (25a-b).

[1114] Bagnall, *Books*, 6-7.

[1115] From the perspective of the patriarchs, the isolation of the desert fathers—a factor that allegedly contributed to the desert fathers' aura of sanctity—compounded the danger of infection from heresy, for the more isolated a monk was, the less his exposure to the direct supervision of the Church leaders tasked with enforcing orthodoxy. Hagiographies confirmed that simple ignorance or isolation from spiritual instruction could be responsible for the heretical notions harbored by various monks. It is worth noting, then, that in some stories, the straying monks were corrected, not by their superiors, but through divine intervention, the hagiographer implicitly acknowledging that monks might not be subject to temporal authority (18.4 Daniel 7; 18.5 Daniel 8). On withdrawal into monastic space creating social and physical room for the monks to challenge authority see Valantasis, 808, 810, 815-16; David Brakke, *Athanasius and the Politics of Asceticism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 81. Remember, however, that monastic isolation was exaggerated.

confirm that Athanasius wrote a biography of Antony,[1116] but scholars question whether the hagiography that is circulating today under Athanasius' name—the hagiography to which this dissertation has made so many references—was actually composed by Athanasius.[1117] Scholars have also challenged the reliability of the hagiography in general.[1118] One of the most controversial elements of the *Vita Antonii* concerns Antony's level of education. According to the hagiographer, Antony knew only Coptic and refused school-based learning.[1119] Yet, this hagiographer also claimed that Antony composed letters to high status figures, including an emperor and a general.[1120] This does not necessarily mean that Antony was literate. These letters could very well have been dictated, but an independent collection of letters in Coptic attributed to Antony display familiarity with traditional Greco-Roman learning.[1121]

Assuming that these letters are authentic, how do we reconcile Antony's erudition with the hagiographer's portrait? Perhaps the hagiographer ascribed a lack of learning to Antony as a way of acknowledging what was actually a lack of facility with Greek and Latin.[1122] The philosophical terminology employed in elite apologetic

---

[1116] For instance, Rufinus, *Hist. eccl.* 10.38; Socrates, *Hist. eccl.* 1.21. For a fuller list see Rubenson, *Letters*, 129.

[1117] Timothy Barnes, "Early Christian Hagiography and the Roman Historian," in *Christian Martyrdom in Late Antiquity History and Discourse, Tradition and Religious Identity*, ed. by Peter Gemeinhardt and Johan Leemans (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2012), 20; Rubenson, *Letters* 129; Andrew Louth, "St. Athanasius and the Greek 'Life of Antony,'" *The Journal of Theological Studies* 39 (1988): 504-509; Harmless, *Desert*, 111-13.

[1118] Rubenson, *Letters*, 9.

[1119] *Vita Antonii* 1, 74. Cf. Pall., *HL* 21.15; Eunap., *VS* 504.

[1120] *Vita Antonii* 81, 86. Cf. Athan., *Hist. Ar.* 14. Antony allegedly encouraged his brethren to record their sins in writing, to increase their shame and fuel their penance (Sozom., *Hist. eccl.* 1.3). This claim is all the more surprising given that the same passage in Sozomen stressed Antony's lack of learning. For other evidence that Antony was learned see Rubenson, *Letters*, 142-43.

[1121] Rubenson, *Letters*, 11, 23, 185-86.

[1122] Rubenson, *Letters*, 98; Gamble, 9. Some of the desert fathers were able to communicate in Coptic, Latin, and Greek (*Hist. mon.* 6.3) while others were miraculously granted the ability to converse in Greek and

discourse was predominantly Greek in origin. So if Antony only knew Coptic, he might not have been able to understand the apologies that Athanasius was producing. But because the Coptic language utilizes the Greek alphabet and many Greek terms, someone who knew Coptic probably knew at least a little Greek.[1123] So it remains unclear just how educated Antony really was.

By comparison, Antony's hagiographer was undoubtedly educated. Even if this hagiographer was someone other than Athanasius, he clearly possessed some traditional Greco-Roman pagan learning, as demonstrated by, among other things, the quality of his Greek.[1124] When he claimed that Antony was unlearned, perhaps he simply meant that the monk was unlearned in comparison to the hagiographer himself.

This hagiographer obviously respected Antony's spiritual charisma.[1125] The monk's alleged limitations with regard to non-Coptic languages might have even been taken as a sign of the monk's sanctity, given the degree to which the Egyptian language was traditionally thought to be invested with sacred power. By (over-)

Latin so that they could communicate directly with visitors (*Paralipomena* 11 [27]). Cf. *Vita prima graeca Pachomii* 93, 95. On these language issues see Tovar, "Linguistic," 37-40.

[1123] Clackson, 75-77; Cribiore, *Gymnastics*, 175, 210; Bagnall, *Egypt from Alexander*, 230-60. For the argument that the Egyptian tongue did not possess adequate terms for the expression of Greco-Roman metaphysical principles see Scott-Montcrieff, 51. Note however that by 300, Christians were composing books in Coptic on Scripture and asceticism. Hieracas wrote in both Greek and Coptic (Epiph., *Pan.* 67.7.1-7). On Hieracas see Rubenson, *Letters*, 110. For school texts in the Fayoum in Coptic, including mathematics, see Karl-Heinz Brune, "Schooldays in the Fayou in the First Millennium," in Gabra, 33-43. The *Vita Antonii* claimed that it was the recitation of a Gospel passage in church that convinced Antony to adopt an ascetic lifestyle. If so, then either Antony knew Greek or the Gospel had already been translated into Coptic by the mid-third century (*Vita Antonii* 2; Scott-Moncrieff 203n3). On the translation of Scripture into Coptic see Burton-Christie, 45. On the distribution of Scriptural texts in Egypt see Bagnall, *Books.*

[1124] Rubenson, *Letters*, 130-32; Harmless, *Desert*, 70-71. Cf. Cain, 351.

[1125] On the efforts of Antony's hagiographer to downplay Antony's spiritual charisma, as compared to the hagiographers and/or informants responsible for the portrait of Antony found in the *Sayings*, see Jenott, 565-69; Brakke, *Athanasius*, 201-76. Cf. Goehring, *Ascetics*, 208-11.

emphasizing Antony's lack of learning, the hagiographer made it seem all the more impressive when Antony outmaneuvered pagan sages.

But we should not forget that the same hagiographer who boasted of these successes insisted that Antony was all too happy to learn from bishops, deacons, and priests. Supposedly, the desert father always submitted to the guidance of the officially-sanctioned Church leaders.[1126] Antony's peaceable nature meant that he was unlikely to engage in the sort of disputes by which he might have challenged authority,[1127] except, of course, when it came to challenging the pagan officials and Arians who were persecuting orthodox Christians.[1128]

[1126] *Vita Antonii* 67. Cf. 14.21 N 388. By comparison, the arrogance of some monks caused them to go astray (Pall., *HL* 26), imagining that they were qualified to serve as instructors (Rufinus, *Hist. mon.* 1.22-28) and to judge the behavior of their fellow monks (10.46 Macarius of Alexandria 2). Compare the treatment of Antony to the treatment of learned and unlearned women in hagiographical literature. Even if the spectacle of women dispensing spiritual knowledge was merely a *topos* meant to demonstrate that the power of God was such that women too might be invested with spiritual knowledge, such claims would have been contingent upon the operation of women as rivals for spiritual authority, and the *Sayings* do in fact represent women chastising men for their failings. Juliussen, 35-47, 78-88. On the literacy of women in Roman Egypt and their knowledge of Greek, Latin, and Coptic see Bagnall, *Egypt from Alexander*, 247, 250; Harris, 309-10; Malcolm Choat, "Language and Culture in Late Antique Egypt," in Rousseau, 350.

[1127] Sozom., *Hist. eccl.* 1.3. A reluctance to engage in disputes, combined with Antony's purported lack of arrogance, prevented the loss of face that supposedly fostered the explosions of anger that, according to learned Greco-Roman pagans, impeded reason (Seneca, *De Ira*). Of course a traditional education in rhetoric would have given Antony an advantage had he chosen to engage in these disputes. One of the primary purposes of school was of course inculcation into the methods of debate. Pedagogical methodology called for students to imagine themselves in specific situations in the past and to debate the appropriate course of action or to imagine alternatives (Cribiore, *Gymnastics*, 232). This meant calling into question accepted narratives, something that might have been deemed questionable with regard to Scriptural texts, the interpretation of which was already subjected to so much controversy. Eusebius, for instance, condemned the kind of critical exegesis that is employed by modern biblical scholars, arguing that the comparison of textual variants and linguistic subtleties with the goal of identifying the "origin" of specific passages (presumably, this is the "correcting" to which Eusebius referred) suggested that the user did not believe the Scripture was divinely inspired (Euseb., *Hist. eccl.* 5.28.13-19). See Schaff, 602n1757. One of the *Saying* contended that there is no point in debating divine matters because they are incomprehensible (14.16 Sōpatros 1). One might argue that a concentration on praxis in the *Sayings* (Burton-Christie, 162) suggests adherence to a literal interpretation of Scripture that flies in the face of the allegorical interpretation that Antony decried and drew so much criticism to Origen. On the use of allegorical interpretation contests for authority in Roman Egypt between patriarchs and suborinate bishops or monks see Davis, "Biblical," 45-61. And because rhetorical training encouraged debate—being founded upon and being intended to facilitate just this—Christian polemics against debate would have discouraged the pursuit of such training, ostensibly so as to promote peace, but these injunctions also would have prevented challenges to authority. Note, however, the efforts of the .two Apollinares to compose an explicitly Christian body of literature based on Scripture to replace the pagan body of literature that formed the basis of education, an effort supposedly prompted by Julian's decision to ban Christian instructors from education (Socrates, *Hist. eccl.* 3.16; Sozom., *Hist. eccl.* 5.18). An effort to construct a Christian curriculum was also made by Protogenes of Edessa, who was exiled to Antinoopolis by Valens (Theod., *Hist. eccl.* 4.17). Harris argues that this was an exceptional case and that, contra Frend, Christians

Antony's submission to authority was impressive not only because he was a monk, allegedly gifted with divine insight, but because he possessed a fair amount of traditional status as well. He was the child of well-to-do parents,[1129] and, as mentioned above, he attracted the attention of emperors and generals. His alleged ignorance of Greek and Latin was unusual, but not entirely unheard of, for an elite person living in Egypt during this period.[1130] Antony was so popular in Christian circles that when he came to Alexandria he was surrounded by adoring crowds. His reputation was such that the Arians supposedly tried to cash in on his celebrity by claiming that he had decided to throw his weight behind their cause (*Vita Antonii* 69). Impressed by Antony's spiritual progress and/or renown, Christians naturally would have wanted to follow in his footsteps. The hagiographer's portrait would have militated against the exercise of ambition in this project. The Christian who mimicked Antony was meant to submit to authority, not flout it.

Not for nothing did one monk after another reportedly eschew leadership. Some supposedly went so far as to mutilate themselves, thinking that this would prevent their promotion.[1131] Whether or not these stories were true, they could be

---

showed far less interest in supporting education than Greco-Roman pagans. Harris, 307-22; Frend, *Martyrdom,* 212.

[1128] *Vita Antonii* 46. Note that Antony's condemnation of the Arians employed language that, if common enough at the time that even an uneducated Coptic speaker would have been capable of stating, was nevertheless evocative of the apologists (*Vita Antonii* 69). Interestingly, one of the letters attributed to Antony does condemn Arius (Antony, *Letter* 4). Also see Harmless, *Desert,* 96-97.

[1129] *Vita Antonii* 1; Sozom., *Hist. eccl.* 1.13. Antony's high status would have made Antony's success in refusing a formal education even more striking *and* hard to believe.

[1130] Clackson, 88, 94; Tovar, "Linguistic," 30-32; Bagnall, *Egypt from Alexander,* 230-60; Harris, 276-79; Arietta Papaconstantinou, ed., *The Multilingual Experience in Egypt, from the Ptolemies to the Abbasids* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2010).

On Athanasius' knowledge of Coptic see Gwynn, 42n5; Griffiths, "Athanasius," 1024.

[1131] 15.33 Theodore of Phermē 25; 16.3 Evagrius 7; *Hist. mon.* 20.14; Pall., *HL* 11.2-3; Socrates, *Hist. eccl.* 4.23; Sozom., *Hist. eccl.* 6.30. Of course, a cynical person might say that these bids for humility were nothing but power-plays. By denying an interest in power, these future leaders demonstrated that they bore the

used to discourage would-be competitors from showing too much ambition. The ideal monk supposedly avoided displays of arrogance (*Hist. mon.* 8.15-16).

The promotion of the unlearned monk's mystique probably did not discourage the pursuit of education by Christians, as a rule. But the exaggeration of this monk's ignorance certainly reflected the existence of a pool of monks who, in keeping with the traditional hierarchy of knowledge and status, were not meant to compete for positions of power.[1132] Injunctions against the possession of physical books can be interpreted in a similar vein. Because book collections functioned as status symbols, the elimination of such a collection[1133] would have damaged a desert father's accumulation of the traditional markers of success, even if this purge was posited as an ascetic measure.[1134] That is, the ascetic prowess and divinely-inspired wisdom of the ostensibly ignorant monk was not meant to threaten the authority of a patriarch like Athanasius, who enjoyed a status that reflected, among other things, his possession of a more formal education that facilitated his interaction with elites outside of the Church.

---

humility indicative of spiritual excellence and required for career advancement. On the provision against persons who have mutilated themselves becoming clerics see Russell, *Lives*, 136n9. On mysticism involving a temporary loss of self suggestive of the humility attributed to the desert fathers see Kripal, 327.

[1132] According to Socrates Scholasticus, the monks' lack of learning also made them vulnerable to manipulation by men like Theophilus (Socrates, *Hist. eccl.* 6.7).

[1133] Pall., *HL* 68.4; 5.38 N 185; 6.6 N 392; 6.7 Theodore of Phermē I; 6.16 Serapion 2; 15.116 N 565; 15.117 N 566; 16.2 Gelasius 1; *AP* 16.29; Socrates, *Hist. eccl.* 4.23; Johnstone, 375, 380-84.

[1134] Given the ambiguity of distinctions between pagan/Christian learning and the penchant for perusing pagan and heretical works for the purposes of refutation, it is easy to imagine a reader coming across a passage or a text that struck his fancy even though he knew that it had been condemned. When accused of secretly reading Origen, who was increasingly regarded as a heretic, Theophilus allegedly defended himself by comparing Origen's writings to a field of flowers in which one could ignore the heretical thorns (Socrates, *Hist. eccl.* 6.17). But efforts to restrict the desert fathers' access to books implies that the monks could not be trusted to be this discriminating, perhaps because they could not understand what they read (or heard), or as if the texts in question might contain such advanced spiritual instruction that it could not be shared with society at large, as in traditional Egyptian pagan tales where sacred texts were meant only for the consumption of religious elites, and calamities fell upon anyone else who managed to gain access. *Setne I*; Dieleman, *Priests*, 230, 232n112. Cf. Pl., *Phdr.* 274d-275b. On literacy in church hierarchy see Gamble, 218-24; Rubenson, *Letters*, 109.

Nevertheless, monks continued to attract attention, acquiring power in the process. They benefited from the accumulation of donations and socio-political sway as they attracted more and more visitors.[1135] With Athanasius unwilling to risk losing clients to rivals, it is not hard to imagine him using a general injunction against pilgrimage[1136] to dissuade potential constituents from seeking out the desert fathers. As the next chapter discusses in more detail, the desert fathers were known for their divinely-inspired insight, but this was subject to the will of God. A person desperately in need of advice might have been inclined to seek out instead a counselor with a savvy reputation based on, among other things, possession of the formal education that was associated with traditional status.[1137] A disinclination to seek out the desert fathers would have been reinforced by rumors about these desert fathers discouraging visitors or refusing to satisfy requests for *Sayings*, the very teachings for which they were so renowned.[1138]

[1135] The competition between intellectual/religious rivals had real world economic consequences as well, translating into clients drawn to a particular temple or magician (Dieleman, *Priests*, 96), professional appointments to academic posts, and informal financial support, like the funds that Origen received from a woman when he fled persecution (Pall., *HL* 64), the gifts received from the emperor by a monk who had distinguished himself (11.80 N 398), and Melania the Elder's gift to the monks of Nitria. The latter incident is particularly interesting because of the recipient's supposed response: When he realized that Melania expected to receive some sort of obsequious gesture in response to her gift, he chastised her for expecting anything in return for a gift given to God, a rebuke that she not only accepted (Pall., *HL* 10.1-4) but which allowed the monk to sidestep the social obligations of the client status which her patronage would normally have imposed. For an example of an emperor seeking out a pagan wise man, consider the lengths to which Vespasian supposedly went to find Apollonius of Tyana in Alexandria (Philostr., *VA* 5.27). Compare the portrait that I have sketched here of a social competition played out in terms religion (heretical versus orthodox), learning (divinely-inspired versus school-based), and language (Greek versus Coptic) to Saliba's portrait of social competition in the early Muslim world, which was played out in terms of religion (Muslim versus pagan/Christian), learning (Persian versus Greco-Roman), and language (Greek versus Arabic versus Persian). See Saliba, 33-40.

[1136] Athanasius comforted a group of virgins longing for Jerusalem by advising them to internalize the sacred, traveling in their minds, not reality. Athan., *Second Letter to the Virgins* 2.5, 3, 1, 2.6. Cf. 2.10 Arsenius 28. Also see Juliussen, 88-91.

[1137] The accusation of ignorance, ostensibly meant to demonstrate the desert fathers' sanctity by demonstrating that all of their wisdom came from God, could also be taken as a criticism meant to discourage others from seeking their counsel. On Socrates Scholasticus accusing Origen's critics of ignorance see Sheridan, 55n32.

[1138] While an elder who refused to offer a *Saying* was ostensibly asserting his authority, sometimes even rebuking an audience who had proved itself unworthy of enlightenment (3.36 Felix; 8.9 Theodore of Phermē 3;

Once we situate this rivalry within the context of Christian-pagan violence, the situation looks very different. The monks might have been relatively peaceful, as Brown argues, but this is not the end of the story. And it is not a given that the absence of evidence for anti-pagan violence in monastic sources reflected the disappearance of pagans, as Bagnall would no doubt argue. References to anti-pagan violence in monastic sources were limited because this violence was considered the purview of the Church leadership. The monks competed with the pagans intellectually. The Church leaders competed with the pagans physically. If, as the previous chapter argues, authority figures were responsible for instigating outbreaks of violence, a monastic aversion to the use of force was in keeping with the relatively low status enjoyed by monks in the Christian chain of command. The men who received most of the credit for property and personal violence against pagans were relatively high in the religious hierarchy.[1139] These men included patriarchs, like Theophilus and Peter Mongus; bishops, like Macedonius and Macarius; and monastic leaders, like Shenoute and Apa Moses.[1140] Of course, the relatively restrained

---

15.59 Theophilus 2), a wholesale denial of *Sayings* would have ultimately undermined the desert fathers' appeal. Hence, stories about the pursuit of silence as an ascetic enterprise served a triple function, enhancing the desert fathers' allure as experts in the divine matters that were thought to require silence because religious wisdom defied expression (*Hist. mon.* 3.1, 6.1, 20.7), discouraging the monastic commentary that would have attracted pilgrims, and discouraging the generation of the extra-Scriptural interpretation that could have generated heresy (that is, a challenge for authority). On the use of silence as a religious exercise in Greco-Roman pagan sources (where it reflected the notion that, if the divine is limitless and incomprehensible, then it is also inexpressible) see Eunap., *VS* 470-73; Philostr., *VA* 1.1, 1.14. Cf. *The Discourse on the Egith and Ninth* VI, 6, 58; Sozom., *Hist. eccl.* 6.28. Also see, Luther Martin, "Secrecy in Hellenistic Religious Communities," in Kippenberg, 110-12; Lichtheim, "Didactic," 258-61; Burton-Christie, 146-49; Hart, 132-33. Attempts to subordinate the desert fathers through the celebration of humility created a contradictory scenario in which the truly humble monks and thus those most spiritually deserving of promotion would have been the least likely to be recognized for this. A monk might have been noticed *because* of his absence or his silence, as Ethiopian Moses was when he refused to respond to the verbal attacks on his ethnicity (16.9 Moses 3), but by their very nature absence and silence were meant *not* to be noticed.

[1139] For two exceptions, see the previous chapter for the monk who threw a rock at the prefect and the reader who led the charge against Hypatia when Cyril was patriarch.

[1140] Another example is provided by Apollo of Hermopolis, who was also a monastic leader. Though he employed methods similar to those of Macarius and Apa Moses, he was responsible for far less bloodshed. Observing a pagan procession, Apollo prayed, and, as a result, the pagans became immobilized. Suffering in the

behavior accorded to subordinate monks in hagiographical literature might have also reflected an effort to idealize monastic life. Yet, insofar as this suggested the existence of doubts in monastic circles regarding the use of force, it constituted an implicit criticism of the leaders who encouraged this violence.[1141] The *Sayings* that seem to question the participation of monks in anti-pagan violence might have been inspired less by an aversion to violence than by discomfort over the prospect of lending assistance to the anti-pagan projects of patriarchs who had been persecuting monks.[1142]

Whether or not the accounts of anti-pagan violence are entirely accurate, they can be taken as evidence that some audiences expected high status Christians to become involved in conflicts with pagans, either because the agnostic nature of elite Greco-Roman society made it likely that Christian leaders would come to blows with a still viable paganism or because such conflicts were thought to be necessary for establishing a leader's credentials even after paganism was more or less dead. As the following section argues, however, assumptions regarding the death of paganism reflect in part a Christian construction of monasticism that deliberately ignored evidence for paganism. A landscape still littered with pagans would have posed a

---

heat, the pagans begged for Apollo's assistance. He prayed once more, the pagans were released from their bonds, and, rejoicing, they destroyed their idol and converted to Christianity (*Hist. mon.* 8.24-29).

[1141] When Church leadership replied to this criticism, it did so not by acknowledging the contradiction of a holy man engaging in violence, but by leveling accusations about the political motivations behind this criticism. For instance, according to Theophilus, when the monks of Nitria boasted to the pagans that they had taken no part in the demolition of the Serapeum, it was because they were attempting to usurp Theophilus' authority. Theophilus, *Second Synodal Letter* 3. On Theophilus' dispute with these monks see Socrates, *Hist. eccl.* 6.9-17; Sozom., *Hist. eccl.* 8.13-27; Russell, *Theophilus* 19-27.

[1142] 4.76 N 162. Cf. 12.3 Bessarion 4a. Also see David Brakke, *Demons, and the Making of the Monk: Spiritual Combat in Early Christianity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006), 219-22; Marinides, 252-55. Notably, patriarchs and bishops were rarely mentioned in the transfer of authority in these communities, demonstrating the monks' success in evading control. Ewa Wipszyka, "The Institutional Church," in Bagnall, 331-49.

dilemma: if pagans and Christians were capable of peaceful co-existence, Christians could hardly have claimed a monopoly on harmony and virtue. If violence *was* breaking out, the monks might have been engaging in the sort of activity that was normally expected from potential leaders, making these monks a threat to the hierarchy. By entirely removing pagans from the picture, the pilgrims (or their informants) could avoid both problems. So while this is entirely speculative, it is worth considering the degree to which a premature disappearance of paganism might have facilitated internal Christian competition.

Pyramids, Temples, and Tombs

This section examines evidence for the intentional effort to ignore indications of paganism in the Egyptian landscape. This willful blindness suggests both a horror of paganism and a desire to erase history, specifically the history associated with paganism. Such a bold maneuver was not without its consequences. Dead pagans struck back, attacking the desert fathers and attempting to prevent what was in effect a colonization of pagan space and pagan history. The desert fathers responded by colonizing the afterlife, converting the pagan dead and laying claim to Egyptian funerary space. For better or worse, this was a project of imperialism.

The pilgrim accounts demonstrate just how thoroughly the desert fathers were replacing pagan emblems of religious authority. Christian pilgrims showed little interest in the physical monuments of Egypt, the pyramids, temples, and tombs that had attracted so much attention from earlier travel writers, for whom these

monuments were evidence of Egypt's religious supremacy.[1143] The early Christian pilgrims focused instead upon the living embodiments of the holy: the desert fathers. While pilgrim accounts sometimes referred to monks living or spending the occasional night in an abandoned temple, these accounts made little attempt to describe the temples or to identify the associated deities.[1144] Unlike apologists such as Athenagoras—who attempted to discredit paganism by mocking Abydos' reputation, for instance, as the resting place of a deity (Athenagoras, *Leg. pro Christ.* 28)—the pilgrims simply pretended that these pagan monuments did not exist.

Feats of blindness simply became part and parcel of the ascetic project. A priest from Scetis who visited the patriarch in Alexandria was eagerly questioned upon his return to Scetis, the audience wanting to know what he had seen in the city. Instead of recounting Alexandria's wonders, this priest told the audience that he had seen nothing but the patriarch's face.[1145] By corollary, a good Christian would not notice Egypt's pagan monuments. The pilgrims occasionally acknowledged pagan statuary, but only insofar as these statues were supplanted by the desert fathers, who claimed that these idols were devoid of life (*Hist. mon.* 10.33; *AP* 10.97). Skepticism

---

[1143] For the interest of Greeks in Egyptian pyramids, animal worship, gods, and the Nile see Heliod., *Aeth.* 2.27-28. On the motivations, religious and otherwise, for pagans visiting Egypt's monuments see C. E. P. Adams and J. Roy, eds., *Travel, Geography and Culture in Ancient Greece, Egypt and the Near East* (Oakville, CT: David Brown Books Co., 2007); Ian Rutherford, "Travel and Pilgrimage," in Riggs, 701-16; Smelik, 1938-44; V. Foertmeyer, "Tourism in Graeco-Roman Egypt" (PhD diss., Princeton University, 1989); J. G. Milne, "Greek and Roman Tourists in Egypt," *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 3 (1916): 76-80; M Hohlwein, "Déplacements et tourisme dans l'Égypte romaine," *Chronique d'Égypte* 15 (1940): 253-78; Lionel Casson, *Travel in the Ancient World* (Toronto: Hakkert, 1974). On geography of the pilgrim's trip see Harmless, *Desert,* 277.

[1144] 10.190 N 59; 5.28 N 176; *Hist. mon.* 5.1-4; *Vita bohairice Pachomii* 8. Compare with the much more detailed description of a tomb in the *Life of Pisentius,* discussed at greater length below, and consider the possibility that the animal demons that Antony allegedly faced while residing in a tomb might have resembled the images decorating the walls (*Vita Antonii* 9).

[1145] 4.66 N 161. Frank points out how travelers often see only that which they expect to see (Frank, 37); the hagiographies certainly suggest that the pilgrims saw only what they expected to see from the Bible. See below for further discussion.

regarding the animation of the idols was already circulating in apologetic literature, but in the context of the pilgrim accounts, the message was clear: these lifeless idols should give way to the monks[1146] who were *living* founts of efficacious miracles.[1147]

Disinterest in the pagan landscape was such that pilgrims regularly failed to celebrate the ruinous nature of the pagan temples that—if some scholars and early Christian apologists are to be believed—were already in a state of serious decline.

[1146] On the equation of monks with idols consider a story in which a monk repeatedly threw rocks at an idol and then told his fellow monks that they ought to imitate the idol in not reacting to provocation (15.12 Anoub 1). The idols were supposedly as immobile as the pagans who fell victim to Apollo of Hermopolis' prayers in the above-mentioned tale (*Hist. mon.* 8.24-29). Yet one might argue that the story about a monk throwing rocks at an idol actually discouraged the use of violence insofar as the idol's passivity was held up as a model worthy of imitation.

[1147] On miracles see the following chapter. Note that "healing statues" appear to have been more popular in traditional Egyptian paganism than traditional Greco-Roman paganism. See G. Luck, *Ancient Pathways and Hidden Pursuits: Religion, Morals and Magic in the Ancient World* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999), 213. It seems significant that this period saw physical attacks on allegedly animated humanoid statues of pagan deities (the idol of Serapis for instance), the promotion of hermetic and theurgic notions of self-identification with deities through such statues (Dam., *Isid.* 63A; Eunap., *VS* 474-475), Christian debates about whether or not one could perceive God's image in men (Theophilus and Cyril's dispute with the monks over Origenism), and a hullaballo over how to represent Jesus in artwork (a polemic that was in part a continuation of an earlier debate in artistic and philosophical circles over the distinction between an image and that which it represented, a distinction that traditional Egyptian paganism tended to deemphasize), with rumors that such depictions were being secretly crafted for crypto-pagans to preserve images of pagan deities. Clearly, both Christians and pagans were toying with the notion that elevation to the divine might be possible through an artistic medium. Points of contention included whether or not this was even possible, the degree to which such an identification would require a resemblance between divinity and humans, the resemblance between the artistic medium providing the point of connection, and whether or not one faith was more gifted in this regard than another. On the possible connection between Theophilus' debate with the monks and his attack on pagan idolatry see Elizabeth Clark, *The Origenist Controversy: The Cultural Construction of an Early Christian Debate* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 55-58. For comparison to Cyril's position in a dispute with monks in the Fayoum see Davis, "Biblical," 47-61. On the debate over depictions of Jesus see Gilbert Dagron, "Holy Images and Likeness," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 45 (1991): 23-33. Frank argues that the pilgrim accounts emphasize the experience of viewing the shining countenances of the desert fathers reflects a displaced desire to view the incorporeal face of God. See Frank, 140. On the question of corporeality in gnostic attempts to conceive the incomprehensible divine see David Brakke, "The Body as/at the Boundary of Gnosis," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 17 (2009): 195-214. The continued significance of statue animation in pagan circles is demonstrated by Eunapius' claim that a theurgist in Julian's circle made a statue smile (Eunap., *VS* 474-475) and Damascius' reference to a pagan who supposedly had the ability to detect the animating powers in images (Dam., *Isid.* 5.76). For the debate on whether or not rituals of animation existed among Greco-Roman pagans prior to the emergence of theurgy in Late Antiquity, a tradition that may have reflected the influence of Egyptian-related hermetism, see for instance Moshe Barasch, *Icon: Studies in the History of an Idea* (NY: New York University Press, 1992), 34-35; Algis Uzdavinys, "Animation of Status in Ancient Civilizations and Neoplatonism," in *Late Antique Epistemology: Other Ways to Truth*, eds. Panayiota Vassilopoulou and Stephen Clark (NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 118-38; Georgios Deligiannakis, "Religious Viewing of Sculptural Images of Gods in the World of Late Antiquity: From Dio Chrysostom to Damaskios," *Journal of Late Antiquity* 8.1 (2015): 181-82; Iversen, *Egyptian,* 37; Sarah Iles Johnston, "Animating Statues: A Case Study in Ritual," *Arethusa* 41 (2008): 445-77; Deborah Tarn Steiner, *Images in Mind: Statues in Archaic and Classical Greek Literature and Thought* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001); Christopher Faraone, *Talismans and Trojan Horses: Magical Statues in Ancient Greek Myth and Ritual* (NY: Oxford University Press, 1992).

According to the pilgrims, the monks were battling demons on a frequent basis, but they rarely dismantled any temples.[1148] Instead, each monk became a "temple" of God.[1149] By shifting the focus from monuments to people as *loci* of the sacred, early Christian pilgrim accounts reflect the same trend, mentioned in the previous chapter, whereby holy men were supplanting sacred space. Not even Christian space entirely escaped this trend, with the desert fathers warning one another not to become too attached to any particular place.[1150]

The transformation of pagan space into Christian space nevertheless exercised an attraction for some Christians. One of Shenoute's sermons promised that the hieroglyphs in a temple would soon be replaced by Christian imagery.[1151] By and large, however, the pilgrims were disinterested in churches. To some extent, this might have reflected an indifference to the contemporary world. Many of the locations that managed to make it into the pilgrim accounts appear to have done so only because they were connected with the distant past, specifically incidents from Scripture. For instance, the monks were said to have found the location of the treasure once possessed by the ignominious Pharaoh who had contended with Moses (*Hist. mon.* 10.23) and the tomb of the magicians who, when employed by that same

---

[1148] For discussion of monks' combat with demons see the following chapter. The many stories describing occupation of an abandoned temple (or an abandoned tomb, on which see below) by an ascetic said little about how the ascetics modified these spaces. Yet it is tempting to conjecture that the demoniacal visions experienced by the ascetics were sometimes influenced by the temple (or tomb) imagery by which they were surrounded. Scott-Moncrieff, 205n1. On these visions see the following chapter.

[1149] *Vita prima graeca Pachomii* 48. Cf. 2 Cor. 6:16; 5.22 N 168.

[1150] *Vita prima graeca Pachomii* 63; 4.64 N 148; 6.4 Agathon 6 and 7; 17.26 N 352. Cf. 18.31 N 361. This may reflect the ideal of the wandering holy man, like Apollonius of Tyana. On the wandering Christian see Daniel Caner, *Wandering, Begging Monks: Spiritual Authority and the Promotion of Monasticism in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002).

[1151] Shenoute, *Invective against Hieroglyphs*. Cf. Shenoute, *Let our Eyes* 1.2. For a tomb discovered at White Monastery with an image labelled as Shenoute (though this image may not have been put up until the sixth or seventh century) see Elizabeth Bolman, Stephen J. Davis, and Gillian Pyke, "Shenoute and a Recently Discovered Tomb Chapel at the White Monastery," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 18 (2010): 453-62.

Pharaoh, had lost to Moses in a duel of magic (Pall., *HL* 18.5-8; *Hist. mon.* 21; *Exod.* 7). The pilgrims boasted that they had seen a temple in Hermopolis where the idols allegedly collapsed when Jesus visited the town as a youth.[1152] And of course the pilgrims equated the monks with figures from Scripture, whom the monks were thought to be imitating.[1153]

Extant examples of early church decoration in Egypt show a similar predilection for images associated with the biblical past. The use of narrative scenes for church decoration was more evocative of Greco-Roman than Egyptian pagan temple imagery. Egyptian temples usually bore images meant to recreate the universe, with the ceiling of a temple representing the sky, the columns covered in flora and fauna, and the walls decorated with the very rituals that were meant to be carried out within the temple in order to sustain the universe. While it is true that Christian and Greco-Roman pagan imagery sometimes included flora and fauna, and Egyptian temples certainly included narrative scenes, there was an important difference. Egyptian animation rituals were thought to bring the temples and the imagery to life, so these temples theoretically could have continued to perform the rituals with which they were decorated without human intervention. Egyptian temples were microcosms of the universe that *recreated* the universe via the rituals with which they were

[1152] *Hist. mon.* 8.1. Cf. Sozom., *Hist. eccl.* 5.21; Matt. 2. Archaeological evidence for Hermopolis Magna also supports the argument for willful blindness on the part of the Christian pilgrims. The pilgrims from the *Historia monacohrum* supposedly passed through the town just prior to or in the midst of several important changes to the architectural fabric, changes all visible from the archaeological record: The deconstruction of a temple complex of Thoth that had been rededicated to Domitian (the site being reused for houses), the erection of a church with one of the largest basilicas in Egypt on the site of a Ptolemaic temple complex, and the construction of a church in the forecourt of a temple of Ramesses II that had been rededicated to Nero. Aside from a reference to fallen idols, a passage otherwise devoid of detail, none of this is detectable from the pilgrim account. On archaeological evidence see Bagnall, *Egypt from Alexander*, 162-69; Verner, 145-65.

[1153] 7.19 Poemen 102. Frank, 163-67.

decorated.[1154] This use of space fostered a cyclical notion of time, contact with the sacred transpiring via repetitive rituals, with little notion of progress. A narrative scene represented both a particular point in time and but a step in an endlessly repeating ritual process. Since Greco-Roman temples and Christian churches were not subjected to animation rituals, the buildings themselves could not sustain rituals, at least not to the same extent as an Egyptian temple. Consequently, ritual time was more dependent on human intervention, and therefore would have progressed in a more linear manner.[1155]

This does not appear to have sat well with Christians. The prevalence of biblical imagery in church decoration and the Christian pilgrim accounts suggests that Christians sought to rupture the linear progression of time. They idolized the desert fathers who, by emulating figures from Scripture, were returning to the original points in time when the precedents of religious meaning were set.[1156] Not for nothing were

---

[1154] On traditional Egyptian temple imagery see Dunand, "Ptolemaic," 89, 227, 290; Zivie-Coche, "Pharoanic," 94-95, 102). Inscriptions are quite common in Egyptian Christian chapels as well, perhaps in keeping with the penchant for inscriptions in Egyptian pagan temples. Zivie-Coche, "Pharoanic," 89; Kristensen, 248; Badawy, 265. On the non-ritual and often narrative nature of Christian church decoration (orans imagery aside) Kristensen, 248; Badawy, 222, 265; Rofail Farag, "Is There Any Justification for the Existence of Coptic Art? Two Recent Critical Opinions," *Kunst des Orients* 11 (1976/1977): 34-35; Polański, 111-13. Christian imagery sometimes portrayed symbolic landscapes as well, the heavens, for instance, or, in a painting from a tenth-century church in the Fayum, a hell complete with suffering sinners. For Christian polemic against decoration like the sort of flora and fauna common to Egyptian pagan temples and the possibility that this imagery might have acquired Christian interpretations, connected for instance, to stories about Jesus' flight into Egypt as a child, see Badawy, 274; Polański, 39-42, 198; J. Balty, "Themes nilotiques dans la mosaique tardive du Proche-Orient," in *Alessandria e il mondo ellenistico-romano: studi in onore di Achille Adriani*, eds. Achille Adriani, Nicola Bonacasa, Antonino Di Vita, Guiseppina Barone (Roma: L'Erma di Bretschneider, 1992), 827-34; Henry Maguire, *Earth and Ocean: The Terrestrial World in Early Byzantine Art* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1987). On the continuing appeal of the "living" reliefs of the temples in the fourteenth century see Haarmann, 613.

[1155] On the commemorative rather than historical, and therefore I would argue cyclical, nature of Egyptian time see Ian Shaw, ed., "Introduction: Chronologies and Cultural Change in Egypt," in *The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt* (NY: Oxford University Press, 2000), 4. On the connection between ritual, myth, and time see Mircea Eliade, *Cosmos and History: The Myth of the Eternal Return* (NY: Harper, 1959).

[1156] By suggesting that the biblical past was accessible in the present, the pilgrim accounts would have been evoking what Mircea Eliade referred to as the eternal present—the ritually created (via pilgrimage) foundation (biblical) moment in time where religious meaning originated. See Mircea Eliade, *Myth and Reality* (NY: Harper, 1963), 34-35, 168-69. The desert fathers were also said to have visited paradise (*Hist. mon.* 10.20-

these desert fathers credited with preserving the universe and human life (*Hist. mon.* pro.9). They performed the same world-sustaining functions as Egyptian temple imagery.

All of this amounted to an eruption of the past into the present. As Georgia Frank and Dag Endsjø have pointed out, the pilgrim accounts resemble travelogues into a biblical landscape,[1157] with details drawn from the Greco-Roman primordial past as well.[1158] In drawing attention to these strange time travel experiments, Frank and Endsjø fail to mention the violence that these experiments would have done to Egypt and to Egyptian identity. Egypt was not a vacuum. Thousands of years of history had to be erased for the experiments to work.[1159] And erasure left a scar.

Imagine the enormous mental effort that would have been required to ignore all of the attractions that had been captivating people for centuries. Consider, for instance, Memphis and the surrounding environs as described by Strabo. The attractions of Memphis, according to Strabo, included the diverse ethnic make-up of the populace, a military stronghold, impressive irrigation works, the Apis bull, several temples, numerous sphinxes, a cave once occupied by the ancient Trojans, and

---

22), but since heaven was confirmation of a future predicted by Scripture, this too reflected the static nature of Christian time.

[1157] The miraculous nature of so many of the pilgrims' stories would have helped to separate the audience from the present, transporting this audience to a biblical past that was defined by the occurrence of miracles that constituted proof for the validity of Christianity. See Frank, 30. And in a point that should be well-appreciated given the preceding discussion, the simplicity of the stories would have facilitated the audience's mimesis of the biblical models which the desert fathers represented. See Frank, 75; Layton, 9.

[1158] Dag Endsjø, *Primordial Landscapes, Incorruptible Bodies: Desert Asceticism and the Christian Appropriation of Greek Ideas on Geography, Bodies, and Immortality* (Baltimore: Peter Lang, 2008), 46-47, 62. Endsjø argues that Antony's lack of Greco-Roman learning was meant to evoke the blissful ignorance associated with a primordial Greco-Roman pagan past that, bound though it was in time, was nonetheless perceived as physical place that could still be reached at the borders of the known world among the Ethiopians, for instance. Endsjø, 46-47, 62, 90. Of course, identifying early Christian Egypt with a Greco-Roman pagan primordial past meant forgetting Egypt's own past.

[1159] The problem was compounded by the fact that the desert fathers were emulating biblical figures who had lived in Egypt, like Aaron, and ones who had not lived in Egypt at all, like Abraham (*Hist. mon.* 26). This was a movement through both space and time.

multiple pyramids. Strabo devoted a few lines of text to each attraction, recounting anecdotes and noting particularly unusual physical details (Strabo 17.1.30-34). No doubt some of these attractions had disappeared or fallen into obscurity by the late fourth century. The last of the Apis bulls was identified during the reign of Julian. Strabo lamented that the sphinxes tended to become buried in sand dunes.[1160] But it is still somewhat shocking to go from Strabo's lengthy account to the *Historia monachorum*'s streamlined sketch: apparently, there was nothing for the pilgrims to see in Memphis but a plethora of monks and Joseph's so-called granaries, that is, the pyramids (*Hist. mon.* 8.3; *Gen*. 41:35-56). Not a word of description was spared for the latter and the nameless, faceless monks were described only by an allusion to their unspecified virtues. The pilgrims were not even interested in the ethnic diversity of the populace—assuming it was still present—that had so captured Strabo's attention.

A lack of interest in the pyramids, which are probably the quintessential symbol of Egypt in the international imagination today and were certainly a source of fascination in antiquity,[1161] is all the more surprising given the hostility that the Christian historians directed at monuments like the Serapeum. This may be no accident, for when a twelfth century attempt to demolish a pyramid backfired, the failure only reinforced admiration for the pyramid's builders.[1162] If a pagan monument could not be demolished, perhaps it was safer just to pretend that it did not exist. But if the pilgrims really believed that the pyramids were Joseph's granaries, why did the *Historia monachorum* pass over the monuments so quickly?

[1160] On Memphis see Bagnall, *Egypt from Alexander*, 94-106; Verner, 89-142.

[1161] Note the interest of the Greeks in pyramids according to Heliod., *Aeth*. 2.27.

[1162] Haarmann, 622.

According to Clement of Alexandria, the pyramids were pagan tombs (Clem. Al., *Prot.* 4). Scholars generally agree that these monuments played a role in mortuary cult.[1163] So by divesting the pyramids of their pagan identity, the pilgrims were not only distorting history, but were forgetting *Christian* knowledge regarding the monuments in question. These pilgrims were no worse, perhaps, than Strabo, who misidentified one of the pyramids near Memphis—actually built by Menkaure (c. 2490-2472 BCE)—as the tomb of a seventh century BCE Greek courtesan.[1164] Travel writers both Christian and pagan were appropriating feats of Egyptian engineering for a biblical or Greco-Roman past, respectively. Yet Strabo showed much more interest in the monuments than the Christian pilgrims, discussing their dimensions and digressing on their significance to Greco-Roman history. The pilgrims could have seized the same opportunity, reminding the audience of Joseph's career in Egypt and applauding his work in constructing monuments that continue to astound visitors today. After Egypt passed into Muslim hands, Muslim scholars were only too happy to debate the incorporation of the pyramids into biblical history, disputing, for instance, whether or not the pyramids predated Noah's flood. Muslims who had set out on religious pilgrimages made a point of visiting the pyramids.[1165] Like Greco-Roman pagans and Muslims, the early Christian pilgrims were clearly willing to

[1163] The word "pyramid" is actually of Greek derivation, with etymology suggesting association with a "wheaten cake." The ancient Egyptian term for pyramid, *mer*, might be taken to refer to a "Place of Ascension" and thus indicate that the pyramid was understood as the point via which the deceased moved between the afterlife and the tomb where his food offerings were located. See David, 96-97.

[1164] Strabo 17.1.33. Cf. Diod. Sic. 1.64; Hdt. 2.134-35. See Edwin Murphy, trans., *Diodorus on Egypt* (North Carolina: McFarland & Company, Inc., 1985), 84n129. Compare to interpretations of the so-called colossi of Memnon, discussed below.

[1165] Haarmann, 608-111.

appropriate Egyptian monuments, but that was as far as it went. Having laid claim to the Egyptian past, they quickly forgot it.

Indifference to the Egyptian pagan past reflected a kind of competitive historiography. Some apologists argued that paganism was a deviation from true religion (Theod. Cyr., *Graec.* 7.21). From this perspective, the pagan learning that facilitated the construction of pyramids was hardly worthy of praise, being but a corruption of the true wisdom forfeited by pagans. If the pyramids were attributed to Joseph,[1166] they were at best evidence for the learning imparted by the Hebrews to the Egyptians. As artifacts of an *Egyptian* past they were irrelevant, even if they were also artifacts of the *Hebrew* past in Egypt, for the desert fathers had no desire to return to the tyranny of life under a pagan Pharaoh. The goal was to return to the original point at which the precedents for religious meaning had been established *without* invoking pagan memories. For a Christian to disassociate himself from the present and to return to an imaginary past free of paganism, these monuments—evidence of that rejected pagan past—had to disappear.

A desire for disassociation from the present, combined with the rejection of a false past, was expressed in various gnostic tracts. But here, the process of forgetting and remembering was inverted. It was engagement with the *contemporary* world, rather than the past, that was associated with memory loss. According to one of these

[1166] Assuming that the pilgrims believed that *all* of the pyramids in Egypt were Joseph's granaries, and not just the pyramids near Memphis, the pilgrims might very well have believed that the credit for actually inventing these granaries belonged to Joseph. Early Christians had access to records indicating that some of the pyramids predated Joseph. Manetho, the Egyptian historian whose work was so crucial to the efforts of Eusebius and other historians in constructing a relative chronology, documented the construction of pyramids well before the invasion of the Hyksos whom Josephus identified with Joseph. Manetho, fr. 7, 42; Joseph. *AP* 1.14 (91-92). While many scholars today question the literal truth of the Pentateuch, it would take a very liberal chronology to place Joseph's entry into Egypt prior to the construction of Egypt's first pyramids. For attempts to correlate the Hyksos invasion with the Hebrews see Finkelstein, 54-69.

tracts, the allegorical soul, living in the contemporary world, had somehow forgotten its original state of union with the Godhead, and descended into sin. Salvation required the recovery of memory and was accompanied by a rejection of the contemporary physical world.[1167] The paradigm of amnesia is reminiscent of the apologetic argument, mentioned above, that paganism was a deviation from true religion. The latter represented an original state of living in accordance with God's plan, the memory of which had been forgotten. If a person could return to God by remembering the more distant past, why bother to preserve any memories of the intervening period, the painful years of sin? Why not try to forget the pagan monuments that were just reminders of the time spent apart from God?[1168]

This would explain why Christians were so willing to forget the pyramids and the other monuments of Egypt. After all, if the pilgrim accounts are to be believed, the desert fathers needed all of the help that they could find to forget the past. The monks were plagued by the recollection of personal sins that were thought to be indicative of a pagan lifestyle. And these memories were far from harmless. They functioned as temptations, enticing the monks to return to the world (alias paganism).[1169] Forgetfulness facilitated salvation.[1170] An intense desire to forget,

---

[1167] The *Exegesis of the Soul*, discovered at Nag Hammadi, and the *Acts of Thomas*, set in Egypt and probably composed in third century Edessa, employ this allegory. *Exegesis of the Soul* II, 127, 18-137, 27, in Robinson, 192-98; *Acts of Thomas* 108-111, in Elliott, 99-291. If, as Scripture claims, reality is restricted to the learning God has inscribed upon men's hearts (Jer. 31:33), then the non-Christian monuments of Egypt were not real, for they were hardly to be found in the Scriptural learning imparted to the desert fathers through divine intervention. Assmann, *Cultural*, 141.

[1168] On erasure of the present facilitating return to original moment in which the precedent of religious meaning was set see Eliade, *Myth and Reality*, 51-52. Compare to Medieval forgetfulness with regard to the Roman period. See Geary, 1-7.

[1169] Christian treatments of paganism *as-a-past-that-might-become-present-again* began to assume the contours of what Muslims would later refer to as the *jahaliyya*, referring to the period preceding the rise of Islam as well as eruptions of that past into the present with outbreaks of the wild immorality associated with paganism. For Muslims, paganism had both temporal and moral implications, the "antiquity" of a custom no longer being a point in its favor as the past was increasingly perceived as a period of depraved ignorance. Julius Wellhausen

combined with a refusal to acknowledge even the existence of the objects being forgotten, implies the presence of severe trauma.[1171] In this context, the disproportionate interest in Greco-Roman paganism over Egyptian paganism in so many Christian texts takes on a new significance. Perhaps Christians were avoiding the subject of Egyptian paganism simply because it was so much more frightening than its Greco-Roman cousin.[1172]

Pilgrimage meant facing the horrors of the past. A pilgrim could close his eyes—and indeed they seem to have done just this—but the monsters were still there. Like foreshadowing in a horror movie, the dangers of the pilgrimage itself—quicksand, bandits, crocodiles, and a lack of water[1173]—had to be endured before a pilgrim could come face-to-face with the desert fathers who were squaring off with the real monsters, the demons that represented the deities and the ghosts of traditional Egyptian paganism.

The edges of inhabitable space where the desert fathers lived had traditionally served as an abode for both demons and the dead. The latter were customarily

---

argued that the concept of *jahaliyya* was derived from the Christian concept of the "time of ignorance" (χρόνους τῆς ἀγνοίας) that preceded the emergence of Christianity (*Acts* 17:30). Julius Wellhausen, *Reste arabischen Heidentums: Gessammelt und Erläutert* (Berlin: De Gruter & Company, 1927), 71n1. Ignác Goldziher and S. M.Stern argued that this *jahiliyya* is more properly interpreted as error or barbarism. Ignác Goldziher and S. M.Stern, *Muslim Studies* (New Brunswick, NJ: Aldine, 2006), 1:201-208; Hawting, 2n4, 98-100.

[1170] On memories of sin as a source of grief for the desert fathers see 5.5 Cyrus. Cf. 5.27 N 173; Pall., *HL* 19.6-7, 23.5; *Hist. mon.* 1.51. On meditation on Scripture as a source of relief for such grief see Burton-Christie, 124-25.

[1171] Recall the discussion regarding silence in the chapter on martyrologies.

[1172] For the argument that Christians in Egypt feared a return to traditional Egyptian paganism more than a return to Greco-Roman paganism see Griffiths, "Athanasius," 1025.

[1173] Rufinus, *Hist. mon.* 23; *Hist. mon.* Epil. 3-13. These dangers no doubt enhanced the pilgrims' sense of accomplishment as they managed to overcome obstacles. Furthermore, these dangers would have agumented the aura of sanctity surrounding the desert fathers, set apart, as the monks were, from the profane world. See Frank, 52. Finally, warnings about the dangers of pilgrimage would have also facilitated the agendas of the Christian competitors who wanted to discourage pilgrimages.

interred at the boundaries of settlements along the desert.[1174] The demonization of this space only distorted pagan concepts to the extent that the demons in question were identified as pagan deities. By venturing into the domains of the dead, Christian ascetics were in fact treading in the footsteps of the traditional Egyptian priests who spent so much time in the necropoleis in connection with mortuary cult. Traditional Egyptian priests sometimes even took up residence in the necropoleis,[1175] so the Christian ascetics were following ancient precedent when they moved into this territory.[1176] But unlike their pagan predecessors, the monks occupying these necropoleis were doing so not to honor the dead, but to pursue their own ascetic regimes, endeavoring to live as though they were already deceased themselves.[1177]

To a modern audience, the early Christian penchant for occupying Egyptian tombs appears quite daring. It is commonly believed that traditional Egyptian tombs were customarily decorated with dire warnings promising torment to anyone who violated the sacred precincts of the dead. Actually, entry into mortuary space was required for the maintenance of mortuary cult. The curses put up in Egyptian tombs

---

[1174] Zivie-Coche, "Pharaonic," 172; O'Connel, 242-43; Endsjø, 59-60.

[1175] Griffiths, "Athanasius," 1026; Scott-Moncrieff, 199.

[1176] In Saqarra, for instance, across the Nile from Memphis, a monastery built in the fifth century reused some pre-existing tombs. Djoser's pyramid, the oldest pyramid in Egypt, would have been viewable off in the distance. On the monastery of Apa Jeremiah, in Saqarra, see Gawdat Gabra, *Coptic Monasteries: Egypt's Monastic Art and Architecture* (New York: The American University in Cairo Press, 2002), 120-23; Bagnall, *Egypt from Alexander*, 98-106; Verner, 91-141; 515-17. Cf. Behlmer Heike, "Christian Use of Pharaonic Space in Western Thebes," in *Sacred Space and Sacred Function in Ancient Thebes*, eds. Peter Dorman and Betsy Bryan (Chicago: The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 2007), 163-76; O'Connel, 239-73; Hedstrom, 372-75. On the attraction of Saqqara's pagan monuments to Muslim visitors see Haarmann, 611-12. For monks occupying tombs see for instance Pall., *HL* 5; *Hist. mon.* 1.37-43; *Vita Antonii* 8; *Vita bohairice Pachomii* 12. Also note that, once, Athanasius allegedly hid from his so-called heretical pursuers in a tomb (Sozom., *Hist. eccl.* 6.12).

[1177] Pall., *HL* 37.13-14; 10.47 Macarius 23b; 10.92 Moses 12. Also see O'Connel, 273. On identification with death as an aspect of mystical experience see Kripal, 327.

were generally directed at the entrance of people who were not ritually pure. [1178] It is possible that some tombs were occupied by Christians who did not realize that they were in fact occupying funerary space,[1179] for it is doubtful that many Christians could have read the inscriptions that might have been put up in these tombs. But Christian ascetics were surely aware of the general prohibition against the violation of tombs, a prohibition found in Greco-Roman pagan, Egyptian pagan, Jewish, and Christian discourse.[1180] By occupying these tombs, Christians were transgressing societal norms and inviting comparison to the witches and criminals who supposedly frequented graveyards. This was a bold strategy, especially since pagans were attacking Christians for the excavation of graveyards in connection with martyr cult.[1181]

For traditional Egyptian and Greco-Roman pagans alike, the violation of a tomb was considered permissible if the tomb belonged to an enemy of the state.[1182] The violation of a tomb in pharaonic Egypt did not necessarily reflect a lack of religious belief, since steps were sometimes taken to ritually disable the deceased from seeking revenge. Instead, tomb violations reflected larger socio-political

---

[1178] Curses threatening potential violators were also put up for Greco-Roman tombs. See for instance Suetonius, *Divus Iulius* 8. Also see J. H. M. Strubbe, "'Cursed Be He that Moves My Bones,'" in *Magika Hiera: Ancient Greek Magic and Religion*, eds. Christopher Faorone and Dirk Obbink (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 33-59. On the presence of curses in traditional Egyptian pagan tombs see for instance David Silverman, "The Threat-Formula and Biographical Text in the Tomb of Hezi at Saqqara," *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt* 37 (2000): 1-13.

[1179] O'Connel, 243.

[1180] Eusebius complained when persecuted Christians were imprisoned alongside tomb robbers (Euseb., *Hist. eccl.* 8.6.9). One of the desert fathers was a tomb robber and a brigand prior to his assumption of the monastic life (*Hist. mon.* 10.3), the implication being—if this was not meant merely to underscore the aura of death surrounding the pagan faith in Christian discourse—that tomb robbing was not considered reputable and that his commitment to Christianity occasioned a rejection of such work.

[1181] Eunap., *VS* 470-73. Notably that martyr cult—insofar as relics were credited with miracles—could very well be likened to the wonder-working activities of the witches whose rituals allegedly employed human remains obtained from graveyards. See below.

[1182] *Digest* 47.12. On pre-Ptolemaic Egypt see Tyldesley, 115-39.

transformations, with power over mortuary space passing to new owners who had no connections to the deceased occupants of this space. Without these connections, the living had no reason to expect or to want assistance on the part of the dead. Therefore, the living had no need to maintain the mortuary customs that were meant to be part of a mutually beneficial relationship with the deceased.[1183] Similarly, Christians had no use for the pagan dead, so there was no need to observe mortuary customs. One might even argue that Christians thought that they were justified in violating pagan tombs to the extent that pagans, including pagans who had died before the birth of Jesus, could be deemed enemies of the state. This argument probably would not have held up in court, but the violation alone would have functioned as a mechanism for identifying these pagans as enemies of a new Christian state.

What, then, are we to make of stories about dead pagans conversing with Christian ascetics? In antiquity, stories circulated about ghosts[1184] who tried to seduce the living.[1185] As chapter three mentioned, graveyards and corpses sometimes carried sexual connotations. Papyri from Roman Egypt include spells meant to protect a person from falling prey to the sexual predilections of a corpse-demon, a

---

[1183] John Baines and Peter Lacovara, "Burial and the Dead in Ancient Egyptian Society," *Journal of Social Archaeology* 2 (2002): 23; Claudia Näser, "Equipping and Stripping the Dead: A Case Study on the Procurement, Compilation, Arrangement, and Fragmentation of Grave Inventories in New Kingdom Thebes," in *The Oxford Handbook of the Archaeology of Death and Burial*, eds. Sarah Tarlow and Liv Nilsson Stutz (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 658. Cf. Sean Lafferty, "*Ad sanctitatem mortuorum*: Tomb Raiders, Body Snatchers and Relic Hunters in Late Antiquity," *Early Medieval Europe* 22 **(**2014) 249–79.

[1184] On ghosts in antiquity see Carolyn Thériault, "The Literary Ghosts of Pharaonic Egypt," ed. Sara Orel (Lewiston, NY: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1992); D. Felton, *Haunted Greece and Rome: Shost Stories from Classical Antiquity* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1999); Daniel Ogden, *Greek and Roman Necromancy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001); Sarah Johnston, *Restless Dead: Encounters between the Living and the Dead in Ancient Greece* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999).

[1185] Propertius 4.7; Phlegon of Tralles, *Book of Marvels* Philinnion 1; Robert Ritner, "O.Gardiner 363: A Spell against Night Terrors," *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt* 27 (1990): 34.

nekydaimon,[1186] who would have merged seamlessly with the other demons attempting to seduce the desert fathers (*AP* 5.54; Pall., *HL* 23.5). Apparently, sexually-charged corpses inspired both attraction *and* horror. One of ascetics living at Scetis was supposedly so distracted by his lust for a woman who had passed away, that he broke into her tomb, soaked a cloth with the bodily fluids excreted by her corpse, and took the cloth away. Afterwards, he would use the stench on the cloth as a reminder to avoid lustful thoughts (5.26 N 172). So an ascetic seeking to avoid lust would have been putting himself in the thick of battle were he to take up habitation in a tomb.

In antiquity, ghosts were thought to appear to the living simply to make noise or to cause mischief,[1187] and we should perhaps classify the *nekydaimon* under this category. Ghosts were also thought to appear to the living out of anger, seeking redress, for instance, for their murders. In cases like this, the ghost in question would often appear to the murderer himself. This implies a link between haunting and guilt. That is, ghosts would usually appear to the individuals who were most likely to be carrying some guilt in connection to the deceased.[1188] If only because this was such a

---

[1186] *PGM* IV.2030. Also see Ritner, "O.Gardiner," 33. The link between demons and ghosts in Christian minds would have found support in the notion that demons were actually gods who were really just mortal men who had accomplished great deeds and then died. See chapter two. On the general conflation of demons and ghosts also see G. Luck, *Arcana Mundi: Magic and the Occult in the Greek and Roman Worlds* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985), 210-15.

[1187] 7.15 Macarius the Great 13. Note that the latter *Saying* could be taken humorously, and Felton points out that ghosts do play a humorous function in some ancient narratives, such as Plautus' *Mostellaria*. See Felton, 50-61. *Setne I*, discussed below, contained humorous elements, the comedy being at the expense of the protagonist. In 7.15 Macarius the Great 13, however, the humor would have been at the expense of the demons who were humiliated by Macarius, a narrative that would have contributed to a general mockery of paganism. On humor in the desert fathers see Luck, *Ancient*, 277.

[1188] Which is not to say that the all reports of ghosts were the product of delusions, merely that if ancient sources believed that guilty people would be visited by the ghosts of their victims, then the appearance of a ghost implied the possibility that the person to whom it had appeared was guilty of some transgression. For examples of ghosts appearing to guilty men see Plutarch, *Cimon* 1.6; Suet., *Nero* 34; Suetonius, *Otho* 7; Amm. Marc.14.11.17. Also see Felton, 11-12; Hope, 118. For the significance of dreams about the dead see Artemidorus, 2.57. On angry ghosts in traditional Egyptian paganism see Pinch, 148-50. On the appearance of ghosts in Egyptian and Greco-

popular literary trope, the audience could have been excused for thinking that a person (even a Christian) who was haunted by a ghost deserved what he got. But what did a Christian have to feel guilty about? If he had in fact violated a tomb, perhaps the appearance of an apparition represented a subconscious acknowledgment that the violation of a tomb, even a pagan tomb, was a transgression of social and religious boundaries.[1189]

Yet Christian discourse largely ignored any case that might have been made for a dead pagan's desire for revenge. As a rule, a ghost did not explain his presence by complaining that a Christian had violated his tomb, though this could certainly have been inferred for the ghosts that appear to have been interested in simply causing trouble. Ghosts not interested in mischief would explain their presence by appealing to a monk for intercession in securing salvation, lamenting that they had been condemned to an afterlife filled with torment.[1190] If the appearance of these ghosts was at all suggestive of guilt on the part of the monks to whom they appeared, this seems to have been limited to anxiety over the postmortem fate of pagans who

---

Roman paganism as a reflection of social ties between the living and the dead, with emotional and physical needs on both sides, and the possible (doubtful given the timelag) connection between Egyptian letters to the dead and the origin of the Greek curse tablets, see Johnston, *Restless*, 91-95; Felton, 11-12; Thériault, 204- 206; Wente, 210-17; Hope, 117. Cf. Brian Schmidt, *Israel's Beneficent Dead: Ancestor Cult and Necromancy in Ancient Israelite Religion and Tradition* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eirauns, 1995).

[1189] Especially since Greco-Roman pagan discourse suggested that the ghosts might have a legal right to the possession of property (Felton, 47-48), particularly the sort of funerary architecture that, in a stroke of true audacity, the Christian monks began including in their wills as personal bequests (O'Connel, 264-69). On ghosts complaining about the transgression of burial rituals or the violation of their tombs see Ogden, 236-37.

[1190] *Life of Pisentius*. When the Christian violation of pagan remains prompted an appeal for help rather than a haunting, this implied that Christians enjoyed divine sanction for the violation of pagan tombs. Compare to stories about Christian ascetics who, by chance, happened to come upon monks who, having lived in isolation unbeknownst by anyone, were on the point of death or already dead, only for the desert fathers to see to their burial. See for instance, *Hist. mon.* 10.9-11; Jerome, *Paul of Thebes* 15-16; *Pratum spirituale* 87; Paphnutius, *Life of Onnophrius* 23-24 (15a-b).

had died before the birth of Jesus and had had no opportunity to secure salvation through conversion to Christianity.[1191]

These appeals for assistance were in keeping with other typical ghost stories from pagan literature, where ghosts made themselves known in order to request proper burial or the continuation of the funerary rites thought to provide the deceased with sustenance.[1192] In the worst case scenario, improper burial of an Egyptian or a failure to maintain mortuary cult was thought to result in a second death—utter annihilation of the deceased—or his torment.[1193] If Egyptian burial rites were properly observed, the dead would still need to visit their mummies regularly for sustenance. So Christians were not challenging Egyptian notions about the afterlife when they claimed that ghosts visited mummies.[1194] But when these mummy-ghosts appeared to Christians in order to appeal for assistance in avoiding the torments of the afterlife, this directly challenged the efficacy of traditional Egyptian paganism in securing salvation.[1195] And since, as chapter two pointed out, Egyptian religious

---

[1191] The *Life of Pisentius* skirted the issue without resolving it. The *Martyrdom of Perpetua* addressed the issue more directly, with Perpetua receiving reassurance as to the salvation of her brother who, even though he was born after the death of Jesus, died young, the implication being that he would have converted had he lived long enough to do so (*Passio Sanctarum Perpetuae et Felicitatis* 7-8). Cf. *Vita prima graeca Pachomii* 62; *Pratum spirituale* 44; Besa, *Life of Shenoute* 154-59. Scholars have speculated that the *Apocalypse of Peter*, referenced in the chapter three, originally claimed that all sinners would eventually receive salvation, a controversial notion that was later suppressed in the extant apocalypse. See Elliott, 613. For a discussion of early Christian treatments of Jesus' descent to hell to liberate the occupants, and a comparison to Greco-Roman pagan stories about Orpheus and Hercules, see Attridge,103-16. Also see Elliott, 164-69, 190-204.

[1192] *Setne* I, 6/1-6/20; Luc., *Philops.* 31-30; Pliny, *Epistulae* 7.27; Philostr., *VA* 4.16. Also see Felton 9-10; Hopkins, 234; Baines, 23.

[1193] David, 117-21; Taylor, 17. For an example of an Egyptian ghost complaining about improper burial, see the below discussion regarding the interment of the mummy's wife and her child in *Setne I.*

[1194] 7.15 Macarius the Great 13; *Life of Pisentius.* On Pisentius see O'Connell, 260-61; E. Amélineau, *Étude sur le Christianisme en Égypte au septième siècle* (Paris: E. Leroux, 1887), 1-72.

[1195] Which is all the more striking given the overlap in pagan and Christian mummification practices, as mentioned in chapter three. The advantage of Christianity, according to Christians, was that salvation was not dependent on postmortem treatment of the body, which could be quite expensive. Christians, too, practiced a form of mummification, but Antony's supposed abhorrence of some of these practices (*Vita Antonii* 90)—mentioned in chapter three in connection with criticism of martyr cult—may reflect in part an effort to reassure Christians that the deposition of their bodies had no bearing on their salvation. Christians who accepted this argument did not

rituals were thought to have been transferred to Greco-Roman paganism via Orpheus and Dionysus, the challenge to Egyptian paganism extended to Greco-Roman paganism as well.

Chapter three argued that Christians made their offer of salvation seem more attractive with propaganda encouraging fear of the afterlife. Pagan apparitions functioned as part of this propaganda, warning audiences about the terrible suffering that awaited sinners in the hereafter.[1196] Christian ghosts offered more heart-warming news. In one of the pilgrim accounts, a desert father raised a monk from the dead so that the deceased Christian could confirm that life in this world was inferior to an afterlife spent in God's company (*Hist. mon.* 10.15-16). Greco-Roman pagans sought to confirm their hopes for salvation as well. In one of Lucian's satires, a man used

---

have to worry about paying for costly mortuary practices, the lax performance of which might endanger a person's ability to enjoy the afterlife. If anything, it is surprising that there were not more Christian protests against mummification, for every stage of the traditional ritual involved the recitation of pagan prayers and the use of religious paraphernalia, some of which might be inserted into the linen wrapped around the corpse. Perhaps Christian prayers were recited in the place of Egyptian spells. A bandage fragment from Oxyrhynchus bears the Christian cross and testimonials made by Jesus regarding the resurrection. Did these statements take the place of texts from the *Book of the Dead* that a pagan priest would have written on the linen? On Christian criticism of mummification see Warren Dawson, "References to Mummification by Greek and Latin Authors," *Aegyptus* 9 (1928): 106-12. On Christian mummification practices see Scott-Moncrieff, 102-32; Dunand, *Mummies,* 123-28, 208n13; Dunand, "Funerary," 163-84; John Bodel, "Dealing with the Dead: Undertakers, Executioners and Potter's Fields in Ancient Rome," in Hope, 135; Thomas, 119n32; Irmtraut Munro, "The Evolution of the Book of the Dead," in *Journey through the Afterlife: Ancient Egyptian Book of the Dead*, ed. John Taylor (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010), 54-59. For allusions to mummification practices and accompanying traditional language in Coptic Christian literature see the c. 400 Coptic *Death of Joseph* 26; *Vita bohairice Pachomii* 82. Also see Rubenson, *Letters*, 101; Behlmer, "Survivals," 573-74. Also see chapter three.

[1196] 3.19 Macarius the Great 38; *Life of Pisentius;* Besa, *Life of Shenoute* 154-59. These warnings can also be interpreted as a variation on the use of ghosts in pagan literature, to deliver predictions. Scholars argue that these "hauntings" function as propaganda for whatever change has been predicted, both ghosts and predictions being invented after-the-fact and projected back in time, before the event in question transpired. For instance, a ghost seen by Marcus Brutus functioned as an ill-omen prior to his defeat at the hands of Octavius, and implied divine sanction for this defeat. Plutarch, *Brutus* 36-37, 48. Also see Thériault, 204; Felton, 33; Ogden, 231-50. If Christians were right about the horrors of the world-to-come, audiences would have expected the dead to provide some advance notice. These warnings served specifically Christian purposes as well, encouraging internal Christian cohesion by warning of the fate awaiting heretics (3.19 Macarius the Great 38). Cf. *Life of Pisentius*. When the description of the torments awaiting sinners in the afterlife included details that corresponded to the traditional Egyptian view of the afterlife, this only strengthened the case for Christianity as the true safeguard against customary fears. The Pisentius text is a particularly interesting example of syncretism. Traditional Egyptian words were used to identify hell (Amente), and traditional Egyptian funerary practices were employed, but the dead mummy identified himself as a Hellene, indicated that his parents were named Agrikolaos and Eusthatia, and claimed that his family worshipped Poseidon (*Life of Pisentius*).

necromancy to inquire which way of life was best. He was told that ordinary men led the best way of life and that people should avoid speculating about such things (Luc., *Nec.* 2, 6-10, 21-2). Of course, Lucian was writing a parody, not proselytizing, and he clearly had little sympathy for people who worried about the afterlife. Porphyry appears to have been one of these people. If his biography of Plotinus is to be believed, Porphyry went to the trouble of consulting an oracle after Plotinus' death to confirm his mentor's fate. Porphyry was relieved to hear that Plotinus was quite happy in the afterlife, and that he had become a companion of the judges in charge of determining men's postmortem fate (Porphyry, *VP* 23). A similar consultation was supposedly conducted to determine the fate of Apollonius of Tyana's soul.[1197] Clearly, both Christians and pagans were interested in obtaining verification as to the efficacy of their chosen way of life when it came to salvation.

Thus, it is hardly insignificant that Christian ascetics were supposedly so adept in necromancy.[1198] Since the Egyptian pagans were also thought to excel in this

[1197] Philostr., *VA* 8.31. Cf. Plut., *De gen.* 590A-592D.

[1198] In addition to the above-mentioned case of a monk being raised from the dead, Macarius the Egyptian (c. 300-390) allegedly raised a person from the dead to counter a clever-speaking pagan-heretic who doubted that the resurrection promised by Christian doctrine was possible. Pall., *HL* 17.11; Rufinus, *Hist. mon.* 21; Sozom., *Hist. eccl.* 3.14. Cf. 19.17 Sisoēs 18. Shenoute and Macarius the Alexandrian (c. 300-393) ordered the skulls of dead pagans to speak. 3.19 Macarius the Great 38; *Life of Abba Pidjimi*. The latter text, recording Shenoute's encounter with the skull, is dated to the tenth century. See Evelyn-White, 1:162. Cf. Besa, *Life of Shenoute* 154-59. On necromancy involving skulls in Greco-Roman Egypt see Christopher Faraone, "Necromancy Goes Underground: The Disguise of Skull- and Corpse-Divination in the Paris Magical Papyri (*PGM* IV 1928-2144)," in *Mantikê: Studies in Ancient Divination*, eds. Sarah Johnston and Peter Struck (Boston: Brill, 2005), 255-82. On talking heads in the ancient world in general see Ogden, 208-30. Note that these discussions may have been viewed as a particularly impressive and aggressive display of the necromancer's powers, because decapitation was considered a heinous fate in traditional Egyptian thought. Traditional Egyptian pagan funerary rites included spells for returning a man's head to him after death (for instance, Coffin Text Spell 532) and safeguards against those who would remove his head (for instance, Coffin Text Spell 453). R. O. Faulkner, trans. *The Ancient Egyptian Coffin Texts: Spells 1-1185* (Oxford: Ars & Phillips, 1973). Interestingly, in some of the later Coptic martyrologies, the pagans subject the Christians to one form of execution after another, only for their victims to miraculously survive. Beheading (a kind of execution reserved for high status individuals) is the only form of execution that works, and then only, the implication being, because God determined that it should do so. See for instance *SS. Paese and Thecla* 74-87 V i.

area,[1199] monks living in Egypt were to some extent appropriating a traditional function of the local religious experts.[1200] Pagan and Christian necromancers apparently differed, however, in the impressions they made on their audiences. Greco-Roman pagan accounts of necromancy—regardless of the ethnicity of the necromancer—routinely condemned the practice, and attributed any power that the necromancer might have enjoyed to his deviance.[1201] Traditional Egyptian pagan accounts of necromancy were far more positive, but attitudes towards the practice probably deteriorated when Egypt fell under Roman rule and necromancy was forced underground.[1202] Some Christians were skeptical about seemingly miraculous feats like necromancy,[1203] but Christians still stood out for their comparatively positive

---

[1199] Aeneas of Gaza, *Theophrastus* 8.22-19.8; Heliod., *Aeth.* 6.14-15; Plin., *HN* 30.18 (6); Apul., *Met.* 2.28-30. Also see Daniel Ogden, *Magic, Witchcraft, and the Ghosts in the Greek and Roman Worlds: A Sourcebook* (NY: Oxford University Press, 2002), 192-93. For necromantic spells from Greco-Roman Egypt see for example *PGM* IV.2006-2125, XIII.278-82. Consider the tale of a Christian who decided to ask an Egypian to summon a soul from the dead so that he could find out if the soul is immortal (Pseudo-Clementine, *Homilies* 1.5).

[1200] The monks were not only using their powers to address fears related to salvation. They were addressing the more mundane needs of their clients as well. For instance, one of the desert fathers used necromancy to exonerate an innocent man of murder (Rufinus, *Hist. mon.* 21) and to recover lost money (19.12 Macarius of Egypt 7). Compare to an incident in Heliodorus' *Aethiopika* where an Egyptian woman used necromancy to find out if one of her sons was still alive (Heliod., *Aeth.* 6.14-15).

[1201] Heliod., *Aeth.* 6.14-15; Lucan, *Pharsalia* 6.588-830; Apul., *Met.* 2.28-30, 3.17-18, 9.29. According to Artemidorus, necromancers were fakes (Artemidorus, 2.69).

[1202] But note that Wilburn argues that necromancy in traditional Egyptian spell books actually became much more popular under the influence of Hellenism. Wilburn, 64. If so, Greco-Roman rule was responsible for both the growth and the suppression of this work. On traditional Egyptian necromancy see Pinch, 159-60. The Romans appear to have held a more negative view of necromancy than the Greeks. See Faraone, "Necromancy," 255. The Roman horror of necromancy was such that when Julian accused the Christians of practicing a necromantic-like incubation rite, he traced the rite to a Jewish origin (Julian *Con. Gal.* 339E-340A), ignoring the Greco-Roman pagan penchant for these rituals. On incubation see the following chapter. On the Roman distaste for necromancy note too that the trial for divination that was carried out under Valens, mentioned in the previous chapter, was, according to Socrates Scholasticus, occasioned by a necromantic ritual (Socrates, *Hist. eccl.* 4.19). The emphasis on necromancy in the former and its absence from the latter no doubt reflect a mutual disregard for the practice. Cf. Amm. Marc. 19.12.14. On Greco-Roman necromancy in general see Matthew Dickie, *Magic and Magicians in the Greco-Roman World* (New York: Routledge, 2001), 237-39; Ogden. On the "official" negative view of necromancy in Jewish circles, despite evidence that Jews were seeking out necromancers, see Christophe Nihan, "1 Samuel 28 and the Condmenation of Necromancy in Persian Yehud," in *Magic in the Biblical World*, ed. Todd Klutz (NY: T & T Clark International, 2003), 23-54; Solomon Nigosian, *Magic and Divination in the Old Testament* (Portland: Sussex Academic Press, 2008), 56-58, 78-79.

[1203] For criticism of Egyptian necromancy see Aeneas of Gaza, *Theophrastus* 8.22-19.8. For the accusation that skull necromancy was a fraud see Hippolytus, *Refutatio* 4.41. For Christians skeptical of seemingly miraculous works even when carried out by so-called Christians see the next chapter.

treatments of the subject, at least with regard to the feats of necromancy performed by Christian monks. When Christians exercised power over the dead, their influence was attributed not to the deviant manipulation of unwilling spirits or human remains, but to the invocation of Jesus' name and the piety of the monks.[1204] Both pagan and Christian necromancers might have inspired awe, but Greco-Roman pagan accounts would have been less effective than Christian accounts in terms of propaganda. Given the choice between a necromancer who derived his power from God and a necromancer who derived his power from a bone stolen from a rotting corpse, the former would have been more likely to attract clients, if only in the audience's imagination.

Skeptical though we may be today with regard to the notion of the dead coming back to life, we are nevertheless still fascinated to some degree by the supposed immortality of the Egyptian pagan dead. Mummies are autopsied on television shows, appear stripped of their bandages in books, and terrorize archaeologists in movies. Presumably, our fascination with mummies does not derive, as it did for the early Christians, from a pressing need to undermine the Egyptian pagan promises of salvation, since mummification is hardly a viable alternative to a modern funeral home. Perhaps it is the specter of death that intrigues us, ironically exemplified by the putrefying visage of a corpse that epitomizes the deterioration that mummification was meant to avert. Something else seems to be in play, however, a fascination with the utterly alien nature of such a foreign culture twinned with the horror inspired by what is essentially a contradiction: the preservation of decay.

[1204] 19.13 Milēs I. See the next chapter for further discussion of the source of the monks' power to work miracles.

The 1932 film *The Mummy*—so influential in encouraging our notions about a connection between ancient Egyptian tombs, curses, mummies, and occult wisdom—was in fact inspired by the demotic tale *Setne I*, known from an early Ptolemaic papyrus. The circulation of stories about desert fathers who were talking to mummies suggests that there was an early Christian audience for the nexus of ideas contained in *Setne I*. The latter told of a man who stole a scroll (supposedly written by the god Thoth[1205]) from a tomb—despite the dire warnings of the mummy with whom the scroll was entombed—and was punished for his transgression.[1206] Scholars have speculated that *Setne I* was originally meant to provoke laughter rather than horror, the protagonist's woes inspiring amusement.[1207] But this set-up seems more conducive to horror in the early Christian and modern tale. For early Christians, of course, the audience's horror would have been directed at the pagan demon-deity that the mummy represented or at the terrifying portrait of the afterlife that the mummy

[1205] Ancient audiences were familiar with stories in which a book of divine wisdom just happened to be discovered in an ancient tomb, a trope reflecting the degree to which the dead were thought to possess special wisdom. For Christians, of course, this wisdom took the form of testimony as to the efficacy of Christianity. For stories about books of wisdom being found in tombs see for instance Pliny, *HN* 13.84-88 (27), 30.9 (2). Also see William Hansen, "Strategies of Authentication in Ancient Popular Literature," in Panayotakis, 301-303.

[1206] The hero of this tale was based on Prince Khaemwaset (13th cent. BCE), the son of Ramesses II and a high priest of Ptah (*Setne* is a corruption of the priestly title *setnem*), responsible for the restoration and construction of many monuments, including temple complexes that continued to be used during Roman rule, as well as the reported contribution of a few spells to the *Book of the Dead*, known from a Ptolemaic era papyrus from Thebes, which Khaemwaset allegedly found under the head of a mummy. On *Setne I* and its connection to the Hollywood film see Robert Ritner, "The Romance of Setna Khaemuas and the Mummies (Setna I)," in Simpson, 453-54; Dieleman, *Priests*, 227. For the Book of the Dead passages see Allen, 216-21. For additional sources on *Setne I* see Simpson, 582-84. Interestingly, in light of the above discussion regarding the role of writing and the temple as a source of writing containing divine knowledge, the initial discoverer of the scroll in *Setne I* had gone looking for this scroll upon the advice of a sage who, mocking the idea that anyone could admire the learning written on the walls of the temples, said that he knew of a scroll that contained much more valuable learning. The initial discoverer of the scroll died for his transgressions and was buried along with the scroll in a tomb, where the hero of *Setne I* found it. When the hero attempted to make amends for stealing this scroll (after suffering ghost-like hallucinations), he did so by returning the scroll and then finding the bodies of the mummy's family members, reinterring them in the tomb alongside the mummy. *Setne I* 3/1-6/20. Thus, in accordance with the classic haunted house story as recorded by Pliny the Younger's *Ep.* 7.27 and Lucian's *Philopseudes*, the haunting was resolved by a proper burial.

[1207] Dieleman, *Priests*, 232n112.

sometimes provided. But the modern mummy tale returns the focus of horror to the issue of guilt that the early Christian narratives so neatly evaded.

Today's vengeful mummy is driven by a desire for retribution, enraged over the violation of his tomb. Insofar as this violation implies a lack of sympathy with the target, it is an act of aggression. But an opposing impulse is clearly operating as well. The modern archaeologists responsible for provoking a mummy's wrath are ostensibly driven by a fascination with antiquity and the sheer strangeness of Egyptian culture and beliefs. The early Christian pilgrims tried to deny the exotic allure of that antiquity and of the Egyptian Other, transferring the wonder usually inspired by Egypt's pagan monuments and religious experts to Christian holy men.[1208] Yet the seductive nature of the corpse-demon-deities haunting these early Christians suggests that the Egyptian Other (and the Egyptian past) continued to exercise an allure.

The modern passion for mummy movies is difficult to separate from the legacy of colonialism that was fostered by a Victorian (and pre-Victorian) European fascination with ancient Egypt. Here, the combination of horror and fascination went hand-in-hand with imperialism. Horror was simply indicative of the distance between the typical imperialist and the object of his exploitation. The latter could not help but inspire alarm, entitled as he was to seek vengeance for this exploitation, with the colonial administrator's fears in this regard no doubt being fueled by his own sense of guilt over the use of abusive practices. At the same time, the subject of exploitation

[1208] Frank, 35-78.

was a source of intrigue. Conquest was motivated by desire, the victim's charms enticing avaricious interests. Aggression, fear, and passion went together.[1209]

The early Christian habit of laying claim to Egyptian funerary space certainly looks like colonization of a sort, making the pagan ghosts who appealed to the Christians for intercession in the afterlife subalterns. Of course, imperialism in antiquity was not exactly like the imperialism to which *The Mummy* is an heir. Roman imperialism relied on strategies of accommodation with subject populations; influence worked both ways. Imperialism in its more recent incarnation relied on strategies of destruction, appropriation, and unilateral influence. Yet, some overlap can be observed between the distant and more recent past with regard to the push-pull dynamic between dominant and subject populations,[1210] and this can be extended to early Christians. For these Christians, imperialism took the form of a desire to colonize, that is, to convert, the known world, which clearly included the afterlife.

[1209] For better or worse, of course, this dissertation could be said to be a product of this same enchantment. The classic text for analyzing the negative, exploitative, and objectifying aspects of enchantment with the Other is Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vantage Books, 1979). Said argued that the sort of appreciative "wonder" evoked by an emphasis on the exotic nature of the flora, fauna, appearance, customs, and monuments of the ethnic Other actually facilitates the process by which the Other is dispossessed and their territory subjected to colonization, because "wonder" alienates the viewer from the "Other," making the latter more easily subject to commodification. By redirecting the wonder previously associated with Egypt's monuments to the desert fathers (Frank, 44-78), one might argue that the hagiographers facilitated the commodification of Egypt, the monks themselves becoming the resources that were being "sold." On Egypt's economic appeal and imperialism see below. For a critique of Said's approach, see below and Nizar Hermes, *The (European) Other in Medieval Arabic Literature and Culture: Ninth-Twelfth Century A.D.* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2012), 36-37; Versluys, 389-436. On the early modern and modern European and American fascination with the remains of Pharoahnic Egypt see Amelia Edwards, *A Thousand Miles up the Nile* (1887; repr., London: Darf Publishers, 1877); Nicholas Daly, "That Obscure Object of Desire: Victorian Commodity Culture and Fictions of the Mummy," *NOVEL: A Forum on Fiction* 28 (1994): 24-51; John Wortham, *The Genesis of British Egyptology 1549-1906* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1971); Brian Fagan, *The Rape of the Nile: Tomb Robbers, Tourists and Archeologists in Egypt* (New York: Scribners, 1975); Roger Luckhurst, *The Mummy's Curse: The True History of a Dark Fantasy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012); Douglas Cowan, *Sacred Terror: Religion and Horror on the Silver Screen* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2008), 111-12. On the myth of Tutankhamen's curse see Roger Luckhurst, "The mummy's curse: a study in rumour," *Critical Quarterly* 52 (2010): 6-22.

[1210] David Mattingly, *Imperialism, Power, and Identity: Experiencing the Roman Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011), 26-31. For a defense of postcolonial theory in the study of the Roman Empire see Mattingly, 26-31; Jane Webster, "Necessary Comparisons: A Post-Colonial Approach to Religious Syncretism in the Roman Provinces," *World Archaeology* 28 (1997): 324-38. For Brakke's usage of postcolonial theory with regard to the desert fathers see below.

Because Egypt had played a role in the biblical past, Christians might very well have harbored a notion that Egypt was rightfully theirs. Like the European imperialists who initiated projects of colonization by first mapping a region, Christians "mapped" Egypt by forgetting its pagan monuments, thereby clearing land for conquest and facilitating exploitation of the region's resources, that is, its potential converts.[1211] Not for nothing did Antony's hagiographer claim that Antony initiated heaven's settlement of the desert.[1212] When native demon-deities were evicted,[1213] this was in fact an ejection of the indigenous population, a standard step in any colonization project.

Given the abusive nature of imperialism, it is striking how the demand for vengeance is so easily dismissed in both the early Christian and the modern incarnation of the mummy tale. The former practically ignored the issue altogether, while the latter acknowledged it only for the mummy to be destroyed, with any questions as to the righteous of the mummy's complaints falling to the wayside. In the aftermath, the colonizers—ancient as well as modern—were left to continue their exploitative practices. The colonizers could even feel justified in proceeding in this manner, because their efforts served to quell the threat represented by the recently

---

[1211] Tellingly, *Asclepius*, one of the texts recovered from the Nag Hammadi cache, attributed the profanation of sacred territory to foreign rule (*Asclepius VI* 70-71). This process would include over-writing the sacred connotations of Egyptian geography as encapsulated, for instance, in lists of pagan cult places in Roman Egyptian funerary texts. On these lists see Riggs, 35. On forgetfulness as a political strategy see Cattell, 28-30. On the role of politics and ideology in travel writing see Frank, 37. On the use of Jesus' visit to Egypt to justify Muslim conquest of this region see Jacques van der Vliet, "Bringing Home the Homeless: Landscape and History in Egyptian Hagiography," *Church History and Religious Culture* 86 (2006): 53.

[1212] *Vita Antonii* 14.30. Compare to Diocletian's invitation to the Nobadae to settle in southern Egypt, discussed below.

[1213] K. M. Klein, "Invisible Monks, Human Eyes and the Egyptian Desert in Late Antique Hagiography," in *The History of the Peoples of the Eastern Desert*, eds. Hans Barnard and Kim Duistermaat (Los Angeles: University of California, 2012), 300. See the following chapter for further discussion of these demons.

neutralized mummy. This meant ignoring, naturally, that it was the imperialistic actions of the colonizer that provoked the mummy in the first place.

It made sense that a mummy would be chosen as the paragon of Egyptian and pagan identity in discourse of this sort. Mummification was uniquely associated with Egypt in both the ancient and modern imagination. But this choice had imperialistic implications as well. By limiting the danger of paganism/Egypt to the dead, these narratives implied that all of the resistance was or should be dead.[1214] Living practitioners were, at the least, old-fashioned and, at the worst, deviant. The mummy was fascinating, therefore, not only because it represented the specter of death that continues to enthrall audiences today, but also because it reassured audiences that the danger posed by the Other was truly dead.

Early Christians had a vested interest in equating paganism with the dead, and for ignoring physical evidence for paganism in the surrounding landscape. So we should be wary of assuming that paganism really died as soon as some would have it.[1215] The early Christian narrative of pagan decline and resistance is too fraught with imperialistic implications for it to serve as definitive proof one way or another as to the longevity of paganism.

The discussion up to this point has focused on the degree to which early Christians would have viewed Egyptians as the Other. In fact, many early Christians

---

[1214] To the extent that paganism had fallen into decline or had simply disappeared, the condemnation of paganism (and the heresy with which it was equated) reflected a shift in notions about how history functioned. Egypt's antiquity was no longer proof of its sanctity, but rather the opposite. The past had become the target of polemic. Thus, as Dijkstra points out, it seems significant that the last person in Philae to convert to Christianity in the *Life of Aaron* was an *old* woman (*Life of Aaron*, 53 [22a-23a]). Dijkstra, 402n48. By rejecting the custom and tradition that was so highly prized in pagan circles—not only replacing it with the Old Testament, but stressing the role played by Jesus in rupturing history—Christians were not just adding a new chapter to the annals of history; in some ways, they were severing the link between past and present. This is blatantly apparent in the rejection of the Egyptian past as represented by the appropriation the Egyptian dead and their funerary space.

[1215] For estimates of conversion rates, see the previous chapter.

were of Egyptian descent. If my depiction of early Christianity as a form of imperialism is correct, then these Egyptian Christians would have been guilty of practicing imperialism against their fellow Egyptians. Were Egyptian Christians actually ancient subalterns, betraying their own kind? Or is that an anachronistic interpretation, born out of current identity politics and the angst generated in the wake of modern imperialism?

Egyptians and Blacks in Early Christianity

The rest of this discussion is devoted to an examination of early Christian attitudes towards ethnicity. Scholarship on the question of ethnicity, in both antiquity and today, is vast. For our purposes, the following simplified definition will suffice: ethnicity, in antiquity as well as today, reflects not only, and perhaps not even chiefly, biological descent (the variability in genetic and physiological markers meaning that outliers will always contradict simplistic attempts at categorization), but also language (Antony's use of the Egyptian language identifying him as an Egyptian), customs and religion (the Egyptians, unlike the Greeks, practicing animal worship), kinship traditions (Jews being thought to be the biological descendants of the Hebrews led out of Egypt by Moses), associations to geographic space (Egyptians living in Egypt), and identities constructed via historical narratives (Plato's defense of a non-Egyptian origin for Athenian learning serving to bolster an autochthonous Athenian identity). Given the complicated nature of this schema, it is not surprising to

find that ethnic identities can be ambiguous and subject to contradictions, reflecting external and internal perceptions.[1216]

Consider, for instance, the quandary created by the fact that, as chapter two mentioned, both the Egyptians and the Jews practiced circumcision. Were they one ethnicity or two? Heliodorus' *Aethiopica* claimed that a woman of Ethiopian biological descent possessed physiological features more akin to those of Greek biological descent. The question of her parentage—Ethiopian or Greek—was a pivotal plot point, the conclusion suggesting that there might not be a one-to-one correlation between biology, physiology, and character.[1217] In Philostratus' *Life of Apollonius*, an Assyrian voiced the desire to become a Hellene, that is, Greek, by acquiring Greek habits and learning (Philostr., *VA* 3.42). Was it really that simple? When Porphyry referred to Origen as a Greek,[1218] this might very well have been a reference to Origen's acquisition of Greco-Roman learning (Euseb., *Hist. eccl.* 6.2.7-8), rather than Origen's ethnic background as we would probably recognize it today. Origen's father had a Greek name, but Epiphanius implied that Origen was actually of Egyptian descent (Epiph., *Pan.* 64.4.1-2). The name "Origen" itself is a reference to the Egyptian god Horus, suggesting that Origen's parents were pagan at the time of his birth (religion, remember, being one of the factors used for determining a person's

[1216] Jonathan Hall, *Hellenicity: Between Ethnicity and Culture* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 9-18; Jeremy McInerney, *A Companion to Ethnicity in the Ancient Mediterranean* (Malden, MA: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 2014); Fredrik Barth, ed., "Introduction," *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Cultural Difference* (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1969), 9-38; Per Bilde, *Ethnicity in Hellenistic Egypt* (Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 1992), 7-38; Johnson, *Ethnicity* 36-44; Walter Pohl, "Introduction: Strategies of Distinction," in *Strategies of Distinction: The Construction of Ethnic Communities 300-800*, eds. Walter Pohl and Helmut Reimitz (Boston: Brill, 1998), 1-16.

[1217] Heliod., *Aeth*. 4.8, 10.4. This character's skin color was supposedly influenced by her mother's contemplation of a picture of Andromeda, whose own ethnic identifers appear to have been a matter of conjecture. On the latter see Gruen, *Rethinking*, 201.

[1218] Porphyry's statement is preserved in Euseb., *Hist. eccl.* 19.7.

ethnicity) and that at least one of them was of Egyptian descent or else identified with traditional Egyptian paganism.[1219] So was Origen a Greco-Roman (by way of learning, language, and partial descent) or an Egyptian (by way of name and partial descent)? Or, since Christianity was indeed being treated as if it was a new ethnicity by some writers, was he a Christian (by way of religion)?[1220] Or was he all of these things at once? How did his self-perception differ from how he was perceived by others?

In a departure from most scholarship on the subject of ethnicity in antiquity, this chapter argues that there are no clear-cut answers to these questions and that this ambiguity was in of itself meaningful, facilitating adaptation to changing circumstances and needs. One caveat must be made, however. In keeping with the subject of this chapter, the majority of the evidence is hagiographical. No effort is being made to argue that the ancient world or early Christians were, as a rule, guilty or not guilty of ethnic prejudice. Instead, a specialized sample of literature that is uniquely devoted to the Other—being narratives of encounters with the Other—is being mined to see if, in this very narrow field of discourse, ethnic prejudice was at all a factor. One might argue that this methodology is inherently biased, but it seems justified to the extent that, as historians, sociologists, and anthropologists have argued, ethnic prejudice itself is far from static. A person who does not think of himself as prejudiced and who, as a rule, is not prejudiced, may still on occasion engage in behavior that consciously or unconsciously suggests the existence of

[1219] Oulton, 171. Alternatively, Origen's parents might have simply been inclined to the sort of syncretic practices that drew fire from Christians encouraging the adoption of totalizing identities. See the next chapter.

[1220] On Christianity as an ethnicity see below.

prejudice.[1221] Therefore, it is worth looking into the operation of ethnic prejudice even within the scope of small, isolated spheres of thought and activity. Failing to do so would mean missing out on the full range of complexity governing social life.

Social scientists and historians have come to a consensus that the recognition of ethnicity (as simply an acknowledgement that differences exist) does not necessarily indicate the presence of ethnic prejudice, defined here as antagonism exercised along ethnic lines. The division between "same" and "other"—"them" versus "us"—is inherent to the human condition.[1222] Though we *instinctively* classify people based on consciously or unconsciously recognized differences, these classification systems are *socially constructed*, meaning that people naturally notice differences but they are taught how to group one another and how the members of each group are expected to behave.[1223] Unfortunately, despite the ambiguity of ethnicity—or perhaps in part because ambiguity is conducive to manipulation—the ascription of ethnic identities can facilitate imperialistic agendas, with socially constructed hierarchies used to justify the subordination of specific people based on their so-called ethnicity.[1224]

[1221] Peter Kivisto and Paul Croll, *Race and Ethnicity: The Basics* (New York: Routledge, 2012), 30-36; Marger, 89-106; Denise Buell, "Early Christian Universalism and Modern Forms of Racism," in *The Origins of Racism in the West*, ed. Miriam Eliav-Veldon, Benjamin Isaac and Joseph Ziegler (New York: Cambridge University Press: 2007), 114-15; Buell, *Race*, 5-13.

[1222] See the introduction.

[1223] Kivisto, 157; Smith, "What," 15-16; Carol Mukhopadhyay, Rosemary Henze, and Yolanda Moses, eds., *How Real is Race? A Sourcebook on Race, Culture, and Biology* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Education, 2007); Marger, 18-22; Jason Marsh, Rodolfo Mendoza-Denton, Jeremy Smith, eds., *Are We Born Racist? New Insights from Neuroscience and Positive Psychology* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2010); Gruen, *Rethinking*, 205.

[1224] Hall, 9-10.

The presence of ethnic prejudice in the ancient world is hotly debated.[1225] The existence of a hierarchy based on ethnicity in Roman Egypt can hardly be denied given periodic expulsions of so-called Egyptians from Alexandria[1226] and the promulgation of a legal code establishing different rights and responsibilities according to ethnicity (ostensibly defined via descent). Yet efforts on the part of the Roman administration to clarify ethnic boundaries do not appear to have been entirely successful. Ethnic identities were sometimes unclear, as demonstrated by references to people who did not self-identify with the ethnicity with which they were identified by the Roman legal code.[1227] Since papyri rarely refer to legal inequalities, Ari Bryen believes that these inequalities were rarely enforced.[1228] However, ethnic distinctions certainly mattered to some people. Philo, for example, complained when Jews were subjected to physical punishment to which only the Egyptians were supposed to be subject (Philo, *In Flacc.* 78-80).

Did the hagiographies recognize ethnic distinctions like this? They obviously recognized ethnic boundaries of some sort, for they went to the trouble of specifying the ethnicities of monks like Antony. But how did they determine which ethnicity applied? They rarely mentioned physiological characteristics or alluded to the ethnic

---

[1225] Scholarship engaging this debate includes Hall; Gruen, *Rethinking;* M. Bernal, *Black Athena: The Afrosiasitic Roots of Classical Civilizations* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1987); Edwin Yamauchi, ed., *Africa and Africans in Antiquity* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2001); Frank Snowden *Blacks in Antiquity: Ethiopians in Greco-Roman Experience* (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 1970); Lloyd Thompson, *Romans and Blacks* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1989); John Coleman and Clark Walz, editors, *Greeks and Barbarians: Essays on the Interactions between Greeks and Non-Greeks in Antiquity and the Consequences for Eurocentrism* (Bethesda: CDL Press, 1997); Benjamin Isaac, *The Invention of Racism in Classical Antiquity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004); G. H. Beardsley, *The Negro in Greek and Roman Civilization: A Study of the Ethiopian Type* (New York: Russell & Russell, 1929).

[1226] The nature of these expulsions is debated. For instance, see Jane Rowlandson and Andrew Harker, "Roman Alexandria from the Perspective of the Papyri," in Hirst, 79-112.

[1227] Katelijn Vandorpe, "Identity," in Riggs, 262.

[1228] Bryen, *Violence,* 39.

make-up of a monk's ancestry.[1229] The most salient characteristic in the identification of Antony's ethnicity appears to have been his use of Coptic. If, as argued above, a lack of familiarity with Greek and Latin was sufficient for identifying a monk as unlearned, then an Egyptian—insofar as this identification was made based on the use of Coptic as opposed to other languages—would by definition be unlearned. But there were in fact learned Egyptians. Epiphanius mentioned a certain Hieracas (c. late 3rd cent.) living in Leontopolis who was an Egyptian (an identification that Epiphanius presumably made based on alleged ancestry), but nevertheless wrote in Coptic and Greek, studied medicine and other disciplines, memorized Scripture, and succeeded in attracting many Christian ascetics to his teachings (Epiph., *Pan*. 67.1-7). When the hagiographers equated language with education, it was irrespective of fellows like Hieracas who would have defied an attempt to link ethnicity to traditional intellectual achievements.

Circling back to the discussion above regarding the use of learning to construct boundaries, it is easy to see how ethnicity became a factor in the generation of a hierarchy. Julian took it as a given that the Greco-Romans with their access to Greco-Roman book-learning had an advantage over other ethnicities when it came to intelligence, defining "intelligence" of course as familiarity with Greco-Roman book-learning. Nonetheless, Julian insisted that all men had access to *divine* wisdom, and he advocated adherence to a person's ethnic religious customs in order to make the most of that access. By rejecting their ethnic traditions, Christians supposedly lost

[1229] Nor did they usually cite a pre-Christian tendency towards Egyptianizing religion as a factor in their identification, with details regarding the monk's (or his family's) engagement with paganism prior to conversion receiving short shrift. Of course, the assumption that pagan traditions could be taken as an indication of ethnicity ignores the problem of syncretism. For an example of hagiographical material that may indicate the ethnic component of a monk's paganism prior to conversion, consider the story about Pachomius' parents sacrificing to the deities of the river—a seemingly traditional Egyptian pagan custom. *Vita prima graeca Pachomii*, 3.

their entrée to this wisdom.[1230] In response to arguments like this, several Christian apologists made an effort to define Christianity as an ethnicity onto itself—a third ethnicity, taking pagans (all lumped together) and Jews as the other two—with Christians tracing their historical descent back to Hebrew roots that predated (and thus were superior to) the origin of the Greco-Roman ethnicity.[1231]

The identification of Christianity as a new ethnicity confused the question of identity in at least two ways. First, if Christianity was an ethnicity, then religion should have been the only factor involved when a Christian was making an ethnic identification. But for the hagiographers, ethnic identifiers other than pagan, Jew, and Christian continued to function. Second, if the old ethnic distinctions between Egyptians and Greco-Romans no longer applied, having been supplanted by a distinction based solely on religion, this implied that Christians no longer endorsed the sort of hierarchical model which made Greco-Romans superior to Egyptians based on so-called intelligence. However, judging by the hagiographers' efforts to celebrate the unlearned Egyptian monks, this model remained in use, and was, at the best, only inverted. Even then, by reducing the Egyptians to spectacles of wonder—amazingly both learned (in Scripture) and unlearned (in Greco-Roman topics)—the pilgrims failed to engage with the Egyptians as real people.[1232] This could not help

---

[1230] Julian *Con. Gal.* 42E-43A, 115D-131C . With Greek and Latin defined as the languages *par excellence* of school-learning, linguistic *ethnic* associations were inevitably attached to hierarchical scales of intelligence that ranked ethnicities according to language and learning models. This is true even if the use of Coptic is not evidence of deviance. On the use of Coptic not necessarily reflecting hostility towards Greco-Romans (at least prior to Chalcedon) see Choat, "Language," 354. On the application of Greco-Roman learning in hierarchy see Carr, 190.

[1231] Clem. Al., *Strom.* 6.5; Tertullian, *ad Nationes* 1.8.1, 1.20; Euseb., *Hist. eccl.* 1.4.2. Also see Johnson, *Ethnicity,* 6; Adolf von Harnack, *The Mission and Expansion of Christianity in the First Three Centuries,* trans. James Moffatt (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1972), 212-14, 233. On the invented history of Christianities roots, see chapter two.

[1232] While admiration for the "wonder" inspired by the spectacle of unlearned monks invested with divine wisdom suggests a positive assessment of Egyptians, an Orientalist critique suggests that, on the contrary,

but imply the existence of underlying boundaries conducive to the generation of ethnic prejudice.

To gain a fuller appreciation for the existence, or lack thereof, of ethnic prejudice in this discourse, we have to step outside the binary of Egyptian/Greco-Roman relations and consider evidence regarding attitudes towards the black-skinned Ethiopians and Nubians who constituted the Other in the eyes of Egyptians and Greco-Romans alike.[1233] This strategy is useful because it allows us to consider the degree to which Egyptians were the source of ethnic prejudice, as opposed to its target, and because it involves an appeal to the physiological markers of ethnicity which are so prevalent in modern instances of ethnic prejudice. Consequently, this

---

this was exploitative and objectifying. To appreciate the role of pilgrimage in hierarchical assessments of wisdom, consider the degree to which Apollonius of Tyana's explorations could be taken as a series of tests applied to alien wise men in order to establish the supremacy of Greco-Roman learning. See Ian Scott, "The Divine Wanderer: Travel and Divinization in Late Antiquity," in Harland, 101-22. Alternatively, the case might be made that what looks like an alien mystique for the Egyptian desert fathers was only the mystique that necessarily surrounds the holy in order to separate it from the profane, and that this reflects religious, not (even subconscious) imperialistic, motivations. However, by privileging the so-called ignorance of men like Antony, the early Christians were not necessarily rejecting the basic paradigm which perceived ethnicity according to a scale of intelligence, merely inverting it. Such inversions were in keeping with non-Christian notions regarding the possibility that aliens possessed non-school-based wisdom about the divine. For a discussion of distinctions between school-based and non-school-based wisdom (so-called science versus faith) see the following chapter. For an example of Christians adhering to the traditional hierarchy, consider a story claiming that Antony had his visitors labeled as haling from Egypt or Jerusalem based on their skill in speaking, with visitors lacking said skill earning the former designation. He would treat the visitors differently based on their identifications, but was he treating one better than the other? The Egyptians would be served a meal, and those from Jerusalem would be engaged in discussion (Pall., *HL* 21.8-9). Were the latter deemed more worthy of Antony's attention because they were elites (an interpretation reflecting a bias for school-based learning) or because their book-learning meant that they were morally inferior and needed more spiritual guidance (an interpretation reflecting a criticism of overwrought academic discourse that could be found even in non-Christian discourse)? Either way, the scale was still in place; only the interpretation varied, and not necessarily in a way that was out of keeping with traditional Greco-Roman paganism. On the dubious efforts of modern researchers to rate different ethnicities according to tests for "intelligence" see Marger, 31. The same cultural and linguistic underpinnings that skew the results of these "tests" today (see below for language and the subaltern) would have skewed an assessment of intelligence in antiquity. With Homer and similar works serving as the basic textbooks in traditional Greco-Roman schools even in Egypt, non-Greco-Romans were at a disadvantage, especially if Greek was not their main language, unless their families had to some extent assimilated by thoroughly embracing Greco-Roman idioms. Carr, 181.

[1233] The term "black," used in this discussion for the sake of convenience, is not necessarily an exact translation for ancient terminology, which employed more diverse language suggestive of a host of shades, including red or sun-burnt, various shades of brown, and black. Other physiological characteristics were also mentioned, including hair type and facial features. Frank Snowden, "Ancient Views of Nubia and the Nubians," *Expedition* 35 (1993): 44.

discussion should cast some light on the differences between modern and ancient attitudes towards ethnicity.

The paradigmatic figure for scholars addressing the problem of anti-black prejudice in early Christian Egypt is a desert father by the name of Abba Moses (fl. late 4th-early 5th cent.), also referred to as Ethiopian or Black Moses, not to be confused with the Apa Moses who dismantled temples of Apollo and Bes.[1234] According to some of the hagiographical sources, Ethiopian Moses was a slave[1235] who engaged in such flagrantly criminal behavior, including acts of banditry, that his disgusted owner cut ties with him. Afterwards, Moses repented and joined a monastery, only to be seized by the very thieves who had once served under his command. Refusing to raise a hand to his former associates, Moses merely informed

[1234] The term "Ethiopia," the biblical Kush, was often applied in ancient sources to all of Africa excepting Egypt. The mystique surrounding Ethiopia in the Greco-Roman imagination can be traced back as far as Homer, who listed it among the nations involved in the Trojan War (Homer, *Iliad* 1.423-24, 23.206; Hom., *Od.* 1.22-24, 5.282-87, 11.522, 19.246-47). In an example of *interpretatio graeca* comparable to the association of a pyramid with a Greek courtesan, mentioned above, two colossal statues of the Egyptian pharaoh Amenhotep III (c. 1386-c.1353 BCE), located bear Thebes, became misidentified as statues of Memnon, the Ethiopian king who supposedly fought in the Trojan War. Scholars speculate that this misidentification was encouraged by the local Egyptian priests who benefitted from visiting Greco-Romans attracted by, among other things, the statues (as confirmed by several inscriptions, a few of which were written in Demotic, though more were written in Latin and Greek), which supposedly emitted noises each day, a phenomenon that appears to have ceased by the fourth century. It has been further speculated that the Christian apologist Theophilus of Antioch was referring to these statues when he mocked the Egyptian worship of shameful sounds (Theoph., *Ad Autol.* 3.41.10). See Lightfoot, 234. On the attraction of the statues of Memnon see for instance Strabo, 17.1.46; Luc., *Philops.* 34. Also see Ian Rutherford, "Travel and Pilgrimage," in Riggs, 705-707; Lindsay, *Men* 317-27.

[1235] Even if Moses was a slave, it was by no means a given that slaves in antiquity would be black-skinned or that a black-skinned person residing in the Roman Empire would be a slave. The connection of slavery to ethnic prejudice is highly controversial and unfortunately cannot be addressed here. Consider, however, the questions introduced by the circulation of arguments that slavery was inherent to a person's nature. That is, a slave was meant to be a slave and would always be a slave. (This sounds very much like modern definitions of racism as belief in a person's innate inferiority, on which see below.) But how could one argue that people were slaves by nature given the obvious fluidity in antiquity between slave and free status, with free men becoming slaves and vice versa? For further discussion see Vincent Wimbush, ed., "Ascetic Behavior and Color-ful Language: Stories about Ethiopian Moses," in *Discursive Formations, Ascetic Piety and the Interpretation of Early Christian Literature* (Atlanta, Georgia: Scholars Press, 1992), 2:84-85; Harper, *Slavery*; Thomas Wiedeman, *Greek and Roman Slavery* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1981); Sandra Joshel, *Slavery in the Roman World* (NY: Cambridge University Press, 2010); Peter Garnsey, *Ideas of Slavery from Aristotle to Augustine* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1996); M. Finley, *Classical Slavery* (London: F. Cass, 2003); Richard Alston, Edith Hall, and Laura Proffitt, eds., *Reading Ancient Slavery* (London: Bristol Classical Press, 2011).

them of his identity, and the shock of this revelation moved the thieves to repent (Pall., *HL* 19.3-4; Sozom., *Hist. eccl.* 6.29).

Whether or not the real Ethiopian Moses—for such a person no doubt existed—once enjoyed a career as a bandit, it is tempting to assume that he was often mistaken for one. To residents of Roman Egypt, black skin was probably often equated with membership in one of the roving bands associated with the Blemmyes, raiders whose activities would have looked very much like banditry. The origin of the nomadic or semi-nomadic[1236] Blemmyes is much debated, but their emergence as a threat to the Roman Empire was clearly connected with the decline of the Meroitic kingdom, [1237] the seat of which was located below the southern border of Roman Egypt. Meroe was the successor of a long line of Nubian kingdoms, the enemies, and sometimes the rulers, of pharaonic Egypt. Meroe had established a sort of détente

[1236] Nomadic groups are usually *semi*-nomadic, with members shifting into and out of more settled communities. Despite the tension created by conflicting subsistence patterns, nomads and more sedentary populations can negotiate access to vital resources in mutually acceptable ways, with sendentary populations benefitting, for instance, from increased access to trade goods brought by passing nomads. For comparative discussion of the Roman Empire's relationship with nomads/semi-nomads further east, see E. B. Banning, "Peasants, Pastoralists, and 'Pax Romana': Mutualism in the Southern Highlands of Jordan," *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 261 (1987): 25-50; S. Thomas Parker, "Peasants, Pastoralists, and 'Pax Romana': A Different View," *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 261 (1987): 35-51. Cf. Abbas Mohammed, "The Nomadic and the Sedentary: Polar Complementaries: Not Polar Opposites," in *The Desert and the Sown: Nomads in the Wider Society*, ed. Cynthia Nelson (Berkeley: University of California, 1973), 97.

[1237] Meroe, mentioned in Classical texts beginning with Herodotus (Hdt. 2.29), probably reached its peak in the first century CE. The religion reflects a mixture of traditional Egyptian and Greco-Roman influences, as well as local traditions. The reasons behind Meroe's decline are obscure, but it appears to have suffered along with the Roman Empire, with whom it engaged in trade, during the third century crisis. Meroe also appears to have fallen victim to raids by the Axumites, Blemmyes, and Nobadae, with archaeological traces of the Meroitic kingdom petering out in the 330s. On the Blemmyes and Nobadae see below. For further discussion of the Meroitic Kingdom, and the predecessor states that operated alongside pharaonic Egypt see William Adams, *Nubia: Corridor to Africa* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977), 162-432; Bruce Trigger, *History and Settlement in Lower Nubia* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1965); Ugo Monneret de Villard, *La Nubia romana (*Roma: Instituto per l'Oriente, 1941); Peter Shinnie, *Meroe: A Civilization of the Sudan* (NY: F. A. Praeger, 1967); László Török, "Between Egypt and Meroitic Nubia: The Southern Frontier Region," in Riggs, 749-62; Stanley Burstein, *Graeco-Africana: Studies in the History of Greek Relations with Egypt and Nubia* (New Rochelle, NY: Aristide D. Caratzas, 1995); Burstein, "When" 41-61; Yamauchi; Laurence Kirwan, *Studies on the History of Late Antique and Christian Nubia*, ed. T. Hägg, L. Török, and D. A. Welsby (Burlington, Vt.: Ashgate, 2002); *Fontes historiae Nubiorum*, eds. T. Eide, T. Hägg, R. Pierce, L. Török (Bergen: University of Bergen); Robert Jackson, *At Empire's Edge: Exploring Rome's Egyptian Frontier* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 129-55.

with Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt, but following its decline, which was accelerated by raids carried out by the Blemmyes, the latter turned their sights north. In 272, when Alexandria revolted, it was with the aid of allies among the Blemmyes. Raids led by the Blemmyes against the Dodekaschoenos contributed to Diocletian's decision to abandon the region altogether. He pulled the border of Roman Egypt north, to the region of Philae, and invited the Nobadae (black-skinned nomads or semi-nomads, like the Blemmyes) to settle in the newly vacated territory in order to protect southern Egypt from the Blemmyes. Unfortunately for the Romans, the Nobadae and the Blemmyes occasionally joined forces. In 453, an effort was made to resolve this problem with a treaty that, among other things, ensured access for the Blemmyes and the Nobadae to pagan cult sites in Roman Egypt.[1238]

Some of the hagiographical sources suggest that religious friction was a factor in hostility between the Blemmyes and various Christian communities. During the reign of Constantine, the Blemmyes allegedly seized a Christian monk and forced him to commit apostasy.[1239] At one point, the Blemmyes also abducted the so-called heretic Nestorius, Cyril's enemy, who had been exiled to the Great Oasis (Evag., *Hist. eccl.* 1.7 [13]). Hostages like this were returned for a price. According to Besa, Shenoute once negotiated with the Blemmyes for the release of some captives, who were subsequently sheltered at Shenoute's monastery (Besa, *Life of Shenoute* 89-90).

[1238] Procop., *Pers.* 1.19.29-34; Priscus fr. 27.1. For further discussion of the Blemmyes and Nobadae see Adams, *Nubia*, 389, 419-32; Vassilios Christides, "Ethnic Movements in Southern Egypt and Northern Sudan: Blemmyes-Beja in Late Antique and Early Arab Egypt until 707 A. D.," *Listy filologické / Folia philologica* 103 (1980): 129-43; Kirwan; R. H. Pierce, "A Blemmy by Any Other Name…: A Study in Greek Ethnography," in Barnard, 226-37; J. H. F. Djikstra, "Blemmyes, Noubades and the Eastern Desert in Late Antiquity: Reassessing the Written Sources," in Barnard, 238-47; Jackson, 131-33.

[1239] *Paralipomena* 5 (8-11). Cf. *Vita prima graeca Pachomii* 85. Compare to a story claiming that the real reason that Origen left Alexandria and fell into heresy was his descent into apostasy when faced with threats of abuse from an Ethiopian (Epiph., *Pan.* 64.1-2).

Monks sometimes became embroiled in military conflicts with the Blemmyes in less direct ways. One of the desert fathers predicted, for instance, the success of a Roman general against Ethiopian forces (*Hist. mon.* 1.2), the latter probably referring to the Blemmyes or other black-skinned raiders.

Military conflicts notwithstanding, the inhabitants of Roman Egypt were not necessarily terrified of the Blemmyes. As we shall see, some hagiographical sources appear to have expected blacks to inspire fear, but hagiographers were not unanimous on the subject. Raids and the seizure of hostages could, from the perspective of the Blemmyes, be justified by the failure of the Romans to pay subsidies. To a Roman, like the historian Procopius (c. 500-c. 560), this looked like extortion.[1240] But the Romans were not above exploiting conflicts with the Blemmyes in order to facilitate their own internal disputes. In the sixth century, the city of Ombos petitioned a governor for help against a so-called backsliding Christian who was consecrating pagan shrines and encouraging the Blemmyes (who were allegedly in the process of converting to Christianity) to abandon their new faith and to support this renegade born-again pagan in seizing property and funds.[1241] Did religious and economic conflict really go hand-in-hand like this? Or was a religious crisis invented in order to bolster a case for addressing what was actually an economic crisis, or vice versa?

There is a good reason for believing that Christianization, especially forceful Christianization, was undermining Roman-Blemmyes relations. The Blemmyes appear to have immediately broken the 453 treaty ensuring their access to pagan cult

[1240] Which is to say that it looked like extortion when carried out by others. Procop., *Pers.* 2.10.18-24. Presumably, Procopius felt the same way about the subsidies to the Blemmyes and Nobadae (Procop., *Pers.* 1.19.29-34).

[1241] *P.Cairo Maspero 67004* in Jitse H. F. Dijkstra, "A Cult of Isis at Philae after Justinian? Reconsidering "P. Cair. Masp." I 67004," *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 146 (2004): 137-54.

sites in Egypt (Priscus Fr. 27.1). But the Romans might very well have decided that it was in the best interests of the Roman Empire to continue allowing the Blemmyes access to these sites, since these rights could be used as a bargaining chip in the future, and an effort to deny them might have provoked hostilities. Though there is no evidence that the Romans made a decision like this, such a policy would help to explain the longevity of pagan practices at Philae. For centuries, pilgrims, priests, and cult statues had travelled back and forth between northern Nubia and southern Egypt, the various streams meeting in Philae, where the cultivation of syncretic religious practices helped to ease political and ethnic tensions. As late as 394, a temple of the Blemmyan deity Mandulis was erected at Philae, two years after the commonly accepted date for the "destruction" of the Serapeum in Alexandria.[1242]

By this point, of course, the entire population of Philae was already supposed to be Christian, at least according to the *Life of Aaron*. This hagiography attributed conversion of the region to the eruption of discord between two Nubians, the term "Nubian" here apparently referring to any black-skinned denizen of the region around southern Egypt. In an effort to settle this argument, Macedonius, Philae's first bishop, performed a miracle that triggered a series of events culminating in Philae's mass

[1242] Temple construction at Philae reflected competition and cooperation between pre-Ptolemaic Egyptians, Ptolemies, Nubians, and Romans, processes also reflected in the recording of inscriptions in Hieroglyphics and Demotic (Philae being the site of the last dated inscriptions of each in Egypt, put up in 394 and 452, respectively) in addition to Greek, Latin, and Meroitic. After Rome gained control of Egypt, some Nubian families cultivated dual loyalties to Rome and Meroe as temple priests and ambassadors. Following the collapse of Meroe, the Blemmyes and Nobatae continued their patronage of Philae. See Kirwan; Jitse Djikstra, *Philae and the End of Ancient Egyptian Religion: A Regional Study of Religious Transformation (298-642 CE)* (Leuven: Peeters, 2008); Török, "Between" 749-62; Adams, *Nubia* 334; Frank Snowden, "Ethiopians and the Isiac Worship," *L'Antiquité classique* 25 (1956): 112-16; Jackson, 111-27; Ian Rutherford, "Island of the Extremity: Space, Language, and Power in the Pilgrimage Traditions of Philae," in Frankfurter, 229-56; Bagnall, *Egypt from Alexander*, 242-45; Verner, 403-19.

conversion.[1243] The hagiographer might have been exaggerating the scope of this conversion, but Christianity had certainly reached Philae by the mid-fifth century. There is a record of a bishop here complaining about attacks carried out by the Blemmyes and the Nobadae around this time.[1244]

Other evidence suggests that the conversion of the region took longer. According to Procopius, Philae's last pagan temple was not closed until the reign of Justinian (reigned 527-565) (Procop., *Pers.* 1.19). If Procopius is correct, this could be taken as confirmation that the survival of paganism in Philae depended on the patronage of the Blemmyes. Having fallen into a state of decline by the mid-sixth century, the Blemmyes were probably no longer in a position to protect their sanctuaries. We should exercise some caution on this point, however. According to the anti-Chalcedonian Church historian John of Ephesus (c. 507-c. 588), the conversion of Nubians around Philae was actually brought about because of a competition between the Chalcedonian Justinian and his wife, the allegedly anti-Chalcedonian Theodora. Husband and wife supposedly sent rival embassies to convert the population, and Theodora's embassy won.[1245]

The actual inscriptions left up on the walls of the temples in Philae tell yet another story. The number of pagan references slowly decline, and the number of Christian references slowly increase. Scholars have taken this to mean that the people

---

[1243] *Life of Aaron* 44-47 (18a-19b). For additional miracles performed on behalf of Nubians see *Life of Aaron* 98-100 42a-43a), 123 (51a-51b). Interestingly, Athanasius supposedly rebuked the bishop of Philae at one point for refusing to give charity to the Nubians south of Philae, a refusal that the bishop justified on account of the Nubians' paganism. *Life of Aaron* 61-62 (26a-27a).

[1244] *P.Leiden Z. = SB XX 14606*.

[1245] John of Ephesus, *Ecclesiastical History* 4.6-8. On John of Ephesus see Susan Ashbrook Harvey, *Asceticism and Society in Crisis John of Ephesus and the Lives of the Eastern Saints* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990). On Procopius see Antony Kaldellis, *Procopius of Caesarea: Tyranny, History, and Philosophy at the End of Antiquity* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004).

of Philae and visitors to the area were gradually converted to Christianity over an extended period of time.[1246]

Hagiographers and historians alike associated the Christianization of black-skinned people with submission to the authority of the Egyptian patriarch, to whom the bishops of the newly Christianized populations were subject, and to the Roman Empire, or at least to the patronage of an empress (Theodora).[1247] The submission of Nubia to Roman Egypt can be seen as just another move in the long-standing rivalry between Nubia and Egypt, a rivalry that was often conducted in religious terms. The same push-pull dynamic observed in the Greco-Roman identification of the Egyptians with magic, as objects of both wonder and horror,[1248] can be observed in Egyptian attitudes towards the Nubians. Nubian words were often included in traditional Egyptian pagan spells. Like Egyptian words in Greek spells, Nubian words in

---

[1246] Archaeological evidence from the region immediately south of Egypt suggests that, following the decline of Meroe, the religion of the inhabitants continued to reflect syncretic processes, with Christian influences gradually emerging, as reflected for instance in fifth and sixth century graves containing both pagan and Christian imagery. In the fifth century, a Nobataean king by the name of Silko defeated the Blemmyes and recorded his success in one of the few inscriptions dating from this period in this area, in the temple of Kalabasha, in poor Greek. The inscription includes a reference to God which has been taken as evidence for Christianization, but it has also been attributed to the interpolation of a Christian or Jewish Greek scribe. Whatever the case, Christianization of the Nobatian kingdom appears to have been fully in effect by the mid-sixth century. For the Greek text of the inscription and an English translation see Eide, 1147-53. For Philae's inscriptions see Eide, 978-90, 1000-24, 1110-12, 1121-23, 1141-44, 1177-82. On the conversion of Philae and the Blemmyes see Chuvin, 142; Frankfurter, *Roman Egypt*, 64-65, 105-10; Jitse Djikstra, "Fate" 421-38; Trombley, 225-41; Johannes Hahn, "Die Zerstörung der Kulte von Philae Geschichte und Legende am ersten Nilkatarakt," in Hahn, 203-42; Vivian, "Introduction," 54-69; J. W. Crowfoot, "Christian Nubia," *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 13 (1927): 141-50.

[1247] *Life of Aaron* 30 (12-13). For the submission of Axumite Christians to the patriarch in Alexandria see Sozom., *Hist. eccl.* 2.24. The kingdom of Axum, which is probably the Roman-era entity that is closest to the Ethiopia familiar today, appears to have arisen in the first century CE. For the Axumite kingdom in general see D. Selden, "How the Ethiopian Changed His Skin," *Classical Antiquity* 32 (2013): 322-77; Stuart Munro-Hay, *Aksum: An African Civilisation of Late Antiquity* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1991); David Phillipson, *Ancient Ethiopia: Aksum: Its Antecedents and Successors* (London: British Museum Press, 1998); J. Y. Nadeau, "Ethiopians," *The Classical Quarterly* 20 (1970): 339-49. Pagan Axumite religious traditions reflected the influence of Egypt and Southern Arabia. Though some controversy exists over the Christianization of Axum, the appearance of Christian symbols on Axumite coinage in the fourth century seems to confirm conversions of the monarchy during this period. In the sixth century CE, the Roman and Persian Empires were dragged into a dispute between Axum (supported by Rome) and Himyar (supported by Persia), a dispute in which religious differences were cited but for which territorial motivations were clearly in play, given the long-time interest of Ethiopia in Yemen and vice versa. See Procop., *Pers.* 1.20; Munro-Hay, 80-85, 196-209.

[1248] See the following chapter.

Egyptian spells enhanced the exotic nature and therefore the power of the spells.[1249] Jews and Christians boasted that Moses had bested two Egyptian magicians (*Exod.* 7), while the Egyptians boasted about Egyptian heroes who vanquished Nubian magicians. The first century CE demotic tale *Setne II* demonstrates the continuing popularity of duals between Egyptian and Nubian magicians well into the Greco-Roman period.[1250] Nubia's reputation was such that it even contested Egypt's claim as the ultimate source of religion and wisdom. Greco-Romans speculated that Nubia, not Egypt, was the true origin of the gods, mankind, writing, and religion.[1251]

All of this would have made the conversion of Ethiopian Moses to Christianity seem particularly poignant, a fact that does not appear to have been fully appreciated in previous scholarship. The conversion of Moses would have demonstrated Christianity's supremacy over a religion (Ethiopian/Nubian paganism) so powerful that it gave even the Egyptian religion a run for its money.[1252] Scholars have been more inclined to point out the significance of Moses' identification with banditry. The very real danger posed by black-skinned raiders would have made it

---

[1249] Dieleman, *Priests*, 140-43.

[1250] *Setne II* 2/25-7/5. Far from suggesting the usual distaste for magic found in Greco-Roman pagan or Christian texts, a matter discussed in the following chapter, *Setne II* expressed the traditional Egyptian priests' pride with regard to the defense of Egypt's reputation for magic, Egypt's overall cultural superiority, and the strength of its borders against the invasion of interlopers like the Nubians. Dieleman, *Priests*, 234-37.

[1251] Diod. Sic. 3.1-3; Luc., *De astrol*. 3-9; Philostr., *VA* 6.15; Heliod., *Aeth.* 9.8, 9.22. Cf. Philostr., *VA* 6.6; Heliod., *Aeth.* 4.8; Apul., *Met.* 11.5; Strabo 17.1.49. Also see Dieleman, *Priests*, 167-68. Note that the earliest Meroitic script was probably derived from hieroglyphics, not vice versa. It was simplified into an alphabetic script in the second century BCE. Adams, *Nubia*, 297; van der Horst, 62n1. Ge'ez, the language of the Axumite kingdom, had closer ties with South Arabia than Egypt, but the earliest evidence for its use also post-dates the origin of hieroglyphics. Munro-Hay, 244-48. Lest the reader imagine that competitive historiography of this sort is a thing of the past, however, consider the efforts of G. G. M. James and others to establish an African origin for Greco-Roman learning and culture as part of a program to establish the relevance of African contributions to civilization and to counter what is perceived as the ignorance of these contributions as a reflection of modern ethnic prejudice. Moyer, *Limits*, 29. G. G. M. James, *Stolen Legacy* (New York: African Islamic Mission Publications, 1988); Bernal. For a critique of this approach see Mary Lefkowitz, "Some Ancient Advocates of Greek Cultural Dependency," in Coleman, 249-51.

[1252] Note that the sanctity associated with Ethiopia was thought to be reflected in the reported longevity of the Ethiopians (Philostr., *VA* 6.4), an area in which the Christian desert fathers competed as well. *Hist. mon.* 1.17, 2.1, 7.1. On the interest in longevity in Christian and Greco-Roman pagan sources see Frank, 56-57.

seem all the more compelling that Moses had abandoned his life as a bandit to adopt the peaceful life of a monk. The contrast between his career as a bandit and his career as a monk vividly demonstrated the salvific power of Christianity, which could transform the most sinful and violent men into paragons of piety.[1253]

The conversion of Ethiopian Moses appears to have been accepted by his fellow monks with relative ease, reflecting what appears to have been a lack of overt ethnic prejudice in early Christian discourse. This is in keeping with the perception of violence suffered at the hands of flesh-and-blood blacks, Nubians, Ethiopians, and Blemmyes. The hagiographers employed relatively mild language for these accounts, especially in comparison to the graphic rhetoric used in the Church histories to describe the brutality allegedly employed by pagans and heretics against orthodox Christians. Despite a supposed propensity for human sacrifice,[1254] the Blemmyes were not accused of being particularly bloodthirsty or violent, and the hagiographers did not go out of their way to emphasize the suffering of their victims. Moreover, the Blemmyes, Ethiopians, and Nubians were identified chiefly *as* Blemmyes, Ethiopians, and Nubians, not as black or wooly-haired Blemmyes, Ethiopians, and Nubians, the hagiographers' failure to use qualifiers based on physiology suggesting a disinterest in ethnic stereotypes.[1255]

[1253] Sozom., *Hist. eccl.* 6.29; Brakke, *Demons*, 176-77; Wimbush, 87.

[1254] According to Procopius, the Blemmyes worshipped the sun and practiced human sacrifice (Procop., *Pers.* 1.19) but Heliodorus claimed that the Ethiopians disapparoved of both animal and human sacrifice (Heliod., *Aeth.* 10.9). Archaeological evidence suggests that the sacrifice of retainers (in connection to the burial of kings) was revived with the decline of the Meroitic kingdom and continued into the sixth century. See van Dijk, 145-49.

[1255] Note that Thompson argues that the hagiographical references to black skin in the absence of other physiological traits associated with black-skinned individuals suggests that the persons in question were actually Egyptian, portrayed as black merely because they were darker skinned than the Mediterranean somatic norm. Thompson, 113. On ignorance of ethnic difference as a form of prejudice see below.

But this does not mean that the hagiographers were any more interested in "real" blacks than they were in "real" Egyptians. To some extent, blacks and Egyptians were just symbols, representing the extent to which Christians were successful in converting the Other. Insofar as the hagiographers failed to portray blacks and Egyptians as "real" people, this might have reflected a simple problem of communication. The pilgrims often had to employ translators (*Hist. mon.* 8.62; *Vita Antonii* 74). The language barrier would have undermined a visitor's ability to appreciate blacks and Egyptians as real people with whom the visitor might have shared commonalities.

The problem of ignorance was exacerbated with regard to blacks. Originating at or beyond the boundaries of the known world, blacks were inevitably the subject of some mystery.[1256] Pliny the Elder (23-79) told fantastic stories about the people living beyond the borders of Egypt, including whole tribes of people incapable of dreaming, people who eschewed the practice of marriage, or more strangely, people who had feet like thongs and moved like serpents. These stories could be blamed on lack of familiarity. But how do we explain Pliny's claim that the Blemmyes, with whom the Romans certainly had dealings, had no heads at all, their eyes and mouths residing in their chests?[1257] Ignorance was undoubtedly behind the conflation of Libyans, Indians, Ethiopians, Nubians, and black-skinned people in general. While such

[1256] For Strabo, the Ethiopians' occupation of the edges of inhabitable space meant that they lacked many of the basic necessities, and the harsh nature of their existence was behind their adoption of the customs that seemed so strange to outsiders (Strabo, 17.2.1). Cf. Dio Sic 3.34. Settlement at the edges of habitation made the Ethiopians apt comparators for the desert fathers, for whom this settlement pattern was not an accident of birth but a voluntary choice and a sign of sanctity.

[1257] Plin., *HN* 5.8 (46). It has been suggested that this depiction referred to the Blemmyes bowing their heads so as to avoid being struck by horses during combat. See A. Stahl, P. Tourame, "From Teratology to Mythology: Ancient Legends," *Archives de Pediatrie* 17 (2010): 1716-24. On the identification of the traditional Egyptian "enemy" deity, Seth, with a demon that had no head and eyes in its shoulders see Lindsay, *Leisure,* 23-24.

conflation might have been the result of innocent confusion, it would have facilitated efforts to stigmatize the parties in question, just as the conflation of Jews and Egyptians (discussed in the second chapter) and the conflation of pagans and heretics (discussed in the previous chapter) facilitated the erection of boundaries and the generation of hostile discourse encouraging violence.[1258]

While the erasure of pre-Christian monuments created space for the inscription of a Christian identity upon Egyptian soil, ignorance with regard to black-skinned people created space for the inscription of Christian identity upon black flesh. To this end, the hagiographers cast Ethiopians and Nubians, or more simply "blacks," as demons symbolizing sins like lust and pride.[1259] Physiological characteristics might not have been emphasized in treatments of flesh-and-blood black-skinned people, but these characteristics, particularly what was described as a foul smell, did appear in accounts about black demons.[1260] The demon's skin color was consistent with this context, since ghosts (to which demons were assimilated) were sometimes thought to have dark skin.[1261] Consistent or not, the troubling association between black skin and ghost-demons in the minds of Greco-Romans, Egyptians, and early Christians suggests an underlying, rather than overt, ethnic prejudice.

[1258] H. A. Shapiro, suggests that one cannot be considered racist if the Other is but a construct. For instance, Shapiro argues that fifth century BCE Athenian treatment of Persia was not "racist" or "proto-racist" because "the construct called Persians' is in most instances no more 'real' or historical than the Amazons or the Trojans to whom the Persians are most often likened." See H. A. Shapiro, "The Invention of Persia in Classical Athens," in Eliav-Veldon, 57-58. Shapiro's argument flies in the face of most scholarship and public discourse on this subject in the United States of America, which indicates that the Other and race, by definition, are constructed, with these constructions depending, at least partly, on ignorance of Shapiro's so-called "real" and "historical" "Other." For scholarship discussing the social construction of race see, for the references cited above for the subjective definition of race. Also see Shannon Sullivan and Nancy Tuana, eds., *Race and Epistemologies of Ignorance* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2007).

[1259] 5.27 N 173; 14.30 Heracleides 1; 18.26 Paul the Simple 1; Pall., *HL* 23.5; *Hist. mon.* 8.4; Rufinus, *Hist. mon.* 23; *Vita Antonii* 6; *Life of Aaron* 93-94 (40a-b). Cf. 18.3 Arsenius 33; 20.24 N 628. Lucian, too, described the exorcism of a black demon, but did not associate the demon with sin. Luc., *Philops.* 16.

[1260] For instance 5.27 N 173; Pall., *HL* 23.5. But note that foul smells are not reserved solely for demons explicitly associated with black-skinned persons. For instance see *Vita Antonii* 63; 20.23 N 19.

[1261] Suet., *Gaius* 57. Cf. Heliod., *Aeth.* 8.11. David Goldenberg, "Racism, Color Symbolism, and Color Prejudice," in Eliav-Veldon, 93, 100-101. Osiris, god of the traditional Egyptian afterlife, was sometimes referred to as the "Black One." Plut., *De Is. et Os.* 359D-F. Also see Goldenberg, 101.

At first glance, prejudice certainly seems to have been a factor in a particularly strange story about a conversation involving Ethiopian Moses. Presumably trying to compliment Moses for his promotion to cleric, a religious superior commented that Moses appeared to have turned white. Moses replied by wondering if he was also white on the inside.[1262] Assuming that Moses did not suffer from vitiligo or a similar disorder—which is worth considering given the discussion below—this conversation can be interpreted in many ways. Perhaps Moses, pleased over his promotion, was simply beaming with joy. The hagiographers often alluded to the radiant faces of the desert fathers, this terminology referring, apparently, to the desert fathers' presumed sanctity. But the term for "radiant" (*phaidros*)[1263] does not correspond to the term used to describe Moses' transformation (*hololeukos*), which indicated a change in shade, not simply hue.

Traditional Greco-Roman color symbolism associated the color white with piety. Frank Snowden was one of the leading scholars who argued that this symbolism, together with the allegorical methodology for which Alexandria was renowned, were chiefly responsible for the equation of blackness with demons and sin in early Christian discourse. Admittedly the color black carried a negative connotation, but since this was a symbolic association, Snowden argued, the audience would have known that this did not relate to flesh-and-blood people. That is, early

---

[1262] 15.43 Moses 4. On skin color as a reflection of sin and the difficulty of changing one's skin color see *Jer*. 13:23. The image of an Ethiopian being scrubbed white was a common proverb. See for instance Lucian, *Adversus indoctum* 28.

[1263] *Hist. mon.* 8.40. On the many references to the monks with radiant faces (though she does not devote much discussion to "black" or "Egyptian" visages or to whether or not these somantic types could achieve radiance) see Frank, 134-70. The biblical source for this radiance is Moses whose visage appeared to radiate after one of his encounters with God (*Exod*. 34:29-35). On the influence of Babylonian astrology on this text, including a discussion of the interpretation of this radiance as horns, see Seth Sanders, "Old Light on Moses' Shining Face," *Vetus Testamentum* 70 (2002): 400-406. Note that in the *Song of Songs*, the black bride is said to dazzle like the sun (*Song* 6:9).

Christian audiences would have known that blackness in a narrative was merely representative. It did not convey a message regarding the character or the activities of actual black people.[1264] According to this line of thinking, color symbolism drove the exchange between Moses and the superior, and this did not reflect ethnic prejudice.

But why did Moses ask what color he was on the inside? Familiar as we are with the biological factors (internal genetics) of skin-color and the social confusion sometimes sparked by people who seem to straddle ethnic boundaries—like the Ethiopian-Greek from Heliodorus' *Aethiopika* mentioned above[1265]—we may be predisposed towards reading Moses' response as a rejection of the notion that he would be interested in discarding his (biologically-based) blackness and passing as white. Perhaps, in keeping with the tradition of color symbolism, Moses was in fact mocking his superior's assumption that external whiteness (piety) correlated to internal whiteness (piety).[1266] Or perhaps he was lamenting, not mocking, the challenge of reconciling external works with internal faith. More ominously, the story might be taken to mean that blacks were thought to be at an inherent disadvantage when it came to exercising the spiritual prowess required for promotion. Having already proven themselves adept at the willful blindness required to ignore pagan

---

[1264] Frank Snowden, "Attitudes towards Blacks in the Greek and Roman World: Misinterpretations of the Evidence," in Yamauchi, 246-75; Gruen, *Rethinking*, 206; Jean Cortès, ed., "The Theme of 'Ethiopia' and 'Ethiopians' in Patristic Literature," in *The Image of the Black in Western Art*, trans. William Ryan (New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1979), 2:9-34; Thompson, 110-13. For criticism of this argument see for instance Goldenberg, 88-108. For application of Greco-Roman color symbolism specifically to interpretation of Ethiopian Moses' color transformation see Wimbush, 88; Snowden, "Attitudes," 265. Note that traditional Egyptian color symbolism assigned contradictory meanings to the color black: It was positive when used to represent gods and kings but negative when used to represent foreigners. Donald Redford, ed., *The Ancient Gods Speak: A Guide to Egyptian Religion* (NY: Oxford University Press, 2002), 60-61.

[1265] See Judith Perkins, "An Ancient 'Passing' Novel: Heliodorus' *Aithiopika*," *Arethusa* 32 (1999): 197-214.

[1266] Brakke, *Demons*, 179-80. For further discussion on of this interpretation see below.

monuments, perhaps Christians preferred to pretend that Moses was white rather than admit that a black man was capable of achieving spiritual progress.[1267]

An interesting reversal of Moses' case is found in another *Saying*, this one about a woman whose skin turned so dark, presumably thanks to an ascetic regime that kept her out of doors, that her husband no longer recognized her and mistook her for an Ethiopian.[1268] Did this transformation have a symbolic meaning? At first glance, the alteration seems to have been for the worse. In contrast to discourse suggesting that blacks were sexually desirable,[1269] the woman's transformation here was said to detract from her beauty. In ascetic terms, this was a change for the better, demonstrative of the woman's spiritually efficacious disregard for vanity and perhaps facilitating her husband's efforts to maintain abstinence. If this should be taken to mean that Ethiopians were naturally more unattractive, then did this also mean that Ethiopians were naturally closer to achieving spiritual excellence? In advocating the adoption of humility, perhaps this *Saying* employed an Ethiopian comparator simply because it was assumed that an Ethiopian was so inherently inferior to others that anyone who emulated an Ethiopian would be debasing himself. On a more positive note, some audience members, knowing the esteem with which the Ethiopian religion was held in some circles, might have interpreted the *Saying* to mean that a person had to become as pious as an Ethiopian, albeit a Christian Ethiopian, in order to achieve spiritual progress.

[1267] Note a *Saying* in which a female ascetic chastised a male ascetic who turned away from her and some other female ascetics—presumably for fear of being tempted by lust at the sight of a woman—by saying that if he was a good monk he would not have noticed their gender. *AP* N 154.

[1268] *AP* 1596, 10. Cf. Petron., *Sat.* 102. See below for a discussion of the implications of Christianity for self-image.

[1269] See below.

Other stories told of monks who turned black when they sinned, only for the monks to revert to their natural color upon repenting (18.26 Paul the Simple 1; 18.46 N 715). How did this imagery affect perception about blacks? Were black-skinned people thought to be more prone to sin? Were all of these transformations actually challenging the assumption that skin color and ethnicity were fixed? If so, were these stories undermining the stereotypes that fueled ethnic prejudice? If Ethiopians could turn white, and non-Ethiopians could turn black, could Ethiopians turn blacker? Consider, for instance, how Moses once engaged in a piece of self-ridicule, referring to himself as the ash-skinned black one (σποδόδερμε μελανέ) (15.43 Moses 4). The reference to ashes here could be taken as an allusion to mourning practices,[1270] suggesting Moses' grief as he struggled to disregard the feelings of shame that tied him to the world. Alternatively, perhaps it was a self-reminder to Moses that he, as a monk, was supposed to be living as though he was already dead, ashes being evocative of cremation. Or, more radically, perhaps it was evidence that Moses was treating his own blackness as the somatic norm. A coat of gray-white ashes might have been an unwanted deviation, for even if it made him look whiter, it would have dulled the brilliance of his blackness.[1271] If the latter, perhaps Moses *was* offended by the suggestion that he was turning white.

[1270] Hom., *Il.* 18.22-24. Cf. *Esther* 4:1-3; *Isaiah* 58.5; *Jer*. 6:26; *Ezek*. 27:30; *Dan*. 9:3; *Jonah* 3:6. Morris Jastrow, Jr., "Dust, Earth, and Ashes as Symbols of Mourning among the Ancient Hebrews," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 20 (1899): 133-50.

[1271] A biblical precedent exists for equating sin with whiteness of a sort. When Miriam, sister of the Scriptural Moses, protested Moses' marriage to an Ethiopian, she was punished for her impious objection with a condition that turned her skin white (*Num*. 12:9), a phenomenon that has been interpreted to mean that her skin did not so much turn white as it began to flake. For the argument that this condition was not leprosy, as was once thought, see Andrzej Grzybowski, Małgorzata Nita, "Leprosy in the Bible," *Clinics in Dermatology* (2016): 34, 3–7. Note too that Miriam's skin condition suggests an interesting contrast to the radiance of her brother, Moses, mentioned above.

To argue that one and only one of these interpretations is correct seems fundamentally misguided. Snowden implied that mere symbolism would have been too ephemeral to support ethnic prejudice,[1272] but this seems to ignore the extensive historical, sociological, and anthropological evidence for the elaborate underpinnings of ethnic prejudice. Seemingly ephemeral and innocuous details, with no inherent link to ethnicity, can be recruited to construct boundaries and to encourage prejudice.[1273]

Assuming that blackness enjoyed only a symbolic association with sin, how can we be sure that it was always interpreted this way? It would have been relatively easy to communicate the notion that black represented sin—the narratives make this equation clear enough—but it would have required another step to communicate the difference between symbolic and real blackness and to ensure that everyone understood the distinction. Relatively few people would have had access to the sort of allegorical training that problematized the relationship between a signifier and the thing it signified. And the allegorical methodology on which this color symbolism would have depended was actually condemned by some early Christians, like Theophilus and, allegedly, Antony.[1274] Would they have been inclined to interpret skin color in a more literal fashion? Paulinus (c. 354-431), a former governor who eventually became the bishop of Nola in Campania, took the trouble at one point to explain that his equation of blackness with sin was *not* intended as a reference to

---

[1272] Snowden, "Attitudes," 265.

[1273] Andrew Nugent, "Black Demons in the Desert," *American Benedictine Review* 49 (1998): 209-21; Kivisto, 91-123; Marger, 108-11. The argument that the comedic intentions of a text or image defy interpretation as racism or ethnic prejudice (Gruen, *Rethinking*, 211-20) is similarly unconvincing. Versluys, for instance, points out the intersection of imperialism and the rise of comedic portrayals of Egyptian natives (with exaggerated, stereotypical physiological features) in Roman mosaics. Versluys, 441. Cf. Berthelot, 198.

[1274] Which means that either Antony's hagiographer was contradicting Antony's condemnation of allegory (*Vita Antonii* 78) by evoking color symbolism in his description of Antony's encounter with a black demon (*Vita Antonii* 6), or that he was *not* evoking color symbolism and this demon *was* black, as in, this demon represented, not sin symbolized by blackness, but a *black demon*.

actual black-skinned people.[1275] In the absence of clarifications like this, can we be sure that all members of all audiences would have made this connection every time that blackness was equated with sin? If Christians were taught that the skin color of a black demon was just symbolic, and that they were not to apply this symbolism to flesh-and-blood people, then how does one explain the use of color symbolism with regard to Ethiopian Moses? The narrative here is predicated on the application of color symbolism to a flesh-and-blood person. If Moses was entirely a creature of symbol—a mythical beast of hybrid colors—the story would have lost some of its spiritually efficacious power. Moses was compelling to Christians as a model of ascetic virtue only insofar as he was just as human as the audience members who were supposed to be able to imitate his virtue.

Snowden argued that "there is no evidence that Ethiopians of the first centuries after Christ suffered in their day-to-day contacts with whites as a result of metaphorical associations of this (color) symbolism."[1276] There are *Sayings*, however, recounting how Ethiopian Moses was ostracized and verbally attacked by fellow monks who questioned his humanity and drew attention to his ethnicity as if being black or Ethiopian was a bad thing. The hagiographers described these attacks as intentional tests of Moses' virtue, tests designed by the monks to see if Moses could be provoked into shows of hostility. Moses, of course, passed the tests (15.43 Moses 4; 16.9 Moses 3). Therefore, what looks like demonstrations of ethnic prejudice might have actually been spiritual exercises in humility.[1277] As the latter, these stories were comparable to *Sayings* that celebrated demonstrations of humility without reference to ethnic markers (15.44 N 499; 15.26 Isaiah of Scete). Some of these *Sayings* even

[1275] Paulinus of Nola, *Carmen* 28.241; Gay Byron, *Symbolic Blackness and Ethnic Difference in Early Christian Literature* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 75-76. On Paulinus of Nola see Brown, *Cult*, 53-68.

[1276] Snowden, "Attitudes," 265.

[1277] Byron, 116; Wimbush, 81-94.

likened people to animals,[1278] using the comparisons to remind the audience that the endurance of insults was a path to heaven (15.34 John Colobos S1).

But if, as modern scholars argue, ethnicity is but a construct, based on arbitrarily chosen markers with no inherent meaning,[1279] then it is not so much Moses' skin color that matters as the treatment to which he was subjected. In other words, the characteristics used to classify people as members of a group are randomly selected and might not even be recognized by the members of this group as significant or as evidence of a shared identity.[1280] Moses' fellow monks manufactured an ethnicity for him and used this to alienate him from their company. They were guilty of prejudice because they singled Moses out, not because they used his skin color to do so. So a case might be made for prejudice against Moses even if, as Snowden argued, this was not indicative of widespread ethnic prejudice in Greco-Roman society as a whole. If nothing else, this incident demonstrates that the audience had some familiarity with the mechanisms of prejudice, because the hagiographer made no attempt to explain the psychological ramifications of the verbal abuse upon Moses. Apparently the audience was expected to understand why Moses was distressed.[1281]

Conversion to Christianity also had implications for a person's self-image with regard to physical identification with the divine. According to Greco-Roman

---

[1278] 15.46 Nestheros the Coenobite 2; 15.53 Poemen 41; *AP* 15.125; 18.35 N 364. Lloyd Thompson is correct to argue that the assessment of a person as less than human reflects traditional Greco-Roman hierarchical models, but he goes too far in arguing that *as a result* such assessments could not possibly reflect ethnic prejudice. Thompson, 139. As the previous chapter discussed, dehumanization is but a stepping stone in the generation of boundaries and violence.

[1279] See the references listed above.

[1280] For discussion of a classroom experiment meant to demonstrate how innocuous markers can be turned to such deleterious ends see "Classroom Simulations," accessed on 27Jan2015, http://www.tolerance.org/magazine/number-33-spring-2008/feature/classroom-simulations-proceed-caution.

[1281] For the argument that the verbal abuse levied at Moses was indeed comprised of ethnic slurs and intended as such see Robert Hood, *Begrimed and Black: Christian Traditions on Blacks and Blackness* (Minneapolis, Fortress Press, 1994), 88; Mayerson, "Anti-Black Sentiment in the "'Vitae Patrum,'" *The Harvard Theological Review* 71 (1978): 304-307. Documentary papyri contain few references to what looks like ethnic slurs or ethnic prejudice. One of these, *SB XXIV* 16252, dated to 163 CE and found in Karanis, was submitted to the epistrategos as an appeal for help in the wake of violence suffered at the hands of an Egyptian, with the victim suggesting that the ethnicity of him (a Roman) and his assailant (an Egyptian) meant that his case deserved special attention. For an allegation that Egyptians were mistreating a Greek recluse living in the Serapeum near Memphis *because he was a Greek* see Dunand, "Ptolemaic," 308; Tovar, "Linguistic," 23.

theory, people look like their gods. So a Nubian deity, theoretically, would have black skin and other characteristically Nubian physiological features (Clem. Al., *Strom*. 7.4; Theod. Cyr., *Graec.* 3.72-73). In reality, the Nubian penchant for animal-headed deities meant that a Nubian would not have necessarily looked like his gods.[1282] But in the Greco-Roman imagination, he would have done so. Following conversion to Christianity, a Nubian would have resembled his new God only to the extent that anthropomorphic visions of God were considered orthodox and could be reconciled with the obvious variability manifest in the human species.[1283] In one hagiography, Theophilus supposedly mocked the notion that an Ethiopian would look like God, asking if a cripple or a leper shared God's features as well.[1284]

This juxtaposition of the flesh-and-blood Nubian, with his animal-headed deity, alongside the fantasy Nubian of the Greco-Roman imagination, reminds us that blacks were not just empty receptacles devoid of social or historical identities. Indeed, blacks might have been expected to function as receptacles for demons precisely *because* of their resemblance to flesh-and-blood people. The real world military threat posed by the Blemmyes, for instance, and the Blemmyes' alleged propensity for

---

[1282] There were gods with Ethiopian features. Bes, for instance, a popular fertility deity in Greco-Roman Egypt, had Nubian facial features in some depictions and was associated, at least in religious narratives, with Nubia. Granted, Bes was not an entirely realistic rendering of Nubian physiognomy, his exaggerated features probably enhancing his apotropaic function; however, it would be going too far to suggest that he was simply ugly or that he was meant to elicit only disgust rather than amusement. Nor does it seem appropriate to equate the humor which an image of Bes might have evoked with that evoked by the unrealistic portrayals of blacks in Roman mosaics, given that one would approach the former as the image of a protective deity to whom one was appealing for assistance and would approach the latter as a piece of entertainment that was only enjoyable insofar as the viewer felt superior to the subject. For portraits of Bes see Frankfurter, *Religion*, Plates 10-16. On Bes' Nubian connections see Redford, *Speak*, 29; Janice Yellin, "Nubian Religion," in *Ancient Nubia: African Kingdoms on the Nile*, eds. Marjorie Fisher, Peter Lacovara, Salima Ikram, and Sue D'Auria (NY: The American University in Cairo Press, 2012), 130.

[1283] The argument that God bore his features would become problematic, since if God *had* a face then how could God be a universal deity (for how could a single visage incorporate the variability of humanity)? These questions make it tantalizing to wonder if the debate over God's possession of anthropomorphic features was at all influenced by the spread of Christianity to a more diverse population. On Theophilus' dispute with these monks see Socrates, *Hist. eccl.* 6.9-17; Sozom., *Hist. eccl.* 8.13-27; Russell, *Theophilus* 19-27.

[1284] *Life of Apa Aphou*, 10. Also see Brakke, *Demons*, 166.

human sacrifice would have predisposed the audience towards expecting violence at the hands of a demon with black skin. Not for nothing did the *Life of Aaron* claim that the conversion of Philae was triggered by an *argument* between two Nubians. Ethiopian Moses himself supposedly died in a raid upon Scetis, a story that would have made sense insofar as it would have seemed appropriate that a person who, by virtue of his ethnicity, was associated with violence, should meet a violent end.[1285] Since subsistence patterns (which might include raiding) are part of the customs that factor into the ancient concept of ethnicity, one cannot argue that Moses' history as a bandit was necessarily separate from his identity as an Ethiopian, or that hostility against black-skinned persons was only hostility against military foes and had no link to ethnic prejudice.[1286] It was all of a piece.[1287]

This discourse was subject to the push-pull dynamic of imperialistic rhetoric as well. Desire operated alongside fear. As David Brakke points out, stories about sexually seductive black demons reflected a tendency to associate blacks with hypersexuality.[1288] Snowden and others have pointed out that Greco-Roman and early

---

[1285] 18.18 Moses 9-10. Cf. *Matt*. 26:52. On the ethnicity of the raiders, identified as Mazices, see Evelyn-White, 2:151-53. For further discussion of the raids see Evelyn-White, 2:153-67.

[1286] Snowden comes close to arguing the latter position. Snowden, "Ancient," 42. For a discussion of raiding and racism and a list of scholars who discuss the topic see Snowden, "Attitudes," 261. For a modern comparator, consider the issue of racial profiling with regard to the identification of perpetrators of criminal subsistence patterns in the United States of America. See Albert Atkin, *The Philosophy of Race* (Durham: Acumen, 2012), 149-71. For an example of the ways in which modern military concerns may be affecting the recognition of binaries in scholarship, see the discussion of Orientalism and the role of current Middle Eastern military and political issues in Daniel Varisco, *Reading Orientalism: Said and the Unsaid* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2007), 394; Tarak Barkawi and Keith Stanski, eds., *Orientalism and War* (London: Hurst & Company, 2012).

[1287] As representatives of alterity for many members of the audience in real life, the ethnic Other was also uniquely suited for symbolizing religious alterity in the form of heresy and paganism. Melania the Younger (c. 383-439) supposedly dreamt of the devil in the form of a black man who appeared in her dreams in anger over her efforts to discourage the so-called heretical Nestorian faith. *Vita Melaniae Junioris* 54. A martyr by the name of Perpetua (d. 203) supposedly dreamt that her persecutor appeared in the guise of an Egyptian man; they fought one another in armed combat. *Passio Sanctarum Perpetuae et Felicitatis* 10.

[1288] 5.27 N 173; Pall., *HL* 23.5. Cf. 14.30 Heracleides 1; *Vita Antonii* 6; *AP N* 426. Also see Brakke, *Demons*, 165-67. For the attribution of hypersexuality to the Egyptians see chapter two.

Christian discourse often associated blacks with beauty,[1289] but if this beauty was being emphasized only for the purposes of objectification and exploitation, this was hardly a positive message.

Blacks were not just alluring for their physical attractions either. The Blemmyes were raking in profits from trade in exotic animals, ivory, and precious stones, to say nothing of the income generated by raiding and gifts from the Roman Empire. Economically-speaking, the blacks controlled the sort of resources that would have made them quite attractive to anyone inclined towards imperialism.[1290] But for Late Antique Christians, the most valuable resource possessed by the ethnic Other might have been its reservoir of potential converts.

The very real desire for flesh-and-blood black converts[1291] was part and parcel of the push-pull dynamic that made blacks apt representatives of sin. Blacks were desirable *because* they were sinful, that is, not Christian. The use of symbolism to augment the association between blackness and sinfulness made blacks all the more desirable. But the use of all of this symbolism leaves us with a dearth of real black

---

[1289] Snowden, "Attitudes" 264. For early Christian exegesis of the biblical statement that "black is beautiful" (*Song* 1:5-6, 6:9) see, for instance, Cortès, 14-16. One cannot help noting, however, that the celebration of black beauty is not entirely positive if this beauty is being objectified for the purposes of exploitation. On this see below.

[1290] Note that Axum enjoyed a lucrative income from the Red Sea trade. Egypt's value as a source of grain was well-demonstrated by Augustus' decision not to entrust it to senatorial control. One of the charges levied against Athanasius was an attempt to interrupt the shipment of grain (Socrates, *Hist. eccl*. 1.35). The value of papyrus was such that distribution *was* put under senatorial control lest, as Pliny put it, a scarcity of papyri disrupt the customary course of life (Plin., *HN* 13.88-89 [27]). According to Epiphanius, an attempt to seize control over the trade of papyri and niter was one of George the Cappadocian's crimes (Epiph., *Pan.* 76.1.1-8). The wealth of the Blemmyes and the Ethiopians (whatever the latter means) was suggested by the impressive array of gifts with which they presented Emperor Constantine (Euseb., *Vit. Const.* 4.7). On the emerald mines over which the Blemmyes exercised control see Heliod., *Aeth.* 2.32; Olympiodorus fr. 35.2; Djikstra, "Blemmyes," 238-47; Warren Treadgold, "The Diplomatic Career and Historical Work of Olympiodorus of Thebes," *The International History Review* 26 (2004): 719-23. On Axum's participation in international trade see Phillipson, 63-70; Munro-Hay, 166-79. Also see Randi Haaland, "The Meroitic Empire: Trade and Cultural Influences in an Indian Ocean Context," *African Archaeological Review* 31 (2014): 649-73.

[1291] To be sure, hagiographies celebrated the discovery of black-skinned monks in the monastic communities of Egypt as the fulfillment of a biblical prophecy that predicted the conversion of Ethiopia. *Hist. mon.* 8.35. Cf. Ps. 68:31.

actors, complete and whole, in of themselves. Consider a *Saying* in which a black serving woman chastised an ascetic, saying that real monks did not go traipsing about the world. Her words prompted the monk to seek seclusion (15.10 Arsenios 32, 40, 41b). Brakke contends that the alterity associated with real black-skinned people was crucial to the narrative. The serving woman's blackness was evocative of the shock required to drive the monk from the world.[1292]

For the audience, however, I cannot help but feel that this story would have raised some eyebrows, not because the woman was black, but because she was black and *not* a demon. So many of the blacks in these pilgrim accounts turned out to be demons that every time a black person appeared in a narrative, one could hardly be blamed for expecting a revelation that the person was really a demon. Snowden seemed to believe that there was little chance of such an expectation being transferred to the real world, for he suggested that audience members would have understood all of this imagery as symbolism. But consider an incident involving an Ethiopian at Philippi, who was allegedly slaughtered by troops who considered his appearance a bad omen (Plut., *Brut.* 48). Were some of the so-called demons in the hagiographical accounts actually flesh-and-blood people?

Consider, for instance, a foul-smelling black woman once seen in the desert by a monk, who chased her away thinking that she was a demon (5.27 N 173). It seems fair to ask how this monk knew what he was seeing. Her foul-smell and, perhaps, the monk's predisposition to temptation appear to have been the critical factors in diagnosing this woman as a demon. It does not seem far-fetched to suggest

[1292] Brakke, *Demons*, 171.

that unfamiliar, and thus foul, smells and a susceptibility to temptation served a similar function in other cases. The possibility that a Christian might identify a real black person as a demon, at least at first, seems confirmed by the fact that the monks sometimes had to be convinced that the people they happened to come across were flesh-and-blood individuals and not visions (Paphnutius, *Life of Onnophrius* 3). Perhaps the hagiographies contain evidence for low level violence against flesh-and-blood blacks masked as violence against demons, these blacks being chased away on the supposition that they were not human.[1293]

Returning again to the black serving woman, who is so remarkable for *not* being a demon, we have to ask if her encounter with the monk is suggestive of ethnic prejudice. Since seclusion facilitated a monk's pursuit of spiritual excellence, the narrative appears to have been positive towards blacks, suggesting that a profit might be derived from their assistance, however begrudgingly given. Yet this implies that blacks are only useful insofar as they can be exploited. The black woman was only in the story because she served as a trigger for the monk's spiritual growth. She was valuable because she was different, but she did not appear to be consciously embracing a deviant identity. Indeed, her reprimand to the monk seems to have stemmed from her annoyance that he had presumed to criticize her for touching his

[1293] One might counter that, because there is little evidence of anti-black violence, there could not possibly have been very much violence inspired by the identification of blacks with demons. However, the silence of the sources with regard to anti-black violence might be explained by a perhaps well-justified lack of motivation on the part of the victims to lodge complaints that would find their way into the papyrological record, since, if ethnic prejudice was indeed a factor in the administration of justice, low status victims might lack the standing to have any potential complaints addressed. Violence against people who did not consider themselves subjects of the Roman Empire might only find its way into the historical record if it was significant enough to spark military action. While I must admit that I do not know of any cases like this, our sources for this interaction are largely Roman and may suffer from a bias against recording such information. This silence might also reflect a failure to define anti-black violence *as* violence, and as violence worthy of documentation, because the victims were of a low status or because only low level violence was employed. And if, as suggested above, some of the demons in the hagiographical accounts were actually flesh-and-blood blacks, then we do have evidence for at least low-level violence against blacks.

sheepskin, as if there was some sort of barrier between the two of them. Her supposed alterity, spiritually efficacious though it may have been to others, did not function as alterity in her eyes and therefore could not have been spiritually efficacious *as* alterity to her. In her opinion, *she* was the norm. Offended by the monk's effort to separate himself from her, she reminded him that *he* was the one who was supposed to be embracing alterity. What looks like the assumption of normative space on the part of this woman suggests that what we have here is a real person speaking her own mind, but we must remember that, as far as we know, she only existed for the brief moment when she touched a monk's sheepskin and chastised his alleged laxity. Where was she before and after that?

Even assuming that our sources accurately recorded real black voices, scholars debate the degree to which the authenticity of these recordings would have been undermined by the political factors that interfere with language usage in a cross-cultural setting. On the one hand, scholars like Edward Said and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak have argued that members of a subordinate population are so overwhelmed by the discourse of the dominant population that it is next to impossible to recover this subordinate population's voice, which is to say, a voice not influenced in some way by the dominant population.[1294] This loss of voice could be observed in Roman Egypt

[1294] Edward Said, "Shattered Myths," in *Orientalism: A Reader*, edited by A. L. Macfie (New York: New York University Press, 2000), 95; Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" in *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, eds. Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988), 271-313. For a possible example of a so-called subaltern being silenced, consider Moses' refusal to respond to abuse (16.9 Moses 3). Treatise XVI of the *Corpus Hermeticum* represents a fascinating problem for subaltern theory. It is written in Greek but the narrator expresses abhorrence at the idea of translation into that language, implying that it was originally written in Egyptian (*Corpus Hermeticum Treatise* XVI, 1-2). For discussion see Fowden, *Hermes*, 30, 37, 43; Dieleman, *Priests*, 2-4. The previous chapter referred to scholarship that treats the Greco-Roman pagan idiom as a "secular" "middle-ground." An Egyptian Christian who employed Greco-Roman pagan idioms may not have been guilty of harboring latent pagan sentiments, but (from the perspective of a postcolonial theorist) his use of these idioms did not constitute participation in a "middle ground" so much as indulgence in the traditional discourse of those in power. To assume that this had no political implications is a

in phenomena as basic as an Egyptian writing his own language in an alphabet comprised largely of Greek letters and filled with Greek loan words because his own script had fallen into decline. To make matters worse, the translation from hieroglyphs, with pictorial representations enhancing phonetic representations, to an alphabet-based script would have drained the language of at least part of its meaning. The Said-Spivak school of thought implies that researchers can do little more than record these distortions as manifestations of subordination. On the other hand, scholars like Daniel Varisco point out that influence between subordinate and dominant populations goes both ways, and that it is incumbent upon a scholar to see what a subordinate population does have to say for itself, with researchers focusing on points of interaction between parties.[1295] Hence, we might consider the growth of Coptic as a demonstration of agency on the part of the Egyptians, a corollary to the activity of temple priests in the composition of demotic-Greek spells for a paying clientele.[1296]

Does comparable evidence—manifestations of agency and collaboration—exist for blacks? Perhaps. Brakke believes that Ethiopian Moses was in fact mocking his superior when he asked if the transformation to a white man affected his interior make-up as well. The superior certainly appears to have been suspicious of Moses'

---

clear rejection of (or at least a challenge to) the position held by Spivak. On the advantages enjoyed by a person of Greco-Roman descent in the absorption and use of this discourse see Carr, 189.

[1295] Varisco, 99. Indeed, Orientalist and subaltern studies are in danger of re-inscribing the subjects of this racism with the stereotypes by which the subjects were relegated to a subordinate position. Scholarship that settles for a list of all of the ways in which the Greco-Romans subjugated the Other and ignores or dismisses the subjugated party's activity would simply re-subjugate the latter.

[1296] Frankfurter, *Roman Egypt*, 225, 250-51. For a potential comparator, consider Gallic elites who adopted Roman manners and engaged in Roman forms of discourse, not, Greg Woolf argues, because they had betrayed their Gallic heritage, but because Romanization offered them a new avenue for competition within Gallic society. See Greg Woolf, *Becoming Roman: The Origins of Provincial Civilization in Gaul* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

response, going on the offensive, encouraging the monks to test Moses' virtue with verbal attacks involving ethnic slurs. By refusing to be provoked, Moses assumed a deferential manner that, contradictorily, was a form of resistance. It constituted an assertion of spiritual dominance.[1297]

If Brakke is correct, this contest would have been in keeping with the larger competition for authority within monastic circles, discussed above.[1298] It would be nonsensical to claim that ethnicity had no role in this contest, for Moses demonstrated his spiritual *excellence* through his endurance of *ethnic* slurs. To this end, he was performing his blackness,[1299] proactively embracing the subjugation desired of a threatening black *and* of a paragon of piety, turning the stereotype to his own advantage. Did some Egyptian monks perform their Egyptian-ness in a similar fashion, emphasizing a presumed lack of education and exploiting Greco-Roman stereotypes about traditional Egyptian spiritual excellence? If so, this does not mean that they were guilty of conscious deception or that the depiction of the unlearned Egyptian did not involve ethnic prejudice. The degree to which a subordinate population manages to turn some aspects of their subjugation to their advantage does not undermine the fact they are subjugated.

[1297] 15.43 Moses 4; Brakke, *Demons*, 179-80. Compare to the interpretation of Mayerson and Hood, who take the attacks upon Moses not as ascetic tests but rather as a deliberate effort to drive Moses from his monastic community, with Moses descending into a spiral of self-doubt, so that ethnically-based shame, not spiritually inspired humility, is the true source of Moses' self-recriminations before the high status visitor. Hood, 88; Mayerson, 304-307.

[1298] Ethiopian Moses posed a challenge not only because of his spiritual prowess, but because he attracted the interest of high status visitors. When one of these visitors came looking for Moses, the monk supposedly tried to put the fellow off by criticizing himself, asking how such a disreputable monk could possibly attract anyone's interest (8.13 Moses 8). This story could be taken as an expression of the humility that a desert father ought to espouse, but it also advocated the disinclination for patronage that, as discussed above, functioned to discourage behavior that would have enhanced the desert fathers' access to clients and thus their potential power.

[1299] On minority populations simply embracing the identities imposed upon them by dominant populations as a function of their subjugation (an Egyptian over-emphasizing traits attributed to Egyptians by Greco-Romans, for instance) see Albert Atkin, *The Philosophy of Race* (Durham: Acumen, 2012), 149-71.

Even leaving aside references to Egyptians and blacks, it seems counter-intuitive to deny the significance of ethnicity in early Christian discourse, given the lengths to which Christian apologists went in order to define Christianity as a valid ethnicity.[1300] Christian apologists might have been challenging the traditional categories—the need to maintain the ethnicity into which a person was born, for instance—but this was only to encourage conversion to Christianity, not because they rejected ethnic boundaries *per se*.[1301] Likewise, pagan discourse sometimes posed a pseudo-challenge to the stability of ethnic identifiers. Consider Philostratus' Greek-speaking and Greco-Roman philosophy-spouting black-skinned Indians[1302] and Heliodorus' Greek-looking and speaking Ethiopians. Both portraits advocated the adoption of a Greco-Roman pagan identity.[1303] The apologists who claimed that Christianity was a *universal* ethnicity were driven by the same impulse that motivated Decius and Diocletian's call for universal sacrifice: the desire to assimilate and thereby institute uniformity.[1304]

[1300] Johnson, *Ethnicity*, 5-6. These apologists employed ethnic paradigms for internal purposes as well, defining orthodoxy through teacher-student descent models that imitated kinship networks. Buell, *Making*, 5-9, 97-98.

[1301] Tatian, for instance, pointed out that the mixed nature of Greek wisdom and language—relying as it did on the influence of ideas of Egyptian origin and foreign loan-words—was a flaw that in and of itself encouraged conversion to Christianity (Tatian, *Orat.* 1).

[1302] Philstr., *VA* 3.12. On Philostratus' use of the ethnic Other to promote Hellenism as a universal ideal see Simon Swain, "Defending Hellenism: Philostratus, *In Honour of Apollonius*," in Edwards, 185. While at first glance, these depictions appear to undermine notions regarding hierarchies based on physiological types, it could be argued that they ultimately perpetuate hierarchies based on the cultural, linguistic, and educational aspects that are included under ethnicity. Philostratus used black Greeks explicitly to criticize pagan Egyptians (Philostr., *VA* 6.6), and the Christians used black Christians implicitly to criticize pagan Egyptians.

[1303] Heliod., *Aeth*. 4.8, 10.4. Admittedly here the motivation probably had less to do with proselytization (a motivation that could be suggested for Philostratus' *Life of Apollonius of Tyana*) and more to do with entertainment.

[1304] Universalizing tendencies are inherently imperialistic to the extent that they seek to impose standards that facilitate imperial (Church) bureaucracy and assimilation. Townsend, 217. See the final chapter for a discussion of the appeal of universal salvation. On the potential for both racist and anti-racist sentiment in the construction of a universal ethnicity see Buell "Universalism," 109-32.

The syncretism indicative of various pagan circles—like Damascius' late fifth century clique—reflected an appreciation for ethnic difference[1305] that was absent from early Christianity, insofar as the latter was intolerant of the religious differences that had hitherto been defined and justified as a matter of ethnic differentiation.[1306] With Christian apologists arguing that so many of the identifiers associated with ethnicity—language, customs, and religion—differed because the ancestors of the ethnicities in question had deviated from God's plan,[1307] the preservation of ethnic

[1305] Bowersock, *Hellenism*, 1-82. Kee makes the interesting suggestion that contact with and disruption of indigenous populations under Roman rule facilitated the formation of new religious identities by undermining existing ties. Howard Kee, *Miracle in the Early Christian World: A Study in the Sociohistorical Method* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), 61. Admittedly, one might argue that Hellenism was still exploitative and reflected Greco-Roman dominance. Scholars who speak in glowing terms of either the Greco-Roman "appropriation" of non-Greco-Roman ancestors and religious customs or the non-Greco-Roman "appropriation" of Greco-Roman ancestors and religious customs (Gruen, *Rethinking*, 4) risk betraying a lack of sensitivity to the political implications of such behavior and the resentment appropriation might inspire among the source population, especially if the appropriated material is maintained as a secret by the source population or is so distorted as to result in misrepresentation and yet another means by which the subaltern is denied a voice. Moyer, *Limits*, 34, 268-69. There are also methodological issues with Gruen's claims. Gruen argues that Egyptians (by which he must mean *Egyptian* Egyptians, as opposed to *Greek* Egyptians, seeing as the thrust of his argument depends on the "ethnicity" of the claimants) were the source of claims that Osiris founded Macedonia, claims that seem to have appeared during Ptolemaic rule. Gruen fosters this as evidence that the Greek/Macedonian appropriation of an Egyptian heritage was not a Greek-centric practice meant to enhance the reputation of Greeks at the expense of dispossessed Egyptians. Gruen, *Rethinking*, 225, 266. Given the Ptolemies' efforts to appeal to Hellenized Egyptian interests with, for instance, the cult of Serapis, one wonders if the Ptolemies and Hellenized Egyptian supporters, rather than un-Hellenized Egyptians, may have had something to do with this and whether that undermines Gruen's argument. Indeed, the Ptolemies may have had a vested interest in encouraging the Egyptian origin for other regions of the world as part of its own imperialistic agenda. See Mendels, "Manetho," 101-102, on Manetho's efforts along these lines. This issue is further complicated insofar as a tale about the Egyptian lineage of Danaus—a tale for which Gruen emphasizes the Ptolemaic (by which, again, he seems to mean an *Egyptian* Egyptian) origin (see Gruen, *Rethinking*, 226)—is first recorded in a Greek context in which Danaus was said to be of Greek descent, his Greek ancestors having fled to Egypt. Gruen, *Rethinking*, 231. The Egyptian origin of Cadmus (whose ancestors, again, were Greek emigres to Egypt) was likewise recorded among the Greeks before it was recorded in Ptolemaic Egypt. Gruen, *Rethinking*, 235. In order to establish an Egyptian source for some of these claims, Gruen treats Hecataeus of Abdera (who Diodorus Siculus cited on the Egyptian origin of Cadmus and the Athenians) as if he was simply an Egyptian (see Gruen, *Rethinking*, 235, 265), a status which is complicated by Hecataeus' identity as a *Hellenized* Egyptian writing *within* the context of the Ptolemaic court to integrate Ptolemaic and Egyptian identity/history. See Doron Mendels, *Memory in Jewish, Pagan and Christian Societies of the Graeco-Roman World* (New York: T & T Clark, 2004), 75. Furthermore, Gmirkin argues that un-Hellenized Egyptians were not attracted to the notion of Egyptians venturing outside of Egypt. See Gmirkin, 186. All of this undermines Gruen's argument that an apparent lack of prejudice against Danaus' line represented lack of prejudice against Egyptians on the part of the Greeks and his argument that it was the Egyptians asserting their influence over the Greeks rather than the Greeks appropriating Egyptian identity.

[1306] As one of the consequences of this, as discussed in the previous chapters, efforts were made to remove religion from the umbrella of ethnicity and redefine certain modes of traditional expression as solely cultural (a matter of aesthetic tastes) and therefore non-religious (incongruously labelled "secular" but more aptly called "antiquarian").

[1307] See the second chapter and Malley, 316-17.

heritage could theoretically be perceived as a sin. Even if this was not stated in so many words, the resulting paradigm was fundamentally at odds with the multicultural ideals promoted today, which are ostensibly predicated on the Other *not* being required to assimilate, or to convert to the religion of the dominant party.[1308] Anachronistic though such a stipulation might at first appear in the current context, it is necessitated by, as noted in the previous chapter, exaggerations regarding tolerance in early Christianity. Scholars who accept early Christian claims of tolerance at face-value set a dangerous precedent for standards of tolerance today.

So while the career of Ethiopian Moses might be interpreted as proof that Christianity was open to everyone,[1309] it might also be interpreted as a less laudatory attempt to domesticate the pagan Other via assimilation. Acknowledging again how inappropriate it is to equate Roman imperialism with early modern colonialism, we can still appreciate how some of the paradigms of conquest associated with the latter might have operated in antiquity. Brakke calls upon postcolonial theories, for instance, to demonstrate how Ethiopian Moses would have functioned as propaganda for the Christianization project, Moses being an example of the reformed, Christianized (civilized) foreigner, proof as to the efficacy of imperialistic conversion practices and yet, significantly, still different enough to justify a continuation of the

---

[1308] This is true even if partial assimilation, in both directions, is inevitable. If multicultural policies reinscribe a paradigm of ethnic prejudice insofar as it encourages the experience of delight in the exotic nature of the Other (in the form of cultural festivals, for instance), it nevertheless diverges from the more negative incarnations of that paradigm by defining difference as good.

[1309] Snowden, "Attitudes," 264. Cf. Swain, 173; Stark, 213. Michael Simmons expresses a similar sentiment in the context of Christianity as a universal religion. See Simmons, *Universal*, 198. Insisting that Christianity's role as a universal religion was fundamental to its success, Simmons is forced to explain why the extremely popular Isis cult failed to do the same and makes the oddly contradictory claim that Isis was too universal to become a universal deity: "the greatest weakness of her cult was her identity as the goddess of *many names*...becoming all things to all people…Isis lost her unique identity as the result of being hyper-syncretized, and thus never became a truly universal saving deity." Simmons, *Universal*, 202. For further discussion of Simmons' theory see the final chapter.

religious, military, and economic practices by which pacifying (Romanizing or Christianizing) life was brought to the ethnic Other. If the Roman emperors were stymied in their dreams of conquest, the existence of said dreams being subject to debate,[1310] the Christians were far more successful.[1311]

This is not to say that stories about Ethiopian Moses—as propaganda—led to the full range of activities associated with missionary projects carried out during the early modern period of colonialism, which would have included the donation of funds or the recruitment of missionaries.[1312] But assuming that hagiographical narratives could have reached pagan black-skinned audiences, they would have served as advertisements for the beneficence of Christianity and Roman rule. Ethiopians could, like Moses, convert to Christianity, and they would they would have been embraced, or so the propaganda claimed (Pall., *HL* 19.3-4; Sozom., *Hist. eccl.* 6.29). A message like this was certainly disseminated to Egyptians: convert, and be like Antony, the greatest monk of all. These narratives would have satisfied the same desire for vicarious power as expressed in stories claiming that Alexander the Great was

---

[1310] For discussion of the Roman Empire's interest in southern Egypt and northern Nubia—as a defensive (against invaders versus internal rebellions) versus offensive effort—see for instance Jackson, 111-57.

[1311] If, by success, we mean Christianization in and of itself and not conversion to a particular sect. On Christianization as imperialism see Brakke, *Demons*, 177. With regard to the imperialistic implications of early Christian discourse versus pagan discourse, note Miller's contention that the *Historia monachorum* was actually more aggressive than Eunapius' *Vitae sophistarum*, for while both texts described confrontations with religious opponents, the former was far more devoted to depictions of the conversion (assimilation) of the Other into itself. Miller, "Strategies," 227.

[1312] In the Christianization efforts discussed here, Justinian and Theodora's mission to the Nubians came the closest to a missionizing project (John of Ephesus, *Hist. eccl.* 4.6). There were already Christians in Philae when Macedonius arrived (*Life of Aaron* 29 [12a]), and the Frumentius responsible for Christianizing Axum did not travel there for the purposes of spreading Christianity, going instead as a captive (Sozom., *Hist. eccl.* 2.24). As narratives of conquest, however, stories about Ethiopian Moses also served an internal function, reminding the Christian how the battle against sin was never entirely won, just as Moses was never entirely white. See Brakke, *Demons*, 181. Consider the function of black demons as representatives of a non-black monk's sins (see Brakke, *Demons*, 171-72) in light of Stallybrass' argument regarding the push-pull dynamic of deviance: The Other serves to remind members of society that they are always in danger of transgressing social norms, of becoming the Other (Stallybrass, 4-5, 20, 178). The Christianization missionizing project was as much an effort to turn blacks into whites as it was to keep whites from turning black.

actually the son of Egypt's last pharaoh[1313] or was descended from an Ethiopian king.[1314] This paradigm domesticated foreign rulers for potential or existing subjects who, thanks to these stories, could continue to take pride in their ethnicity without taking a stand against the new administration. If celebration of Ethiopian Moses was meant merely to facilitate the religious conquest of blacks, it was not really the product of pro-black sentiment.

So were early Christians and/or residents of the Roman Empire racist?[1315] To some extent, the answer depends on the definition of "racism" that is employed. The terms "race" and "racism" are of recent origin, but some ancient scholars defend the effort to seek evidence for "abstract thought" in antiquity that would have supported the sort of ideology that would be recognized as racist today.[1316] The consensus among historians, sociologists, and anthropologists is that racism is fluid in its operation, so-called racists are not necessarily static or unified in the maintenance of their views, and the perceptions of race held by so-called racists shift between fixed and more malleable categories.[1317] However, scholars of antiquity often distinguish

---

[1313] Pseudo-Callisthenes, *Life of Alexander* 3.18-23. On the appeal of such a story to high status Egyptians see Braun, 23-41.

[1314] Pseudo-Methodius, *Apocalypse* 8. The latter also claims that Romulus, founder of Rome, was half-Ethiopian and Alexander's brother (Pseudo-Methodius, *Apocalypse* 9). This text, the date of which is hotly contested (with possibilities ranging between the fourth and ninth centuries) can be found in Syriac and English in Francisco Javier Martinez, *Eastern Christian Apocalyptic in the Early Muslim Period: Pseudo-Methodius and Pseudo Athanasius* (Ph.D. diss., The Catholic University of America, 1985), 2-205. The significance of this competitive historiography in establishing cultural superiority will be appreciated by the reader who recalls the discussion in chapter two, where it was suggested that the attribution of pagan achievements to Moses might have encouraged conversion to Christianity. Hence it is hardly insignificant that the foundation of Meroe was also attributed to Moses, who allegedly fought the Ethiopians when they invaded Egypt, married an Ethiopian woman, and taught the Ethiopians the religious practice of circumcision. *Num.*12:1; Euseb., *Prep. ev.* 9.27 432a-433d. The foundation of Meroe was attributed to the Persian king Cambyses as well (Diod. Sic. 1.33.1).

[1315] For the controversy over whether this is even an appropriate field of study see Laura Purdy, "What We Shouldn't Be Learning from the Greeks," in Coleman, 291-310.

[1316] Benjamin Isaac, Joseph Ziegler, and Miriam Eliav-Feldon, "Introduction," in Eliav-Veldon, 1-31.

[1317] Kivisto, 30-36; Marger, 89-106; Buell, "Universalism," 114-15; Buell, *Race*, 5-13. Note that my treatment of the issue eschews reference to the hereditary traits and environmental factors that, according to

between racism and ethnic prejudice. They define the former as a monolithic show of hostility towards a group identified by physiological traits that were thought to have a stable relationship with a person's character. They define the latter as a milder, more fluid form of racism.[1318] These scholars argue that the ancient world might have been guilty of ethnic prejudice, but not racism.[1319]

Scholars such as Erich Gruen and Frank Snowden go even further, to argue that, as a rule, the ancient world did not practice ethnic prejudice. They provide a wealth of evidence in support of their claim, and they certainly seem to be correct, even if, as suggested above, one can find fault with a few of their arguments.[1320] It might be argued that the evidence I have marshalled is too slight to sustain a charge of racism against the early Christians.[1321] Had I included references to blacks in other forms of early Christian discourse—sermons, for instance—the picture might look

---

Snowden and Isaac, are so integral to the operation of racism. Snowden, "Attitudes," 246-75; Isaac, *Invention*, 23. The fluid nature of racism suggests that it need not be justified by elaborate underpinnings linking character to heredity or environment. Thus, the failure to discover the operation of these theories is not proof against the operation of racism, as Snowden claims. Snowden, "Attitudes," 246-75.

[1318] Isaac, "Introduction," 10-11. The distinction between race and ethnicity in the Introduction of *The Origins of Racism in the West* (Isaac, "Introduction," 5) is problematic—finding support in but a minority of the intellectual community which tends to treat race as a subset of ethnicity (Kivisto, 1-25; Marger, 9-18)—and may also be anachronistic, since ancient sources employ terms such as *ethnos, laos,* and *genos* to distinguish people based on factors that are included under the modern definition of ethnicity. Buell's contribution to the volume rejects the approach espoused in the "Introduction" and adheres more closely to both ancient and modern conceptions of ethnicity as the primary area around which distinctions were drawn (Buell, "Universalism," 113). The approach espoused in the "Introduction" is also surprising given that it is impossible to know what factors went into every instance of a source's assessment of ethnicity. For instance, when *The Life of Aaron* identified various characters as Nubian with no details as to skin color, dress, language *et cetera* (see for instance *Life of Aaron,* 44 [18a]), how are we to know how the identification was made?

[1319] Vandorpe, 261. Note that my discussion intentionally leaves out the question of proto-ethnic prejudice for the sake of simplicity. On proto-ethnic prejudice see Isaac, *Invention*.

[1320] In addition to the issues discussed above, note one more potential methodological issue: As Erich Gruen points out, the Greco-Roman somatic norm was a Mediterranean middle-ground between the paler-skinned northerners and darker-skinned southerners. But the implication that prejudice against blacks is cancelled out by prejudice against non-blacks (Gruen, *Rethinking,* 205) does not hold. Rather than proving the non-existence of negative associations for ethnic markers, these examples merely show that these associations were multidirectional.

[1321] Wimbush, 83.

like less dismal.[1322] But I do think it is worthwhile to examine a very narrow field of evidence—the pilgrim accounts and related hagiographical material—for evidence of ethnic prejudice, and to question the definition of ethnicity in the work of early Christian apologists. The results cannot be used to sustain a generalized portrait of the ancient world, which, like the modern United States of America, might have been subject to occasional flares of what appears to have been ethnic prejudice but, as a rule, was probably not prejudiced. Nevertheless, the results do seem to show one important way in which identity and perceptions of reality were manipulated. It would be nonsensical to ignore this inconsistency.

Unfortunately, scholarly debate has stalemated in a dispute between, on the one hand, scholars who perhaps go too far in rejecting the significance of evidence for ethnic prejudice, like Gruen and Snowden, and, on the other hand, scholars who perhaps exaggerate that evidence, like Robert Hood and Philip Mayerson. As a result, we lose sight of the true complexity of the situation. For the sake of argument, let us assume for the moment that we deem the ancient world free of the taint of any kind of racism or ethnic prejudice. Theoretically, then, we should be able to dispense with the category of ethnicity altogether. Would we lose anything? We might, I suppose, continue to perceive the degree to which language, religion, custom, subsistence patterns, and the other features which are all tangled up with ethnicity contributed to cooperation and competition between different groups. But how would we define these groups? Our labels would still be evocative of ethnicity. The points of friction

[1322] For instance, scholars have argued that the treatment of the *Song of Songs* in sermons and commentaries suggests a lack of ethnic prejudice. Byron, 72-75; Cortès, 9-34. I am not aware of scholarship looking into this issue in connection with texts composed in Egypt but, unfortunately, this sort of investigation is outside the scope of the current project.

and collaboration would still hinge upon ethnic identifiers, such as the pursuit of subsistence patterns that made the Nobadae attractive to the Romans as a buffer against the Blemmyes.

Recognition of ethnicity as a point of cooperation and friction allows one to consider the ways in which actors on all sides manipulated their own identities and those of others, constructing categories, defining boundaries, and resisting the imposition of the same. By examining the multifunctional and multidirectional nature of identity[1323]—defined previously by comparison to a deck of cards, with various ethnic factors being different cards that one might play—helps to dismantle the binary of "us" versus "them." This in turn facilitates discoveries as to the multiple, conflicting ways in which a given text might be read, multiplicity emerging as an end in of itself. Ignoring evidence for ethnic prejudice would cost us at least half of the story.

Indeed, though the discussion above should make it clear that I sympathize with the argument for recognizing ethnic prejudice in early Christian discourse, the multiple possible readings provided for each scenario should also make it clear that the polyphonic nature of this discourse is, in my opinion, one of its critical features. The hagiographers and their informants might not have intended for this discourse to function in a polyphonic fashion, and disagreement over interpretation might have given rise to dissent, but it might have also fostered inclusion, as each audience member took away the meaning that resonated the most for him. I cannot prove that a

[1323] The "Introduction" to *The Origins of Racism in the West* makes the somewhat shocking claim that it is not interested in identity (Isaac, "Introduction" 6). The mutability of identity (see below) explains perhaps why the editors of this volume, who want to define race and racism as monolithic, static entities (see above) want to ignore identity.

particular narrative generated competing interpretations. But the basic paradigm of black conversion did inspire competing treatments, being cast alternatively as a conquest of personal sins (18.26 Paul the Simple 1; 18.46 N 715), as proof of the civilizing power of Christianity (Sozom., *Hist. eccl.* 6.29), as confirmation of Roman control over southern Egypt and the religious supremacy of Roman Egypt (via its patriarch) over Nubia (*Life of Aaron*), as evidence of the superiority of the anti-Chalcedonian cause (John of Ephesus' *Church History*), and as an archetype for the self-effacing, and yet so self-aggrandizing, competitions for power in the increasingly vicious elaboration of inner-church rivalries (15.43 Moses 4). Intentional obscurity is certainly suggested by the counter-intuitive motifs running throughout this discourse: Antony, for instance, was both unlearned and the most learned of men. Such a contradiction defies simplistic analysis. And the spectacle of a black man appearing white in the purity of his faith would have evoked frisson whether or not ethnic prejudice was involved. By appreciating the polyphonic aspects of this discourse, scholarship can move past the deadlock over whether or not ethnic prejudice operated in antiquity, and come closer to grasping the true complexity of the challenges posed by life in a multicultural environment.

Conclusion

Could the polyphonic nature of this discourse, playing upon assumptions regarding ethnicity, have had any effect on conversion? Not if we accept the scholarly estimates which suggest that the majority of Egypt was Christian in the mid-fourth century,[1324] since this would put the hagiographical evidence too late for it to have

[1324] Depauw, 407-35; Bagnall, "Onomastic," 105-24; Stark, 3-27.

had much of an effect, at least in Egypt. Widespread conversion would have been well under way by the time that monasticism was becoming popular.

But assuming that hagiographical accounts were directed at least in part at potential converts, who would have been drawn to these tales? Pagan testimonials as to the efficacy of Christianity in avoiding postmortem suffering might have appealed to a diverse audience. The unlearned desert father defeating a learned pagan philosopher in a battle of wits might have had a more limited appeal. In pagan tales, like *Setne II* and Philostratus' *Life of Apollonius of Tyana*, the learned pagans were outsmarted by *more* learned pagans, not simpletons. Elite Greco-Roman pagans were probably less impressed by the unlearned Christian monks besting learned pagans[1325] and more impressed by the monks besting their fellow Christians—including emperors—thereby showing how a person could circumvent a traditional power structure that was becoming increasingly competitive.[1326]

As for non-elites, Christian monasticism might have provided an attractive narrative insofar as it appeared to invert the status quo. It is easy to see how impoverished or otherwise subordinate populations might have been drawn to stories that seemed to give a religious valence to the endurance of social and political subordination.[1327] To some extent, Christianity would have subverted the Roman

[1325] For an example of an unlearned Greco-Roman pagan wise man, see Eunap., *VS* 504. Notably, it is unclear whether or not the unlearned youth in question had no education at all prior to his death at the mere age of twenty.

[1326] On the influence that monks were exercising over emperors and the competitive nature of the power structure see the following chapter.

[1327] Note that Fowden argues that the elite nature of the pagan holy man's holiness—founded as it was on elite education—forced the marginalization of paganism, whereas Christian holy men, being less elitist, were less marginal. Fowden, "Holy Man," 33-59.

subjugation of Egyptians.[1328] Roman law insisted that Egyptian pagan priests disengage themselves from the economic and political hierarchy. The Christian holy man *was* separate from society and *because* the holy man was separate from society, he had power in society, with even the emperors begging his attention. Elite Egyptians would have been well aware of the debate in Greco-Roman circles regarding the place of traditional Egyptian learning in the hierarchy of knowledge. The notion of a supposedly unlearned Egyptian besting an allegedly learned Greco-Roman pagan could have been simultaneously frustrating—because it was limited to Christians—and satisfying.[1329]

Meanwhile, these debates over Christian-pagan learning clearly reflected, at least in part, an internal Christian contest for power, involving, among other things, disputes over the value of book-based learning, the nature of divine learning, and monastic authority with regard to the dissemination of teachings. This does not necessarily mean that paganism had ceased to constitute a danger in its own right. The dearth of references to paganism in pilgrim accounts might not be evidence for

---

[1328] Especially if this was achieved by appropriating Greco-Roman ideals of moderation, or *sophrosyne*, a concept to which elite Egyptians would have been exposed. On the Greco-Roman ideal of *sophrosyne* as a partial source for Christian asceticism see for instance Kathleen O'Brien Wicker, "'The Politics of Paradise' Reconsidered: Chrysostom and Porphyry," in Goehring, 116-33. As she argues, ascetic ideals in early Christianity had a precursor in Greco-Roman paganism. But if it is true that the asceticism of the Egyptian pagan priest described in Greco-Roman discourse was a distortion of reality, as suggested in the fourth chapter, then asceticism *was* new to Egyptian pagans, at least insofar as the lengths to which this asceticism was carried, as an ideal in and of itself, for Egyptian pagans certainly avoided certain foods and adhered to other ascetic-like practices as part of their religious routines. However, the favorable attitude of traditional Egyptians towards the world seems to preclude the possibility, mentioned in the second chapter, that Gnosticism, at least in the ascetic variants that appear to have renounced the world, reflected traditional Egyptian pagan thought.

[1329] An earlier chapter explored the degree to which Christianity might have appealed to potential converts as an outlet for deviant sentiments suggestive of dissatisfaction with this world. But an attraction towards deviance should not be taken to mean that pursuit of Christianity necessarily reflected a rejection of an interest in *this* world. Indeed, to accept that Christian asceticism was a complete renunciation of the world is to fall, on the one hand, for hagiographical polemic, which sought to separate the ascetic from the rest of society so as to augment his sanctity, and on the other hand, for the polemic of church leaders, who, as Peter Brown has demonstrated, used an alleged disinterest in worldly power as a strategy to claim just that. Brown has done much to elucidate the intersection of decreasing political opportunities in the Roman world, the resulting intensification of competition, and the rise of the Christian holy man who side-stepped the traditional route to political power. Brown, *Cult*; Brown, *Poverty*; Brown, *Power*; Brown, *Eye*.

the death of paganism itself, because a refusal to see pagan monuments served to foster a Christian polemic that, like the stories about interaction with the pagan dead, suggested that paganism was dead. That is, of course, except on the outskirts of the known world, where it continued to linger among the oh so foreign Ethiopians and Nubians. By pushing paganism to the edges of normative society, hagiographers implied that pagans were alien and deviant. A potential for ethnic prejudice runs throughout early Christian discourse, though the mutability of ethnic signs would have undermined efforts to generate boundaries. This ambiguity was of a piece with the general mystique that surrounded the desert fathers. The resulting discourse seems to defy clear-cut interpretation, demonstrating a malleability that might have been one of the reasons for the popularity of these narratives, suitable as they were for so many different uses and thus appealing to a diverse audience.

Chapter 6: Hagiographies Again: Proof of Wonders

The current chapter seeks to examine the role of miracles as an argument for or against conversion as a function of Christian-pagan identity construction. At first, this might strike some readers as a bit odd. Miracles were indeed credited with inspiring conversions,[1330] but scholars have been plagued with uncertainty, even some embarrassment, as to how to handle this.[1331] To an outsider, a miracle is just an illusion. To an insider, it is evidence of divine will. How are we, ostensibly outsiders, supposed to conquer this barrier? We might, like MacMullen, dismiss miracles as mere superstition,[1332] but this approach does not help us to account for how a person was supposed to have chosen between rival Christian and pagan displays of wonder. What, from a modern Western scientific perspective, might look like a demonstration of credulity bordering on stupidity on the part of believers[1333] in fact called for an exercise of reflection as potential believers sifted through the explanations for the evidence, which would have included not only efficacy as we would measure it today, with studies of pharmacodynamics and the collection of adverse events, but also socio-economic dependencies surrounding the miracle-worker, truth-claims regarding

---

[1330] *Life of Aaron* 44-51 (18a-21b). Cf. Eunap., *VS* 458-460; *Hist. mon.* 8.24-29, 10.14.

[1331] On this embarrassment see Frank, 45; Harmless, *Desert*, 291; Kee, 2-3.

[1332] MacMullen, *Christianity*, 89, 98. On the definition of "superstition" see Dale Martin, *Inventing Superstition: From the Hippocratics to the Christians* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004); Michele R. Salzman, "'Superstitio' in the 'Codex Theodosianus' and the Persecution of Pagans," *Vigiliae Christianae* 41 (1987): 172-88; L. F. Janssen, "'Superstitio' and the Persecution of the Christians," *Vigiliae Christianae* 33 (1979): 131-59.

[1333] Patrick Hurley's introductory logic textbook articulates an attitude common to adherents to scientific methodology that people who maintain so-called superstitions do not attempt to test their beliefs and ignore evidence challenging their beliefs. Patrick Hurley, *A Concise Introduction to Logic*, 10th ed. (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, Cengage Learning, 2008), 574-81. It follows from this that so-called superstitious people are lacking in intelligence, because a savvy person *would* test his beliefs and *would not* ignore evidence challenging his beliefs.

the so-called orthodoxy of the miracle-worker, and displays of charisma. We should not imagine mechanistic examinations of this evidence, with graphs and charts,[1334] but nor should we ignore the fact that early Christians were exercising some sort of choice when they decided to go to a particular shrine one day and another the next. To dismiss the considerations that would have gone into this choice—stories that they might have heard, simple curiosity, notions regarding the underlying forces responsible for the operation of the world, a desire for a patron, convenience, *et cetera*—is to apply anachronistic assumptions based on the supposed irrationality of ancient behavior. But the cynicism implied by modern skepticism on this point is partly the fault of early Christian apologists, who downplayed the degree of pagan competition in order to argue that Christianity alone was capable of furnishing wonders. This implied that Christians were the only ones receiving miracles and therefore that Christians were the only ones gullible enough to believe in these miracles. Once we realize the full scope of the competition, it becomes obvious that if miracles were encouraging the spread of Christianity, it was not because Christians were the only ones offering them. Instead, it was because Christians were successfully gaining control over narratives and interpretations.

[1334] Remember that the term "choice" in this study has been defined quite broadly, allowing for the exercise of conscious and unconscious factors (see the introduction). Problematic though this is, the alternative denies actors any agency and reduces history to the whims of an amorphous, intangible, irrational, and fundamentally inexplicable zeitgeist. The terms "argument" and "evidence" do not refer solely to rhetorical truth-claims and data subject to independent verification (the sort of rhetorical argument, for instance, that Clement of Alexandria would have posed regarding the Hebrew source of Greco-Roman paganism, with evidence taking the form of monotheistic trends in Greco-Roman pagan thought). An argument/evidence includes the fear induced by an apocalypse, the deviant allure of a martyr's endurance of torture, the destablization of pagan notions regarding the relationship between an idol and a deity when that idol is destroyed, the pain induced by the use of physical force, and the degree to which a patron's support for Christianity would have been interpreted as evidence for the validity of Christianity.

Previous scholars have generally ignored miracles,[1335] dismissed them as signs of superstition,[1336] treated them as narrative devices[1337] or biblical allusions,[1338] traced discourse on the subject as a matter of intellectual history,[1339] examined individual instances for evidence of syncretism,[1340] compared the treatment of miracles from one text to the next as a contest over charismatic authority,[1341] or conducted brief sociological analyses of collected or isolated incidents.[1342] A dearth of scholarship takes miracles seriously as proof for the efficacy of religion. Given the degree to which our sources attributed conversion to miracles, the only explanation for such an approach is skepticism as to the efficacy of miracles. When Rodney Stark, for instance, argues that conversion was accomplished largely through the application of social pressure and he rejects the influence of miracles,[1343] he is in fact proposing an explanation for conversion (social pressure) that would have been superfluous had miracles really been working the way that Christians claimed that they were working. In other words, if, as Christians claimed, miracles were efficacious and were therefore convincing Christians to convert, then there would be no reason for Stark to propose an alternative explanation.

[1335] Arguing that conversions attributed to miracles, for instance, were due solely to social and political influence. Stark, *Religion*, 208.

[1336] MacMullen, *Christianity*, 89, 98.

[1337] Candida Moss, "Miraculous Events in Early Christian Stories about Martyrs," in *Credible, Incredible*, eds. Tobias Nicklas and Janet Spittler (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013), 283-301.

[1338] Frank, 45; Ward, "Introduction," 39-40.

[1339] Martin, *Superstition*; Robert Grant, *Miracle and Natural Law in Graeco-Roman and Early Christian Thought* (Amsterdam: North-Holland Publishing Company, 1952).

[1340] David Frankfurter, "Syncretism and the Holy Man in Late Antique Egypt," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 11 (2003): 339-85.

[1341] Jenott, 565-69; Brakke, *Athanasius*, 201-76.

[1342] Brakke, *Demons*, 168-71.

[1343] Stark, *Religion*, 208.

Miracles deserve to be taken seriously, because failing to do so, first, overlooks just why Christians were claiming that miracles were working, and second, assumes that a conversion attributed to a miracle but "really" carried out in response to socioeconomic or political pressure was not in fact also carried out because this pressure itself constituted evidence possessing some religious valence. For instance, when some peasants supposedly appealed to Shenoute for assistance in a dispute with so-called pagans who were forcing these peasants to purchase wine produced from the vineyards on an island, Shenoute miraculously caused this island to sink (Besa, *Life of Shenoute* 85-86). Besa's treatment suggests that the most salient feature of this exchange was the miracle. Scholars have argued that this and similar incidents actually constituted a socioeconomic struggle between Shenoute and elite competitors, the latter only being deemed "pagan," perhaps, because they dared to pose a challenge to Shenoute. The most salient feature of this exchange, according to these scholars, was the peasants' acquisition of Shenoute as a patron, not the miracle *per se*.[1344] This approach means ignoring an important aspect of the exchange. While the miracle in question no doubt functioned as propaganda on Shenoute's behalf, these peasants by and large could not have been drawn to Shenoute solely because of their socioeconomic dependency on him, if only because removing religious motivation from the picture altogether suggests the operation of a seemingly anachronistic separation of religious and socioeconomic and political spheres of activity and thought.[1345] If this patronage secured any converts,[1346] surely this was

[1344] Barns, 151-56; Trombley, 77-82; Emmel, "Atripe," 168, 181.

[1345] The scholar who attributes a conversion solely to socioeconomic/political influence, in defiance of sources that attribute the conversion to a miracle, must first establish the separation of these spheres. See chapter four.

because the patronage in question constituted evidence as to the efficacy of Christianity, with the notion that "proper" religion was a patron's religion, whether this was an emperor or a monk.[1347] Patronage was religiously salient. Therefore, a miracle—even if it was carried out through the application of socioeconomic and political pressure—carried religious valence. If we ignore this, we lose touch with one of the most crucial distinctions between Late Antiquity and modern, secular societies.

It is incumbent upon scholars to ask just why Christians claimed that miracles were working, because this too is a crucial distinction between the Late Antique and modern world.[1348] This chapter combines various approaches—sociological, psychological, philosophical, and rhetorical—to elucidate the various ways that a miracle might have been convincing *for a narrator and his audience*. This allows us to side-step the obvious discomfort demonstrated in scholarship with regard to miracles and so-called superstitions. As we shall see, some scholars contend that

---

[1346] Whether this means converting to Christianity for the first time or already self-ascribing Christians simply asserting their commitment to Shenoute.

[1347] If we assume that dependents converted merely out of socioeconomic or political pressure, disregarding the degree to which this pressure would have itself constituted "evidence" carrying religious valence for the validity of Christianity, then we are left with converts either devoid of actual religious sentiment (atheists or secularists) or hypocrites who, by default, would have been secret pagans. Both options seem anachronistic, the former reflecting a modern Western bias and the latter reflecting Reformation-era anti-Catholic rhetoric regarding the so-called pagan tendencies of Christianity. While I do not doubt that the diversity of the human condition is such that some Christians consciously harbored atheistic- or pagan-like sympathies, for lack of evidence that they would have self-ascribed as such, and given the polemical nature of accusations regarding such tendencies within Christian circles (see below), the only option for the responsible historian (who endeavors to avoid anachronisms) is to assume that most converts "believed in their belief" as Christians (see discussion of "belief in belief" in chapter one and below). This would not have meant the same thing to everyone and, in some cases, it might have even meant consciously retaining practices or beliefs that other Christians would have condemned as pagan (see below). For the mechanisms by which the "endeavor" to be Christian might have been pursued by a person persuaded to convert by the religious valence of socioeconomic and political pressure, see the discussion below on "Learning Belief."

[1348] As we shall see, socioeconomic and political pressures were one of the reasons that Christians were making these claims. But again, unless we assume that the Christians making these claims were consciously lying, we must assume that there was a religiously salient "argument" for believing that these miracles were working. Such an argument might very well have been that a patron's religion is "proper" religion. The point of this chapter is to tease out this and similar religiously salient "arguments."

debunking such beliefs is a duty of scholarship,[1349] but a scholar can disagree with a believer's interpretation of an event—withhold belief—without questioning the believer's intelligence.[1350] While I doubt whether we can legitimately claim *definitive* knowledge that events transpiring over fifteen hundred years ago were *not* demonstrations of divine will, this chapter avoids this issue for the most part. I will address the so-called duty of scholarship with regard to claims like this near the conclusion, in connection with a debate over the degree to which the objective stance that scholars ostensibly seek to adopt might be at odds with the subjectivity upon which religious life is thought to be dependent. To date, scholars studying religion in antiquity have largely avoided this controversy, to the detriment of the field, in my opinion. By entering into this debate, we can get a better grasp on just what we mean when we talk about belief in antiquity and we can demonstrate our relevance to the study of religion in general.

The rest of the chapter focuses on how miracles were perceived by Late Antique audiences and why, even if these incidents were not signs of divine will, they would have been interpreted as such, and, what is more, would have been compelling even without this interpretation. Clearly, the narrators responsible for producing the majority of the narratives discussed here must have expected or wanted their

---

[1349] James Lett, *Science, Reason and Anthropology: The Principals of Rational Inquiry* (NY: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 1997), 16.

[1350] See below on the application of anachronistic comparators based on modern scientific advances. Lest the reader imagine that scholarship on early Christian Egypt has never indulged in historical explanations hinging on the perceived intellect of the Egyptians, note Milne's grumbling that a lack of intellect on their part was the actual motivation for their rejection of Arianism and their refusal to accept Chalcedonian doctrine. Milne, *History*, 154-55. Milne's assessment ignores the scope of evidence submitted in defense of an anti-Chalcedonian position, including miracles and martyrdoms thought to establish the righteousness of this cause (or assumes that acceptance of this evidence implies a lack of intellect). On miracles as evidence of "religious rectitude" see Sidney Griffith, "The Signs and Wonders of Orthodoxy: Miracles and Monks' Lives in Sixth-Century Palestine," in *Miracles in Jewish and Christian Antiquity: Imagining Truth*, ed. John Cavadini (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1999), 139-68.

audiences to believe that these miracles actually transpired. Biblical parallels surely enhanced the authority of these narratives, but the inclusion of additional substantiating details demonstrates that the miracles were not merely invented to adhere to pre-existing biblical narratives. Narrators sought to provide these miracles with credible frameworks so that the audience would be more willing to believe in the miracles themselves.[1351] Papyri attest to the fact that people were appealing to Christian holy men for intercession when confronted by illness and other calamities.[1352] This does not mean that biblical parallels or sociological or psychological factors were not in play when a person appealed for help or a narrator related the tale.[1353] These biblical parallels and socio-psychological factors might have actually encouraged audiences to accept the reality of the miracles in question. Instead of reducing a miracle to one explanation or another, I hope to demonstrate how miracles operated on multiple levels.

After all, if miracles were actually thought to be transpiring, since Christian wonder-workers had competition from Jews and pagans, it is incumbent upon us to try and understand how Christians distinguished themselves from the pack. Dismissing belief as a sign of irrationality[1354] is of no use here, for it does not help us to distinguish between a pagan who believed in miracles and a Jew or a Christian who believed in miracles. Nor does it matter whether we classify Christian miracles as

---

[1351] As Gerald Downing notes, a narrator is more likely to provide corroborating detail if he is afraid that his account will be questioned. Gerald Downing, "Magic and Scepticism in and around the First Christian Century," in *Magic in the Biblical World*, ed. Todd Klutz (NY: T & T Clark International, 2003), 97.

[1352] For an example see P.Brit.Mus. inv. 2496 = Papyrus 1928 in Bell, *Jews*, 114-15.

[1353] In this, I am following David Brakke who argues against assuming that encounters with demons can be reduced to delusions on the part of witnesses, or to biblical imagery, or to an outbreak of an internal and/or external political conflict, or to an actual confrontation with an entity the existence of which seems counter-intuitive to non-believers, when in fact all of these issues were involved. Brakke, *Demons*, 14.

[1354] As MacMullen does. MacMullen, *Christianity*, 74-102.

pagan survivals—as proof that Christians "needed what they had put away"[1355]—or as demonstrations of syncretism,[1356] for both positions beg the question: If paganism was so worth preserving, why convert? In other words, if pagans and Christians were proffering the same sort of evidence for the efficacy of their religion—miracles—we have to ask why Christian evidence in this regard was thought to be more convincing than pagan evidence. Christian sources might have been exaggerating the extent to which their miracles were impressing audiences, but it is obvious that Christians continued demanding wonders of this sort.[1357] So people must have believed that they were in some way genuine.[1358] If we eschew any bias and assume that there is no reason why Christian practices should have been any more efficacious than pagan or Jewish ones—which is not the same thing as saying that miracles did not transpire or that believers were fools, for the criteria of belief in antiquity might have differed from that of a modern scholar[1359]—then why did believers accept the evidence they were provided? Answering this question will take us quite a ways towards answering how Christians distinguished themselves from pagans and Jews in this area.

This discussion will focus on the materials discussed in the previous chapters—all material related to Egypt—as well as texts specifically devoted to the subject of magic and divination in Egypt, such as the *Papyri graecae magicae*, mentioned briefly in the previous chapter, and the *Sortes Astrampsychi*. Naturally

---

[1355] MacMullen, *Christianity,* 121.

[1356] Frankfurter, "Syncretism," 339-85.

[1357] And doing so despite the resistance of Christian leadership who discouraged the desire for such displays. See below.

[1358] On the continued use of curse tablets as evidence that people thought they worked see Gager, *Curse*, 22-23.

[1359] See below for a definition of "reasonable" belief.

enough, the analysis begins with a definition of a “miracle” and proceeds by reviewing a few examples specifically related to what appear to have been inversions of natural laws. This will help us get a grip on the origin of skepticism in antiquity, a necessary step if we are to correct for the biases of modern Western education, wherein skepticism might be fueled by exposure to the principals of scientific study. The discussion then moves on to an examination of the social and rhetorical strategies by which Christians established control over interpretations as miracles transpired and after the fact. This will lay the necessary groundwork for a more in-depth analysis of the beliefs that were being generated in response to miracles and shed light on just what kind of beliefs we are dealing with when we talk about conversion. And, as elsewhere in this study, special attention will be paid to the extent to which an Egyptian focus complicates simplistic Christian-pagan dichotomies. As we shall see, attitudes towards miracles in traditional Egyptian paganism, Greco-Roman paganism, and Christianity varied widely (both with regard to each other and internally). By articulating a position on the subject of miracles, individuals were situating themselves vis-à-vis various forms of Egyptian paganism, Greco-Roman paganism, orthodox Christianity, and heretical Christianity. The construction of Christian and pagan identities proceeded in step.

Inversions of Nature: Sources of Skepticism

What is a miracle? This is a difficult question. It cannot be resolved by simply saying that a miracle is something that defies the laws of nature, for as Pliny the Elder pointed out, the existence of men with black skin seems unnatural to a person who

has never seen such a thing.[1360] Allegedly, the Serapeum possessed a shrine with a statue that, thanks to the use of magnets, appeared to float in the air (Priscus Fr. 28.2). To anyone not aware of the natural powers of magnets, such a spectacle surely seemed miraculous. Perhaps, then, miracles are necessarily context-specific, appearing counter-intuitive to the parties that define the spectacle in question as a miracle but merely natural to those for whom it is not counter-intuitive. While this definition might seem overly subjective,[1361] because the same event will appear intuitive to some people and not to others, this subjectivity is functional, for the identification of miracles provides useful insight into the ontological and epistemological models by which different people operate.

What feats would have been considered particularly counter-intuitive in antiquity? The success with which humans seemed to bend nature to their own will appears to have been thought especially striking. A desert father who supposedly once delayed the sunset certainly raised eyebrows. And lest anyone doubt that this feat actually transpired, it was supposedly witnessed by an entire village.[1362] Other renowned ascetics of Egypt were allegedly gifted in teleportation, though the number of witnesses for these incidents varied from case to case (Besa, *Life of Shenoute* 18-19, 58-59, 106-108; 18.8 Zēno 5; 19.10 Macarius the Egyptian 14; *Vita Antonii* 60; *Hist. mon.* 22.7; Sozom., *Hist. eccl.* 1.14). One of the desert fathers reportedly

---

[1360] Plin., *HN* 7.1 (6). Pyysiäinen argues that counter-intuitive thinking is the *sine qua non* of religious thinking but that there are counter-intuitive beliefs that are not religious. For instance, some scientific theories are rather counter-intuitive. Pyysiäinen "Religion," 114-15.

[1361] For a history of attempts to define and to study "miracles" see Randall Zachman, "The Meaning of Biblical Miracles in Light of the Modern Quest for Truth," in Cavadini, 1-18; Ward, "Introduction," 39; Benedicta Ward,"Monks and Miracles," in *Miracles in Jewish and Christian Antiquity: Imagining Truth*, in Cavadini, 127-29; Kee, 1-77. For the terminology used to refer to a miracle see Harmless, *Desert*, 291-92.

[1362] *Hist. mon.* 10.12-14. Cf. 19.3 Bessarion 3; 19.5 Elijah 2.

travelled all of the way to paradise, a journey that was vouched for by a monk who claimed that he had personally handled a fig that had been brought back from paradise, the size of the fruit, and its curative powers apparently serving to substantiate its otherworldly origin.[1363]

Miracles involving the Nile appear to have been especially enigmatic. Pagans and Christians alike considered the river holy. In 436, an ostensibly pagan festival of the Nile was still being celebrated in Alexandria.[1364] Elsewhere, Christian monks were supposedly imitating Jesus' feat of walking on water, crossing the Nile with the water at most only reaching to their knees (*Hist. mon.* Prol. 9, 10.20; *Vita prima graeca Pachomii* 21; 19.2 Bessarion 2). A story was circulating that the Nile had once turned to wine, an event that allegedly commemorated a miracle performed by Jesus (Epiph., *Pan.* 51.30.1-3).

In a region so dependent on the regular flood of the Nile, it makes sense that anxieties with regard to this issue would have inspired religious interest. Isis was credited with causing the Nile to flood every year,[1365] and supposedly, the marks on the body of the Apis bull predicted just when this would happen (Aelian, *NA* 11.10). A Christian monk was even rumored to have the ability to predict the flood's extent (*Hist. mon.* 1.11). As late as the fourth century, pagan priests were still travelling to

---

[1363] *Hist. mon.* 10.20-23. Compare to an account about one of the Macarii bringing fruit back from a paradise-like garden created by the magicians who were defeated by Moses (*Hist. mon.* 21.11-12). Ward argues that the latter account includes details suggesting that Macarius' story was not believed, even with the fruit. Benedicta Ward, "Introduction," in *The Lives of the Desert Fathers: The Historia monachorum in aegypto*, trans. Norman Russell (Oxford: Cistercian Publications, 1980), 42. Presumbly, Ward is referring to the hesitancy of the monks to follow Macarius back to this paradise, but we need not interpret this as skepticism *per se*. Indeed, it is evidence of the extent to which his story was meant to be taken seriously, for it anticipates and resolves the audience's questions as to why the pilgrim responsible for recording the account had not tried to reach this paradise for himself: He did not do so because the earthly paradise of mere magicians was of this world and therefore no great treasure.

[1364] Kiss, 195.

[1365] Dousa, 155-56.

Akoris in southern Egypt to measure the height of the flood.[1366] The devices used to measure this, the Nilometers, were traditionally kept in pagan temples.[1367] During Constantine's reign, these Nilometers were moved to the churches. The pagans allegedly claimed that this move spelled disaster, since divine wrath over perverted religious practices was bound to impede the rise of the Nile. When the Nile not only rose according to schedule but flooded more than usual, this was interpreted by Christians as proof for the efficacy of Christianity (Euseb., *Vit. Const.* 4.25; Socrates, *Hist. eccl.* 1.18; Sozom., *Hist. eccl.* 1.8). Afterwards, the emperor Julian reportedly ordered Christians to return the Nilometer associated with the Serapeum in Alexandria to the latter (Sozom., *Hist. eccl.* 5.3). If this is true, then Julian presumably either believed that the Christians had exaggerated their evidence or he simply did not accept the Christian interpretation of this evidence. Later, when the Serapeum was destroyed, pagans supposedly warned that a drought was sure to follow. But the regular flood was yet again more impressive than usual, and the Nilometer was transferred to a church (Rufinus, *Hist. eccl.* 11.30; Sozom., *Hist. eccl.* 7.20).

Of course, in the decades that followed, droughts occasionally occurred, prompting appeals to Christian leadership for intercession with God. If the hagiographies are to be believed, either the longed-for miracles were in fact provided,[1368] confirming the authority of Christian holy men as go-betweens for the

---

[1366] Frankfurter, *Roman Egypt*, 200.

[1367] On the importance of the Nilometers see Strabo 17.1.48. Cf. Plin., *HN* 5.10 (58). Also see McKenzie, "Reconstructing," 96.

[1368] *Life of Aaron* 131-32 (53b-54b). Cf. Besa, *Life of Shenoute* 102-105. On this work as an indication of interest in traditional religious involvement with the agricultural cycle see Frankfurter, "Syncretism," 371.

inhabitants of Egypt and God, or elaborate explanations were constructed, diverting responsibility from God and laying the blame squarely on the shoulders of human sinners, the identification of whom became one of the primary functions of the Christian holy men who (unintentionally?) leveraged calamity into bids for authority.[1369]

Since divine will was thought to have an influence on the operation of the world, and it was a given that holy men could be called upon to mediate this relationship, it is by no means shocking to find that holy men were enlisted to tame the dangerous fauna inhabiting the Egyptian landscape.[1370] Like renowned Greco-Roman pagan wise men (Iambl., *VP* 13), Christian monks were sometimes said to keep company with wild animals, occasionally even domesticating creatures that were generally deemed untamable (*Hist. mon.* 6.4; 14.5 John the disciple of Paul 1). The blissful interaction between beast and man was such that one of the Macarii reportedly healed a blind hyena and received in return a sheepskin as a gift from the hyena's mother, a hide that remained in the possession of Macarius' fellow monks and, according to one version of the story, ended up in the hands Melania the Elder (325-417), serving as tangible proof of an otherwise unbelievable feat.[1371]

[1369] For instance, one of the monks supposedly warned people when a calamity attributed to divine wrath was imminent and identified the people who were responsible for provoking this wrath (*Hist. mon.* 1.11). See below for further discussion of incidents like this in the negotiation of authority. Note that one apologist, writing during the last pagan persecution of Christians, had declared that the Christian deity had never promised to perform good works on the behalf of mankind (Arnobius, 2.76). People who looked towards the divine for prosperity in this life simply misunderstood the relationship between this world and the next (Arnobius, 7.45-48). Yet another apologist suggested that pagans were already beginning to face punishment for conducting anti-Christian persecution during their lifetimes (Lactant., *De mort. pers.* 33).

[1370] On the desert fathers assuming traditional Egyptian pagan functions with regard to taming wild animals see Frankfurter, "Syncretism," 372-74. Also see Gilhus, 162. For early Christian versus pagan attitudes towards animals in general see chapter two.

[1371] *Hist. mon.* 21.15-16; Pall., *HL* 18.27-28. Cf. *Life of Aaron* 44-47 (18a-19b). The notion that the desert fathers enjoyed a cordial relationship with animals might have also suggested that they had managed to return to a primordial state wherein they enjoyed a peaceful coexistence with nature. Endsjø, 42-48, 79.

Various desert fathers gained renown for taming and driving off the lions[1372] and hippos[1373] that were so fascinating to non-Egyptians,[1374] creatures that the Egyptians themselves associated with pagan deities, that is, demons to the Christians.[1375] The reader may recall from the second chapter how the Egyptian penchant for honoring and fearing the same animal seemed contradictory to the Christian apologists. But if religion is, as Illka Pyysiäinen argues, by definition counter-intuitive,[1376] and counter-intuitive belief systems are facilitated by the domain-specific nature of knowledge, with objectively contradictory behaviors escaping detection as such until they are shown to be mutually exclusive,[1377] then Christians who accused pagans of contradictory beliefs were simply employing a rhetorical trick to persuade audiences to reject paganism. This was a rhetorical trick because it implied that Christianity was not subject to such contradictions, but to the extent that religion is counter-intuitive, Christianity was indeed potentially subject to the same contradictions. In arguing that contradictions undermined the rationality of pagan faith, Christians were ignoring the degree to which their own religion might

---

[1372] On demons in the form of lions see *Life of Aaron* 95-96 (41a-41b); *Vita Antonii* 9. On Christian holy men in Egypt defeating flesh-and-blood lions see *Life of Aaron* 87 (37b-38a). Cf. Aelian *NA* 7.48; Plin., *HN* 8.19-21 (48-58); Philostr., *VA* 6.24. On the veneration of lions in Egypt see Zimmerman, 113-114; Bootie Cosgrove-Mather, "Lion Mummy Found in Egyptian Tomb," *AP*, accessed January 14, 2004, http://www.cbsnews.com/news/lion-mummy-found-in-egyptian-tomb/.

[1373] *Hist. mon.* 4.3. On hippo hunts in traditional Egyptian paganism see Lindsay, *Leisure*, 197.

[1374] On the display of lions and hippos in the arena see Plin., *HN* 8.20-21 (53-54), 8.41 (96); Aelian, *NA* 7.48.

[1375] On the treatment of lions with divine honors in Egypt see Aelian, *NA* 12.7; Burton, 243; Karolien Geens, "Hellenism as a Vehicle for Local Traditions in Third-Century-Egypt: The Evidence from Panopolis," *Studies of Hellenism: Studies in the History of the Eastern Mediterranean* (*4th Century B.C.-5th Century A.D.*), ed. Peter Van Nuffelen (Walpole, MA: Peeters, 2009), 297, 312-13. Lions were also associated with the deities Sekhmet, Tefnut, and Apedemak (the latter being Nubian). Hippos were associated with the deity Tawaret. See Redford, *Ancient*, 103, 123-24, 351-53.

[1376] Pyysiäinen "Religion," 110-23. The counter-intuitive nature of religion might be observed in the push-pull tendencies of horror and attraction that, as I have argued with regard to martyrdom especially, seem to have directed so much of religious life in antiquity.

[1377] Ilkka Pyysiäinen, *Magic, Miracles, and Religion: A Scientist's Perspective* (NY: Altamira Press, 2004), 50.

have appealed to people on the basis of similar contradictions, such as the push-pull tendencies that I have argued were surrounding the martyrs and the desert fathers.[1378]

To be sure, Christian hagiographers were exploiting the degree to which creatures like crocodiles inspired both fear and awe. These creatures, being suffused with divinity by Egyptian pagans, honored perhaps because they were dangerous,[1379] provided tantalizing evidence as to the super-human powers of the few men who managed to secure their submission. According to the writer Aelian (c. 175-c.235), the pagan priests who gained mastery over wild crocodiles did so through the use of powerful spells (Aelian, *NA* 17.6). Christians claimed that the vicious creatures were no threat to good monks,[1380] and pilgrims provided eyewitness testimony confirming that crocodiles could be driven off by calling upon Jesus (*Hist. mon.* 4.3, Epil. 13). Allegedly, a pious monk even compelled a crocodile to return its victim unharmed (*Life of Aaron* 98-100 (41b-43a). One rather bold desert father purportedly took a ride on the back of a crocodile (*Hist. mon.* 12.6-9), a feat also attributed to a celebrated Egyptian magician,[1381] an Egyptian king (Diod. Sic. 1.89.1-3), and the Egyptian deity Horus.[1382]

[1378] See chapters three and five on these push-pull tendencies.

[1379] The Egyptians may have venerated crocodiles, for instance, because of the animals' association with the deity Sobek, but the Egyptians also associated crocodiles with the deity Seth, chief enemy of Osiris. For this reason, crocodiles were honored and kept in pens in one locale only to be subjected to execration rituals in another. On crocodiles and the afterlife see Taylor, 193; Chris Eyre, "Fate, Crocodiles and the Judgement of the Dead: Some Mythological Allusions in Egyptian Literature," *Studien zur Altägyptischen Kultur* 4 (1976): 103-14. On the identification of the crocodile with Seth, chief enemy of Osiris, and the deity Sobek, worshipped in the Fayum during the Greco-Roman period, see Redford, *Ancient*, 336-37; Burton, 134, 243. For Greco-Roman attempts to explain the contradictory attitudes of Egyptians towards crocodiles see Aelian, *NA* 10.21; Strabo, 17.1.44. Cf. Aelian, *NA* 10.24, 12.15. On the display of crocodiles in the arena see Strabo, 17.1.38, 17.1.44; Plin., *NH* 8.40 (96).

[1380] 14.27 N 294; *Vita Antonii* 15; *Vita Bohairice Pachomii* 20. Cf. AP 18.53. Also see Griffiths, *Conflict*, 115.

[1381] Lucian, *Philops.* 34. Cf. *PGM* XIII.282-89. Also see Fowden, *Egyptian*, 166.

[1382] Burton, 109, 260; Wilburn, 121; Scott-Moncrieff, 137. For traditional Egyptian pagan spells for repelling crocodiles see J. F. Borghouts, trans., *Ancient Egyptian Magical Texts* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1978), 83-91.

Snakes— like crocodiles, the objects of both veneration[1383] and horror[1384]— were reportedly subject to the powers of pagan Egyptian snake charmers (Aelian, *NA* 16.27-33, 17.5) and Christian holy men. The latter were said to occasionally put snakes to work, using them to guard against robbers, for instance (*Hist. mon.* 9.1-11). Audiences no doubt were impressed by such a claim, at least in part, because of a passage in the New Testament promising Christians the power to trample serpents (and scorpions).[1385] The desert fathers who claimed these powers were in fact appropriating abilities attributed to traditional Egyptian deities.[1386] But these stories were not just invented to fulfill the narrative need for biblical parallels or to satisfy the interests of syncretization. The hagiographers and their informants intended for the audiences to believe that these accounts had actually happened, alluding to witnesses in order to situate these events in physical space and time. In one instance, when a desert father slew a particularly large and frightful snake by calling on God, the villagers came and marveled at the snake's corpse (*Hist. mon.* 9.1-11). Hypothetically, anyone who doubted the veracity of this tale could have interviewed the villagers for himself.

Admittedly, these eyewitnesses might have been beyond the reach of the pilgrims who recorded the story, and these pilgrims were forced to take an

---

[1383] Aelian, *NA* 10.31; Dousa, 154-55; Frankfurter, "Kothos," 176-88.

[1384] On the association of snakes and scorpions with the deity Selqet see Redford, *Ancient*, 199. Also see *Vita Antonii* 9. On snakes as objects of horror and wonder see Aelian, *NA* 6.38; Plin., *HN* 8.35 (85-87); Diod. Sic. 3.36-37, 3.51. Compare a story claiming that a desert father applied an asp to his genitals as a cure for temptation (Pall., *HL* 23.5) and the belief that a viper can be used to cure a viper bite (Plin., *HN* 29.21 [69]).

[1385] Luke 10:19. Cf. Dan. 6:22; Exod. 7:8-13.

[1386] *Vita prima graeca Pachomii* 21; 19.15 Paul 1; *Hist. mon.* 20.12; *Vita Antonii* 24, 30. For a sixth century CE spell from Egypt to drive off a scorpion and reptiles and referring to Horus, Aphrodite, and the Jewish-Christian deity Sabaoth see *P.Oxy.* 1060. Also see Marvin Meyer, Richard Smith, and Neal Kelsey, ed. *Ancient Christian Magic: Coptic Texts of Ritual Power* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1994), 48-49. Also see Dieleman, *Priests*, 229n108. Also see David Frankfurter, "The Binding of Antelopes: A Coptic Frieze and its Egyptian Religious Context," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 63 (2004): 97-109.

informant's word for it that a sheepskin, for example, was proof of a miracle when such a mundane item was surely obtainable through other means. Yet the provision of such evidence suggests that Christians were not simply believing everything that they were being told. They were demanding proof in the form of physical tokens. Indeed, the pilgrimages to Egypt were motivated by the hope of *seeing* the desert fathers, for it was not enough merely to *hear* about them.[1387] These travelers displayed their pursuit of "reasonable belief"[1388] by refusing to settle for the legends. They wanted to see the truth for themselves.

These pilgrims do not appear to have personally verified all of the evidence that the hagiographers mentioned. But, according to the hagiographers, these pilgrims were able to question the men who allegedly examined this evidence.[1389] If so, then these pilgrims were in a position to form a judgment as to the reliability of these witnesses. In a society where, as discussed in the previous chapter, a one-on-one relationship between a teacher and his student was so highly privileged, the interaction between the pilgrims and their monastic informants might have been particularly conducive to the generation of trust, thereby encouraging the acceptance of a narrative.[1390] In some cases, hagiographers seem to have taken the repetition of a story by different informants as a form of confirmation (*Vita Antonii* 65). In other

---

[1387] Pall., *HL* 35.3-4. Also see below for miracles related to sight and Cynthia Hahn, "Seeing and Believing: The Construction of Sanctity in Early-Medieval Saints' Shrines," *Speculum* 72 (1997): 1079-1106.

[1388] See below for definition.

[1389] Recall the statement made in the previous chapter that the attitudes expressed in any given text potentially reflected not merely (or not even) the attitudes of an actual desert father, as either the subject of the story or the informant providing the story, but also the attitudes of non-monastic informants employed in the Church leadership, the translators supposedly employed by the pilgrims to communicate with the monks, the pilgrims who allegedly put the stories down in writing, and the translators and editors of the written text. It is also assumed that the audience might have played a role in shaping some accounts, with narratives reflecting the storyteller/writer/translator/editor's awareness of the (likely) response of a listening or reading audience.

[1390] When conducted through an interpreter, the counter-intuitive aura of the linguistic barrier may have augmented a sense of religious awe.

cases, the acceptance of a narrative might have been based on a familiarity with similar incidents, for the pilgrims claimed that they had witnessed many miracles while in Egypt (*Hist. mon.* 10.1), testimony that the hagiographers clearly hoped that the audiences would accept, even if the hagiographers did not provide ample details about all of the incidents in question.

Unimpressed by the investigative efforts of individuals such as these pilgrims, MacMullen argues that belief in miracles in Late Antiquity can be characterized as a "loss of reason" that transpired in connection with an apparent decline in the average education of upper status individuals.[1391] Galen's (129-161) complaints about the irrational Jews and Christians who believed that God could perform miracles[1392] had given way, by the end of the third century, to growing superstition even in elite circles, as demonstrated by the writings of Porphyry and Iamblichus.[1393] For MacMullen, the rational approach for which Pliny the Elder, Plutarch, and Plotinus were supposedly indicative sought proof "drawn from knowledge of empirical data observed in nature. To think, thus, along lines of reason, along lines of the likely, is the distinctive sign of 'philosophy'...Today we would say 'science.'"[1394] By contrast, Christians contended that comprehension of God's work was beyond human abilities and that it was best not to inquire into such things.[1395] What looked like blind faith on

---

[1391] MacMullen, *Christianity,* 83, 89, 98.

[1392] Galen, *De usu partium* 11.14. Also see Richard Walzer, *Galen on Jews and Christians* (London: Oxford University Press, 1949); Christopher Gill, Tim Whitmarsh, and John Wilkins, eds., *Galen and the World of Knowledge* (NY: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

[1393] MacMullen, *Christianity,* 81.

[1394] MacMullen, *Christianity,* 77-78. For alternative interpretations of Pliny, Plutarch, and Plotinus see Martin, *Superstition* 248n10; Luck, *Arcana,* 423-26; Grant.

[1395] Note that MacMullen's accusations against Eusebius in this regard (Euseb., *Prep. ev.* 15.62.16) are not entirely fair since Eusebius was discussing astrology and attributed his warning about the inadvisability of

the part of Christians in undemonstrated tenets inspired attacks on Christianity from pagan critics.[1396] Christians, in turn, complained that pagans relied on clever (that is, sophistic) rhetorical arguments (*Vita Antonii* 80).

But what made the skepticism of Galen and others so "scientific"? Pagans, Jews, and Christians agreed that nature was the work of God (or the gods) and that divinity, however defined, enjoyed supreme power. For Christians, miracles were proof of God's power because the inversion of natural law demonstrated that God could do the impossible.[1397] To pagans like Galen this was a contradiction in terms: To suggest that God might want to transgress His own rules was to suggest that these rules, and thus God, were somehow imperfect. This sounded like impiety. So, if by "science" we mean a search for clear chains of cause and effect based on statistically significant results subject to confirmation via repetition of the parameters in question,[1398] Galen's skepticism on the subject of miracles hardly seems scientific, fueled as it was by the notion that nature and the gods are inherently perfect.[1399] As G. E. R. Lloyd has pointed out, appeals to empirical evidence in elite circles were

---

studying the world to Aristotle (though Eusebius could very well be using him as a mouthpiece). MacMullen, *Christianity,* 88-89.

[1396] J. M. Rist, *Plotinus: The Road to Reality* (NY: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 231-46.

[1397] *Vita Antonii* 83. Cf. Matthew 17:20.

[1398] Hurley, 570-73; Michael Wagner, "Scientific Realism and Plotinus' Metaphysic of Nature," in *Neoplatonism and Contemporary Thought,* ed. R. Baine Harris (Albany: State University of NY, 2002), 1:15-17; Dennett, 219.

[1399] Galen, *De usu partium* 11.14. Also see Feldman, *Philo's,* 1, 317; Martin, *Superstition,* 112, 121; Grant, 85-86. On Galen's devotion to Asclepius and acceptance of divination and dreams in the diagnosis of illness see Martin, *Superstition,* 113-15. Martin argues that the modern binary between nature and the supernatural did not exist in antiquity; the gods were part of nature, not (super-) separate from it. Martin, *Superstition,* 13-16. Consider a scene in Lucan's *Pharsalia* that depicts the contravention of the laws of nature despite Zeus' best efforts (6.460-65). The natural order that was being overturned *included* Zeus. G. E. R. Lloyd argues that ancient authors tended to treat nature and so-called natural laws in a polemical fashion, with nature identified according to the author's personal preferences or as indication of the exceptional rather than the typical case. G. E. R. Lloyd, *The Revolutions of Wisdom: Studies in the Claims and Practice of Ancient Greek Science* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), 322-23. Note Baines' warning against assuming that Egyptian religious beliefs and activities involved a sphere of activity that was not entirely real. Baines, "Discourse," 86-87.

usually just lip-service. Aside from a few notable exceptions, ancient thinkers rarely conducted their own investigations or sought to subject someone else's findings to re-testing with the goal of impartial confirmation.[1400]

When ancient thinkers arrived at conclusions that just happened to coincide with those of modern science, like atomic theory, it was not because these ancient thinkers necessarily performed the experiments that serve to support these conclusions today. Instead, they just happened to find these theories aesthetically and morally pleasing.[1401] And if it is true that the past is a foreign country,[1402] then we ought to be extremely suspicious any time an ancient thinker begins to look like a modern (secular) scientist.[1403]

Scholars who study the discourse in which modern scientific research is communicated argue that science, too, is prone to a subjectivity and bias that undermines efforts to establish the field as the ultimate arbiter of truth[1404] that MacMullen seems to take it as. Following Andrew Holowchak, since scholars have yet to come to a consensus on the objective truth-value of *modern* science, it seems

---

[1400] Lloyd, 331-35. See also G. E. R. Lloyd, *Magic, Reason and Experience: Studies in the Origin and Development of Greek Science* (NY: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 24, 267.

[1401] Lloyd, *Revolution*, 333. Martin, *Superstition*, 61. For instance, Plutarch mocked the story about Isis mourning for Osiris because he thought that it was unseemly for a social superior—which a goddess certainly was—to indulge in such an emotion. Plut., *De Is. et Os.* 379B-C. As the reader may recall from the second chapter, Christian apologists used the same argument to reject various pagan accounts (Arnobius, 7.36-41). Cf. Plut., *De Is. et Os.* 358E-59B.

[1402] L. P. Hartley, *The Go-Between* (1953, repr.; NY: New York Review of Books, 2002), 17.

[1403] Among other things, we should be wary of projecting our own fears regarding the so-called dumbing down of society onto antiquity. MacMullen's anxieties over the dumbing down of the third century Roman Empire are disturbingly reminiscent of modern fears regarding the dumbing down of America. On the latter see James R. Delisle, *Dumbing Down America: The War on Our Nation's Brightest Young Minds (And What We Can Do to Fight Back)* (Waco, Texas: Prufrock Press, Inc., 2014).

[1404] Defenders argue that a self-critical pose is an effective guard against bias, but critics point out many instances in which so-called scientific knowledge has been influenced by the cultural biases of the scientists involved. Andrew Holowchak, *Ancient Science and Dreams: Oneirology in Greco-Roman Antiquity* (NY: University Press of America, 2002), 14-15; Stanley Tambiah, *Magic, Science, Religion, and the Scope of Rationality* (NY: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 84-154.

inappropriate to apply preconceptions based on this so-called truth-value to the interpretation of ancient discourse.[1405] We should be wary of assuming that ancient thinking inherently possessed or lacked truth-value on the basis of a correlation between their claims modern scientific claims, since modern scholars have been unable to come to an agreement regarding the degree to which these modern scientific claims possess objective-truth-value. Furthermore, if, from a modern scientific perspective, the belief in miracles in antiquity was not a justified belief—on the assumption that these miracles would not have held up to the rigors of retesting in a controlled setting—then the application of a modern scientific perspective is still useless. Reducing faith to a demonstration of stupidity (defined here as unjustified belief, that is belief that is contradicted by existing evidence or belief that would not hold up to the rigors of retesting in a controlled setting) does nothing to help us *understand* faith, for how does a person comprehend something that is, by definition, a failure in comprehension?

The dearth of scholarship examining justified belief in connection with early Christianity is surely born in part out of a desire to avoid obvious bias. This is misguided because we cannot hope to understand the rise of Christian belief if we are unwilling to broach the subject of belief itself. However, the scholar who dares to investigate this issue is not seeking to understand simply belief, but rather *justified* belief, that is, justified *for an early Christian believer*. We need a culturally-specific scale by which to judge the reasonableness of ancient conclusions, because what constitutes justified belief in one setting might not do so in another. Therefore, I

[1405] Holowchak, 17.

propose to follow the philosopher Alvin Goldman in defining "justified belief," conditionally, as a conclusion reached via a reliable process available to the believer at the time the belief is being generated, this process being such that it would necessarily result in belief.[1406]

According to another line of scholarship, a belief must be falsifiable in order for it to be considered justifiable. But the notion of falsifiability—embedded as it is in modern intellectual discourse linked to the rise of scientific methodology and linked to criticism of religious thinking, which is thought to be flawed to the extent that it is not subject to tests of falsifiability[1407]—cannot be directly applied to ancient thought, particularly ancient *religious* thought. Falsification, as opposed to falisifiability *per se*, provides a viable alternative, if falsification is taken to refer to the strategies by which rival ancient authorities sought to forward their own evidence and their own interpretations at the expense of competing authorities.

The authorities who are entrusted with confirming a belief provide a final complication. Consider the problem created when a potential believer cannot verify all of the evidence for a belief himself.[1408] He must rely on the testimony of various authorities. A (modern) scientifically-minded person might only trust authorities whose testimony can be independently verified via controlled testing. A religiously-minded person might be more inclined to (also) accept the testimony of certain

---

[1406] Alvin Goldman, "What Is Justified Belief?" in *Knowledge and Reality: Classic and Contemporary Readings*, eds. Steven Cahn, Maureen Eckert, and Robert Buckley (Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Pearson/Prentice Hall, 2004), 133. Also see James Kraft, *The Epistemology of Religious Disagreement: A Better Understanding* (NY: Palgrave MacMillan, 2012); Jake Chandler, Victoria Harrison, eds., *Probability in the Philosophy of Religion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

[1407] James Cox, *An Introduction to the Phenomenology of Religion* (NY: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2010), 132-33; Carl Sagan, Ann Druyan, *The Demon-haunted World: Science as a Candle in the Dark* (NY: Random House, 1995).

[1408] To give a very modern example of a fact that might not be subject to personal verification, consider, for instance, the ability of humans to travel to the moon in spacecraft.

religious authorities whose credentials have been validated through methods that might not be verifiable through controlled testing.[1409] In antiquity, the authorities trusted to validate a belief did not, as a rule, depend on scientific methodology,[1410] according to which a given test, performed under controlled settings, should always produce a given result. Consequently, a justified belief in antiquity might not have been the *only* justified belief. The one-to-one correlation that people expect to see today between a test and the results did not necessarily exist in antiquity, if only because testing was not as well controlled, thanks to, among other things, a lack of conscious appreciation as to the need for such a control. Confounding factors would have provided opportunities for alternative explanations. With scientific methodology removed from the equation, the credentials of a so-called authority, the means by which he produced his conclusions, and these conclusions all became subject to debate. Retesting might have been performed but it was not a given that retesting would be accepted as a means of validation.[1411] Authorities certainly claimed that their interpretation was the proper one, but their claims were contested, as is to be expected when proof was not contingent on a given test always producing a given result. Perhaps, then, we should not be seeking *justified* belief but rather *reasonable*

[1409] Religious authorities might have their credentials validated through, among other things, visions. For an example see *Life of Aaron* 58 (25a-b); Pall., *HL* 32.1; *Hist. mon.* 8.3.

[1410] As argued above, some thinkers performed what looks like scientific testing and criticized others for failing to do so, but this testing was not a given and it was not a given that an argument based on the evidence produced via testing would have been accepted. Criticism was all too often linked to personal self-interest and was undermined by inconsistency. Compare Apollonius of Tyana's criticism of believers who submit one explanation after another to explain away failures on the part of a magical rite (Philostr., *VA* 7.39) to his generation of just such an explanation to resolve possible skepticism of the powers attributed to Asclepius (Philostr., *VA* 1.10).

[1411] See below for Paralius' efforts to retest the shrine at Menouthis and the explanations that might have been proferred to explain his failure to illicit a response.

belief, constructed via rhetorical strategies of negotiation and subject to falsification in the form of rival interpretations.[1412]

With this definition, we can look at the criteria that skeptics and believers used to assess claims. This will give us a clearer picture of just what constituted *reasonable* belief in the ancient world, and what ancient men and women would have considered compelling evidence. Obviously, the question is not "Were ancient believers right?"[1413] but rather "Why did they think that they were right?" To examine this issue further, let us consider a form of miracle that would have been easily subject to verification: divination.

Divination: Divine Will or Chance?

This section explores the competing Christian and pagan claims regarding divination,[1414] focusing on how these claims were undermined or verified through various strategies. For the most part, attitudes towards divination appear to have been

[1412] While this may appear to have been an overly lenthy statement of a self-evident definition, a firm philosophical basis for non-scientific belief will help to balance the scales when it comes to comparing the so-called rationality of non-scientific versus scientific thinking. The lack of precision in scholarship on the subject to date has tipped the scales too heavily (and anachronistically) in the favor of scientific thinking.

[1413] Aside from the few thinkers who did engage in repetitive testing and submitted their results for impartial confirmation by others, *everyone* was wrong by modern scientific standards. That is, the methodology must be correct for the conclusion to be considered valid.

[1414] On divination in the ancient world see Luck, *Arcana*, 334-36; Frankfurter, *Roman Egypt*, 179-97; Michael Swartz "Divination and Its Discontents; Finding and Questioning Meaning in Ancient and Medieval Judaism," in *Prayer, Magic, and the Stars in the Ancient and Late Antique World*, eds. Scott Noegel, Joel Walker, Brannon Wheeler (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2003), 155-66; Solomon Nigosian, *Magic and Divination in the Old Testament* (Portland: Sussex Academic Press, 2008). To some extent, divination is a risk management strategy. It addresses a situation where there is some risk (if only insofar as there is a question about what to do or what will happen) and mitigates the risk (by suggesting a course of action or indicating which scenario is likely to transpire so that the client can prepare). For a discussion of decision-making in the context of risk and uncertainty that is geared towards the modern world but nevertheless suggests insights into more or less universal factors involved in this process see Karl Halvor, Teigen Brun, Wibecke Brun, "Anticipating the Future: Appraising Risk and Uncertainty," in *Decision Making: Cognitive Models and Explanations*, eds. Rob Ranyard, W. Ray Crozier, Ola Svenson (NY: Routledge, 1997): 112-27. On the role of rhetoric in the interpretation of risk see Anton Kühberer, "Theoretical Conceptions of Framing Effects in Risky Decisions," in Ranyard, 128-44. On the social construction of risk and thus reactions to risk (including the exaggeration of risk in order to generate authority and/or work) see Toner, *Disasters*, 95, 104; Durodié, 131; Frank Furedi, "Towards a Sociology of Fear," in Hebblethwaite, 21. On the recent explosion of discourse devoted to risk see Furedi, 27.

dictated by socially constructed notions about how the universe was supposed to work. Truth-claims took the form of narratives. This discussion provides a useful means by which to orient ourselves to just what would and would not have constituted compelling testimony in antiquity.

Many of the Christian holy men of Egypt could supposedly see the future (18.31 N 361; *Life of Aaron* 7 (3b); *Hist. mon.* 6.1). They knew, for instance, whether battles would turn out in an emperor's favor and could predict when emperors would die (Sozom., *Hist. eccl.* 7.22; *Hist. mon.* 1.1-2). They somehow had knowledge of events transpiring miles away, sensing when travelers set out to see them (*Life of Aaron* 58 [25a-b]; *Vita Antonii* 59, 62; *Hist. mon.* 8.48, 12.11) and when fellow monks had perished or were destined to soon die (*Vita Antonii* 60; *Hist. mon.* 10.12, 11.4, 22.8). By demonstrating this insight, the monks were imitating the prophets of the Old Testament, or so their admirers claimed (Sozom., *Hist. eccl.* 6.28). Yet pagan wise men were credited with similar insight. The reader may recall how Antoninus, for example, had foretold the fall of the Serapeum.[1415] Christians also had to compete with pagan oracles, including the temple at Abydos, the site of the divination-related activities that prompted a spurt of trials (Amm. Marc. 19.12.3-18) mentioned in chapter four.

The gods supposedly delivered divinatory messages to humans via omens obtained through sacrifice, in the entrails, and through the peculiar behavior of certain animals.[1416] Other popular methods for communicating with the divine involved the

[1415] Eunap., *VS* 466-473. Cf. Iambl., *VP* 28; Philostr., *VA* 1.12; Porphyry, *VP* 11.

[1416] According to Sozomen, Athanasius once interpreted a bird-related omen to mean that the pagans would be prohibited from celebrating a festival on the following day, a prediction that turned out to be true (Sozom., *Hist. eccl.* 4.10). Note that Origen pointed out that animals were employed in divination rites (because of

manipulation of divine statues, exchanging oracular tickets, consulting special books, employing astrology, and relying on the messages received via dreams. As the previous chapter indicated, Christians went out of their way to advertise the superiority of their holy men over divine statuary when it came to the provision of miracles, and divination was no exception. In traditional Egyptian paganism, statues were manipulated by priests to provide oracular responses to suppliants. While this might look to the modern eye as if cunning priests were taking advantage of gullible clients—faking divine communiques for a clientele too stupid to realize that they were being duped—the priests were actually following set parameters, in some cases resorting to what appear to have been "scripts."[1417] This indicates that priests were thought to be acting within acceptable and even expected boundaries, at least by other priests.

The divination conducted via oracular tickets was also controlled by set guidelines. A client would submit a question to the oracle with two possible responses, one positive and one negative, and would receive in return (via a priest) the response allegedly specified by the deity. The practice was later adopted by Christians.[1418] Queries submitted to Christian oracles included, for instance, whether or not the submitter should travel to Chiout,[1419] or should discuss some issues relating

---

their alleged expertise in communicating with the gods), but these same rites required that the animals be slaughtered. If the creatures truly had prophetic powers, Origen asked, why were they unable to avoid being slaughtered (Origen, *Con. Cels.* 4.90)?

[1417] Zivie-Coche, "Pharaohnic," 119-20; Tallett, 405. Cf. Lucian, *Alex*. 26; Hippolytus, *Refutatio* 4.28.

[1418] David Frankfurter, "Voices, Books, and Dreams: The Diversification of Divination Media in Late Antique Egypt," in Johnston, 245.

[1419] *P.Oxy.* 925. Also see Meyer, *Ancient* 52.

to the weighing office or to the bank.[1420] Straightforward questions about what would happen in the future were easily subject to verification, but questions about how a client should act in a given situation were less subject to verification, for having taken a given course a client could hardly know if the other option would have turned out better. Since two possible outcomes were supplied for each question, in cases where the likelihood of either option proving advantageous or coming true was really fifty-fifty, the oracle had a fair chance of being "right." No doubt, clients sometimes asked questions even when they realized that one option was better or more likely than another, seeking reassurance or even divine intervention. But for cases where the odds seemed even, it is worth noting that no less an intellect than Socrates had supposedly claimed that there were was no harm in turning to divination when there was no rational means for making a decision (presumably because the odds were even) (Plut., *De gen.* 581A). We have no way of knowing how often these oracles turned out to be right, but as John Gager has pointed out with regard to curse tablets, the fact that people continued to make use of practices like this implies that these practices were indeed thought to be efficacious.[1421] Recent psychological research suggests that adherence to so-called superstitions—like a person keeping his fingers crossed for good luck—actually improves performance in some situations, apparently by boosting the user's confidence.[1422]

[1420] *P.Oxy.* 1926; *P.Harr.* 54. Also see Herbert C. Youtie, "Questions to a Christian Oracle," *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 18 (1975): 253-57; Meyer, *Ancient*, 53-54.

[1421] Gager, *Curse*, 22-23.

[1422] Lysann Damisch, Barbara Stoberock, and Thomas Mussweiler, "Keep Your Fingers Crossed! How Superstition Improves Performance," *Psychological Science* 21 (2010): 1014-20.

Another method of divination involved taking a text like Homer or the Bible and turning to a page, more or less at random, and interpreting the given passage as an answer to a user's query. The most influential Egyptian text for book-based divination was certainly the *Sortes Astrampsychi*, which consisted of a series of questions and answers, the user employing a mathematical operation in order to determine the solution to queries such as, in the earlier texts, "Will I reconcile with my lover?" or, in the later Christianized texts, "Will I be made a cleric?" Comparing the odds of receiving a particular response from the *Sortes Astrampsychi* against real-world probabilities, Jerry Toner argues that chances were good that the text would prove accurate at least some of the time. When it came to loaning money, for instance, seventy percent of the possible answers in the *Sortes Astrampsychi* indicate that it was unlikely that the loan would be repaid. This corresponds to existing interest rates which indicate that loans were not repaid 66-90 percent of the time.[1423]

Accuracy aside, users might have been drawn to texts like the *Sortes Astrampsychi* simply out of nostalgia. The perpetuation of (invented) traditions provided a powerful motivation for behavior in the custom-bound society of antiquity. The alleged antiquity of the text no doubt endowed the contents with an aura of power.[1424] The *Sortes Astrampsychi* was allegedly composed by Pythagoras and hidden in a temple. It was supposedly found there by an individual named Astrampsychus, who then presented it to Ptolemy.[1425]

[1423] Toner, *Popular*, 46-52.

[1424] On the importance of custom in antiquity, see chapter two.

[1425] William Hansen, ed., *Anthology of Ancient Greek Popular Literature* (Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1998), 287-89; Geens, 306; Toner, *Popular*, 46-52; Frankfurter, *Roman Egypt*, 181-84; Meyer, *Ancient*, 251-56.

This convoluted provenance—from Greek to Egyptian to Greek—resembled the chain-of-transmission associated with astrology (not to be confused with astronomy). Attributed variously to Ethiopians, Egyptians, and Persians,[1426] astrology appears to have actually been the invention of Persians, who carried the practice to Egypt in the sixth century BCE. By the time that Christianity arrived on the scene, Egyptian temple priests had made great strides towards integrating astrology into their work, writing texts on the subject in both Greek and demotic.[1427] They supposedly used this learning to predict crop failures, pestilence, and floods (Diod. Sic. 1.81). Not to be outdone, Jewish traditions attributed the invention of astrology to Abraham, who supposedly collaborated with the Babylonians in developing the science before bringing it to Egypt.[1428] Whatever astrology's origin, at least some Christians appear to have shown an interest in the subject, as demonstrated by an early sixth century horoscopes from Oxyrhynchus that seems to have been calculated for a Christian.[1429]

Efforts to Christianize the use of oracular tickets, *Sortes Astrampsychi*, and astrology suggest that MacMullen may be correct in claiming that converts "needed

---

[1426] On the Ethiopian origin see Lucian, *De astrol.* 3-9. On the Egyptian origin see Hdt 2.82; Diod. Sic. 1.81. On the Persian origin see Theod., Cyr., *Graec.* 1.19.

[1427] Moyer, *Egypt*, 235; Jacco Dieleman, "Stars and the Egyptian Priesthood in the Graeco-Roman Period," in Noegel, 140-45; Burton, 237; Dieleman, "Literature," 443.

[1428] Euseb., *Prep. ev.* 9.17-18 417b-20b. Cf. Joseph., *AJ* 1.8.2. Also see Droge, *Homer*, 23; Burton, 237. Such a claim was clearly meant to undermine pagan rhetoric asserting that the Jews had made no meaningful contributions to civilization. See Jos., *Ap.* 2.13; Julian *Con. Gal.* 356C. For a discussion of Greco-Roman attitudes towards Abraham in general, see Jeffrey Siker, "Abraham in Graeco-Roman Paganism," *Journal for the Study of Judaism* (1987): 188-208.

[1429] *P.Oxy.* 4275. See Alexander Jones, *Astronomical Papyri from Oxyrhynchus: P.Oxy. 4133-4300a* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Center, 1999), 8, 416-17. Also see Kocku von Stuckrad, "Jewish and Christian Astrology in Late Antiquity," *Numen* 47 (2000): 1-40; Tim Hegedus, *Early Christianity and Ancient Astrology* (Washington, D.C.: Peter Lang, 2007).

what they had put away."[1430] Abraham's alleged connection with astrology notwithstanding, Christian and Jewish thinkers endeavored to divorce their faiths from practices of this sort,[1431] implying that such practices were in fact pagan. Yet the notion of a "pagan survival" implies a kind of passivity on the part of religious leaders, who were unable to stop followers from persisting in popular practices. Frankfurter argues that the evidence demonstrates just the opposite, at least when it comes to Christianity. The staff at a martyrium of Colluthus in Egypt, for instance, appears to have taken an active hand in encouraging the use of oracular tickets and *Sortes Astrampsychi*.[1432] By providing these services, the shrine was openly competing against other Christian sources of oracular insight, including the desert fathers, who were reportedly predicting the rise of the Nile and the deaths of emperors (*Hist. mon.* 1.11; Sozom., *Hist. eccl.* 7.22). Insofar as Christian divination facilitated inner-Christian competition, we cannot write it off as a pagan survival, if by that we mean the mindless repetition of behavior for no other reason than because it meant preserving custom,[1433] for divination served a specifically Christian purpose.

Moreover, there are several reasons, besides those mentioned above, why people might have believed that oracles were useful, so that a person who turned to divination was making a potentially sound decision and not simply falling back on

---

[1430] MacMullen, *Christianity,* 121.

[1431] Athanasius protested the distribution of oracles at martyriums (Athan., *Ep. Fest.* 41 [Coptic], Athan., *Ep. Fest.* 42 [Copt]), but he accepted that the Old Testament foretold the rise of Christianity (Athan., *De incar.* 1.38). See Frankfurter, "Syncretism," 361. His skepticism regarding the divination associated with martyriums may reflect yet another example of his efforts to discourage the patronage of Christian rivals. For what appears to be a Jewish-Christian attempt to deny Abraham's involvement in astrology see Sib. Or. 3.218-31. Cf. Julian, *Con. Gal.* 256C. Also see Malley, 336-37; Droge, *Homer,* 23.

[1432] Frankfurter, "Voices," 245-48.

[1433] Though, as suggested above, nostalgia and the preservation of custom may have been *one* of the factors behind the popularity of Christian divination.

tradition from a want of wisdom or lax religious commitment. By forcing a client to consider a situation from a viewpoint that he might not have previously considered, an oracle could prompt reflection upon a possibility that had not been sufficiently examined.[1434] The wise men who were supposedly gifted with foreknowledge were probably handing out advice that, in other circumstances, would have been taken as nothing more than acumen.[1435] Athanasius, for instance, enjoyed so much success eluding his heretical pursuers that opinions were split as to whether it was thanks to divine intervention or Athanasius' savvy advisers (Rufinus, *Hist. eccl.* 10.19; Sozom., *Hist. eccl.* 4.10, 6.12). According to Palladius, when a virgin foresaw that her village was going to be attacked over a dispute involving water rights, divine intervention was responsible for her insight (Pall., *HL* 31.1-2). But given the heated nature of the situation, her prediction looks like simple commonsense. In Heliodorus' *Aethiopika*, an Egyptian priest went around encouraging Greeks to believe that he had the power to read minds when really, as the audience was clearly expected to realize, he was just an incredibly good judge of character (Heliod., *Aeth.* 4.10-11). Tellingly, a demon supposedly confessed to Pachomius that she could not really predict the future, but that she deluded people into thinking that she could do so by making predictions based on what had already transpired.[1436]

[1434] Sarah Johnston, "Delphi and the Dead," in Johnston, 298.

[1435] On the attribution of divine insight to individuals gifted in the perception of sensory data, absorption of data (focused attention), or imagination see Ann Taves, "Non-ordinary Powers: Charisma, Special Affordances and the Study of Religion," in *Mental Culture: Classical Social Theory and the Cognitive Science of Religion*, eds. Dimitris Xygalatas and William McCorckle, Jr. (Durham: Acumen Publishing Limited, 2013), 96. Also see Graham Anderson, *Sage, Saint and Sophist: Holy Men and Their Associates in the Early Roman Empire* (NY: Routledge, 1994), 71.

[1436] *Paralipomena* 25. Cf. Lactant., *Div. Inst.* 2.14-16; *Vita Antonii* 31, 33.

A fair number of critics expressed criticism of divination, including pagan elites.[1437] The arguments offered above to rationalize belief—the odds that the *Sortes Astrampsychi*, for instance, would be correct—could be taken as just that, specious *rationalizations* for an unreasonable belief. After all, with the odds stacked in an oracle's favor, divine intervention was hardly required to ensure success, and anyone who thought otherwise could be accused of gullibility. Yet, a fair number of intellectuals endorsed divination. The Alexandrian mathematician Ptolemy (c. 100-c. 170) devoted a work on astronomy to explaining how astrology operated.[1438] Like magic, astrology supposedly worked thanks to the underlying sympathies and antipathies according to which the universe was thought to operate, natural laws that wide swaths of Greco-Roman elites seem to have accepted.[1439] As Dale Martin has pointed out, when elites condemned divination, it was often because of socio-cultural prejudices rather than any sort of objective testing. Elites shunned, for example, practices that were thought to have originated from alien innovations; or when practices appeared to have been carried out to further personal interests, because this usage suggested a traitorous effort to put the self over the state; or because the search for divine guidance implied a cringing uncertainty that an elite man, being the master of his own fate as it were, should never suffer; or because—by assigning these practices to a lower social stratum—elites could set themselves apart, as members of a superior, more sophisticated stratum. The rejection of divination, therefore, had

[1437] Cicero and Plutarch, for instance, had expressed suspicion as to the credibility of the evidence proffered by the so-called oracles. *Cicero, De divinatione;* Plutarch, *De defectu oraculorum.*

[1438] Ptolemy, *Tetrabiblus.* Also see Luck, *Arcana,* 414-19; Anderson, *Sage*, 63.

[1439] Luc., *De astrol*. 28-29. On the attribution of this text to Lucian (in light of his general skepticism) and its purpose see A. M. Harmon, *Lucian* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1913), 5:347. Also see Luck, *Arcana,* 423-26.

more to do with social politics than the rigorous application of scientific methodology, the latter being defined again as a search for clear chains of cause and effect based on statistically significant results subject to confirmation via repetition of the parameters in question.[1440] Hence, we should be wary of repeating elite rhetoric that associated a dependence on divination with a lack of intellectual rigor.

To be sure, a high degree of cognitive performance went into recognizing the patterns that had to be assessed in order to interpret the divinatory meaning of an alleged omen. The ability to recognize patterns was evolutionarily advantageous to the human species as a whole,[1441] allowing, for instance, hunter-gatherers to predict when and where food might be found. It is only to be expected that the search for patterns might lead people to suspect the existence of a pattern where there is none, a phenomenon known as *pareidolia*, or to mistake coincidences for the confirmation of connections, a phenomenon known as synchronicity.[1442] When people attached meaning to omens in antiquity, it was not necessarily because they were intellectually inferior so much as that they were quite reasonably—defining "reason" here by culturally-specific standards constructed without reference to modern scientific methodology—looking for and expecting to see patterns.

[1440] Martin, *Superstition*, 27-31, 61, 68-69, 71, 126, 130-32. When Plutarch wanted to explain why divination did not appear to be working, instead of reminding his audience of the dearth of statistical evidence for its efficacy, he laid the blame on clients asking questions unworthy of the gods (Plut., *De def. or*. 413B-414C). For a very elitist explanation as to why a particular set of omens failed to predict the future (because they were beneath the dignity of the elite personage whose future was being subjected to inquiry) see Eunapius, *VS* 466.

[1441] I am referring, of course, to evolutionary theories related to the development of *homo sapiens sapiens* up to c. 100,000 BCE. See Leaky, 1-350. For discussion of Bellah's argument with regard to evolution in the so-called Axial age see chapter two.

[1442] Hurley, 576; Robert Segal, "Myth," in *The Blackwell Companion to the Study of Religion* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), 349; T. M. Luhrmann, *Persuasions of the Witch's Craft: Ritual Magic in Contemporary England* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989), 318. My thanks to Professor M. Grossman for pointing me in the direction of Lurhmann's work.

Of course, if the sources are to be believed, faith in divination was undermined whenever an oracle failed to provide the required assistance. As Eusebius argued, if Apollonius of Tyana could really see the future, why was Apollonius unable to foresee that he would be imprisoned or otherwise provided with the insight necessary to take steps to avoid his fate?[1443] And why did the oracles not warn the Alexandrians beforehand about the fierce fire that at one point ravaged the Serapeum?[1444] In the face of such evidence, faith in divination could be preserved by explanations, like the one offered by the Egyptian priest in Heliodorus' *Aethiopika*, saying that knowledge of the future did not mean that a person could avoid misfortune. Fate could not be changed (Heliod., *Aeth.* 2.24). With competing arguments for and against divination, belief and disbelief depended on interpretation, not cut-and-dry facts.

Like pagan skepticism, Christian skepticism was driven by socio-cultural bias more than objective analysis. For this reason, Christian apologists were not above accepting pagan oracles when these oracles appeared to foretell Jesus' coming or otherwise verified the truth of Christian doctrine (Pseudo-Justin, *Cohort.* 37-38). The argument that pagan oracles foretold the rise of Christianity put apologists in an awkward position when it came to challenging the efficacy of pagan divination, a challenge that was required if Christians were going to demonstrate the superiority of their faith. This problem was remedied by arguing that the coming of Christ triggered a cessation in pagan oracles.[1445] In light of such a claim, any apparent failure on the

[1443] Eusebius, *Contra Hierocles* 36.

[1444] Euseb., *Prep. ev.* 4.2 135b. Cf. Arnobius, 6.23.

[1445] Athan., *De incar.*1.47; Theod., Cyr., *Graec.* 10.43; *Vita Antonii* 33, 79. Cf. Clem. Al., *Prot.* 2.

part of a pagan oracle took on new significance, implying as it did the inferiority of the pagan faith. Yet pagans do not appear to have simply accepted Christian explanations for these failures. According to Lactantius, pagan priests in the employ of Diocletian blamed the failure of some divinatory rites on Christian impiety. This accusation allegedly prompted a persecution of Christians. In response, Christians defiantly embraced the charges laid against them, but with a twist, claiming that it was Christian *piety* not *im*piety that disrupted these practices (Lactant., *De mort. pers.* 10). Whether or not this incident transpired exactly as Lactantius claimed, his narrative seems to capture accurately the ways in which pagans and Christians would have sought to establish the superiority of their faith by tap-dancing their way through rhetorical arguments meant to persuade audiences to accept their interpretations of the evidence.[1446]

Not for nothing then did Quintillian's (c. 35-c. 100) advice to rhetors appearing in court indicate that divination was to be accepted or rejected based chiefly on whether or not it would help a rhetor's case. Belief depended on how well the rhetor manipulated his audience, with Quintillian recommending arguments both for and against divination, and at no point mentioning an objective examination of the evidence one way or another. More damningly still, Quintillian actually advised relying on the logical fallacies that, according to a modern textbook on logic, fuel superstitious thinking.[1447]

[1446] Amm. Marc. 25.2.8, 25.4.17; Sozom., *Hist. eccl.* 5.2. Ammianus Marcellinus and Sozomen implicitly accepted divination, they merely attempted to assert authority over the ways in which it was practiced.

[1447] Hurley, 575. Quintillian recommended that rhetors attack or support the evidence supplied by dvinination simply by adopting the positions of either the Epicureans (critics of divination) or the Stoics (proponents of divination) with regard to the subject, as if the question of actual efficacy was immaterial next to the larger issue of winning a case. Quintillian also recommended that rhetors argue that some forms of divination were better than others (Quint., *Inst.* 5.7.35-37), echoing the sentiments of other pagan intellectuals (Artemidorus

Relying, as belief in divination did, on the manipulation of rhetorical arguments and the savvy interpretation of apparent patterns in a confluence of factors, it makes sense that arguments over the efficacy of divination would have come down to contests over *how* something ought to be interpreted and *who* could be entrusted with this authority. Debates over the efficacy of divination depended on proving the interpreter's wisdom. The difficulty of interpretation was such that characters in Greek novels sometimes expressed confusion over how to read given oracles.[1448] Instead of saying that pagan divination did not work, Sozomen simply said that pagans misinterpreted the signs they received (Sozom., *Hist. eccl.* 5.1-2). Theodoret of Cyrus complained that pagan oracles were particularly prone to ambiguity.[1449] Confusion could also be caused by mix-ups regarding an omen's intended audience. According to Josephus, Jews mistook omens intended for Vespasian (reigned 69-79) as indications that they would succeed in their revolt.[1450]

Dreams posed their own challenges in this regard.[1451] Interestingly, Sozomen claimed that pagans were induced to convert to Christianity by signs (miracles), learned discussions (including, presumably, the sort of arguments discussed in chapter two), *and* dreams (Sozom., *Hist. eccl.* 2.5). One of the desert fathers

---

2.69; Porphyry, *VP* 11, 15), and like them, making little effort to provide empirical evidence in support of any given conclusion.

[1448] Heliod., *Aeth.* 2.35-36; Ach. Tat. 2.12-14. Cf. Plut., *De gen.* 587A-587C.

[1449] Theod., Cyr., *Graec.* 10.25. Competition within Christian circles may have underpinned similar warnings. Pachomius allegedly claimed that any sinner who *sought* a vision—including, one assumes, visions of a clairvoyant nature—was liable to misunderstand the visions he received, for only those visions experienced by *God's will* were clear (*Vita prima graeca Pachomii* 48). The implication is that Christians who sought out the kind of clairvoyant messages that would bolster their authority were doomed to failure. See below for further discussion of internal Christian competition and miracles.

[1450] Joseph., *BJ* 6.5.4. Cf. Tac. *Hist.* 5.13.

[1451] Harris points out that dream interpretation would have been one of the divinatory practices that fell under Constantius II's ban (*Codex Theodosianus* 9.16.6 = Codex *Justinanus* 9.18.7) in the fourth century. William Harris, *Dreams and Experience in Classical Antiquity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009), 74.

supposedly decided to become a monk on the basis of a dream (*Hist. mon.* 10.4). Insofar as religion is, as Pyysiäinen again argues, counter-intuitive,[1452] dreams—being illogical by nature[1453]—are certainly liable to inclusion in the realm of experience subjected to religious interpretation.[1454] Unfortunately, the messages received via dreams were apparently just as ambiguous as other omens.[1455]

The situation was further complicated by what appears to have been a conflation of dreams with visions. In a novel by Chariton (fl. 2nd cent.), the protagonists, who more than once made a decision based on a dream (Chariton, 1.12, 2.9, 3.7), at one point questioned whether an incident was actually transpiring or was merely part of a dream (Chariton, 3.1). Similar questions were raised in Heliodorus' *Aethiopika*.[1456] Likewise, people appear to have sometimes suffered doubts as to whether the visions they were experiencing were illusions. After beholding her lover following a long separation from him, the heroine of Chariton's novel wondered if she had actually seen the man in question or an illusion summoned by Persian

---

[1452] Pyysiäinen "Religion," 110-23.

[1453] Harris, *Dreams*, 15-17.

[1454] On dream interpretation in antiquity see Holowchak; Peter Brown, *The Making of Late Antiquity* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press 1978), 40-41; Patricia Cox Miller, *Dreams in Late Antiquity: Studies in the Imagination of a Culture* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994). For modern theories on the purpose and origin of dreams see Harris, *Dreams*, 9-20.

[1455] Heliod., *Aeth.* 1.30, 2.16. Artemidorus 3.66. Some of the confusion derives from the difficulty of knowing whether to interpret a dream allegorically or literally. Artemidorus 1.2. Cf. Ach. Tat. 2.23-24. Also see Harris, *Dreams*, 213. Interestingly, when Artemidorus wanted to defend his dream interpretations, he did so by suggesting that he had carried out what looks like the preliminary stages of a scientific study on the subject. He criticized others for not basing their evidence on experience and assured his readers that he had not only consulted every available written source on dreams but had also spent years consulting with actual dream interpreters, travelling far afield to ensure the breadth of his sample size (Artemidorus 1 Intro). Artemidorus admitted that his interpretation of a particular symbol would not hold true in every case, but insisted that he had based these interpretations on experience, not simply probabilities (Artemidorus 2.66). See below for further discussion of Artemidorus' approach.

[1456] Heliod., *Aeth.* 3.11, 8.11. According to Iamblichus and (supposedly) Apollonius of Tyana, the dreams experienced just prior to waking in the morning were more likely to contain divinatory revelations (Iambl., *Myst.* 3.2; Philostr., *VA* 2.37. Cf. Dam., *Isid.* 5.96 A. But it is precisely this period between waking and sleeping that is most likely to produce dreams mistaken for reality because the dreamer does not realize that he is asleep. Hurley, 577; M. M. Ohayon, R. G. Priest, M. Caulet, C. Guilleminault, "Hypnagogic and Hypnopompic Hallucinations: Pathological Phenomena?" *The British Journal of Psychiatry* 169 (1996): 459-67.

magicians (Chariton, 5.9). If that should be chalked up to poetic excess, a similar situation cropped up in one of the hagiographies, where a monk came across an ascetic in the desert and had to be convinced—by inspecting the ascetic's footprints—that the fellow was a flesh-and-blood man (*Life of Onnophrius* 3).

Significantly, people sometimes appear to have decided whether or not they were experiencing a vision based on an application of basic commonsense. For instance, Antony supposedly came to the conclusion that he was experiencing a vision when he came across a plate of silver in the desert one day, for it seemed unlikely to him that such an object could have been dropped by accident and the location was particularly remote.[1457] Room for doubt on the issue is implied by the hagiographer's comment on the sudden, inexplicable (by scientific laws) replacement of this silver plate by a lump of gold: Antony did not explain why gold had suddenly appeared in his path, "nor do we know the answer—only that what appeared was gold."[1458] So Antony apparently realized that he was having a vision because what he was observing seemed counter-intuitive, but what he was seeing was *real*. The hagiographer reassured the audience that the hagiographer himself believed this to be true.

Anxiety over potential skepticism in the audience is implied by another hagiographer's reassurance that multiple people had experienced the vision he was reporting, as if this was proof of the vision's veracity.[1459] There was good reason for

---

[1457] *Vita Antonii* 11. For the theory that the silver dish was a pool of water see Anderson, *Sage*, 21.

[1458] οὔ τε ἡμεις ἔγνωμεν, πλὴν ὅτι χρυσὸς ἦν ὁ φαινόμενος. *Vita Antonii*, 12. Translation from Robert Gregg, trans., *The Life of Antony* (NY: Paulist Press, 1980).

[1459] *Hist. mon.* 8.34. Cf. Artemidorus 1.2. This implies that visions experienced by only one person might have been considered somehow suspect. On the definition of hallucination as a vision that only one person

such anxiety: Celsus accused the witnesses of Jesus' resurrection of hallucinating. Origen responded that the witnesses were mentally sound, implying that a mentally sound person was incapable of hallucinating.[1460] But did Celsus' argument hold more water than Origen was willing to grant? Given the popularity of visions involving demons, the use of these stories as propaganda in support of the desert fathers' reputations, and competition with pagan holy men in this regard, it is worth considering the means by which Christians identified demons *as* demons and the ends to which these identifications were put.

Demons or Delusions?

Demons are a popular topic in scholarship on early Christianity, scholars arguing, for instance, that exorcism was a social drama facilitating the expression and resolution of tension.[1461] To my knowledge, scholars have yet to articulate fully the dissonance in modern versus ancient—and Christian versus pagan (especially Egyptian pagan)—belief in demons. An effort towards this end is made below, with the conviction that this will not only help to reorient modern thinkers towards ancient lines of thought, but will also illuminate a key area of competition between Christians and pagans. This section begins by examining the psychological factors involved with producing a vision, then looks at how ancient thinkers distinguished visions from non-visions and how they identified the entities in a vision. It concludes with an analysis of exorcism, focusing on the dispute regarding the significance of this

---

sees see William Harris, "Greek and Roman Hallucinations," in Harris, 293. But note that Harris does not say that this means that the vision is not the result of divine intervention.

[1460] Origen, *Con. Cels.* 2.55-60. Also see Harris, "Hallucinations," 300-301.

[1461] Toner, *Popular*, 82; Brown, *Cult*, 110-11.

practice in antiquity and the extent to which Christian and pagan practices overlapped.

Today, it is popularly assumed that visions of supposed gods and demons are a symptom of mental illness or an altered state of consciousness, not a result of divine intervention.[1462] Some of the practices associated with visions in antiquity, such as fasting and sleep deprivation, would have been conducive to the experience of hallucinations without divine intervention, which of course does not preclude contact with the divine.[1463] The sensory deprivation and concentration of thought that was practiced by early Christian monks has been known to induce a level of absorption that is sometimes associated with hallucinations.[1464] Ancient thinkers were well aware that physiological factors could encourage religious experiences, as demonstrated by Clement of Alexandria's complaint that pagan oracles relied on hallucinatory aids (Clem. Al., *Prot.* 2.11).

Personal fantasies were also thought to have a hand in directing the course of a person's dreams, including, presumably, the dreams that were being conflated with visions (Pl., *Resp*. 9.571C-D; Chariton, 4.1). This hypothesis is reminiscent of

---

[1462] Toner, *Popular*, 81-83; Bernadette Höfer, *Psychosomatic Disorders in Seventeenth-century French Literature* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2009); Christine Worobec, *Possessed: Women, Witches, and Demons in Imperial Russia* (DeKalb, Ill.: Northern Illinois University Press, 2001); Simon Dein, Malcolm Alexander, A. Napier, "Jinn, Psychiatry and Contested Notions of Misfortune among East London Bangladeshis," *Transcultural Psychiatry* 45 (2008): 31-55.

[1463] For periods of starvation followed by visions see *Hist. mon.* 10.23, 12.2-3. Cf. *Hist. mon.* 11.5. For the monks purposely avoiding sleep (or sleeping while standing) see *Hist. mon.* 13.4, 20.17. For a vision experienced on the point of exhaustion see *Hist. mon.* 21.3-4. Cf. *Apocalypse of Elijah* 4. Also see Rudolph Arbesmann, "Fasting and Prophecy in Pagan and Christian Antiquity," *Traditio* 7 (1949-1951): 1-71; Oliver Mason, Francesca Brandy, "The Psychotomimetic Effects of Short-Term Sensory Deprivation," *The Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease* 197 (2009): 783-85. Note that Plutarch claimed that the contents of a person's dreams were influenced by changes in the dreamer's body (Plut., *De def. or*. 437E-F).

[1464] Harris, "Hallucinations," 305; T. M. Luhrmann, "How Do You Learn to Know That It is God Who Speaks," in *Learning Religion: Anthropological Approaches*, eds., David Berliner and Ramon Serró (NY: Berghahn Books, 2007), 86, 99. For the debate over whether or not it is appropriate to apply the term "hallucination" to ancient experiences, given the lack of exact Latin or Greek equivalents, see Harris, "Hallucinations," 286-88.

psychoanalytical theories that associate the content of a person's dreams with underlying anxieties. Scholars like Patricia Cox Miller have applied some of these psychoanalytical theories to an analysis of dream theory in antiquity. The perfect subject for this sort of analysis is a prolific pagan writer by the name P. Aelius Aristides (b. 117 CE). In addition to a travelogue on the subject of Egypt, Aristides penned a collection of personal dreams, which he appears to have carefully studied in search of guidance as to his relationship with the divine and potential medical treatments for various ailments. The resulting collection provides a treasure-trove of details regarding the psychological angst and emotional turmoil to which a relatively high status man of the period might have been subject.[1465] Dream interpreters were not exactly psychiatrists, but, as Patricia Cox Miller contends, dream interpretation clearly provided a valuable means of self-exploration for clients. Because an interpretation was person-specific and relied heavily on allegory, dream interpretation provided clients with a special paradigm through which to reconsider the nature of their relationship with the world at large, including their relationship with the divine.[1466] When a dream did not appear to come true, this was not necessarily a sign that divination via dreams was misguided. Instead, it demonstrated that the dreamer had misunderstood his connection to the world, if only because he had failed to provide the interpreter with all of the required information.[1467]

[1465] E. R. Dodds, *Pagans and Christians in an Age of Anxiety: Some Aspects of Religious Experience from Marcus Aurelius to Constantine* (NY: W. W. Norton and Company, 1965), 39-45; Brown, *Making*, 42-46; Perkins, *Suffering*, 173-99; Miller, *Dreams*, 184-204.

[1466] Miller, *Dreams*, 10-11, 35, 90, 128.

[1467] As a demonstration of Artemidorus' clinical as opposed to theoretical approach, note his insistence that it is necessary for the dream interpreter to know as much as possible about the dreamer, his occupation, birth, financial status, state of health, age, and habits so that interpretations can be shaped to fit the dreamer (Artemidorus 1.9, 4.59).

If dream-visions really reflected the dreamer's hopes and fears, then perhaps angelic and demonic visitations had nothing to do with God or evil plots on the part of Satan.[1468] Psychological explanations could surely be provided to account for some of the visions recorded in the pilgrim accounts. For instance, a virgin on the brink of death supposedly had a vision of the martyr Colluthus, who warned her about her impending death and invited her to eat a meal in his martyrium (Pall., *HL* 60). The vision and the subsequent meal clearly served as a form of consolation for a woman confronted by anxiety over her own mortality. According to another account, a monk suffering pangs of lust had a vision that he was undergoing castration at the hands of three angels. Following the vision, the monk found himself miraculously freed from the lust that has been plaguing him (Pall., *HL* 29.2-5). Even if the hagiographers or their informants were guilty of a bit of invention when it came to these visions, presumably visions of this sort could have been experienced in antiquity. Should we dismiss them as mere wish-fulfillment or especially effective creative visualization? Plutarch contended that there was no need to insist upon the intervention of spirits when a person's own trials and tribulations were enough to summon horrifying visions, including the ghosts that were so easily conflated with demons (Plut., *Brut.* 36-37; Plut., *De superst.* 165D-166A). The fact that these visions inspired fear was, according to some elites, a reason to question the credibility of the visions, for elite sensibilities were offended by the notion that a divine being would behave in an

[1468] For ancient thinking on the subject of hallucinations generated by powerful emotions see Harris, "Hallucinations," 302-305.

autocratic, fear-inducing fashion and that an elite male would indulge his anxieties and give way to terror.[1469]

Before dismissing a vision as the product of a troubled mind, let us consider the alternative. If a martyr was going to visit someone, why not drop in on a dying virgin? If anyone deserved a vision of angels, surely a distressed monk qualified. As circular as this reasoning is, it would have seemed compelling to Late Antique men and women who had already accepted that spirits were active in the world and that these spirits took a genuine interest in the lives of humans. Visions of demons, horrible as they were, might have actually been inspired by underlying stress; but this psychological explanation (assuming it was considered) was not necessarily a reason to discount the existence of demons; rather, this stress was a reason to believe that demons were real. Demons were certainly known to enjoy torturing Christians through, among other things, psychological stress. Theoretically, confrontation with a demon should have prompted a monk to contemplate his own conscience, since these demons were thought to appear to monks who were struggling with sin (*Pratum spirituale* 161). To the extent that demons were thought to prey upon a person's guilt, fears, and desires[1470]—summoning visions of food, for example, for a hungry monk (*Hist. mon.* 21.3-4)—demons actually served to facilitate a monk's externalization and disavowal of unsavory elements, that is, sin.[1471] This does not mean, however, that these visions did not possess an element of reality. Social scientists have embraced the notion that the consequences of a situation become real when a person

[1469] Plut., *De superst.* 165D-71A. Martin, *Superstition*, 28-29, 61, 204-205, 230.

[1470] Note that, at one point, in Chariton's novel, a protagonist questioned whether a seemingly divinatory dream had been inspired by a deceptive spirit (Chariton, 3.1).

[1471] Brakke, *Demons*, 156.

believes that the situation is real.[1472] Hence, it is striking to come across pilgrim accounts claiming that encounters with demons left monks beaten, lacerated, and half dead (*Hist. mon.* 1.40-43, 25; *Vita Antonii* 8).

The characters in a narrative like the *Aeneid* probably received more visits from the gods than the audience members of the *Aeneid* itself would have personally experienced, or so William Harris argues. He contends that audience members merely took it as a given that the gods were more likely to make themselves visible to heroes than to ordinary mortals, and that there was a dearth of heroes in the audience's day.[1473] If so, then this was in sharp contrast to what the Christians were claiming. Allegedly, Jesus, demons, and angels *were* appearing to Christians, and in the here and now, not the distant past. Some pagans seem to have believed that the gods, too, could still be seen. Lucian mocked a fellow who claimed to have seen Hecate, a sight supposedly vouched for by several other witnesses (Lucian, *Philops.* 22-24). As amusing as Lucian found the story, it demonstrates that some people did not think that a divine visitation was out of the realm of possibility. A first-second century CE pagan text claims that a pilgrim actually beheld the visage of Asclepius in an Egyptian temple,[1474] demotic spells from Roman Egypt allegedly allowed clients to behold dream-visions of gods,[1475] and a fully awake Julian supposedly witnessed a statue of a goddess smiling, evidence, it seems, that the goddess was physically present in the idol (Eunap., *VS* 474-475).

[1472] W. I. Thomas, Dorothy Swaine Thomas, *The Child in America: Behavior Problems and Programs* (NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 1928), 572; Ralph Tanner, *Violence and Religion: Cross-cultural Opinions and Consequences* (New Dehli: Concept Publishing Company, 2007), 262.

[1473] Harris, "Hallucinations," 290-91.

[1474] Thessalos of Tralles, *De virtutibus herbarum* 23-25.

[1475] *PDM* xiv.93-114; *PDM* xiv.117-49.

Narrators probably sometimes included visions involving deities, demons, or angels as plot devices or as literary flourishes, allusions to Scripture or the *Iliad*. Such allusions would have bolstered the impact of an account, demonstrating the sophistication of the storyteller and reinforcing the notion that the hero of a tale was operating in accordance with religious precedent. Miracles were ideal for propaganda, implying, as they did, the existence of divine sanction.[1476] If such references were no more than sophisticated literary allusions, storytellers would have had no need to include corroborating details. The same is true of visions that were attributed to psychosis. It is worth noting, then, that the hagiographers often sought to substantiate visions with corroborating details. Antony's hagiographer claimed that Antony's visitors could hear the clanging of weapons and the other noises made by Antony's combat with demons (*Vita Antonii* 51). Allegedly, monks were able to see for themselves the wounds inflicted on their fellow monks by the demons (*Hist. mon.* 1.40-43, 25). When one of the desert fathers stabbed a demon in the face with a hot iron, the other monks apparently heard the demon scream. Afterwards, the desert father was able to hold burning hot iron without protection (*Hist. mon.* 13.1-2). The witnesses, the noises, the wounds, a demon's screams, and the seemingly miraculous ability to hold red hot iron without being burned were the sort of lurid details that Quintillian had recommended including in order to substantiate a report, as noted in chapter three. These details would have heightened the aesthetic qualities of a

[1476] Kee, 174; Harris, *Dreams*, 100. Not for nothing did Apion's anti-Jewish account of Moses' expulsion from Egypt claim that the pharaoh's decision to drive off the Hebrews was prompted by a dream in which Isis complained about the destruction of a temple (Joseph., *Ap.* 1.289 [32]). A deity in the form of an Egyptian deity supposedly predicted Apollonius of Tyana's birth (Philostr., *VA* 1.4). The gods' favor for Vespasian was reportedly demonstrated by both the flooding of the Nile upon the emperor's arrival in Egypt and the miraculous cures the emperor managed to perform during his stay in Alexandria (Dio Cass. 65.8; Tac., *Hist.* 4.81; Suetonius, *Vespasian* 7). Recall, too, the significance, in Christian eyes, of the Nile flooding after the destruction of the Serapeum.

passage, yes, but they were also intended to lend credibility to an account, to encourage the audience to believe that the events in question had actually transpired.

Perhaps the so-called visions in question were flesh-and-blood encounters that were somehow mistaken for visions. The previous chapter suggested that flesh-and-blood black-skinned people were occasionally mistaken for demons, if only for a split second. Maybe the desert fathers were mistaking bandits for demons. Or maybe some of the wounds were self-inflicted, monks throwing themselves about in manic fits. The seemingly miraculous ability to handle red hot iron could perhaps be attributed to the development of scar tissue or to the sort of trick that, according to the heresiologist Hippolytus (170-235), charlatans were using in order to fool their audiences into believing that magicians could dip their hands into boiling liquid without suffering harm.[1477]

Such rationalizations notwithstanding, some Christians must have believed that real demons, not human impersonators, were operating in this world, even if these demons were not always visible. For how else do we explain the central role of exorcism in the process of baptism?[1478] Supposedly a demon once gained entrance into Shenoute's monastery and threatened Shenoute. Scholars have theorized that this so-called demon was actually a local official trying to put the arrogant monk in his place. But when Shenoute attacked the demon and stood on it, the demon vanished.[1479] Such a feat is presumably beyond the powers of a mere mortal. If the

---

[1477] Hippolytus, *Refutatio* 4.33; Bohak, *Jewish Magic*, 40.

[1478] On exorcism in baptism see Silke Trzcionka, *Magic and the Supernatural in Fourth-Century Syria* (NY: Routledge 2007), 159-60; Roy Kotansky, "Greek Exorcistic Amulets," in Meyer and Mirecki, 250.

[1479] Besa, *Life of Shenoute* 73. Also see David Bell, trans. *Life of Shenoute* (Kalamazoo, Michigan: Cistercian Publications: 1983), 103n58.

story was meant as a metaphor, the demon representing sin,[1480] for instance, then this observation still stands. The encounter with the sin was articulated in physical terms, even if it was simply a mental or psychological ordeal. We need not choose between the alternatives. A demon in a particular story could very well have been a manifestation of psychological angst, or a real-world human enemy; neither option bars us from appreciating the possibility that these visions were in fact perceived as wonders—transgression of the natural order—to at least some of the actors and audience members.

For the Christians and pagans who were persuaded to accept the reality of these visions, the question appears not to have been whether or not gods or demons could appear to man but how a person could tell just which entity was involved. Frankfurter suggests that the staff at religious shrines was tasked with helping clients identify the deities, saints, and martyrs these clients beheld in their dream-visions, the assumption being that dreamers would not necessarily know what these entities looked like.[1481] According to Christians, demons had a disturbing ability to mimic the appearance of Jesus, angels, priests, and otherwise harmless fellows.[1482] Gullible though a believer might have seemed, he dared not risk trusting everything he saw.

[1480] According to one of the pilgrim accounts, a monk had to conquer the temptation corresponding to a particular demon in order to expel that demon (*Hist. mon.* 15.3).

[1481] Frankfurter, "Voices," 240. In Heliodorus' *Aethiopika*, an Egyptian priest was able to identify the characters in his dream as gods—and thus identify the dream as a vision—because these characters did not touch the ground (and the Egyptians supposedly portrayed the gods with their feet joined together because the gods do not physically walk) (Heliod., *Aeth.* 3.11-13). Allegedly, Aurelian once had a vision of Apollonius of Tyana, whom he recognized from depictions of Apollonius that had been put up in temples (*SHA Aurelian* 24).

[1482] Pall., *HL* 25.4; 15.89 N 312; 15.90 N 313; 18.13 Macarius the Egyptian 3; *Vita prima graeca Pachomii* 87; *Hist. mon.* 13.5. Cf. *Luke* 24:37-39.

Christians had to develop strategies for identifying the entities they observed.[1483] It is unfortunate that scholars have not shown more interest in this subject, for it sheds a great deal of light on Late Antique patterns of thought. Consider the process by which a patriarch of Alexandria by the name of Eulogius (d. 608) reportedly came to the decision that, first, he had experienced a vision, and second, that the person in his vision was a martyr. Eulogius realized that he had just experienced a vision when his efforts to determine the identity of the man who had interrupted his vigil were met by multiple reassurances that no one had entered the chapel where he had been secluded. Eulogius then decided that the person who had interrupted this vision was Julian the Martyr, because—a system of symbolic referents obviously in play—the man in his vision resembled an actual archdeacon who just happened to be named Julian (*Pratum spirituale* 146).

Some narrators were disappointingly vague when it came to explaining just how the Christian or pagan wise man in a particular story was able to see through an entity's disguise (Eunap., *VS* 470-73; *Life of Aaron*, 95 [41a]). Realizing the danger of confusion, Christians made an effort to clarify the process of identification. Among other things, demons could supposedly be distinguished by their foul stench (5.27 N 173; Pall., *HL* 23.5; *Vita Antonii* 63). Allegedly, demons also had a frightening countenance, inspiring fear and depression, whereas angels bore a friendly countenance and had a quiet demeanor. The sight of an angel might frighten someone at first, Antony supposedly explained, but if this fear gave way to joy, then a person

[1483] When an ascetic living in the desert pointed to his footprints as evidence that he was a flesh-and-blood person, it is striking that the monk who was inspecting these footprints still felt compelled to recite a prayer (*Life of Onnophrius* 3). Was the monk making sure that the ascetic was not a demon?

could rest assured that he was in the company of an angel.[1484] Pachomius supposedly claimed that the sight of an angel dispelled all thoughts save wonder at the spectacle of the divine. If a monk was able to continue deliberating as he gazed at a vision, then he knew that he was actually looking at a demon (*Vita prima graeca Pachomii* 87). Besa did not explicitly specify how Shenoute happened to be able to identify demons, but the threats levelled at Shenoute by the demon that broke into his monastery might have been a decisive factor in that particular case (Besa, *Life of Shenoute* 73). No doubt, demons often gave themselves away by the illicit nature of their behavior, while angels could be recognized by the dissemination of the sort of advice an angel could be expected to give. In other words, the identification of an entity as an angel depended on the viewer's notions of orthodox Christianity, since this comprised the body of knowledge that an angel would be expected to deliver.[1485]

One of the *Sayings* recommended that a monk confronted by a so-called angel declare that he was unworthy of beholding such an entity (15.87 N 310; 15.88 N 311). Presumably, this show of humility would force a demon to unmask itself. Otherwise, a Christian wishing to expose a demon could display the sign of the cross or intone prayers. The demons were weakened by these demonstrations, and their exhibition of

---

[1484] *Vita Antonii* 36-37, 43. Cf. *Vita Antonii* 25-26.

[1485] According to one of the pilgrim accounts, a monk living in Egypt supposedly suffered from temptation so badly that he had a vision in which he actually felt as if he was participating in a lewd act with a demon. Later, overcome with remorse for his behavior during the course of this vision, he secluded himself in a cave and had another vision, this time of an angel who assured him that God had forgiven him for his transgression. The angel also told the monk that, in the future, he should rely on his fellow monks for support (*Hist. mon.* 1.52-58). Apparently the monk identified the entity in the first vision as a demon based on the creature's lewd behavior. But how did the monk know that the angel in the second vision was not just a demon in disguise, urging the monk to abandon his repentance ahead of time, since they were well known for their efforts to discourage the monks (*Vita Antonii* 25)? Perhaps it was the angel's dissemination of advice that an angel could be expected to deliver—a recommendation that a monk rely on his brothers—that convinced the monk that he was indeed seeing an angel. Cf. *Hist. mon.* 2.9-10. For the use of this sort of reasoning by evangelical Christians living in the United States of America see Luhrmann, "Learn," 89. Similar reasoning was employed by Sri Lankans assessing the veracity of demon possessions in the 1980s. See James Brow, *Demons and Development: The Struggle for Community in a Sri Lankan Village* (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 1996), 145.

vulnerability constituted yet further evidence that these entities were in fact demons, for angels would never betray such helplessness.[1486] Hence, the wailing of the demons as they endured exorcism was particularly telling. The Christian martyrs had supposedly endured similar agonies without complaint. Thus, the torments of exorcism were a fitting parallel to the martyrdoms suffered by Christians at the hands of their pagan (and heretical) persecutors.[1487] Not for nothing did Tertullian invite pagans to produce a man possessed by a demon into the trial of a Christian being prosecuted on account of his faith, for the demon—according to Tertullian—would have no choice but to testify as to the supremacy of Christianity (Tert., *Apol.* 23). Whereas torture was subverted by a martyr's resistance, it performed its traditional function when applied to a demon, demonstrating the power and righteousness of the (Christian) torturer. Ostensibly, torture was meant to elicit truth as well. So when, according to Minucius Felix, exorcists used pain to force Serapis and other demons to confess their true identities (Min. Fel., *Oct.*27), we can assume that these confessions would have involved the so-called deities admitting that they were actually demons. Significantly, for our purposes, this scenario was evocative of traditional Egyptian pagan rites, rites in which a deity or person allegedly gained power over another by learning the victim's true name.[1488]

[1486] *Vita Antonii* 63; *Hist. mon.* 1.60; *Life of Aaron* 96, 127-29 (41b, 52b-53a); 19.9 Longinus; 19.20 see Xanthias 2. Cf. *Mark* 5.1-20; 12.19 N 36; 18.8 Zēno 5.

[1487] On the resemblance of exorcisms to martyrdoms see Grig, 75; Brown, *Cult*, 108-109.

[1488] Burton, 62n2; Betz, 172; Dieleman, *Priests*, 69-70; Naomi Janowitz, *Icons of Power: Ritual Practices in Late Antiquity* (University Park, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2002), 33-44. Also see H. S. Versnel, "The Poetics of the Magical Charm: An Essay on the Power of Words," in Mirecki, 105-58; Erica Mathiesen, *Christian Women in the Greek Papyri of Egypt to 400 CE* (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols Publishers, 2014), 27l-81. On the Jewish use of divine names see Zellentin, 43; Gideon Bohak, "Hebrew, Hebrew Everywhere? Notes on the Interpretation of *Voces Magicae*," in Noegel, 69-82. For examples of Greco-Egyptian spells where knowledge of divine names imparts power see *PGM* II.126-27; *PGM* III.158-59; *PGM* 624-25; *PGM* IV.1818-19; *PGM* 2344. Interestingly, Origen adopted the same position as the magicians when it came to the power of *untranslated* divine names in order to defend the right of Christians in refusing to invoke their deity

Exorcisms were reportedly so impressive that they were inspiring conversions.[1489] Yet this process could not have been as clear-cut as Christians claimed. This point has received scant scholarly attention, presumably because scholars have seen little value in investigating a religious debate over entities of suspect existence. However, if it is true that demons do not exist, then this debate is surely among the most promising areas of research, since here we have not only the construction of meaning out of counter-intuitive evidence, but the construction of *contested* meanings out of this evidence, implying the existence of a *shared* construct that is nevertheless the subject of dispute. According to pagans and Christians alike, the exercise of power over what was thought to be a deity suggested that the entity in question was not actually a deity, because submission implied inferiority. This was in keeping with internal pagan polemics over the use of rituals intended to secure a god's service: an entity who obeyed the will of a person must somehow be inferior to that person, as Porphyry pointed out in his *Letter to Anebo*, complaining about an Egyptian penchant for levying threats at supposed deities.[1490] Porphyry does not appear to have been entirely off-base with his assessment of Egyptian practice, for traditional Egyptian pagan texts[1491] and Greco-Roman Egyptian spells do contain instructions for levying threatening language at deities. According to a Greek spell from Egypt, for instance, practitioners were meant to threaten destruction of Osiris' corpse if Osiris did not do their bidding.[1492] This sort of abuse looked odd to Porphyry and to the Christians apologists,[1493] but their skepticism was based

---

using the name of Zeus (Origen, *Con. Cels.* 1.24-25, 5.41-46). In terms of subaltern theory, Origen's argument could be perceived as an effort to resist imperialistic efforts to deny the subaltern's voice. Yet this could not help but open Christians open to the charge of magic. See the below discussion of the use of seemingly nonsensical language in magic.

[1489] Socrates, *Hist. eccl.* 4.23; Sozom., *Hist. eccl.* 5.15, 6.20. Also recall the conversions that supposedly followed the exorcisms of pagan temples (Pseudo-Dioscorus, *The Panegyric of Macarius of Tkōw*, 5.2-11; *Life of Apa Moses*).

[1490] Porph., *Ep. ad An.* Cf. Plut., *De Is. et Os.* 380C-D. Cf. Philostr., *VA* 5.12.

[1491] Betz, 164-65, 173-74; Pinch, 74-75.

[1492] *PGM* V.250-301. See Fowden, *Egyptian*, 81.

[1493] Euseb., *Prep. ev.* 5.10 19b-c; Theod. Cyr., *Graec.* 3.67-68. Cf. Artemidorus 4.2.

not on repetitive testing performed in controlled settings, but on preconceived notions regarding the proper maintenance of a hierarchy, where a true deity could never appear subordinate to a mere mortal.

To understand the significance of these threats from an Egyptian perspective, we have to appreciate that these threats were often levied in the course of rituals during which the practitioner was attempting to assimilate to a deity. For instance, a practitioner would state that he *was* the deity Thoth.[1494] This strategy was reused in spells incorporating Jewish and Christian imagery, the users claiming, for example, "It is the mouth of the lord Sabaoth that said this"[1495] or "I am Mary."[1496] If the spectacle of a god bowing to the will of a mere human raised some eyebrows, a god who bowed to will of another deity (identified with a human) would have been less shocking. Moreover, the threats levied against the deities were theoretically never meant to be carried out, since it was expected that the deities would do the bidding of the practitioners and that religious order (including the supremacy of the deity) would be preserved.

I do not believe that scholars have fully realized the degree to which a Christian who threatened to exercise power over a demon in a deity's guise would have looked like an Egyptian pagan who went about threatening to destroy Osiris' corpse. This resemblance matters because the ending of the Christian ritual was so very different: in the eyes of Egyptians, a new religious order was being established

---

[1494] *PGM* V.249-250; *PGM* XII.227-238. Cf. Philostr., *VA* 8.5; *Corpus Hermeticum Treatise X*, 24-25; *Corpus Hermeticum Treatise XI*, 20; *Corpus Hermeticum Treatise XII*, 1; *Asclepius* 6-7; Iambl., *Myst.* 6.5-7. Also see David Frankfurter, "Protective Spells," in Meyer and Smith, 108; Dieleman, *Priests*, 154-55.

[1495] Ⲧⲁⲓ ⲦⲁⲠⲢⲞ ⲞⲨⲠⲞⲤ Ⲥⲁⲃⲁⲱⲑ ⲦⲈⲚⲦⲁⲤϪⲈ Ⲡⲁⲓ. *P.Ryl.Copt.* 104 . Also see Meyer, *Ancient*, 128.

[1496] ϪⲈⲁⲚⲞⲔⲠⲈ ⲘⲁⲢⲓⲁ. *P.Lond.Copt.* 5987 = inv. 1008 . Also see Meyer, *Ancient*, 129-33.

by appropriating the Egyptian ritual and overturning its traditional operation.[1497] The Christian carried through on the threats to destroy the deity, whereas the Egyptian pagan who levied these threats had no intention of doing so.

Christian propaganda ignored the fact that pagans were performing their own exorcisms[1498] and ignored the degree to which the conflation of pagan deities and demons undermined the function of a Christian exorcism as proof against paganism as a whole. Traditional Egyptian pagans distinguished between different kinds of demons—both good and bad—as well as deities that could be alternatively helpful and dangerous to mankind.[1499] Collapsing all of these entities into a single demonic category, Christians concentrated anxieties and facilitated the expression of aggression by simplifying processes of classification and expediting decision-making. The conflation of demons and deities in an exorcism scenario could be interpreted as an effort to undermine pagan rivals who were relying on the assistance of the deities in question. If we step outside of Egypt for a moment, we can find a good example of this in the Apostle Paul's alleged exorcism of a girl who was supporting herself by delivering prophecies inspired by a spirit that had managed to gain possession of her.

[1497] Which is not to say that Christian exorcism was based on Egyptian antecedants, only that this is how a Christian exorcism might have appeared to an Egyptian. For the origin of exorcism rituals, see Kotanksy, 246-57.

[1498] Luc., *Philops.* 16-17; Eunap., *VS* 457; Philostr., *VA* 3.38, 4.11; Dam., *Isid.* 3.46 B. Also see W. J. Tait, "Theban Magic," in *Hundred-Gated Thebes: Acts of a Colloquium on Thebes and the Theban Area in the Graeco-Roman Period*, ed. S. P. Vleeming (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1995), 178. On Jewish exorcism see Gideon Bohak, *Ancient Jewish Magic: A History* (NY: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 88-114; Rebecca Lesses, "Exe(o)rcising Power: Women as Sorceresses, Exorcists, and Demonesses in Babylonian Jewish Society of Late Antiquity," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 69 (2001): 343-75. On the cultural rather than scientific sources of Late Antique skepticism with regard to the existence of demons see Martin *Superstition*, 187-204.

[1499] Pinch, 34-46; Rita Lucarelli, "Towards a Comparative Approach to Demonology in Antiquity: The Case of Ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia," *Archiv für Religionsgeschichte* 14 (2013): 11-25; Rita Lucarelli, "Demonology during the Late Pharaonic and Greco-Roman Periods in Egypt," *Journal of Ancient Near Eastern Religions* 11 (2011) 109–125.

After Paul exorcised this spirit, the girl's employers were so annoyed over losing their source of income that they turned Paul in to the magistrates.[1500]

According to other Christian accounts, the spectacle of exorcism attracted converts. In the third quarter of the fourth century, two desert fathers exiled to an island in Egypt allegedly exorcised the daughter of a pagan priest. Their feat inspired the locals to destroy their idols and to convert (Socrates, *Hist. eccl.* 4.23; Sozom., *Hist. eccl.* 6.20). Given the nature of these consequences, it is not surprising that audiences would have debated the significance of an exorcism[1501] or that rivals were apparently denying altogether that their opponents had the ability to perform exorcisms (Tert., *Apol.* 46; *Vita Antonii* 80). Nor is it surprising that audiences were demanding proof as to the efficacy of an exorcism, especially considering the status holy men were accruing for this service. Proof might be provided by a cup of water that was knocked over as the demon fled, as seen during an exorcism reportedly performed by a Jew before Vespasian,[1502] or in an entire wall being knocked over, as in a later Christian account (Pall., *HL* 36.5). Presumably, proof might also be proferred by the demon itself, with the entity announcing its submission or making some other embarrassing admission (15.15 Daniel 3; 15.84 N 307). Otherwise, an

[1500] *Acts* 16:16. For the Greco-Roman pagan accusation that Paul was a magician see Droge, *Homer*, 177.

[1501] Jesus' ability to exorcise demons allegedly provoked a debate over whether he was actually divine versus whether he was merely acting on behalf of Beezelbub. Luke 11:14-20; *Mark* 3.22-30; *Matt*. 12.22-30; Todd Klutz, "Reinterpreting 'Magic' in the World of Jewish and Christian Scripture: An Introduction," in Klutz, 2n4.

[1502] Joseph., *AJ* 8.2 (42-49). On this incident see Bohak, 100-105. For the requirement that the demon give physical proof of its departure see Philostr., *VA* 4.20.

exorcism might have been proclaimed successful based on the determination that the victim of the possession had ceased to behave in a deranged manner.[1503]

To perform an exorcism, Christians relied on prayer and the sign of the cross (Sozom., *Hist. eccl.* 6.28; *Vita Antonii* 78, 80). A *Saying* recommended that monks facing temptations in demonic guise fall back on religious teachings, reciting these, even when these teachings had not yet been mastered by the monks in question. Allegedly, the language of the teachings alone would instill terror in the demons, for these entities understood the words well enough. This *Saying* likened monks to snake charmers who supposedly controlled snakes with words that the snakes understood but not the charmers (5.37 N 184). The use of seemingly nonsensical language, especially combined with the use of visual imagery (drawings of the cross), suggests a striking overlap with practices associated with magic.[1504] This parallel did not go unobserved by pagan critics. When Julian accused the Christians of accomplishing all of their power by marking crosses on people's foreheads and hissing to the demons, he meant that they were employing magic (Julian, *Ep.* 19 [79]). Over a century earlier, Celsus had accused Christians of relying on incantations and the use of magical names to gain power.[1505]

But if a Christian's power really came down to the usage of a few words and symbols, this could be interpreted to mean that Christian faith itself was not the reason that Christian wonder-workers were excelling. It would have followed from

---

[1503] For cases where physical proof of the demon's departure was provided alongside a proof constituted by a return to acceptable behavior see *Vita Antonii* 64; Philostr., *VA* 4.20.

[1504] *PGM* XIII.765-70; Iambl., *Myst.* 7.4-5. For ancient skepticism regarding the power of seemingly nonsensical language see Plut., *De superst.* 166B; Plin., *HN* 28.4 (21). Cf. Luc., *Philops.* 7-10; Porph., *Ep. ad An.* Also see chapter two, Burton-Christie, 124; Frankfurter, *Roman Egypt*, 255-56; Gager, *Curse*, 7-9; Brakke, *Demons*, 231; Betz, 164-72.

[1505] Origen, *Con. Cels.* 1.6. Cf. Clem. Al., *Prot.* 4.

this that a person did not have to be Christian, *per se*, to make use of the Christian magic that was supposedly so efficacious. Even pagans and Jews could make good use of a spell containing Christian elements.[1506] After all, many of the spells circulating in Roman Egypt incorporated syncretic fusions of imagery, suggesting that a Greco-Roman pagan, for instance, did not have to forfeit his Greco-Roman pagan identity to benefit from the use of Jewish, Christian, and Egyptian pagan imagery when performing an exorcism or another similarly counter-intuitive feat (*PGM* IV.3007-86). Indeed, the late fifth century pagan Damascius knew of an Alexandrian scholar who allegedly performed an exorcism by calling on the God of the Jews *and* Helios (Dam., *Vit. Isid.* 3.46 B).

Lest anyone imagine that a Christian's power to exorcise a demon lay solely in the use of magical symbols and obscure language, Christians claimed that only *Christians* could wield this power effectively. According to *Acts*, some Jewish exorcists tried to invoke Jesus' name in order to expel a demon, and were attacked by the demon, who said it recognized Jesus' name but not them (Acts 19:13-17). Hagiographers implied that the success of an exorcism depended on the exorcist successfully demonstrating stereotypically Christian characteristics, such as humility (15.71 N 298; 15.84 N 307), obedience (*Hist. mon.* 24.10), and charity (17.17 N 354).

Besa insinuated that the sight of Shenoute was enough to put a demon in agony (Besa, *Life of Shenoute* 6). Did Shenoute really derive the power to perform an exorcism from himself? If so, this could be taken to mean that the efficacy of

[1506] On difficulties associated with trying to interpret the use of divine names in spells preserved on papyri as evidence for the users' religious identity see Roberts, 82; Gager, *Curse*, 209. Frankfurter argues that the use of a particular name in a spell indicated the practitioner's needs (and the best deity for meeting that need) rather than his religious affiliation. David Frankfurter, "Narrating Power: The Theory and Practice of the Magical Historiola in Ritual Spells," in Meyer and Smith, 476.

Christianity was dependent on personal charisma rather than the religion itself. To offset the danger that people would think that holy men were operating independently from divine will, Christians endeavored to identify God as the true source of the holy men's powers.[1507]

We should not be overly hasty in accepting this as proof that Christianity, by definition, was distinct from magic. The Christian who attributed his power to God was voicing a sentiment not unlike that found in the traditional Egyptian spells, that attributed the magician's power, for instance—the responsibility for the threats that the magician was levying against the gods—to the force of the magic itself, as if this magic was an active intelligent entity and the magician merely its conduit.[1508] This must have posed a challenge for early Christians: a seemingly miraculous event that did not depend on the faith of the practitioner or was merely an illusion could hardly serve as the basis of what was supposed to be a faith-conversion. To succeed, Christians had to prove that their miracles were better than the spells and trickery attributed to so-called magicians.

Magic Tricks or Miracles?

This section of the discussion challenges the distinction between magic and the so-called proper religious miracle. It begins by addressing the degree to which magic is interpreted as trickery, and proceeds to debunk one strategy after another for distinguishing between magic and proper religion. These theories include the

[1507] *Vita Antonii* 48. Cf. AP N 19.20. Compare to the accusation that the Persian priest-magicians avoided invoking the gods in their public rites lest anyone believe that their powers came from these gods as opposed to the mortals practicing these rites. Philostr., *VS* 494-95.

[1508] Christian Jacq, *Egyptian Magic* (Chicago: Bolchazy-Carducci, 1985), 103. On magic (*heka*) in traditional Egyptian pagan belief as a creative force see Ritner, "Religious," 49.

presence of coercive language, usage within a private or secret context, and the use or rituals or exotic imagery. An extended discussion of the "pagan-izing" aspects of magic demonstrates that the constructed nature of pagan-Christian boundaries prevents this sort of simplistic categorization. The distinction between magic and proper religion is particularly difficult in an Egyptian context because a distinction of this sort appears to have only arisen in this region under Roman rule. Having thoroughly undermined the objective basis for a distinction between magic and proper religion, this section concludes by suggesting that the two categories were constructed and differentiated through the use of rhetorical strategies and social negotiation.

The scholar hoping to deal with the issue of magic faces a plethora of challenges,[1509] not the least of which is a tendency, both ancient and modern, to associate magic with intentional chicanery. For our purposes, chicanery, or trickery, can be defined as an assertion that a particular feat has been accomplished via an inversion of natural laws when in fact the feat has been accomplished thanks to the proper operation of natural laws with which the witnesses are simply unfamiliar. Ancient thinkers who accepted the possibility of a miracle—an inversion of natural laws—would not have classified an event as a miracle if they could submit an intuitive explanation for its occurrence. And the classification of such an event as a miracle would have looked like trickery to them. The same reasoning applies to many

[1509] For a history of various approaches towards the study of magic and efforts to define magic itself see Tambiah, 1-83; Bohak, *Jewish Magic*, 35-51; Gustavo Benavides, "Magic," in Segal, 295-308; Trzcionka, 5-9; Ritner, "Religious," 44-48; Wilburn, 15-18; Jonathan Smith, "Trading Places," in Meyer and Mirecki, 13-28. For magic in antiquity see Bohak, *Jewish Magic*; Trzcionka; Dickie; Dieleman, *Priests*; Meyer and Smith; Paul Mirecki and Marvin Meyer, eds., *Magic and Ritual in the Ancient World* (Leiden: Brill, 2002); Gager, *Curses*; Pinch; Robert Ritner, *The Mechanics of Ancient Egyptian Magical Practice* (Chicago: Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 1993); Luck, *Arcana*; Luck, *Pathways*; Christopher Faorone and Dirk Obbink, eds., *Magika Hiera: Ancient Greek Magic and Religion* (NY: Oxford University Press, 1991); Noegel; F. Graf, *Magic in the Ancient World*, trans. Franklin Philipp (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997); Harold Remus, *Pagan-Christian Conflict over Miracle in the Second Century* (Cambridge, MA: Philadelphia Patristic Foundation, 1983).

modern thinkers in their approach towards magic. Anthropologist James Lett, for instance, despite claiming that he wants to treat magic as objectively as possible, admits that he is predisposed towards assuming that every instance of magic, divination, necromancy, and miracle will turn out to be a conscious fraud.[1510] Accusing all wonder-workers of intentional deception seems to be going too far. As Gideon Bohak points out, the literature actually produced by ancient magicians is devoid of references to the methods by which they allegedly faked their powers.[1511] For instance, the spells mentioned in the previous chapter in connection to necromancy were not instructing practitioners to insert the windpipes of cranes into human skulls, even though Hippolytus claimed that this was how a typical necromancer operated, using a windpipe as a speaking-tube to dupe audiences into believing that inanimate objects were carrying on conversations (Hippolytus, *Refutatio* 4.41). Work conducted by anthropologists among wonder-workers suggests that the practitioners actually believe that they have the counter-intuitive powers they claim to have.[1512] Thus, it seems reasonable to stipulate that at least some ancient wonder-workers were not engaging in conscious fraud.

The classification of magic vis-à-vis proper religion poses another challenge. Some scholars have sought to distinguish magic from religion by the presence of coercion. According to this line of thinking, a prayer for assistance is a plea, not coercion. Therefore, a prayer is a tool of proper religion, whereas magic seeks to

[1510] Lett, 70.

[1511] Bohak, *Jewish Magic*, 40.

[1512] For instance, see Brow.

force an entity's compliance.[1513] Ancient precedent for a distinction between magic and religion on the basis of coercive methodology is provided by elite discourse asserting the impropriety of such behavior. Allegedly, it was inappropriate for a person to try to force a god to do his bidding. Moreover, supreme deities were supposed to be indifferent to the commands of mere mortals. Therefore, anything that looked like coercion was either trickery or targeted at something other than a deity.[1514] But as Garth Fowden points out, so-called proper religion in antiquity was founded on the assumption that the gods could be encouraged to adopt a favorable attitude towards suppliants through sacrifice and other rituals.[1515] At least some elite thinkers came to the conclusion that magic could be effective, because it seemed to function according to a law of cause and effect, a sympathy existing between a magician's actions and the universe at large, an ancient version of chaos theory[1516] ensuring the efficacy of a ritual.[1517] Therefore, it does not seem legitimate to distinguish between magic and religion based on the use of what looks like coercion, especially if this is taken to mean that Christianity, as a so-called proper religion, was entirely free of the taint of coercion. Consider a *Saying* in which a desert father sought to free a disciple from the influence of a demon by saying that he was not going to release God until the disciple was cured, even if God was unwilling to take

---

[1513] Luck, *Arcana*, 3; Luck, *Pathways*, 205; Kee, 213; Remus, 62-67; Marcel Mauss, *A General Theory of Magic* (Boston: Routledge and K. Paul, 1972), 72.

[1514] See criticism of the notion that gods would obey the threats of mere mortals.

[1515] Fowden, *Egyptian*, 80. Cf. Anderson, *Sage*, 241n27.

[1516] Events being linked through chains of cause and effect, so that even minor changes to a system can have tremendous effects. See L. Douglas Kiel, Euel W. Elliott, *Chaos Theory in the Social Sciences Foundations and Applications* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1997).

[1517] Chaeremon fr. 2; Luck, *Pathways*, 206-207.

action. This threat—so reminiscent of the attempts at coercion found in traditional Egyptian spells—was successful, and the demon was driven away (19.12 Sisoēs 21).

Another strategy for distinguishing between magic and proper religion involves the extent to which magic is presumed to have enjoyed a unique identification with privacy and secrecy. This approach is valid insofar as the Roman state identified so-called magic with private religious devotions.[1518] But secrecy in of itself is not proof that a particular act was magic, since secrecy was considered part and parcel of licit, state-sanctioned traditional Egyptian temple-based religion.[1519] Moreover, acts that were sometimes classified as magic were carried out in a public setting.[1520]

Alternatively, scholars have sought to distinguish magic from proper religion based on the use of rituals.[1521] Unfortunately, it is unclear how ritual in this instance should be defined. If it refers to the manipulation of objects and nonsensical language, does the use of a prayer count as ritual? What if the person intoning the prayer does not entirely understand the meaning of the words, like in the *Saying* that compared monks to snake charmers? If magic, by definition, involves symbolism, does the use of an emblem like the cross turn an exorcism into magic? Questions like these suggest that a distinction between magic and proper religion based on the use of ritual would be terribly subjective. It also seems to reflect a bias inspired by a Protestant polemic that sought to denigrate Catholic ritual by labeling it as magic.[1522]

[1518] Some practitioners of what the Roman state labelled as magic must have known that the rituals they were conducting were illegal. Perhaps the illicit thrill of deviance contributed to the notion that these rites had power. Wilburn, 15-21.

[1519] Moyer, *Limits*, 255-56.

[1520] For instance, amulets were worn in public and were not necessarily banned by legislation (Wilburn, 24), though at one point, wearing an amulet to ward off illness was apparently considered sufficiently criminal to garner an arrest (Amm. Marc. 19.12.14). On amulets in traditional Egyptian paganism see Pinch, 104-119; Campbell Bonner, *Studies in Magical Amulets Chiefly Graeco-Egyptian* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1950).

[1521] Wilburn, 15.

[1522] Benavides, 296; David Frankfurter, "Traditional Cult," in Potter, 545; Smith, *Drudgery*.

The argument that magic and proper religion can be distinguished based on the inclusion of exotic imagery means that the same act might be classified as both magic and proper religion depending on the circumstances. A prayer would be considered magic if used by a monk who did not understand all of the words but would be considered proper religion if used by a monk who did understand the words. Tendentious as this may sound, the ancient world tended to associate illicit religious practices, including magic, with the foreign. Greco-Roman novelists incorporated Egyptianizing aspects into their (negative) portrayals of magic.[1523] The identification of a particular practice as magic was a labelling strategy by which people distinguished themselves from the Other. Thus, it makes sense that Greco-Roman pagans accused Christians of using magic, associating these Christian "magicians" with Egypt because Egypt was thought to be the home of spellbinding, but depraved, wonders.[1524] For this reason, Celsus accused Jesus of finding employment for a while in Egypt as a magician (Origen, *Con. Cels.* 1.28). Christians returned the favor, saying that what looked like pagan miracles were really just illusions carried out by magicians and demons.[1525]

With Christians accusing their pagan opponents of magic, it follows that a Christian who engaged in behavior resembling magic was in fact descending into paganism. G. Luck argues that so-called orthodox Christians had to reject magic because it was too pagan,[1526] meaning, it seems, that Christianity could only survive if it managed to distinguish itself as a

---

[1523] Luc., *Philops.* 34; Heliod., *Aeth.* 2.33, 3.16, 4.7. Also see Dieleman, *Priests*, 243-44, 286; Graverini, 57-62; Dickie, 229-33.

[1524] Dickie, 203, 229; Fowden, *Egyptian*, 165.

[1525] Origen argued that Jesus' deeds were free of the deceit that tainted sorcery (Origen, *Con. Cels.* 2.49-50). On the contrary, the miracles attributed to Antinous, Hadrian's deified lover (see the second chapter), were acts of magic carried out by the pagan priests in charge of his cult (Origen, *Con. Cels.* 3.36). Origen went on to compare Jesus to Moses, who had defeated the Pharaoh's magicians by relying on divine intercession (Origen, *Con. Cels.* 2.49-50), thereby proving Jewish-Christian supremacy *over* the Egyptian magicians to whom Celsus was attempting to equate Jesus. For additional discussion of Moses' battle with the magicians see below. For additional discussion of the charges against Jesus as a magician see Athan., *De incar.* 1.48; Justin, 1.30-51; Arnobius, 1.43. See also Kofsky, 174, 213-14; Bremmer, "Foolish Egyptians," 311-30; Kahlos, *Debate*, 177-79; Martin, *Superstition*, 1-9; Morton Smith, *Jesus the Magician* (NY: Harper and Row, 1978); Anderson, *Sage*, 222-27; Remus, 57-61. For an example of a debate over whether or not a given act was proper religion or illicit magic, consider the controversy over the source of Apollonius of Tyana's oracular powers, abilities that some attributed to wizadry and others attributed to divine intervention (Philostr., *VA* 5.12).

[1526] Luck, *Arcana*, 468.

distinct entity from paganism. To do this, it had to disavow the syncretizing tendencies of so-called heretical forms of Christianity. The latter, presumably would have included the ubiquitous gnostics, some of whom appear to have incorporated practices that looked like (or at least were denigrated as) magic (Plot., *Enneads* 2.9.14; Epiph., *Pan.* 27.3.1). Yet, as Frankfurter points out, the desert fathers who so closely resembled the wonder-working pagans often operated as syncretizing forces.[1527] Recall the desert fathers' efforts to control nature, a function otherwise performed by pagans carrying out entirely licit rituals. To MacMullen, this syncretism was nothing less than the survival of paganism in a Christian guise.[1528] Some so-called pagan practices, like the use of amulets, were certainly denounced by Christians such as Shenoute, implying that these practices really were foreign to Christianity.[1529] But whether we refer to this behavior as a "pagan survival" or as "syncretism," we are left at something of a loss when it comes to explaining the conversions attributed to these feats. If Christians were just like pagans, and Christian miracles looked just like pagan feats, then how could these miracles have functioned as evidence for the efficacy of *Christianity* as opposed to *paganism*?

Some of the confusion regarding the significance of so-called magic can be dispelled if we consider the degree to which "paganism" and "Christianity" were constructed categories, not objective realities. Some overlap is only to be expected. Indeed, Jonathan Z. Smith challenges the notion that any society or culture could possibly develop out of another, *de novo*, free of all connections to the past, even with the aid of a body of literature, especially a body of literature as lean as the New Testament and the apocrypha. No text could possibly provide enough guidance on every aspect of life to prevent the maintenance of some

[1527] Frankfurter, *Roman Egypt*, 270; Frankfurter, "Syncretism," 339-85.

[1528] MacMullen, *Christianity*, 121. On the negative implications of syncretism in scholarship see chapters one and two.

[1529] Clem. Al., *Prot.* 10; Pseudo-Athanasius, *Homily on the Virgin*; Shenoute, *Against the Origenists*. Cf. Acts 19:11-13. See also Kotansky, 244.

traditions. The process of conversion, even extended over several years, could not communicate complete knowledge of what was essentially an organic, living tradition. Converts had to be told what it meant to be Christian on an ongoing basis, and the content of these messages was not uniform. So to call particular activities evidence of a reversion to "paganism" is quite naïve.[1530]

As the work of social scientists suggests, people do not generally make an effort to analyze their routine behavior objectively, only that behavior which, once attention is called to it, is deemed unacceptable.[1531] The cultivation of seemingly contradictory religious beliefs is not exceptional.[1532] Until a so-called Christian was prompted to reflect upon the orthodoxy or Christian-ness of his behavior—to ask himself, for instance, if something looked like magic and whether or not engaging in such an activity was suitable for a Christian—he had no reason to suppose that he was doing anything inappropriate, that is, pagan. Hence, it is not a given that a new convert—even if we imagine conversion constituting a reorientation of the soul, as Arthur Darby Nock would have it[1533]—would have systematically changed every facet of his life in accordance with what he took to be Christian teachings. The same would have applied to Christians raised in the faith.

That being said, Christians like Shenoute were clearly reflecting on the orthodoxy of given behaviors and seeking to isolate particular acts—like so-called magic—as pagan. But a scholar who gives these fellows pride of place in defining

---

[1530] Smith, *Drudgery*.

[1531] Mark Konty, "The Deconstruction of Deviance," in Bryant, 31-37.

[1532] Simon Price takes a similar vein in his work on imperial cult, calling on the work of the symbolist Dan Sperber. Simon Price, *Rituals and Power: The Roman Imperial Cult in Asia Minor* (NY: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 5, 8-9; Dan Sperber, "La pensée symbolique est-elle pré-rationnelle?' in *La function symbolique*: *E*ssais d'anthropologie réunis, eds. M. Izard, P. Smith (Paris: Gallimard, 1979), 17-42. Also see Luhrmann, *Witch's*, 308.

[1533] Nock defined conversion as a personal reorientation of the individual, associated with an internal consciousness of a change having taken place, anxiety being replaced by willing engagement and feelings of renewal and happiness at the perception of new truths. Arthur Darby Nock, *Conversion: The Old and the New in Religion from Alexander the Great to Augustine of Hippo* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1933). See below for further discussion.

what it meant to be a Christian would appear to be falling victim to bias with regard to certain authority figures, an assumption that there is some ultimate truth to Christian doctrine and that various people—perhaps because of their status in the Church—have a unique privilege in interpreting this. It seems more sensible to conclude that Christianity was a socially constructed category, not an objective reality, and that accusations of a descent into paganism were bids for control over behavior.[1534]

By arguing that Christianity was rife with pagan survivals (including so-called magic), we lose sight of three crucial points. First, the equation of Christian wonder-working with paganism was a strategy meant to undermine rivals in what was essentially an inner-Christian social competition, an issue to be discussed at greater length below. Second, efforts to distinguish Christianity from paganism and to disavow the use of magic facilitated the legitimization of behavior that would have otherwise looked illicit. Christians had to define miracles as something other than magic in order to avoid state censure. When Christians were successful in convincing people that Christianity opened up unique access to licit power, this would have made Christianity appear attractive to men and women who were seeking the kind of services that had led to trials for the use of divination under Constantius II.[1535] If we dismiss the transformations required for this realignment of licit and illicit categories as merely a matter of a pagan survival, we are ignoring the degree to which this

[1534] For further discussion of Christian wonder-working in the context of social competition see below.

[1535] On these trials chapter four. The ideal Christian monk both undermined and appropriated the Greco-Roman stereotype of the Egyptian religious expert. According to Greco-Roman pagans, Egypt might have been the birthplace of religion, but the typical Egyptian magician was an unlearned deviant. The Greco-Roman notion of a deviant and unlearned Egyptian magician working illicit feats of necromancy was no doubt a distortion of the reality in which a legitimate and learned Egyptian priest was performing state-mandated functions. The Christian construction of an unlearned, spiritually advanced, Egyptian monk, working licit feats of magic was both an endorsement and a rejection of this distortion.

involved a careful manipulation of social discourse. Third, if miracles and magic, whether Christian or pagan, really looked the same in terms of their operation, then the supremacy of Christianity was not proved, as the Christian hagiographers claimed, by the performance of Christian miracles *in of themselves*, but in the *construction* of these miracles as more efficacious, and not simply more licit, than whatever the pagans were doing.

An Egyptian context for the debate over the distinction between miracles and magic adds a "turn of the screw" insofar as traditional Egyptian pagans do not appear to have distinguished between the two categories.[1536] In Heliodorus' *Aethiopika*, an Egyptian priest did articulate what looks like a distinction between magic and religion, the former concerning itself with rituals and illusion while the latter concerned itself with maintaining a connection to the gods.[1537] But Heliodorus' depiction of a so-called Egyptian priest probably reveals more about Greco-Roman elite stereotypes regarding Egypt than actual Egyptian thought. Many of the Greco-Egyptian spells from the Roman period appear to have actually been composed by Egyptian temple priests.[1538] In stories dating well into the Greco-Roman period, like *Setne II*, no distinction appears to have been made between magic and religion. The magic in these narratives was performed in sanctioned government settings (projected back into the Pharaonic period). The magicians in these tales were heroes (if

---

[1536] Though Greco-Romans (particularly Romans) and Jews condemned magic as a rule, both dabbled in what appear to have been licit magic. Feldman, *Philo's*, 321; Bohak, *Jewish Magic*; Joshua Levinson, "Enchanting Rabbis: Contest Narratives between Rabbis and Magicians in Late Antiquity," *The Jewish Quarterly Review* 100 (2010): 54–94; Wilburn, 22-23, 56-57; Kee, 136; Ogden, *Magic*, 275-300; Moyer, *Limits*, 255.

[1537] Heliod., *Aeth*. 3.16. Cf. Philostr., *VA* 7.39; Arnobius 1.44.

[1538] Frankfurter, *Roman Egypt*, 231; Dieleman, *Priests*. Wilburn points out that priests might have been producing these spells, but the temples might not have officially sanctioned this work. Wilburn, 59-60. On the lack of overlap between Greek and demotic texts see Tait, "Demotic," 179-80.

sometimes bumbling). And the priests in these stories relied on books of magic composed by the god Thoth.[1539]

Robert Ritner argues quite forcibly that magic was not distinguished from proper religion in traditional Egyptian paganism, where the same act could be performed with the sanction of the state *or* for private purposes, including rites whereby the practitioner cursed the gods or particular individuals. A private setting was not in of itself suggestive of illicit behavior. People could be prosecuted in connection with activities related to magic, but this was because they had attempted to subvert the government, not because they had employed magic *per se*.[1540] Roman legislation sought to prevent the use of religion in connection with subversive activities of this sort by first cordoning off a certain collection of behaviors, and then condemning these behaviors, as if there was something inherently subversive in the acts themselves, as opposed to simply the ends to which they were put. Thus, a new category of religious behavior emerged: illicit magic.[1541]

Since the term "magic" serves to differentiate between groups (Christians and pagans, for instance, or Egyptian priests and Egyptian magicians) based on practices that are distinguishable only via (outsider) labels, Jonathan Z. Smith recommends that scholars avoid the word "magic" altogether.[1542] However, this might be going too far. The word or comparable terms had meaning in antiquity. "Magic" did not exist as an objective category, but as a means by which to label the activities and entities that the speaker wished to identify

---

[1539] Dieleman, *Priests* 223-27, 249, 286.

[1540] Ritner, "Religious," 48-57; Susan Redford, *The Harem Conspiracy: The Murder of Ramesses III* (DeKalb, Illinois: Northern Illinois University Press, 2002).

[1541] The Roman strategy resulted in some contradictions. Divination, for instance, was perfectly licit when performed by state-sanctioned augurs but, as previously discussed, was liable to prosecution when carried out by visitors to the temple of Abydos in the fourth century. By condemning so-called magical practices like divination, which were entirely licit from a traditional Egyptian perspective, the Romans were striking at the very heart of temple practices and thereby undermining paganism in general. Ritner, "Religious," 57.

[1542] Smith, "Trading Places," 16. Also see Gager, *Curse*, 25.

as “Other.” Therefore, the term remains useful, illuminating the strategies by which actors sought to draw and to maintain boundaries.[1543]

The closest term to “miracle” in the pre-Coptic Egyptian language is the same word that was used for “magic,” *heka*. The latter was carried over into Coptic as ϩⲓⲕ, “magic,” a concept sharply distinguished from the Coptic term ⲡⲓⲡⲏⲣⲉ, “miracle.”[1544] The development of a distinction between “magic” and “miracle” was in keeping with Roman and Christian efforts to differentiate between so-called improper and proper religion, but the above discussion is enough to suggest that the distinction remained ambiguous. So it seems appropriate for us to treat magic like miracles. The definition of magic, like the definition of miracles, was context-specific. Magic appeared counter-intuitive to the parties that defined it as magic, but appeared merely natural (and therefore no better than trickery disguised as miracle) to those for whom it was not counter-intuitive. If not attributed to trickery, magic would be attributed to deviant religious practices. In either case, self-ascribed magicians obviously did not consider magic so illicit that its use was unthinkable. Yet in a world where licit religion was distinguished from magic, an act became magic to a person when it became illicit. Indeed, practitioners might have exploited the illicit connotations of magic on the assumption that the associated thrill of deviance was in some way linked to real power.[1545]

Having established the ways in which an Egyptian context would have exacerbated the conflation of magic and miracles, let us return to an issue introduced above. If Christian wonders and pagan wonders (whether miracles or magic) looked the same, then the efficacy of Christian miracles, and hence the supremacy of Christianity, could not have been established solely by the miracles themselves. Because there was no real distinction between magic and religion, skepticism towards magic, like skepticism towards miracles, had little to

[1543] Graf, *Ancient World*, 18-19. Also see Remus, 67-72.

[1544] Ritner, "Religious," 55.

[1545] Wilburn, 14-15.

do with empirical evidence produced via repeated, controlled studies. It was not that non-Christians were using illicit or ineffective magic and that Christians were using licit and effective miracles; it was that Christians succeeded in convincing people that this was the case through the use of rhetorical strategies and social negotiation.

Competition

This section of the discussion explores the use of charisma to leverage socioeconomic influence under the guise of miracles and curses. When socioeconomic influence did not already exist, hagiographies suggest that charisma could be used to secure this influence. When this influence existed, the miracle in question might have constituted the exertion of this influence. In either case, the exchange cannot be reduced to a cut-and-dry exercise of worldly authority, for this authority was predicated on its disassociation from worldly authority, and it was situated within a religious context wherein a religious valence was attached to all of the elements. Unsurprisingly, envy was generated by the acquisition of this sort of authority. Internal Christian competition and Christian-pagan competition inspired accusations regarding a reliance on demons and the use of curses. This was simply a rhetorical strategy by which to undermine an opponent's position, since an objective analysis of the narratives indicates that pagans *and* Christians were employing curses. The same sort of social negotiation involved with the exercise of charisma appears to have operated in connection with curses. The latter had real consequences insofar as the persons responsible for levelling curses and their victims were convinced to accept the efficacy of the practice. In other words, belief was not a foregone conclusion, but a result of the extent to which the potential believer accepted a particular interpretation of a social negotiation.

While we cannot dismiss the possibility that a given act was in fact efficacious thanks to divine intervention, at least some wonders were probably interpreted *as* wonders (whether magical or miraculous) because the wonder-worker out-performed others when it came to a

demonstration of charisma. A complaint submitted to the authorities in second century Egypt provides testimony as to just how an incident like this might have transpired. The person who submitted this complaint was seeking the prosecution of an opponent who had allegedly resorted to magic. This accusation, according to Bryen, was born out of the plaintiff's failure to hold his own when confronted by the so-called magician. A successful exertion of charisma and intimidation were all that were needed to convince the plaintiff that his rival was employing magic.[1546]

Consider a contest that allegedly took place between a so-called Manichaean and one of the desert fathers. Having challenged this Manichaean to a stroll through a pyre in order to prove the efficacy of his faith, the desert father spent a solid half hour in the flames without suffering harm. When the Manichaean refused to follow suit by entering the pyre, the angry crowd threw the cowardly Manichean into the fire and he was badly burned. The Manichaean's failure to avoid harm and his cowardice were perceived as proof for the inferiority of Manichaeism. The crowd drove the burn victim from town (*Hist. mon.* 10.30, 10.32). Modern experiments have shown that there is nothing miraculous about the ability to walk across hot coals without suffering harm,[1547] but assuming that the pyre was nothing more than a bed of hot coals, this alone is hardly sufficient for explaining the Christian's defeat of the Manichaean. Surely, the desert father's gumption was a deciding factor. After all, had he been a craftier fellow, the Manichaean could have talked his way out of the challenge, following the example, perhaps, of the pagans and Christians who warned

[1546] *P.Mich. VI* 423–424. Also see Bryen, "Gemellus," 554.

[1547] *Mythbusters*, "Water Stun Gun," aired September 17, 2008, on Discovery.

that people should not go about demanding proof regarding the efficacy of religious devotions.[1548]

Simply as contests to determine who had greater charisma, a wonder-working dual had social significance. The outcome had real social repercussions, if only as the result of a social negotiation involving a test of nerves. The winner acquired sociopolitical status, attracting the interest and support of clients, including elites and the populace at large.[1549] According to Sozomen, a monk living in the Thebaid directly owed his status to his ability to work miracles (Sozom., *Hist. eccl.* 6.29). Monks allegedly attracted imperial interest with their ability to tell the future (Besa, *Life of Shenoute* 53-54). One emperor was so impressed with the oracular powers of a monk living in the Thebaid that he supposedly tried, unsuccessfully, to make the monk come to court (Sozom., *Hist. eccl.* 7.22). The same monk was purportedly sought out by a general, a senator, and other high-ranking officials who came seeking, among other things, assistance against an Ethiopian army and a cure for a wife's illness (*Hist. mon.* 1.2-12).

A wonder-worker's assertion of divine sanction was a strategy whereby he, first, laid claim to authority above and beyond that of rivals who were relying solely on socioeconomic and military resources,[1550] and, second, sidestepped the accusations of bias that would have been implied by reliance upon those socioeconomic and

---

[1548] See below.

[1549] On the holy man's charisma as a reflection of the holy men's participation in a social structure where power was built on personal alliances and male bonding see Peter Brown, "The Saint as Exemplar in Late Antiquity," *Representations* 2 (1983): 2-10. On the role of the patron-client relationship in the dissemination of miracles in the ancient world see Jerome Nerey, "Miracles, in Other Words: Social Science Perspectives on Healings," in Cavadinin, 19-56. For discussion of the papyrological evidence for appeals to holy men for intercession in connection with illness see Mathiesen, 106-109.

[1550] See chapter three on the link between prophecy and revolts. See below for the link between divination and curses.

military resources. Concerned as he was with matters of a divine nature—as opposed to matters of a worldly nature—a wonder-worker theoretically stood outside the patronage networks that were so central to the political maneuvering of traditional politicians. Though it very well might have been true that a holy man had no interest in politics or subterfuge, the *appearance* of indifference would have made him all the more attractive as a potential ally.[1551] Believing that holy men had to avoid the taint of personal interest, Christians and elite pagans claimed that improper religious practitioners could be distinguished from proper ones because the improper practitioners took money for their work.[1552] On the one hand, this claim masked the degree to which holy men benefited from donations and acquired power over economic resources. On the other hand, this piece of subterfuge facilitated a holy man's acquisition of this power by implying his disinterest in such things. When appealed to for assistance in healing a suppliant who had fallen under an affliction, one gifted monk supposedly replied that the issue was out of his hands, but that he just happened to know of a transgression on the part of the victim's family—the theft of an ox—and recommended that this issue be remedied. This was done and the victim was healed.[1553] The monk's disavowal of authority disguised and facilitated (by disguising) his exercise of this authority. Not only does this incident demonstrate the socioeconomic power that monks were acquiring as gate-keepers for miracles—

[1551] Brown, *Making*, 63-64, 78-80. Thus the illusion that Christians stood outside secular, that is, worldly, authority, encouraged and was encouraged by socio-political interests that sought to posit the Christian holy man as an ideal patron. This undermines the credibility of the paradigm that Christians were really separate from so-called secular behavior, a point discussed in the fourth chapter.

[1552] Origen, *Con. Cels.* 1.68; Philostr., *VA* 7.39. Cf. Philostr., *VA* 6.41. Also see Fritz Graf, "Theories of Magic in Antiquity," in Mirecki, 95.

[1553] *Hist. mon.* 22.3; Sozom., *Hist. eccl.* 1.14. Cf. *Life of Aaron* 109-16 (45b-49a). Anderson suggests that the recommendation regarding the ox was a strategy for deferring blame should the holy man's intercession fail. Anderson, *Sage*, 72.

the implication being that the miracle was contingent upon the family obeying the monk's orders regarding the theft of the ox—but it also reveals the degree to which miracles were themselves forms of social negotiation. By identifying and resolving social conflicts (whether or not the resolutions were recommended as a result of divine insight or simply good commonsense), miracles like the one involving the ox could very well have appeared efficacious thanks to the function of psychological factors. Afflicted individuals might have recovered their health largely through the relief of the anxiety-inducing tensions that had been inspired by these conflicts.[1554]

The socioeconomic capital earned by the working of wonders goes a long way towards explaining why techniques were developed for faking wonders[1555] and why people were suspicious of fraud.[1556] Lucian was clearly frustrated by the social sway acquired by a fraudulent fortune-teller by the name of Alexander (Lucian, *Alex.* 34-57). With wonder-workers marshalling so many resources, envy was inevitable. We can see evidence of the conflict that this was generating within Christian circles and between Christians and pagans. When Palladius visited a popular monk in the Thebaid, the pilgrim was annoyed to find that their conversation was interrupted by a

[1554] Disasters could also be leveraged to seize social authority. That monk in the Thebaid who was so popular with government officials allegedly predicted when acts of divine wrath were going to fall and exposed the people responsible for inviting these calamities (*Hist. mon.* 1.11). To a cynical person, this sounds as if the monk was marshalling the fears of his audience to exercise control over rivals, or else that he was taking advantage of misfortune to acquire favor by claiming that he could identify the source of the problem, satisfying the audience's desire for a scapegoat. On this strategy see Toner, *Disasters*, 42, 57-58, 65, 76.

[1555] Bohak points out, however, that these techniques are not actually found in spell books or comparable material. They are found in tracts critical of wonder-working. Bohak, *Jewish Magic*, 40.

[1556] Critics of divination, for instance, pointed out that oracular signs could be faked or intentionally misinterpreted for personal gain (Lucian, *Alex.*, 20-22; Eunap., *VS* 476-478, 500-502; Clem. Al., *Prot*. 2.11; Origen, *Con. Cels.* 7.54). Grounds for skepticism about the significance of a dream as a sign of divine will is well-demonstrated by a passage in Chariton's *Chareas and Callirhoe*, where a character pretended that he had had a divinatory dream in order to press for a delay in making an important decision (Chariton 6.2). See above for sources on faking divination and below for the case of a woman who pretended to be possessed (AP 18.24; Pall., *HL* 34).

governor who then monopolized the monk's attentions.[1557] Eusebius lamented when a so-called Egyptian magician managed to have himself promoted to general and convinced an emperor to turn against the Christians (Euseb., *Hist. eccl.* 7.10.1-5). Sozomen complained about the influence exercised by pagan diviners over Julian (Sozom., *Hist. eccl.* 5.2). When a monk discovered that he had the ability to see visions, his less gifted superior responded by beating him and declaring (incorrectly, according to the hagiographer) that the visions were sent by demons.[1558] One of the documents found in the Nag Hammadi cache recorded an outbreak of envy over a disparity in the gifts exercised by a congregation (*The Interpretation of Knowledge* XI,1 14-17), an incident that is hardly surprising given that a failure to receive visions could be attributed to spiritual failings (11.109 Olympios 1).

Spiritual gifts were sometimes turned against religious rivals in a more direct fashion. Antony's supposed prophecy about the Church falling victim to indignities at the hands of heretics was interpreted as a condemnation of so-called Arians.[1559] Whether it was just good judgment or divine intervention, the desert fathers who were supposedly going about sensing the sins of other Christians were leveraging their

---

[1557] Pall., *HL* 35.5-6. On social status and competition over gaining access to the saints associated with the martyrium at Menouthis, discussed below, see Juliussen, 101.

[1558] 15.18 Zachariah 4. Cf. 10.2 Antony 12; 14.5 John the disciple of Paul 1. Allegedly, Antony warned monks not to seek out the acquisition of miraculous powers like clairvoyance (*Vita Antonii* 33; Sozom., *Hist. eccl.* 1.13). Pachomius allegedly claimed that any sinner who *sought* a vision—including, one assumes, visions of a clairvoyant nature—was liable to misunderstand the visions he received, for only those visions experienced by *God's will* were clear (*Vita prima graeca Pachomii* 48). Asserting that divine insight was only accessible to those with no ambition, this statement underscores the degree to which ambition, rivalry, and claims as to divine insight were all bound together. This paradigm was not limited to Egypt. For discussion of skepticism as a challenge to a wonder-worker's spiritual authority rather than skeptism of miracles in general see Clare Stancliffe, *St. Martin and His Hagiographer: History and Miracle in Sulpicius Severus* (NY: Oxford University Press, 1984), 7, 260.

[1559] *Vita Antonii* 82. See Anderson, *Sage*, 62.

power. The alleged sinners who failed to fend off the offensive were forced to submit to the judgment of charismatic self-described prophets.[1560]

In some cases, rivalry appears to have motivated efforts to discourage the celebration of a holy man's spiritual gifts. When Christian miracle-workers forbade witnesses to reveal the wonders they had seen,[1561] this might be taken as a sign that Christians were primarily concerned with the danger of mockery. They wanted to keep these feats secret, lest the reports not be believed. This could also be interpreted as a strategy by which the storyteller sought to bolster the allure of his narrative, implying, as it did, that the audience members who were learning these secrets were in receipt of special revelations. At the same, these injunctions suggested the existence of an effort to undermine the transmission of propaganda that would have enhanced the authority and the attraction of the monks who were responsible for working wonders. Such an effort would have been part and parcel of the internal Christian competition that was mentioned in the previous chapter in connection to efforts to downplay the learning of the desert fathers. It made sense that hagiographers warned against anyone becoming arrogant over the ability to work wonders, since pride was considered a sin (*Vita Antonii* 38; *Hist. mon.* 1.47-53, 8.15), and sins were known to thwart a monk's success in the performance of miracles (*Hist. mon.* 1.47-58). But this warning would have done double-duty as a safeguard against the growth of ambition. The attribution of a monk's powers to God (Rufinus, *Hist.*

[1560] *Hist. mon.* 16.1; Rufinus, *Hist. mon.* 1.11, 23. Comparative studies suggest that moralizing of this sort can backfire if the audience realizes its devisive nature and decides that this is incompatible with claims of spiritual authority. See Brow, 158. Note the many *Sayings* against passing judgment on fellow monks. For instance, 9.7 Moses 2; 9.13 Pior 3; 9.14 Paphnutius 1; 19.21 Poemen 113.

[1561] Sozom., *Hist. eccl.* 1.14; *Life of Aaron* 117 (49a-b); *Vita Antonii* 60. Compare to a passage in which Eunapius confessed some hesitancy to record a wonder performed by Iamblichus and said that he decided in the end to do so because the wonder was so amazing that it actually converted observers (Eunap., *VS* 458-460).

mon. Prol. 4; *Vita Antonii* 48, 80, 84; 19.6 Longinus 3) could have worked in one of two ways, depending on the speaker's intentions. It could have advertised the holy man as an ideal ally, insofar as he was outside the influence of worldly patronage networks and was therefore unbiased. Or it could have undermined the prestige of the gifted ascetics who were assuming so much power, reminding audiences that it was a mistake to think that this power was invested in any one ascetic *per se*.

Religious rivals could undermine one another by questioning the source of their respective powers. Recall the story mentioned above about an elder who declared that his disciple's visions were sent by demons (15.18 Zachariah 4). Some of the desert fathers were supposedly receiving visions and hearing voices indicating that they would one day assume great power (Pall., *HL* 32.1; *Hist. mon.* 8.3). Other monks were apparently being misled by demons spouting similar promises (Pall., *HL* 25; *Hist. mon.* 2.9-10). The circulation of rumors regarding the latter would have made anyone in receipt of seemingly divine encouragement wary of acting upon this encouragement or boasting of the communiqué.

Thus, demons were taking center stage in the dramas whereby Christians were negotiating for authority. Exorcism represented a particularly poignant kind of social contest. Some of the Christians who were persecuted under Valens and Leo (401-474) went on to perform exorcisms. Their successes in this regard implied that they were in fact orthodox, since heretics should have been incapable of such feats.[1562]

Victims of possession were ostensibly guilty of indulging in extremely antisocial behavior thanks to the influence of demons. One elite fellow who happened

[1562] Socrates, *Hist. eccl.* 4.23; Sozom., *Hist. eccl.* 6.20; Pseudo-Dioscorus, *The Panegyric of Macarius of Tkōw* 4.1-2, 5.11, 15.5, 15.8, 16.1. Frankfurter, "Urban Shrine," 444, 446.

to be possessed was forced by a demon to eat his own excrement (*Vita Antonii* 64). Another man who was possessed struck a desert father in the face (15.71 N 298). Possession clearly facilitated anti-social behavior, whether it was the result of mental illness, personal eccentricity, or an actual a demon. By blaming a demon, a person could vent emotions and express opinions that were considered unacceptable, while avoiding some of the negative repercussions for this behavior. Exorcism would have facilitated such a person's eventual rejection of the behavior in question and his reintegration as a fully acting member of society.[1563] In some cases, possession might have actually operated as a bid for attention disguised, of course, as the opposite. A virgin reportedly pretended to be possessed as an ascetic exercise—her antisocial behavior ensuring that she would be shunned by others—but her efforts backfired when her deception was revealed and her fellow virgins showered her with praise (AP 18.24; Pall., *HL* 34).

Because possession allowed Christians to externalize their sins (in the form of demons), the process facilitated the management and elimination (through exorcism) of perceived problems.[1564] According to one of the *Sayings*, an elder who was jealous of a priest accused this priest of theft, only to fall victim to possession by a demon. The elder confessed his crime, but the best efforts of the congregation were still not sufficient to rid him of the demon. He was not cured until the priest who had been

[1563] Cf. Philostr., *VA* 4.20. See Trzcionka, 155-59; Toner, *Popular*, 82; Brown, *Cult*, 110-11; Anderson, *Sage*, 93. For exorcism as a return to society, consider a case in which a demon was driven out a woman who had not spoken for six years, only for her to begin speaking again (Pall., *HL* 36.5). As Bohak points out, possession is a social drama, so the audience is often responsible for determining whether or not an exorcism has succeeded. Bohak, *Jewish Magic*, 113. For discussion of modern psychiatric attitudes towards exorcism and psychomatic disorders see Bohak, *Jewish Magic*, 42; Höfer; Worobec; Dein.

[1564] Brown, *Body*, 421.

falsely accused stepped in to help him.[1565] To believers, the presence of underlying social tension in this community was no doubt all of the evidence that was needed to substantiate the reality of a demonic presence. How else were Christians to explain the descent of monks into jealousy and conflict?[1566] From a believer's perspective, it only made sense that a guilty man would fall victim to possession and that a priest so spiritually gifted that he was inspiring envy would have had the power to exorcise a demon when others failed. At the same time, this scenario suggests that demons were being utilized as mechanisms for diffusing tension and resolving disputes.[1567]

Even if these were just stories—the events in question or comparable events never actually having transpired—they are evidence of the degree to which demonic activity was thought to be connected with social competition. In this context, it is particularly striking to find that there are Greco-Egyptian spells for causing a ghost or a demon to appear in a victim's dreams.[1568] This makes it tempting to speculate that desert fathers were occasionally exorcising demons that were rumored to have been summoned by social rivals. Consider a particularly ominous scenario involving the celebrated monastic leader Pachomius. The latter appears to have warned a monk that severe ascetic exercises were an invitation to possession. The monk ignored Pachomius, proceeded with his ascetic regime, fell victim to demonic attack, and had to rely on Pachomius' intercession to recover (*Vita prima graeca Pachomii* 69).

[1565] AP 16.29. Social rivalry and an effort to give "work" to a competing exorcist are suggested by 19.8 Longinus 4.

[1566] Cf. *Pratum spirituale* 161.

[1567] Because black demons often appear in the midst of disputes between monks (5.27 N 173; 14.30 Heracleides 1), Brakke argues that they function as third parties for the negotiation of authority. Brakke, *Demons*, 168-71.

[1568] *PGM* IV.1842-71. Cf. Pseudo-Callisthenes, *Life of Alexander* 1.8. Faraone, "Necromancy," 267; Miller, *Dreams*, 117-23.

Because a monk's ascetic regime impressed potential patrons (*Hist. mon.* 1.17) and was linked to the performance of wonders,[1569] a cynical person might suggest that this story about an ascetic falling victim to possession amounted to nothing more than a jealous elder frightening a promising disciple into withstraining himself from displays of envy-inducing asceticism.[1570] Yet the incident also looks strangely like a case of one Christian placing a curse on another: Pachomius cursed the ascetic to prevent him from posing a threat.[1571]

To understand how such a thing could be countenanced, it is necessary to appreciate the intense nature of competition during this period. As power within elite Roman circles became increasingly centralized and hierarchical, competition became increasingly fierce. This created a situation ripe for the accusation that a rival was employing an unfair advantage, that is, magic. At the same time, these so-called unfair advantages would have become increasingly attractive to anyone looking for an edge. Wonder-working, whether magical or miraculous, was dangerous insofar as it was thought to subvert traditional lines of authority. Wonder-workers and their clients appealed to paths of power that did not rely on the customary patron-client relationship.[1572] Therefore, it makes sense that Athanasius, who consistently posed a

---

[1569] For asceticism as a route to miraculous knowledge of Scripture, see the previous chapter. On the need for ascetic purity in order to see the future see *Vita Antonii* 34; Sozom., *Hist. eccl.* 1.13; Philostr., *VA* 3.42.

[1570] According to Antony's hagiographer, Antony warned monks that demons would encourage them to excessive shows of asceticism (*Vita Antonii* 25). On the social rivalries that may have been motivating this portrait see the previous chapter.

[1571] Compare an incident in which one of the Macarii warned a disciple that he would develop leprosy if he did not heed Macarius' advice. The disciple failed to heed this advice and indeed developed leprosy. But since this disciple assumed Macarius' position upon Macarius' death (Pall., *HL* 17.3-4), this confrontation might also be read as a contest for authority in which Macarius resorted to a curse.

[1572] Peter Brown, "Sorcery, Demons and the Rise of Christianity from Late Antiquity into the Middle Ages," in *Witchcraft Confessions and Accusations*, ed. Mary Douglass (London: Tavistock, 1970), 17-46. The seminal text for the study of witchcraft in the midst of social tensions is E. E. Evans-Pritchard, *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic among the Azande* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1937). G. E. R. Lloyd and Dale Martin contend that the democratic features of ancient Greek political life were integral to the development of what looks like a

challenge to imperial authority, was accused of sorcery despite his criticism of such practices.[1573] For who else but a wizard would have had the temerity to stand up to an emperor and could have succeeded in doing so?[1574]

Envy, and the knowledge that rivals were envious in return, was enough to inspire the use of apotropaic objects to avert curses. More proactively, a person might resort to employing a curse himself in order to forestall similar efforts on an opponent's part. Though a curse might seem utterly ineffective from the perspective of modern scientific knowledge regarding the laws of cause and effect—an objective perspective that focuses on the efficacy of a curse divorced from its social setting—the picture can look very different when the subjective context is taken into consideration. To the person levying a curse, such an act could seem efficacious if only because the expression of hostility relieved the tensions responsible for producing real-world ailments. As for the victim of the curse, he need not have been informed that a curse had been put in place in order for him to entertain suspicions in this regard. These suspicions could very well have encouraged the sort of anxiety that

---

first step towards modern scientific methodology because it encouraged debate and challenged the hierarchical paradigms according to which demons were thought to act (Martin, *Superstition*, 230-39; Lloyd, *Magic*, 263-64). If so, then the increasing hierarchy of Late Antiquity undermined debate in keeping with a shift in the ruling political paradigm. The consideration of political motivations does not mean, of course, that only elites were interested in appealing to wonder-workers. If the explosion of spells in fourth century Egypt was in fact due to politics, then the clients were either elites frustrated by increasingly limited opportunities or non-elites who were, for perhaps the first time, seeking entrée into higher levels of the power structure.

[1573] For the accusations against Athanasius see Rufinus, *Hist. eccl.* 10.16; Socrates, *Hist. eccl.* 1.27; Sozom., *Hist. eccl.* 2.23. For Athanasius' condemnation of magic see Wilhelm Reidel and W. E. Crum, *The Canons of Athanasius of Alexandria: The Arabic and Coptic Versions* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1904), Canons 71-72. See also Dickie, 20, 264, 275-76, 205. This accusation is also a reminder of the malleable and inherently political definition of magic during this period. Compare to the accusations of paganism levied against officials from Egypt, charges that Chuvin likens to acusations of communist sympathies during the McCarthy era (Chuvin, 93-94).

[1574] Brown, "Sorcery," 26. Athanasius' reputation for divination, mentioned above, was apparently held against him (Amm. Marc. 15.7.8). Also see Dickie, 275-76.

produces real-world disorders.[1575] This supposition is supported by recent work performed by Western-trained and raised anthropologists who, despite all their scientific education and an *a priori* lack of faith in the efficacy of curses, found themselves coming to believe that they had in fact fallen victim to curses *and* that these curses were effective.[1576] Not for nothing did MacMullen's paragon of so-called scientific thinking, Pliny the Elder, claim that no one was immune from the fear that he might fall victim to a curse (Plin., *HN* 28.4 [19]). Some people even thought that a curse was responsible for the ignominious death of Athanasius' arch-rival, Arius.[1577]

All this being said, the notion that a Christian might have stooped to cursing his rivals no doubt strikes some readers as odd. After all, *cursing* a person is hardly the thing we would expect of the supposedly peace-loving desert fathers. Recollection of traditional Egyptian pagan attitudes may provide clarification. When a pagan priest cursed a Pharaoh's opponents in state-sanctioned rituals he was not performing an act that was considered inherently immoral, especially if traditional Egyptian pagans did not distinguish between illicit magic and proper religious practice. A pagan priest who cursed the Pharaoh's enemies was actually behaving in a righteous manner as he endeavored to protect the Pharaoh. This does not mean that Egyptians applauded

---

[1575] Esther Eidinow, *Oracles, Curses, and Risk among the Ancient Greeks* (NY: Oxford University Press, 2007), 235; Gager, *Curse,* 22-23; Wilburn, 263; Toner, *Popular,* 40; Bohak, *Jewish Magic,* 45. For curses in the ancient world see Wilburn, 5-6; Gager, *Curse;* Eidinow; Ogden, *Magic,* 210-26; Nicole Hansen, "Ancient Execration Magic in Coptic and Islamic Egypt," in Mirecki, 427-46; H. S. Versnel, "Beyond Cursing: The Appeal to Justice in Judicial Prayers," in Faraone, 60-106.

[1576] Paul Stoller, Cheryl Olkes, *In Sorcery's Shadow: A Memoir of Apprenticeship among the Songhay of Niger* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987); Michael Kearney, *The Winds of Ixtepeji; World View and Society in a Zapotec Town* (NY: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1972). Also see Jeanne Favret-Saada, *Deadly Words: Witchcraft in the Bocage* (NY: Cambridge University Press, 1980). Cf. Luhrmann, *Witch's* 7, 341.

[1577] Sozom., *Hist. eccl.* 2.29. It is easier to understand the hostility provoked by interest in divination when it is realized how closely the prediction of an emperor's death resembles a curse. Also see Trzcionka, 74-75. Recall that the trials for divination under Valens were inspired by efforts to determine the name of the next emperor, implying an interest in eliminating the current emperor (Socrates, *Hist. eccl.* 4.19; Sozom., *Hist. eccl.* 6.35; Amm. Marc. 29.1.18-2.28). On the use of divination in criticism and legitimation of the social order see Frankfurter, "Voices," 235.

every curse. A person would hardly have been pleased to find that *he* was the subject of a curse, for instance.[1578] From this perspective, at least, the curse and the people who had levied it were in the wrong. With this in mind, it seems less shocking to imagine Christians cursing one another.

Shenoute is ample evidence that there were Christians willing to use aggressive language bordering on curses against their rivals.[1579] Scholars have pointed out that excommunication employs language indicative of a curse.[1580] And the binding elements found in exorcisms can also be found in traditional curses. Papyrological evidence verifies the existence of a Christian market for these curses. In a text dated to around the sixth century CE, a monk by the name of Victor cursed an opponent using references from Deuteronomy.[1581] The hagiographies are filled with references to what appear to have been curses.[1582] According to the *Life of Aaron*, when a wealthy man living in the region of Philae went blind, he was told that

---

[1578] Consider, for instance, a tale recorded in the early fifth century BCE. Pinch 58, 96.

[1579] In one passage of Besa's *Life of Shenoute*, Besa claimed that Shenoute predicted that Gessius would be punished in the afterlife by having his blasphemous tongue become attached to his foot. At some point, Gessius must have passed away, for Shenoute also apparently told Besa that he saw—in a vision, one supposes—Gessius being punished in just this way (Besa, *Life of Shenoute* 88). While Gessius was alive, the prediction would have served as a threat. After his death, it would have served as consolation for his adversaries and a threat against anyone whom Shenoute or Besa perceived as an ally or imitator of the deceased Gessius.

[1580] Benavides, 302; Luck, *Arcana*, 468

[1581] P. Michigan 3565 at Advanced Papyrological Information System, http://quod.lib.umich.edu/a/apis/x-2008/3565V.TIF?lasttype=boolean;lastview=thumbnail;resnum=1;size=20;sort=apis_inv;start=1;subview=detail;view=entry;rgn1=apis_inv;q1=P.Mich.inv.%25203565, accessed 8Feb2016. Also see Meyer, *Ancient*, 211-12.

[1582] For instance, villagers allegedly set out on a raid only to find themselves frozen in theirs tracks and blamed their affliction on a virgin who interceded with God on behalf of the village targeted for the raid (Pall., *HL* 31.1-4). A cynical person would say that the assailants had suffered second-thoughts about the planned assault and blamed the virgin in order to save face. In a similar incident, a monk supposedly froze a pagan procession in place. After he released them, the victims of the miracle (curse) converted (*Hist. mon.* 8.24-29). The same monk interceded in a dispute between Christians and pagans over a boundary dispute and threatened the leader of the pagans with death. To be sure, the pagan was found torn to pieces some time later (*Hist. mon.*, 8.36-37). Cf. Philostr., *VA* 1.12. When an old woman revealed Macedonius' assault on a pagan temple in Philae to the head pagan priest, Macedonius ordered her tongue frozen in place. After she confessed her belief in God by nodding her head, Macedonius cured her (*Life of Aaron* 36-53 [14b-23a]). See the discussion in chapter four regarding Shenoute's language towards Gessius and other so-called pagans.

his ailment was probably somehow linked to a man who owed him some money, especially since the debtor had sought out the assistance of a holy man in connection with this debt. Desperate for help, the wealthy man appealed to the holy man for assistance. The holy man refused to cure the wealthy man until he agreed to stop abusing the debtor (*Life of Aaron* 109-16 [45b-49a]).

As Jerry Toner points out, simply contacting a magician—or, for our purposes, a holy man—might have been enough to alert observers that underlying social tensions were in danger of erupting.[1583] The debtor in the above scenario not only reached out to a patron with growing socioeconomic power, but he showed observers that he was willing to take his case to God, a tactical move that could not have helped but to communicate a threat to his opponent, even if this only carried emotional weight. A skeptic might scoff that the wealthy man was a fool if he fell for this, but when this gentleman was suddenly struck blind—whether or not this was psychosomatic—we have to remember that his medical options were limited to so-called doctors whose practices involved, among other things, asking patients if any deities happened to have proferred recommendations regarding treatment in the patients' dreams.[1584] By comparison, asking for assistance from a Christian holy man who wields curses does not seem that foolish.

[1583] Toner, *Popular*, 27.

[1584] Holowchak, 129-64. For medicine in antiquity see Helen King, ed., *Health in Antiquity* (NY: Routledge, 2005); Andrew Crislip, *Thorns in the Flesh: Illness and Sanctity in Late Ancient Christianity* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013); Wendy Mayer, "Medicine in Transition: Christian Adaptation in the Later Fourth-Century East," in *Shifting Genres in Late Antiquity*, eds. Geoffrey Greatrix, Hugh Elton, Lucas McMahon (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2014), 11-27; James Longrigg, *Greek Rational Medicine: Philosophy and Medicine from Alcmaeon to the Alexandrians* (NY: Routledge, 1993); Rebecca Flemming, "Empires of Knowledge: Medicine and Health in the Hellenistic World," in *A Companion to the Hellenistic World*, ed. Andrew Erskine (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2003), 449–63; Ralph Jackson, *Doctors and Diseases in the Roman Empire* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1988); H. F. J. Horstmanshoff, "The Ancient Physician: Craftsman or Scientist," *The Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences* 45 (1990): 176-97.

Of course, the desert fathers allegedly stepped in to help the victims of curses as well. One of the Macarii became embroiled in a contest with a sorcerer who supposedly turned a woman into a horse. Recounting Macarius' successful restoration of the woman, the hagiographers were apparently uncertain as to whether the woman's transformation had actually taken place or had been merely a delusion on the part of the victim and/or the witnesses.[1585] The efforts of the hagiographers to rationalize an otherwise counter-intuitive event indicate that they expected at least some audience members to believe that the curse and the miracle were real, even if psychological manipulation, rather than divine intervention, was at work both in placing the curse and affecting the cure. This narrative is evidence that some Christians took it as a given that sorcery, if only in the form of psychological manipulation, was a real danger, and that victims were able to appeal to Christian wonder-workers for help.

So it is not surprising to learn that a man who had supposedly been cursed using what, to modern ears, sounds rather like a voodoo doll, went to a martyrium for assistance. The resulting miracle is listed alongside others of its kind in an account

[1585] The *Historia monachorum* was vaguer than Rufinus and Palladius about whether or not the woman really was a horse. The *Historia monachorum* claimed that Macarius was approached by the woman's parents, who told him that their daughter had been turned into a horse. It is not clear if this means that the woman was acting like a horse or if she had physically turned into a horse (*Hist. mon.* 21.17). Rufinus and Palladius claimed that the observors thought that she was a horse, and Palladius was quite clear that this constituted a physical transformation (Rufinus, *Hist. mon.* 21.17; Pall., *HL* 17.6-9). Russell argues that the hagiographer responsible for the *Historia monachorum* may have thought that the girl was deluded (Russell, *Lives,* 151). But this is not entirely clear in the text. The emphasis on the observors' testimony in Rufinus and Palladius might have been prompted by questions that were being asked by other audience members. Brakke points out that Palladius' account actually claimed that Macarius accused these observors of delusion. Thus, Macarius denied the efficacy of pagan magic (asserted that it was a delusion) *and* reversed the spell, undermining his rival in two ways. Brakke, *Demons* 239. Also see the second chapter for discussion of animal transformations; David Frankfurter, ''The Perils of Love: Magic and Countermagic in Coptic Egypt,'' *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 10 (2001): 480–500. Compare to the story claiming that Hilarion encountered a case of a young woman possessed by a demon because a frustrated lover—apparently on the advice of magicians in Memphis—had buried some cursed objects under her doorstep, Hilarion refused to allow anyone to dig up the cursed objects until after he had successfully exorcised the woman, lest observors believe that the power of these objects was such that Hilarion could not have overcome the spell without first disposing of the component parts (Jerome, *Vit. Hil.* 21). For what looks like duals of magic between rabbis and magicians see Levinson, 54-94.

penned by Sophronius (560-638), an ascetic who visited this martyrium in Egypt before he became the bishop of Jerusalem.[1586] The martyrium in question was located at Menouthis, about twelve miles from Alexandria. It was established by Cyril, who translated the relics of two saints to the site in the early fifth century. Afterwards, the martyrium appears to have operated in head-to-head competition with a nearby pagan healing shrine.[1587] Although this competition cannot be traced directly in the sources, we do have enough information to speculate about the scenario that supposedly led to the demise of the pagan shrine.

Testing and Talking Belief

Having explored at some length the role of social negotiation in establishing the supremacy of Christian wonder-working, we can turn now to the role of rhetorical strategies in the construction of this argument. These rhetorical strategies are well-represented in the religious dispute at Menouthis, which also provides some insight into the nature of belief in Late Antiquity in general. The demise of the pagan shrine here is supposedly recounted in a narrative composed by Zachariah of Mytilene,[1588]

[1586] Sophronius, *Narratio miraculorum ss Cyri et Iohannis*. Preface and Enconium in *Sophrone de Jérusalem: Panégyrique des Saints Cyr et Jean*, ed. Pauline Bringel (Turnhout: Brepols, 2008). Also see Gager, *Curse*, 262-63. For Sophronius and the martyrium see Booth, 44-89; J. Gascou, "Les origines du culte des saints Cyr et Jean," *Analecta Bollandiana* 125 (2007): 241-81; John Duffy, "Observations on Sophronius' 'Miracles of Cyrus and John,'" *The Journal of Theological Studies* 35 (1984): 71-90. For the use of so-called voodoo dolls in Egyptian curses see *PGM* IV.296-466; Montserrat, *Sex*, 191; Burton, 93-94. For examples of learned Greco-Roman pagans attitudes towards such curses see Porphyry, *VP* 10; Libanius 1.243-50.

[1587] For the debate over whether this shrine constituted an actual temple or was merely a household shrine see Watts, *Riot*, 13n57; Cameron, "Poets," 26-27.

[1588] Since Sophronius' account indicated that the martyrium was in Menouthis before the demise of the pagan shrine as dated by Zachariah of Mytilene's account, scholars have wondered if the latter's failure to mention the other shrine should be taken as evidence that either the martyrium was founded later than Sophronius claimed or that Zachariah's entire account was fabricated. It has been argued that the Chalcedonian Sophronius "invented" Cyril's translation of the relics in order to make it seem as if the Christian shrine originated before the anti-Chalcedonians seized power in Alexandria. Refuting this argument Montserrat suggests that after Cyril's death, persecution of his supporters by Cyril's successor might have helped to turn Cyril's martyrium into a backwater. Later, competition with the nearby pilgrimage site of Abu Menas would have impeded Menouthis' ability to recover. See Dominic Montserrat, "Pilgrimage to the Shrine of SS Cyrus and John at Menouthis in Late

who claimed to have witnessed it first-hand while living as a student in Alexandria. As chapter four mentioned, Zachariah's reliability on this subject has been challenged, but Edward Watts has done a fair job of answering these concerns. A pagan shrine could very well have continued to operate in some fashion well into the late fifth century at Menouthis, though probably not as openly as Zachariah implied. If the entire story was fabricated by Zachariah or an informant, it is nevertheless compelling insofar as it depicts the process by which it was thought that a committed pagan could be gradually turned away from paganism, and the devastating fallout of this conversion for other pagans. Although scholars have already used Zachariah's text to explore questions related to Christian-pagan violence and the longevity of paganism, I am not aware of any scholars who have put this text through its paces as thoroughly as I do in connection to testimony as to the mechanisms of personal conversion.

This section of the discussion begins with an explanation of incubation rites. Potential clients of an incubation shrine would have had limited means for verifying the efficacy of the rites. Medical alternatives of the day might not have been any more efficacious when judged from a modern scientific perspective. From this debate over efficacy, the discussion moves on to an incident involving the pagan incubation shrine at Menouthis. I summarize the process by which a pagan visitor supposedly subjected this shrine to a series of tests, and when these failed, went on the offensive,

---

Antiquity," in Frankfurter, 261-63. Watts points out that Zachariah showed a marked disinterest in anti-Chalcedonian landmarks elsewhere (Watts, *Riot*, 267) and the previous chapter noted the hagiographers' marked aptitude for ignoring what they did not want to see. Cf. Montserrat, "Pilgrimage," 265. On the location of the martyrium see Ibid., 260.

verbally attacking pagans and inciting a physical altercation that eventually led to the shrine being dismantled.

According to Zachariah, the pagan shrine at Menouthis employed incubation rites akin to those attested for the martyrium established by Cyril. These incubation rites had a foothold in traditional Egyptian pagan temples operating well before the rise of Christianity. Incubation involved a suppliant sleeping at a shrine, whether Christian or pagan, with the expectation that a deity would somehow communicate with this suppliant through the suppliant's dreams. This expectation might have predisposed particularly suggestible visitors towards experiencing the longed for dream-visions. In any case, staff was on-hand to help interpret dream-visions lest a visitor fail to recognize the deity's hand.[1589] A person might have been interested in receiving divine insight for any number of reasons, but these shrines were well-known for providing suppliants with dreams related to much-needed cures. Isis and Serapis enjoyed venerable reputations for their accomplishments in this regard.[1590]

Naturally, it was in the interests of the staff to record dream-visions that led to any sort of success, since this would encourage clients to seek out a shrine's services. Sophronius' account of the martyrium at Menouthis should probably be interpreted in this light, as a celebration of the martyrium's successes, an advertisement for

---

[1589] Harris, *Dreams*, 63; Gaëlle Tallet, "Oracles," in Riggs, 412.

[1590] On cures attributed to Isis and Serapis see Diod. Sic. 1.25; Tac., *Hist.* 4.84. On cures attributed to Serapis and Isis in connection with incubation see Strabo 17.1.17; Dio Chrysostom, *Oratio* 32.12. Cf. Iambl., *Myst.* 3.3. For an example of what looks like incubation (for insight on saving the Pharaoh from Nubian magic) in a traditional Egyptian tale dating from Roman rule, see *Setne II* 5/10. It has been argued that the use of Egyptian temples as sites of medical treatment was borrowed from Greco-Romans; however, scholars dispute whether or not the practice of incubation itself originated in Egypt. Burton, 108-109; Harris, *Dreams*, 173n301. Like the temple of Serapis in Alexandria (Plut., *De Is. et Os.* 361F), the martyrium at Menouthis was said to have been founded thanks to the inspiration of a dream-vision (Sophronius, *Narratio miraculorum ss Cyri et Iohannis* Enconium 27), a fitting origin for a site devoted to incubation. Also see Harris, *Dreams*, 164-68; Frankfurter, *Roman Egypt*, 162-65; Watts, *Riot*, 210.

attracting pilgrims. Without the intervention of anything like the modern Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to collect adverse events and to report failures, potential clients had limited means for objectively determining the efficacy of a shrine. The staff would have had no inclination to collect or to report when a dream-vision proved inefficacious.[1591] As anyone familiar with the contradictory claims of the media today knows, statistics even in connection to so-called scientific studies can be vulnerable to manipulation.[1592] So we should not assume that the potential clients of a shrine in antiquity necessarily had the required information to determine whether or not a shrine was actually efficacious.

We should also keep in mind that criticism of a given medical practice in antiquity, when it did appear, would have been all too often compromised by personal interests. Medical practice, defined here as simply the alleged or actual treatment of physical ailments whatever their source, was a hotbed of rivalry. Christians were supposedly attracting converts with their cures.[1593] Wise men and physicians were mixing apparent incantations with what—to the modern eye—look like somewhat scientific treatments based on an alleged knowledge of the composition of drugs

---

[1591] Harris, *Dreams*, 63; Tallet, 412; Bohak, *Jewish Magic*, 48-49. On the problem of sample bias in the attribution of successes, but not failures, to rituals see Philostr., *VA* 7.39. In defense of an incubation cult's staff when it came to collecting data on failures and long-term success-rates, local cults might not have had the means for collecting this information. With over a decade of experience as a subcontractor engaged in the support of clinical research for the National Institutes of Health, I can attest to the difficulties faced by medical staff hoping to follow-up with unavailable and disinterested test subjects even today.

[1592] Gary Smith, *Standard Deviations: Flawed Assumptions, Tortured Data, and Other Ways to Lie with Statistics* (NY: Overlook Duckworth, 2014).

[1593] After Emperor Valens exiled the so-called orthodox Protogenes of Edessa (fl. fourth century) to Antinoopolis, Protogenes reportedly cured a sick boy by praying on his behalf, then refused to help other sick boys until the boys' parents agreed to have the children baptized (Theod., *Hist. eccl.* 4.17), thereby securing social and possibly economic resources for the Church. For examples of the desert fathers performing miraculous cures, including resurrections, see (19.11 Macarius of Egypt 14; 19.14 Poemen 7; 19.6 Longinus 3; *Hist. mon.* 7.2; Rufinus, *Hist. mon.* 21.17; *Vita Antonii* 58; *Life of Aaron* 101-126 [43a-52b]; Sozom., *Hist. eccl.* 6.28). Note that a self-proclaimed love of humility would have actually helped to improve a Christian wonder-worker's statistics when it came to demonstrating efficacy. One desert father's practice of handing out cures in private (*Hist. mon.* 1.12), would have helped him to stay out of the spotlight and thus cover up failures.

(Eunap., *VS* 499; Iambl., *VP* 29). Clients relying on magic sometimes turned to spells incorporating Christian elements.[1594] Charms with healing properties were supposedly being handed out by Egyptian pagans (Ach. Tat., 2.7) and Christian monks (Shenoute, *Against the Origenists* 255-61). In light of all of this competition, a savvy fellow would have known better than to trust all of the bad press that he heard about a particular treatment, seeing as there was a good chance that the source had a stake in the matter.

Recent scientific studies have actually shown that some of the remedies found in ancient texts would have been somewhat effective. Pure chance and the placebo effect would have helped to enhance a treatment's apparent success rate, but the patient's assessment of efficacy might have been at least partly based on the degree to which the treatment corresponded to assumptions about how the world worked. A treatment that challenged those assumptions might have been considered less efficacious even if it was comparatively more effective than alternatives as judged by modern scientific standards.[1595] As mentioned above, even physicians trained in the Hippocratic and Galenic traditions were not above relying on dreams for guidance as to treatment, and dream-visions might have been efficacious insofar as they helped the dreamer address underlying social tensions. Therefore, we should not be too hasty in condemning the wisdom of Late Antique men and women who sought out the services of incubation cults.

[1594] *P.Oxy.*924; *P.Oxy.*1077; Meyer, *Ancient,* 33, 39-40.

[1595] Bohak, *Jewish Magic*, 41-44; Anderson, *Sage,* 58-60. Cf. Mark Plotkin, *Shaman's Apprentice: An Ethnobotanist Searches for New Medicines in the Amazon Rain Forest* (NY: Viking, 1993); Bart Holland, *Prospecting for Drugs in Ancient and Medieval European Texts: A Scientific Approach* (Amsterdam: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1996); Yoram Bilu, Eliezer Witztum, and Onno van der Hart, "Paradise Regained: 'Miraculous Healing' in an Israeli Psychiatric Clinic," *Culture, Medicine and Psychiatry* 14 (1990): 105-27.

In head-to-head competition between a pagan incubation cult and a Christian incubation cult, how could one assert its supremacy over the other? Each cult would of course claim that it was a conduit for divine agency whereas the rival was defunct, or simply a conduit for demonic—and therefore dangerous—powers, or a front for medically-trained staff handing out so-called sound advice in the guise of a divinity so as to create the illusion of sanctity.[1596] Setting aside the possibility that Christians would have been more effective at supplying remedies than pagan shrines thanks to their reliance on divine intervention, let us consider the competition from the perspective of a Late Antique Alexandrian predisposed towards patronizing pagan rather than Christian establishments. How could Christians win such a fellow over? They could, like Clement of Alexandria, acknowledge the potential efficacy of a pagan treatment, but stress that temporary relief in this world was not worth the eternal damnation that a person would earn by appealing to a demon for help.[1597] Like Cyril, they might mock the notion that clients were letting themselves be hoodwinked by a demon appearing in the guise of a mere woman.[1598] Or, like Zachariah, they might offer up the example of a pagan shrine that had been tested and found wanting by an actual pagan.

[1596] The latter charge was apparently made about the martyrium at Menouthis. See Dominic Montserrat, "'Carrying on the Work of the Earlier Firm': Doctors, Medicine and Christianity in the *Thaumata* of Sophronius of Jerusalem," in King, 237.

[1597] Clem. Al., *Prot.* 10. This argument was contingent on convincing the target audience that Christians were correct about the afterlife, a position that might have been easier for the audience to accept if it had already begun to wonder if the alleged role of deities and demons in generating evils, like illness, compromised pagan beliefs in general.

[1598] This might have been a reference to Isis, who would have been associated with the rival pagan incubation cult at Menouthis, assuming it existed (Cyril of Alexandria, *Oratiuncula*). See Fritz Graf, *Roman Festivals in the Greek East: From the Early Empire to the Middle Byzantine Era* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 261-62. For discussion of the gender politics in the rivalry between the two shrines see Juliussen, 91-98.

Zachariah's account revolves around a student by the name of Paralius, who came to Alexandrian in the 480s to take classes with, among others, the Horapollo from Damascius' account of late fifth century anti-pagan violence in Alexandria, discussed in chapter four.[1599] Horapollo taught in classrooms[1600] shared with other instructors, including the Heraiscus also mentioned in chapter four, and a man by the name of Asclepiodotus. The latter was originally from Alexandria but had visited Aphrodisias where he had struck up an alliance with the family of Paralius. After marrying, Asclepiodotus supposedly received some sort of divinatory message indicating that he and his wife would be able to conceive a child if he visited Isis' incubation shrine in Menouthis. Asclepiodotus did so and was successful in receiving a dream-vision. He followed the instructions of the dream interpreter employed at the shrine and was rewarded when he and his wife became the proud parents of a child. Learning about this incident, Paralius repeated the story as proof for the efficacy of paganism to his brother, a monk living near Alexandria. The monk and his fellow ascetics were unimpressed. One of the monks asked whether or not the mother of the new child was producing breast milk. If not, the monk said it was obvious that she was not the real mother and that some sort of chicanery was involved (namely, that the baby was adopted). Paralius approached the staff at the pagan shrine requesting an investigation into the breastfeeding abilities of the mother. His request was denied (Zachariah of Mytilene, *Vita Severi* 16-21).

[1599] For scholarship on the incident involving Paralius discussed below see Haas, 170, 187-88, 239-40, 327-29; Trombley, 14-20; Chuvin, 106-11; Watt, *Riot*; Cameron, "Poets," 21-46; Frankfurter, *Roman Egypt*, 162-65.

[1600] Classrooms of this type have been uncovered at Kom El-Dikka. Watts, *Riot*, 5-7.

In the meantime, Paralius had apparently been seeking out his own visions at Menouthis. He dreamt, or had a vision, in which Isis warned Paralius about a fellow student who, according to Isis, was a magician. When Paralius returned to the school, he naturally looked into this student's activities. He was informed that this student had also gone to the shrine at Menouthis and had been warned, by the same Isis, that *Paralius* was a magician. Understandably perturbed, Paralius went back to Menouthis seeking advice (perhaps wanting to know how to prove that the other student was lying). But Paralius received no response to his request for guidance. No deities or demons condescended to grant him a dream-vision. Outraged, he returned to Alexandria and began verbally attacking paganism, mocking the pagan beliefs of his classmates and insulting his pagan instructors.[1601] One day, when the instructors were away, a verbal dispute between Paralius and a coterie of pagan students escalated, and Paralius was physically assaulted.[1602] Zachariah was one of the few Christians present at the time and helped Paralius escape. Afterwards, Paralius took refuge at his brother's monastery. With the support of several Christians, Paralius approached the prefect, complaining about the assault at the school and the illegal sacrifices being carried out at Menouthis in connection with the incubation cult. When the prefect refused to take the desired steps, Alexandria's patriarch, Peter Mongus, took it upon himself to march to Menouthis and dismantle the pagan shrine.[1603]

[1601] Unfortunately, Zachariah did not follow up on the witchcraft accusation. Perhaps he meant the audience to think that the demon (Isis?) meant merely to stir up controversy with the charge. Perhaps Paralius' attacks on paganism were (subconsciously?) intended to divert attention from himself as a suspected sorcerer. One cannot help but wonder what the other student accused of sorcery thought of all of this.

[1602] Watts points out that students frequently came to blows because of rivalry between teachers, not religion. Watts, *Riot*, 4, 69.

[1603] Zachariah of Mytilene, *Vita Severi* 20-36. Chapter four discussed whether or not Zachariah's account can be taken as evidence that paganism continued to flourish in the late fifth century, and touched upon the extent to which the destruction of such an edifice was interpreted as proof of the inefficacy of paganism. It also

Whether or not this account is entirely trustworthy, it provides valuable insight into the reasoning process by which it was thought that faith in a pagan cult might have been undermined. The most compelling part of the story, for our present purpose, is Paralius' willingness to subject religion to the very "tests" that, according to pagans, Christians avoided (Origen, *Con. Cels.* 1.9, 3.44).

The miraculous provision of a child to a barren couple was not in of itself the problem. Christians, too, were credited with helping couples conceive (*Life of Aaron* 125-26 [51b-52b]; *Pratum spirituale* 114). The problem appears to have been the mechanism by which Asclepiodotus was provided with a child and the false-representation of this feat as a miracle when no counter-intuitive powers were actually involved, meaning that it was just a trick. Unfortunately, the text documenting Paralius' debate with the pagan priests over the source of Asclepiodotus' baby is corrupt, so it is impossible to know the full breadth of the range of evidence brought to bear. We should not assume that scientific methodology was behind Paralius' skepticism though. As Alan Cameron contends, the demand for proof of lactation was not necessarily on point, since elite women often hired wet nurses.[1604] Zachariah portrayed the pagan priest as a bit of a huckster, talking his way around evidence that suggested that the shrine was not efficacious. Manipulative double-speak was expected in situations like this. Apollonius of Tyana allegedly

---

discussed the persecution of Damascius' circle, which included Horapollo, around this time. Scholars debate whether this persecution was connected with a revolt and to the dispute involving the shrine at Menouthis. Watts, *Riot*, 62-78; Chuvin, 96-99, 111; Athanassiadi, "Persecution," 21-22; Haas, 475n117. Since, as Haas points out, Peter Mongus appears to have used this incident (at least according to Zachariah's depiction of events) as a means to unite rival Christian factions (Haas, 328), we see here yet another example of the influence of internal Christian disputes upon Christian-pagan interaction. Consider, too, Zachariah's intentions for this account—as an apology for Severus in the face of denouncements by other Christians—and the possible link to the debate over the the Theotokos, mentioned below.

[1604] Cameron, "Poets," 24.

mocked the inventiveness of so-called believers, who would offer one excuse after another, even blaming themselves, whenever a sacrificial rite or a piece of magic failed to produce the desire results.[1605]

Yet Apollonius himself was not above blaming clients for failed treatments (Philostr., *VA* 1.10). If refusals to treat a patient because of alleged sins on the patient's part or on the part of the patient's family are reinterpreted as (proactive or retroactive) explanations for *failed* treatments, then the desert fathers were guilty of smooth-talking as well (*Hist. mon.* 22.3; Sozom., *Hist. eccl.* 1.14). According to Zachariah, the pagan priest at Menouthis eventually confessed that he had supplied Asclepiodotus' wife with a child born to another couple, and that, afterwards, he had lied, claiming that Asclepiodotus' wife had conceived thanks to divine intervention (Zachariah of Mytilene, *Vita Severi* 18-19). As Frank Trombley points out, this so-called confession was coerced and should not necessarily be taken at face-value.[1606] Assuming that the confession was correct, the situation might have looked very different from the perspective of a believer. Presumably, the pagan priest could have spun this account to contend that divine intervention was responsible for helping him find an unwanted child for adoption.[1607] Hampered though we are by our reliance on a

---

[1605] Philostr., *VA* 7.39. For other possible explanations see Bohak, *Jewish Magic*, 49-50.

[1606] Trombley, 13.

[1607] Compare to the efforts to undermine the reputation of the martyrium established under Cyril's direction by attributing the cures to natural law rather than divine intervention. On the latter see Montserrat, "Carrying," 237. In pressing the point as to whether or Asclepiodotus' wife had actually given birth, the Christians may have been projecting some of their own anxieties regarding Mary's status as the Theotokos onto the situation. See Juliussen, 91-96. The Christians who helped couples conceive were also accused of fraud. For instance, a monk was accused of fathering the child that had only been conceived thanks to a miracle produced through the monk's intercession. The misunderstanding was cleared up through another miracle, one in which the baby identified its true father. *Pratum spirituale* 114. Cf. 15.39 Macarius the Egyptian 1. Whatever the source of the child in the affair at Menouthis, to anyone sympathetic with the couple's desire for offspring, the behavior of Alexandria's Christian community seems particularly cruel. It advertised the "true" source of the child, making sure that this information was spread far and wide, and even arranged for a communiqué on the subject to the distant region of Caria (Zachariah of Mytilene, *Vita Severi* 36-37).

pro-Christian account, we can nevertheless see that it was not the failure of the pagan shrine to produce results that was the problem, since a baby *was* produced, but rather the staff's failure to maintain control over the interpretation of the associated events.[1608]

Turning to Paralius' personal indulgence of the incubation rites at Menouthis, we can speculate about the rhetorical arguments that could have been proffered to sustain Paralius' faith in the powers of the shrine when his attempt to secure a dream-vision failed. Though Cyril had accused pagan incubation shrines of inventing dreams (Cyril, *Oratiuncula*), Zachariah did not appear to doubt that a demon was granting visions to clients at Menouthis.[1609] Zachariah just doubted that these visions were actually of any use. Zachariah claimed that Paralius failed to receive a dream-vision upon his second visit to the shrine at Menouthis because the demon (Isis) was annoyed that Paralius would dare to test it (Zachariah of Mytilene, *Vita Severi* 21). Zachariah did not say how he (Zachariah) knew this. If he was not simply speculating, perhaps he was quoting Paralius' report of the explanation proferred by the shrine's staff. Presumably the staff at this shrine might have also explained Paralius' failure by claiming that the gods had deemed Paralius unworthy of help or that the gods were seeking to test him.[1610] Whatever the case, this staff clearly failed to maintain control over Paralius' interpretation of the incident.

[1608] On the role of persuasion in the generation of counter-intuitive beliefs see Taves, 96.

[1609] Compare to Julian's mockery of what looked like incubation practices carried out in connection with tombs and Egyptian obelisks. Julian, *Con. Gal*. 339e-340a. Also see Cook, 326; Malley, 167.

[1610] For an example of a client who was refused service for what looks like unworthiness see Philostr., *VA* 1.9. For a more recent case in which the application of tests with ambiguous results did not undermine belief see Brow, 174-77.

Two other incidents showcase the importance of rhetorical persuasion in Paralius' adoption of Christian interpretations of the activity involving the shrine at Menouthis. Before coming to Alexandria, Paralius attended pagan divination rites that were allegedly disrupted by the presence of a cross. A pagan who also attended these rites sought to explain away this incident by explaining that the gods were offended by the cross because it represented murder (Zachariah of Mytilene, *Vita Severi* 39-43). Much later, after Paralius decided to be baptized, he was supposedly struck down by a sudden demonic attack. Zachariah investigated the problem, discovered that Paralius was in possession of some pagan literature, and demanded that this be destroyed. The literature was consigned to the flames, and Paralius felt as if he had been restored (Zachariah of Mytilene, *Vita Severi* 36-40). These two incidents were to some degree parallels. The pagan literature, like the cross, disrupted Paralius' maintenance of a proper relationship with the divine. But Paralius' final interpretation of the two items responsible for disrupting this relationship—the literature and the cross—differed. The cross, he decided, had disrupted the pagan rites because Christianity was inherently superior to paganism. The pagan literature had disrupted Paralius' tranquility—his *Christian* tranquility—because paganism was wicked, not because Christianity was by any means inferior. If a pagan had been available to proffer another interpretation of the second incident, would Paralius' opinion have changed? The "tests" and the "proofs" they produced were not provided and analyzed in an objective setting, with controls in place. They were carefully mediated via narratives constructed by men (a brother, his brother's friends, and a fellow student)

who had personal relationships with Paralius, social negotiation no doubt going some way towards Paralius' decisions about which interpretation to accept.[1611]

Learning Belief

This section of the discussion begins by considering the extent to which both Paralius' efforts to retest the shrine at Menouthis and the Late Antique demand for miracles in general seems to have reflected a (conscious or unconscious) attempt to establish reasonable belief, as defined above. I then challenge this argument, by presenting recent work suggesting that belief actually follows commitment. This is in keeping with Jonathan Z. Smith's arguments regarding the nature of early Christian belief: people must be taught how to think according to a new cognitive model before they can be expected to do so. I reconcile this theory with my supposition that people endeavor to have reasonable beliefs, by clarifying that reasonable belief is not necessarily the same thing that is being taught when a person learns to believe (contradictory though this may sound). In the course of this, I touch upon the scholarly debate over the role of subjectivity in the generation of religious beliefs (and the scholars' engagement with said subjectivity). I conclude by explaining just what is meant by the ubiquitous references to belief in this discussion, namely "belief in belief," as opposed to some idealized notion of belief as imagined by particular Christian leaders like Shenoute. Because "belief in belief" is so ambiguous, it is impossible to pin-down, meaning that scholars should be wary of declaring a specific person or a specific act as Christian or pagan.

[1611] Interestingly, Watts sees Paralius' rejection of his instructors' pagan faith as part of a rebellion against authority. Watts, *Riot*, 150-51.

To Paralius' fellow pagan students at Alexandria, his transformation probably looked like what we might call brainwashing today. The *counter*-intuitive nature of religious beliefs means they must be learned; they are not self-evident. To outsiders, this process can look like brainwashing, the "captivation" and "imprisonment" of a person's mind by religious authorities. In Paralius' case, these religious authorties would have been his brother, his brother's fellow monks, and Zachariah, as well as, perhaps, other unnamed actors. But modern researchers still debate whether or not brainwashing is even possible.[1612]

If Paralius was not brainwashed *per se*, then, following MacMullen, we might simply take Paralius as a typical example of the growth in superstition that accompanied the decline in rationalism in Late Antiquity. Unfortunately, this approach seems to disregard Paralius' consistent demands for proof. These demands flew in the face of a common assumption, circulated in both Christian and elite pagan circles, that it was not appropriate for ordinary people to test deities or the deities' chosen wonder-workers.[1613] Recall Zachariah's claim that Paralius failed to receive a dream-vision upon his second visit to the shrine at Menouthis because the demon (Isis) was annoyed that Paralius would dare to test it (Zachariah of Mytilene, *Vita Severi* 21). Paralius' insistence upon a repetition of his incubation experience at the

---

[1612] Anson Shupe and Susan Darnell, *Agents of Discord: Deprograming, Pseudo-Science and the American Anticult Movement* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2006), 123-62. Also see James Richardson, "The Active vs. Passive Convert: Paradigm Conflict in Conversion/Recruitment Research," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 24 (1985): 163-79. Note that the below discussion argues that Paralius displayed both active and passive behavior, actively seeking to put claims to the test while passively taking in explanations from certain authority figures (until he became capable of fostering these explanations himself).

[1613] Eunap., *VS* 458-460; Plut., *De def. or.* 409E-410A; *Paralopomena* 14 (33). At one point pagan priests allegedly attempted to stop Apollonius of Tyana from visiting an oracle on the grounds that it would be dangerous to allow a sorcerer to do so (Philostr., *VA* 8.19). Were they concerned that Apollonius would attempt to test the oracle? According to Sozomen, a monk in the Thebaid proved his superiority not only by managing to have God grant all of his requests, but by showing the prudence to request only those things that God would grant (Sozom., *Hist. eccl.* 3.14). In other words, the monk never attempted to test God.

shrine was approaching something that looks very much like the beginnings of an empirical investigation.

In this context, it seems appropriate to interpret the desire for miracles, not merely as requests for divine intercession in personal problems, but also as demands for proof in a world with limited methods for conducting empirical investigations. From this perspective, the request for a miracle was an appeal to a commonly shared system of verification. The shared nature of this system is paramount to its interpretation. Both Christians and pagans were potentially the recipients of miracles. The provision of wonders (including miracles and so-called magic) to a Christian reflected his participation in a system to which pagans belonged as well. These wonders were only "pagan" insofar as these wonders were generated in a shared sphere of activity. This sphere was no more pagan then it was Christian. Therefore, these wonders were not signs of the requestor's latent paganism, as MacMullen would put it.

A demand for proof of this sort implies an effort to resist the imposition of belief from authority figures who, as MacMullen points out, were discouraging the pursuit of empirical evidence.[1614] Christian leaders were seeking to dictate beliefs that would have been accepted on the basis of their personal authority, without having to submit proof of a divine mandate in the form of miracles. Hence, the demand for a miracle would have functioned as a "ritual of doubt," skepticism being implied

[1614] Euseb., *Prep. ev.* 15.62.16; MacMullen *Christianity*, 88-89. It seems unfair that MacMullen would, on the one hand, discount Christian miracles as pagan survivals and, on the other hand, criticize Christians for their lack of interest in empirical investigation. The game is "fixed," to use an idiom, if Christians are going to be accused of reverting to paganism whenever they demand proof of Christianity's validity (taking proof, here, to mean miracles, which, in the absence of modern scientific means, might very well have been taken as sources of reasonable belief). MacMullen's argument might be taken to mean that Christians were fundamentally irrational, so when they showed reason, they were reverting to paganism.

merely in the request, since truth-values were inherently attached to the fulfillment of these requests.[1615] The failure to provide a longed-for miracle would have begged the question as to why the miracle was not forth-coming. If disbelief was not going to result, some sort of explanation had to be proffered (the requestor's sins, for instance). During Paralius' performance in a "ritual of doubt," he challenged authority, attempted to analyze evidence via the most reliable processes available to him at the time, and endeavored to ensure that this evidence was not falsified.

Therefore, Paralius was not a victim of brainwashing or irrationality (defined here as a disregard for empirical evidence and unreasonable belief). We have no choice but to consider the possibility that the alteration in his beliefs was reasonable—using the definition of reasonable belief established above—even if someone else would not have come to the same conclusions. With Paralius' belief characterized as a matter of reasoning, faith becomes a kind of knowledge. But how did Paralius acquire this knowledge? Again, the *counter*-intuitive nature of religious beliefs means they must be learned.[1616] A recent vein of scholarship has taken up the position that a counter-intuitive belief system is acquired via some sort of participation. It is by active engagement as a subjective participant in activities

[1615] On "ritual doubt" see David Berliner and Ramon Serró, eds., *Learning Religion: Anthropological Approaches* (NY: Berghahn Books, 2007), 23-24. Berliner seems to limit the term to actual rituals (like the transubstantiation of the Eucharist), but I think it is applicable in this broader context as well. Since participation produces circumstances in which faith might be tested, it is easy to see why elite Christians and pagans were discouraging tests. Every demand for a miracle provided an opportunity for the introduction of skepticism.

[1616] As the reader may recall from the previous chapter, some ancient thinkers sought to cast religious learning as a form of innate learning. The below discussion assumes the opposite. The variability in religious beliefs across the world and across time seems to support this approach. Claims as to the innate nature of learning appear to have been rhetorical ploys, seeking to establish the supremacy of a particular position by claiming that it was inherent to the human condition.

embedded in and interpreted through a belief system, not through objective study, that a person learns religion.[1617]

The claim that a person "learns religion" no doubt strikes some readers as odd. Accepting Jonathan Z. Smith, scholarship on this issue has been sadly lacking with regard to early Christianity and Late Antique religion in general. The discussion in this chapter and every previous chapter has assumed that belief is generated in response to the reception of some sort of evidence (an intellectual argument, the spectacle of a martyr's suffering, fear of postmortem punishment, physical force, socioeconomic and political pressure, *et cetera*). But recent work by social scientists suggests that belief actually *follows* commitment. People must be taught how to think according to the new cognitive model before they can be expected to do so independently and to have confidence in this.[1618] A convert might have accepted that, in theory, God is active in the world and performs miracles for believers, but this convert will not automatically know how to interpret specific events according to this rule (or other rules related to the new faith). Tellingly, in the days leading up to Paralius' baptism, he still had to fall back on the guidance of Zachariah in the face of a spiritual crisis. It was only with Zachariah's help that Paralius was able to diagnose the source of his spiritual crisis (the possession of some pagan tracts) and determine how to resolve this crisis (by destroying these tracts). As Paralius became more adept in Christian reasoning, he was able to generate Christian interpretations on his own, as demonstrated by his efforts to reach out to his old associates to explain why the

[1617] Luhrmann, *Witch's*, 309-55; Berliner, 1-228.

[1618] Luhrmann, *Witch's*, 309-55. For the moment, I am conflating belief in a particular faith with knowledge of the precepts of this faith, but I think this is in keeping with the implicit approach of other scholarship on early Christianity. See below for an attempt to draw out the distinction between belief and knowledge of a faith's precepts.

appearance of the cross at those failed divination rites could be taken as proof of Christianity's supremacy rather than as a sign of the gods' discomfort over a symbol representing murder (Zachariah of Mytilene, *Vita Severi* 39-43).

If the Christian hagiographers are to be believed, behaving like a believer even in jest was a spur to belief. As a child, Athanasius supposedly enjoyed pretending that he was a bishop and would go about baptizing other children. Alexander, who was patriarch at the time, happened to observe Athanasius engaging in the game and, instead of dismissing it as mere child's play, he took it as a sign that Athanasius would one day become a great leader (Rufinus, *Hist. eccl.* 10.15; *Pratum spirituale* 197). Though scholars today would probably not go so far as to interpret a child's game as a sure-fire indication of a career path or a divinely-inspired sign of things to come, Alexander's appreciation for the deeply meaningful nature of play is well in line with modern thought on the educational role of children's games.[1619]

Evidence also exists for a link between religious learning and play-acting on the stage. It is a truism that actors are required to empathize with their characters to some degree in order to put on a good show. According to one martyrology, an actor was supposedly playing the part of a Christian martyr in the early fourth century and enduring a faux flogging when he suddenly experienced an epiphany: he had identified so closely with his role that he felt as if he was now a Christian. He had converted via mimesis.[1620] Fanciful as this stage conversion may sound, research on

---

[1619] Olivia N. Saracho, Bernard Spodek, *Contemporary Perspectives on Play in Early Childhood Education* (Greenwich, CN: Information Age Pub., 2003).

[1620] *PG* 117.408; Webb, *Demons*, 121-25, 157-60. Also see Panayotokis, 309; Coleman, "Fatal," 68. Given the link between conversion and mimesis, it is telling that Christians spoke of martyrdom as a theatrical production (Origen, *Exhortatio ad maryrium* 36), while both trials and executions were treated like theatrical events (Chariton 3.4; Philo, *Leg. ad Gaium* 368). Also see Harker, 140; Duncan, 203.

mimesis suggests that imitation can produce profound psychological results. Physical mimicry of the physiological traits associated with emotion will activate the same neural networks as genuine emotion.[1621] And emotion, according to MacMullen[1622] and the anthropologist T. M. Luhrmann,[1623] is crucial to the stimulation of religious beliefs.[1624]

The reader may also recall that chapter three contended that (even imagined) somatic and emotional engagement had an important role in encouraging conversion. Both elements were involved with the Late Antique demand for miracles to resolve illness, miracles that supposedly served as inspiration for conversions but would have served in the maintenance of faith as well, as "rituals of doubt" that facilitated the expression of skepticism and (hopefully) the resolution of that skepticism as the desire for a miracle was fulfilled.[1625] These miracles provided proof that was susceptible to personal testing and validation via engagement with the bodily senses that carried so much weight with a person's judgment.[1626] The rise of Christian

---

[1621] Hoffman, "Empathy," 441; Niklaus Largier, *In Praise of the Whip: A Cultural History of Arousal* (NY: Zone Books, 2007), 63.

[1622] MacMullen, *Christianity,* 54.

[1623] Luhrmann argues that religious beliefs are inconsistent because, among things, they are articulated to justify emotional commitments in *specific* contexts. They are not necessarily applicable to general situations. Luhrmann, *Witch's,* 353.

[1624] As mentioned in chapter three, Aristotelians and Stoics considered feelings a kind of judgment. The somatic sensations responsible for influencing emotion must therefore be considered a part of judgment. Scholars should beware applying anachronistic understandings of "rationalism" based on a Cartesian body-mind dualism to antiquity.

[1625] On "ritual doubt" see Berliner, 23-24.

[1626] The popularity of *healing* miracles as a vehicle of conversion in Late Antique narratives underscores the importance of this *physical* involvement. Giselle de Nie, "History and Miracle: Gregory of Tours's Use of Metaphor," in *The World of Gregory of Tours*, ed. Kathleen Mitchell and Ian Wood (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 268-69.

pilgrimage surely reflected, in part, the same need for physical contact in order to validate religious knowledge.[1627]

This portrait of religious learning leaves us with something of a paradox: if people cannot really believe until they have been taught how to think as if they believe and have generated the emotions associated with belief by acting as if they believed, then no one can objectively gather data on belief. To understand belief, to learn it, a person must compromise his objectivity and participate. This brings us face-to-face with a controversy that is swirling in scholarly circles. On the one hand, scholars like Luhrmann and Pyysiäinen contend that religious thinking can only be understood from a subjective standpoint. The scientific methodology that privileges so-called objectivity and challenges the credibility of counter-intuitive religious thinking is not necessarily as objective as its claim, being the product of a culturally-specific environment and unique historical circumstances.[1628] Paul Veyne, in pointing out the inherent subjectivity of all so-called objectivities,[1629] implies that it is the duty of scholarship to promote comprehension and appreciation for different perspectives from as subjective a standpoint as possible. In other words, to appreciate another culture we need to attempt to see the world from its perspective. By doing so, we can undermine the development of the boundaries that facilitate violence, as discussed in the fourth chapter. On the other hand, champions of objectivity like James Lett argue

---

[1627] Van Dam, *Gaul*, 200. The numerous miracles related to ailing sight (recall the incident of blindness recorded in the *Life of Aaron*) suggest a paradigm in which potential converts and adherents were being asked not just to feel but also to *see* the superiority of Christianity. Consider the connection between cures for blindness and the visual representation of cures in saint shrines. On the latter see Van Dam, *Gaul*, 137.

[1628] Luhrmann, *Witch's*, 16; Tambiah, 115-29; Pyysiäinen, *Magic*, 1-27; Jean-Pierre Olivier de Sardan, *Epistemology, Fieldwork and Anthropology*, trans. Antoinete Tidjani Alou (NY: Palgrave MacMillan, 2015).

[1629] Paul Veyne, *Did the Greeks Believe in Their Myths? An Essay on the Constitutive Imagination* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1988).

that scientific objectivity is applicable in a cross-cultural context and is a universal. Moreover, he argues that it is the duty of scholarship to promote scientific reasoning and to challenge belief in counter-intuitive principles that cannot be proven by scientific methodology,[1630] a sentiment which MacMullen no doubt seconds.

Both sides of the aisle have their merits. And they agree on certain issues. They acknowledge that religion has failed to submit convincing (that is, scientifically convincing) evidence for certain counter-intuitive religious beliefs. However, the Luhrmann school of thought, in maintaining that these beliefs may in fact be true, sometimes fails to be as explicit as it ought to be in asserting that the necessary evidence has *yet* to be supplied, and that members of this school of thought are thought are merely holding out the possibility that this evidence may be supplied in the future.[1631] The Lett school of thought sometimes forgets that this evidence *might* be supplied one day, a possibility that must be allowed for if the open-mindedness

[1630] Lett, 16. Lett's work is nearly two decades old but is worth referencing insofar as it encapsulates this side of the debate and was influential in the field. For an evenhanded review see Bryan Byrne, "Review of *Science, Reason, and Anthropology: The Principles of Rational Inquiry*," *American Anthropologist* 101 (1999): 682-83. Lett argues that this objectivity is necessary if scholars are going to make objective, universalistic humanitarian statements (Lett, 72). In this, Lett makes a mistake akin to that of C. A. Hoffman (who is also interested in the debate regarding subjective/objective viewpoints), as discussed in chapter four. Universalistic claims, ostensibly humanistic or not, are inherently dangerous insofar as they are absolutist bids for authority that threaten to override human choice (a statement that is, admittedly, a universal claim). On the imperialistic implications of universalistic claims, see chapter five. Arguing that efforts to debunk counter-intuitive claims do not conflict with sensitive ethnography (Lett, 71), Lett seems to be guilty of over-confidence. If we think of our ancient sources—like Lucian—as anthropologists, we can see the problem. Recall the ire Lucian inspired with his behavior with regard to Peregrinus' self-immolation (see chapter three). A fellow committed to debunking the beliefs of his subjects is likely to inspire their animosity and, what is worse from the perspective of a researcher, their refusal to act as informants.

[1631] The current study attempts to avoid this problem by focusing on how the so-called wonders under study here might have functioned regardless of their origin (divine or not) while acknowledging that proof of a divine origin acceptable to all audiences (both ancient and modern) is wanting. If this evidence *was* accepted by everyone, this study would be superfluous. The specificity of this language avoids, I hope, the flaw that Lett was quite right to point out with regard to the work of anthropologists like Luhrmann. Lett, 69.

and empiricism thought to be so integral to scientific methodology is to be preserved.[1632]

For our purposes, this matters because Paralius looks awfully like the well-educated anthropologists mentioned above who, during the course of their fieldwork, became convinced that they were the victims of curses inflicted by individuals living in the communities the anthropologists were studying. By indulging these suspicions, these anthropologists committed an arch-sin according to Lett, for they ceded their objectivity. Presumably Lett would applaud Paralius' decision to test the incubation rites a second time, but perhaps we should not be so ready to assume Paralius' objectivity on this point. Why did Paralius bother trying the incubation rites in the first place? Was he simply curious to see what would happen? Did he go seeking insight into the miracle involving Asclepiodotus? Or was he actually seeking assistance with regard to an issue in connection with what turned out to be a witchcraft scare?

Chapter three discussed the extent to which fear can be used to prompt a religious response. In the case of the anthropologists attacked by curses, the appearance of a *personal* threat was integral to the loss of objectivity. These anthropologists came to accept fears that were thoroughly counter-intuitive, but thoroughly convincing, perhaps *because* the issue was so personal. If, as suggested above, religion is learned, then despite the initial (albeit partial[1633]) objectivity of these anthropologists, their engagement in religious behavior (not merely observing

[1632] Despite Lett's claims as objectivity, his text is rife with bias. See, for instance, his assumption that every instance of so-called magic will turn out to be a conscious fraud. Lett, 70.

[1633] Only partial objectivity since they were engaging to some extent in the activities of the societies they were studying.

but participating) led them to a subjective perspective in which counter-intuitive beliefs came to be more persuasive. Was Paralius a victim of the same scenario? If it is true that he initially went to Menouthis in connection with suspicions regarding witchcraft or some sort of anxiety in connection with the fellow student who was accused of witchcraft, then we can hardly say that he was conducting an objective experiment. The second time he went, he was certainly not objective, as his own reputation and identity were on the line, having been accused of witchcraft himself. By suppressing or at least ignoring Paralius' reasons for the first trip, Zachariah gave the impression that Paralius' evidence was far more impartial than it might have actually been.

Above, I suggested that Paralius' behavior cannot be attributed to brainwashing. Does the introduction of fear warrant reconsideration of this issue? I think not. The anthropologists attacked by curses sought to remove themselves from the situations in which they felt threatened, but their core beliefs did not change. They merely suffered uncertainty. Paralius likewise removed himself from a threatening situation and sought protection in the arms of a religion that had already proved that it was efficacious in disrupting religious rites, a cross having foiled an attempt at pagan divination. Paralius' core beliefs did change, but he was hardly the passive victim implied by the term brainwashing. He took an active hand in his transformation.

Even if Paralius' initial visit to Menouthis had nothing to do with witchcraft or anxiety with regard to the fellow student later accused of witchcraft, the model sketched here for Paralius' conversion may still hold water. He might have truly felt threatened upon his second visit. If not—if Paralius' conversion was really brought

about through a process of empirical testing, social negotiation, and rhetorical strategies as suggested above—the witchcraft scenario might have nevertheless been a compelling factor in the conversion of other Christians. Curses and witchcraft were treated earlier in this discussion as elements of incidents that were essentially social negotiations. Reexamination of these incidents in light of the learning patterns discussed here lends weight to the notion that the subjective experience of a curse or a spell could have itself contributed to conversion.

Let us return to a problem introduced above: the notion that belief actually *follows* commitment—that religion is learned—seems to fly in face of the argument that belief is generated in response to the provision of some sort of evidence (including an intellectual argument, the spectacle of a martyr's suffering, fear of postmortem punishment, physical force, socioeconomic and political pressure, *et cetera*). The hagiographers, for instance, claimed that people were moved to accept faith in Christianity after they were furnished with proof in the form of miracles, meaning that belief *preceded* conversion. The apparent contradiction between belief the *precedes* commitment and belief that is only learned *following* commitment is resolved to some extent if we consider the observation of a miracle (or other evidence) as a kind of participation that implies some sort of commitment. Accidental or intentional observation—or reception, in the form of a narrative—of a feat that is framed or interpreted as a miracle functions as a form of instruction that has the potential to produce belief. The resolution of this "experiment" is not predetermined.[1634] But engagement of some sort is the *sine qua non* of conversion,

[1634] Lucian certainly was not converted by observing Peregrinus' self-immolation. See chapter three.

which, based on our definition of reasonable belief, is a conclusion (that is, belief in the efficacy of Christianity) reached via a reliable process (the reliability of this process, remember, being socially constructed), available to the believer at the time the belief is being generated, this process being such that it would necessarily result in belief. The generation of reasonable belief, conversion, hinges on the audience's receptivity to[1635] and the effectiveness of the rhetorical strategies and social negotiation surrounding the evidence, as well as the observer's own efforts to attempt to falsify the explanation that would yield conversion.

Yet we need to pin-down exactly what we mean by the belief associated with conversion. Scholars have debated at some length just what conversion might have meant in antiquity. It could hardly have been a reorientation of the soul for everyone, despite Nock's claims.[1636] This is especially true, as K. Holum has pointed out, for the famous mass conversions in which many of the converts could not have understood the language of the missionaries and insufficient time was provided for instruction in the tenets of the new religion before the converts were ostensibly considered Christians.[1637] Jonathan Z. Smith has illuminated the difficulty of characterizing belief even for the believers who did not face these challenges.[1638]

[1635] That is, willingness to engage in subjective participation.

[1636] Nock, 7. But for an apologist describing what sounds like a reorientation of some sort see Clem. Al., *Strom.* 4.6.

[1637] Kenneth Holum, "In the Blinking of an Eye: The Christianizing of Classical Cities in the Levant," in *Religion and Politics in the Ancient Near East,* ed. Adele Berlin (Bethesda: University Press of Maryland, 1996), 131-50. On Athanasius' endorsement of baptism even without faith see *Pratum spirituale* 198. Ignoring, for the moment, the degree of debate in the Christian leadership regarding just what was and was not acceptable behavior for a Christian, one assumes that knowledge of these issues would have been installed during the lessons administered to catechumens. The length of the catechumenate fell to a mere few weeks in the fourth century, but as Christian concepts entered the mainstreamthere may have been less need for this education. Alan Kreider, "Changing Patterns of Conversion in the West," in *The Origins of Christendom in the West* (NY: T&T Clark. 2001), 35. Instruction post-baptism would of course continue via sermons, assuming a person attended church, and as we know from one of the versions of the story about the woman who allegedly turned into a horse, some people avoided attending these sermons. (Macarius informed the woman that she would not have been susceptible to the

The question of belief is further complicated by efforts to locate similar concepts in non-Western cultures.[1639] Some scholars have suggested that conscious religious belief is a decidedly Western notion.[1640] James Cox has challenged the assumption that religious belief requires a conscious commitment, especially to the extent that this principal is predicated on a distinction between secular and religious aspects of life and therefore excludes societies that would seem to lack such a division, including perhaps the ancient Mediterranean.[1641] Even before the rise of Christianity, though, competition between religious experts would have prompted some sort of response from potential believers, this response ranging anywhere from complete acceptance to utter rejection to simple disinterest. What should we call this if not belief?

When it comes to knowing what another person believes—even when not separated from the believer by fifteen hundred years of history—what evidence do we have on which to base our conclusions? Our target's testimony, his behavior, other people's stated opinions, and our own suspicions, based—if we follow the example of the holy men who, as mentioned above, could allegedly read people's minds—on what we believe to be divine insight? Leaving aside the latter, we might claim, like

---

spell had she not skipped the Mysteries five weeks in a row, Pall., *HL* 17.6-9.) Even if the spatial constraints of church architecture during this period mean that most so-called Christians could not have regularly attended church (MacMullen, *Second Church*), we should not assume that irregular church-goers believed that they were pagans.

[1638] Smith, *Drudgery Divine*.

[1639] See the introduction for the debate over whether or not the terms "faith" or "belief"are appropriate with regard to paganism.

[1640] Berliner, 22.

[1641] Cox, 13. Note Kate Cooper's conclusion that "it is impossible to say what constituted a complete or satisfactory conversion, when we are uncertain whether or where a boundary was drawn between the sacred and the secular" (Kate Cooper, "Epilogue: Approaching Christendom," in Kreider, 362). For discussion of the argument that paganism (particularly Roman paganism) was a religion of ritual rather than faith, see chapter one.

Shenoute, the privilege of judging which behaviors—yes, *behaviors*, since if Shenoute was not psychic, behavior was the only guide he had to a person's beliefs—do and do not qualify a person as a Christian. But given that Shenoute's efforts in this regard were so self-serving, facilitating his efforts to assert his own authority, is this approach entirely appropriate for a modern scholar? As mentioned in the previous chapter, even committed Christians could sometimes make innocent mistakes leading to beliefs akin to so-called heresy (18.4 Daniel 7; 18.5 Daniel 8). Until the men in question were made to realize that they were engaging in heresy, they supposedly *believed* that they were orthodox Christians. So, do we reject them as orthodox Christians based on their heretical statements, or do we accept them as orthodox Christians based on their beliefs about their beliefs?

The difficulty is resolved, at least to some degree, by adopting Daniel Dennett's approach. Dennett argues that people generally believe in *belief* as opposed to believing in *religion*. By this, he means that when people say that they believe in a religion, they simply mean that they *believe* that they believe. They do not, as a rule, consciously think about all of the tenets of the faith that should theoretically constitute their belief. To do so would be impossible, for no one's brain can process that much information at once. In addition to believing in belief, people believe that the act of believing is important. Otherwise, conversion would hold no meaning. Because belief is not equivalent to simultaneous consciousness of all of the tenets of a faith, self-avowed religious people who, from an objective perspective, appear to lack in-depth knowledge of the tenets of their own religion may nevertheless consider themselves devout. Religious institutions (and leaders), not being able to read their

subjects' minds, have no choice but to rely on behavioral evidence for their constituents' faith. Thus, at the best, institutions (and leaders) can only *believe* in their constituents' belief,[1642] based, for instance, on the provision of evidence, like universal sacrifice, in Decius' case, or the avoidance of charms, in Shenoute's case.

If, as Dennet argues, people believe in belief as opposed to believing in a religion, and identity is really as fluid as suggested by comparison to a deck of cards, then where does that leave us when it comes to assessing the religion of anyone in antiquity? At one point, MacMullen claims that Christianity, unlike paganism, demanded a choice.[1643] If one looks at each action a person performs as a choice, the cards he plays, then Christianity was not unique in demanding choices. However, as mentioned above, modern psychological research suggests that counter-intuitive belief systems are facilitated by the domain-specific nature of knowledge. Objectively contradictory behaviors need not be recognized as such so long as the behaviors are not shown to be mutually exclusive.[1644] So people might (consciously or unconsciously) make a choice without it occurring to them that this choice was particularly pagan or Christian. What to us looks like a show of paganism—the playing of a pagan card—might not actually be proof of pagan belief. In other words, a seemingly pagan card is not proof of the card player's belief in pagan belief. For that matter, the pervasive and sometimes contradictory impulses of syncretic processes undermine the degree to which even the adoption of a Christian name can

[1642] Dennett, 223-46. Dennett's work, devoted as it is to a defense of atheism, has drawn some fire on those grounds. However, I believe his concept of "belief in belief" can be extracted from that frame and considered on its own grounds. For criticism of Dennett in the context of the debate regarding atheism see for instance Michael Shermer, "Review: Believing in Belief," *Science* 311 (2006): 471-72.

[1643] MacMullen, *Christianizing*, 17.

[1644] Pyysiainen, *Magic*, 50.

be taken as concrete evidence of belief in Christian belief, meaning that we cannot assume that Christianity was as widespread as some scholars argue on the basis of onomastic evidence.[1645]

Leaders such as Shenoute identified particular acts as pagan or Christian as a means by which to construct boundaries that could be used to negotiate pagan-Christian identity (and internal Christian identity). The inherently political nature of this act, reflecting as it does a leader's effort to secure and maintain authority, means that we cannot necessarily trust the results to represent an objective assessment of the Christian and pagan categories of activity, particularly given the degree to which Christian-pagan boundaries were constantly shifting. Therefore, we should be wary of passing judgment about another person's belief in belief merely on the basis of this person's behavior. That being said, it is understandable that we might want to speculate about an actor's belief in belief based on our interpretation of his actions, but it is wrong to assume that there is a one-to-one correlation between any given act and a person's belief in belief.[1646] This is especially true given that we rarely have an actor's own testimony (untrustworthy though that may be) as to his motivation. Therefore, when it comes to a fellow like Paralius, it seems appropriate to believe that Zachariah wanted us to believe that Paralius believed in his Christian belief. This can be true, even if, to us, Paralius' fear of the powers resting in certain pieces of pagan literature would have looked like latent paganism to Christians who claimed that such

[1645] Depauw, 407-35; Bagnall, "Onomastic," 105-24; Stark, 3-27. Again, even if the spatial constraints of church architecture during this period mean that most so-called Christians could not have regularly attended church (MacMullen, *Second Church*), we should not assume that irregular church-goers believed that they were pagans.

[1646] In chapter four, I challenged the assumption that interest in so-called pagan literature was *not* a sign of belief in pagan belief. My point there was the same as it is here: The situation was not necessarily clear-cut.

fears were superstitious (in other words, pagan) nonsense.[1647] We still have to assume that Zachariah wanted us to believe that Paralius believed he was Christian.

By this point, the reader would be well-justified in complaining that, instead of explaining how to assess someone's religion in antiquity, I have suggested that it is nigh on impossible to do so. Unfortunately, that is the reality with which we must deal. Saying that belief was ambiguous does not mean that we do not have to take it seriously, for, as argued above, Late Antique believers were no doubt endeavoring to ensure that the beliefs they held were reasonable, at least when these believers were consciously considering the issue (otherwise, we would have to introduce anachronistic notions like widespread atheism). We cannot assume that the association of certain behaviors with an individual (whether self-ascribed or attributed) is evidence that the person in question was (believed he was) a Christian syncretist or crypto-pagan (as Frankfurter would argue), or that he was (believed that he was) a Christian with good tastes (as Alan Cameron would argue), or that he was (believed he was) a heretic (as Bagnall would argue), or that he was the figment of the imagination of a Christian (a person who believed that he was a Christian) (as Bagnall again would argue), or that he was (believed he was) a Christian who lacked the moral fortitude or intellectual rigor to know that what he was doing was actually pagan (as MacMullen would argue).[1648]

[1647] Athanasius claimed that magic had ceased in Egypt and elsewhere (Athan., *De incar.* 1.47).

[1648] The difficulty of reconciling Bagnall's claim that paganism died an early death with MacMullen's claim that paganism survived in Christian guise reflects in part a vague definition of paganism. Equated with sacrifice, it certainly died an early death, assuming that illicit practices like those supposedly being carried on at Menouthis were outliers. But, as argued previously, traditional Egyptian paganism did not focus on sacrifice to the same extent as Greco-Roman paganism. If we define paganism as patronage of some sort of site or image, the situation is murkier, especially if, as I argued in chapter four, we cannot assume the de-sacralization of either. If paganism is taken to refer to the use of so-called magical practices, as some early Christians argued, then MacMullen is right, but would this have equated to belief in belief in paganism? For lack of an objective measure ofpagan belief in belief, the death of paganism is impossible to date at least within the scope of Late Antiquity.

Consider, for instance, the conundrum posed by a person like Nonnus of Panopolis (c. late 4th-5th cent.), a poet contemporaneous to Shenoute and hailing from the same city. Nonnus' adherence to Christianity would appear to be substantiated by his composition of a *Paraphrase* of St. John's Gospel, except that Nonnus went on to pen a rather lengthy epic celebrating the career of the deity Dionysus. Did he convert to paganism? Scholars think not, based on the inclusion of Christian imagery in the epic. Did his composition of this epic reflect his indulgence in a secular (better, antiquarian) activity? Perhaps. But Shenoute surely would have objected. Was Nonnus secretly a pagan all along, his indulgence in Christian imagery merely a cover? Probably not.[1649] Whatever the answer, the point seems to be that Nonnus, by definition, crossed lines.

Like Nonnus, many ancient men and women were probably crossing and re-crossing imagined religious boundaries on a regular basis in terms. Indeed, they must have been doing so, at least in the eyes of their observers, for each person, including non-Christians, carries within himself a stereotypical image of Christianity that is used to judge the behavior of others. Since this stereotype cannot help but vary from person to person, others must, by default, sometimes appear to be transgressing a personal rule. Since it is impossible to consciously consider all of the tenets of a religion at the same time, from second to second, a person might even occasionally appear to be transgressing his own personal rules.[1650]

[1649] For the debate over Nonnus' religious sentiments see for instance, Shorrock; Bowersock, *Hellenism,* 41-49; Cameron, "Poets," 42-43; Konstantinos Spanoudakis, *Nonnus of Panopolis in Context: Poetry and Cultural Milieu in Late Antiquity with a Section on Nonnus and the Modern World* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2014); Domenico Accorinti, *Brill's Companion to Nonnus of Panopolis* (Boston: Brill, 2016).

[1650] As the reader may recall, the definition provided above for "reasonable belief" allows for the existence of more than one reasonable belief about a given situation at any one time.

The ambiguous portrait of religious faith presented here suggests that Robert Shorrock and M. Kahlos' *incerti*—Late Antique people whose religious status was, by definition, unclear[1651]—might have been more numerous than otherwise suspected. We have to consider the possibility that there were people who did not care to be pinned down with regard to their beliefs about beliefs. They preferred ambiguity.

Conclusion

I have argued that both miracles and magic were constructed through social negotiation and rhetorical strategies. An Egyptian setting underscores the constructed nature of these categories because the traditional Egyptian attitudes towards magic, proper religion, and demons did not accord with either Greco-Roman pagan or Christian attitudes. Belief in divination, visions, demons, curses, and cures was likewise the product of social negotiation and rhetorical strategies. The conversions that were attributed to these feats were, by necessity, products of the same processes. Extended analysis of a particularly evocative case involving a shrine at Menouthis sheds light on the mechanisms by which reasonable belief might have been generated. With the concepts "belief in belief" and "learning belief," I have sketched a model that I think more accurately captures the truly diverse nature of belief (and, by corollary, identity) in antiquity than other models proposed thus far, that rely, for example, on reference to pagan survivals or mere syncretism.

By correcting for our assumptions regarding the nature of a so-called miracle, we can gain a greater appreciation for ancient men and women who did not think the same

[1651] Shorrock, 123; Kahlos, *Debate*, 2-3, 30-43.

way we do today but, nevertheless, were far from stupid. Once we recognize the constructed nature of religious belief—the gap between prescribed and lived existence always being to some extent insurmountable—we are in a better position to assess belief as a matter of social and rhetorical negotiation. No one enjoyed (or enjoys) pride of place in determining how a person ought to think about a particular subject, though people might very well try to assert the authority to do so. This is a matter of social competition, not adherence to some ultimate truth.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

So why did people convert to Christianity? One might argue that people did not really convert, that Christianity was just paganism in a new guise. The previous chapter pointed out the problems with this argument, namely that the identification as a particular act (or "belief in belief" judged on the basis of behavior) was far too polemical and fraught with ambiguity for us to venture to make such a bold statement. The previous chapter also explored the extent to which miracles might have been considered a reasonable basis for conversion, with Christians employing rhetorical and social negotiation to persuade audiences of just this. We might speculate that Christians were generally better at this than pagans, but the lack of testimony from an objective third-party observer makes it difficult to make any hard and fast conclusions.

Of course, many of the miracles that people were looking for involved the resolution of illness. Interestingly, the Coptic term for "healing" (ⲟⲩϫⲁⲓ) was also a traditional Egyptian term for "salvation."[1652] Chapter three contended that Christians were exceptionally good at advertising the terrors of the afterlife awaiting a person who failed to secure salvation. Michael Simmons argues that the promise of salvation was paramount in the Christian triumph: Christianity, unlike its competitors, offered universal salvation, and this was integral to its success.[1653] It may be true that the institutional organization of Christianity offered a better mechanism for overseeing a

[1652] David Frankfurter, "Healing Spells," in Meyer and Smith, 82.

[1653] Simmons, *Universal*, 210-26.

universal religion than pagan alternatives and that Constantine, recognizing this,[1654] hoped to capitalize on it, being drawn to universalism for the same reasons as Decius and Diocletian, to consolidate his authority, a possibility mentioned in chapter three. But it is not clear why universalism would have been particularly attractive to residents of the empire as a whole. Universalism might have appealed to the sort of people who were drawn to dogmatism, attracted as they were to the certainty of uniform guidelines.[1655] Yet, as this study has suggested again and again, deviance—the rejection of dogmatism and universal guidelines—might have exercised a very real attraction for early converts. Were this not the case, it would still be difficult to sustain the argument that conversion to Christianity meant conversion to a universal religion. The propaganda of Christian apologists notwithstanding, Christianity was by no means a unified system of belief. It was fractured by doctrinal and political dissent as early as the second century. Moreover, the claim that Christianity tended towards universalism rests in part on the notion that Christianity was inclusive rather than exclusive. Chapter five reviewed some of the reasons why we should be suspicious of the claims made by the Christian apologists on this point. Finally, Christian baptism was not the panacea for salvation that Simmons seems to think it was.[1656] Because the sins committed post-baptism posed a potential obstacle to salvation, Christian views of salvation might have actually acted as a detractor for some pagans considering

[1654] Rives, 135-54.

[1655] On the appeal of zealotry in connection with efforts to resolve identity confusion see Michael A. Hogg, Janice R. Adelman, and Robert D. Blagg, "Religion in the Face of Uncertainty: An Uncertainty-Identity Theory Account of Religiousness," *Personality and Social Psychology Review* 14 (2010): 72-83. On the argument that Christianity appealed to pagans simply because it offered a moral code, see chapters one through three. On the argument that Christianity appealed to pagans because monotheism itself was appealing, recall the discussion in chapter two regarding the monotheistic tendencies of paganism.

[1656] This is the implication when he favorably compares baptism to salvation in pagan cults which, as he puts it, had to be renewed. Simmons, *Universal*, 207.

conversion.[1657] Consequently, Christian promises of salvation cannot be the *only* reason for Christianity's triumph, as Simmons claims,[1658] though as my argument in chapter three clearly demonstrates, I do think it could have been successful in attracting some converts.

Another popular explanation for the success of Christianity relies on the supposition that Christianity addressed itself to all social levels, especially the lower socioeconomic levels generally ignored by pagan elites, and satisfied social needs.[1659] This argument is in keeping with accusations levied by early pagan critics who claimed that Christian converts were drawn from the lowest statuses. Christian writers embraced the claim, and some scholars have taken this as evidence for its veracity.[1660] As Averil Cameron has pointed out, Christianity was never solely a religion of the lowest statuses, and it was not unique in providing comfort during times of turmoil.[1661] Nonetheless, Christians might have been more effective in capitalizing on the latter and in marshalling their resources as patrons of previously untapped constituencies. The Church was certainly establishing itself as a patron in its own right by the mid-third century in Egypt, doling out charity, as chapter three mentioned, and beginning to acquire vast resources in the fourth century, thanks to the donations of wealthy donors, like Melania the Elder, whose generosity during a

---

[1657] Paul Bradshaw, ed., *Essays in Early Eastern Initiation* (Bramcote, Nottingham: Grove Books, 1988); Maxwell Johnson, ed., *Living Water, Sealing Spirit: Readings on Christian Initiation* (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1995).

[1658] Simmons, *Universal*, 210-26.

[1659] Stark, *Rise*, 207-208. See comments in Ando, "Apologetics," 172.

[1660] MacMullen, *Christianization*, 39. Also see chapter two.

[1661] Cameron, *Rhetoric*, 224-25. In a related argument, as chapter four discussed, some scholars have suggested that paganism was bound to decline as institutional support for paganism declined, but this argument is undermined by evidence suggesting that paganism adapted to this shift, transferring the focus to wandering holy men rather than holy places relying on institutional forms of support.

trip to Egypt was mentioned in chapter five. In the course of this process, Christian leaders were becoming increasingly powerful, successfully evading attempts to impose imperial control over the Church and meeting the demands of constituents who were appealing for assistance in the face of various dilemmas, including debt (19.12 Macarius of Egypt 7), confrontations with powerful men (Besa, *Life of Shenoute* 85-86; *Life of Aaron* 109-15 [45b-49a]), and boundary disputes with rival villages (*Hist. mon.* 8.36-37).

Rhetoric discouraging Christians from seeking wealth and social prestige masked the extent to which Christians were in fact interested in such matters. Notably, Sozomen attributed conversion not only to miracles and discussions with leading Christians, but also to envy, with pagans jealous of the influence that Christians had managed to gain with the emperor seeking conversion in order to secure an edge over the competition (Sozom., *Hist. eccl.* 2.5). Chapters four and six touched on the role of socioeconomic and political pressure in conversion, a process that would have proceeded according to existing dependencies. Kenneth Holum has shed light on the extent to which dependents would have converted alongside their patrons, in keeping with the expectations attached to dependency relationships.[1662] Though I could not find any explicit examples of this in Egypt, this sort of situation was no doubt common.

Conversion proceeded also proceeded along kinship lines. As chapter five mentioned, conversion sometimes threatened the family dynamic, so it is worth

[1662] Holum, "Blinking," 131-50. By suggesting that faith might have been directed by socioeconomic interests, I do not mean to imply that it was in any way insincere. If a conversion performed for socioeconomic reasons reaped rewards, then Christianity *worked*, implying that it did enjoy divine favor. Of course, competition did not disappear simply because a person became Christian. With disavowals of paganism operating as a strategy to assert social authority, it is hardly surprising that Christian rivals began accusing one another of descents into paganism, an issue to which this study has returned again and again.

noting that miracles were often presented as family affairs, with people seeking out holy men in search of treatment for their ailing relatives (*Hist. mon.* 1.12, 22.3; Sozom., *Hist. eccl.* 1.14; *Life of Aaron* 102 [43b], 107-24 [45a-51b]; 19.11 Macarius of Egypt 14; 19.14 Poemen 7; 19.17 Sisoēs; *Vita prima graeca Pachomii* 43; Theod., *Hist. eccl.* 4.17). When the Macarii exorcised the daughter of a pagan priest, the girl's entire community was allegedly inspired to destroy their idols and to convert (Socrates, *Hist. eccl.* 4.23; Sozom., *Hist. eccl.* 6.20). Scholars have argued that the transmission of Christianity along social networks was a leading cause of its success.[1663] According to Rodney Stark, a modest conversion rate, applied exponentially across social networks, would have resulted in a high number of converts over the course of a few centuries even without mass conversions.[1664]

Recent work by social scientists supports an argument for group-based conversions. Apparently, identity transformation is easier to bring about in a group than on an individual basis. When isolated from the group, an individual will endeavor to maintain the group standards, but if group standards change, then the individual is more likely to change as well.[1665] Unfortunately, this scenario introduces something of a dilemma: How can a group change without individual members of the group changing first, and doing so in contravention of the group consensus and group leaders? The process is feasible if we assume that, as argued in chapter three, there will be a few individuals in the group drawn to deviance, and, as argued in chapter

[1663] Kate Cooper, "Insinuations of Womanly Influence: An Aspect of the Christianization of the Roman Aristocracy," *The Journal of Roman Studies* 82 (1992): 150-64.

[1664] Rodney Stark and William Bainbridge, "Networks of Faith: Interpersonal Bonds and Recruitment to Cults and Sects," *The American Journal of Sociology* 85 (1980): 1376-95. Also see Jack Sanders, "Conversions in Early Christianity," in Blasi, 264. For criticism of Stark's argument see Cameron, "Conversion," 3-22.

[1665] Shupe, 127.

four, the individual members of the group—though hardly mindless—will be susceptible to influence from one another. Thus, we can imagine conversion spreading person-to-person and group-to-group, and we can imagine this process without likening Christianity to a contagion, as though it were inherently designed (because it was true) to infect anyone it came across. Because its infectivity (truth-value) was not a given, a sociological model whereby conversion transpired via exposure cannot be sustained without also envisioning non-sociological reasons for conversion, that is, the motivation behind at least some individual conversions, including, perhaps, the intellectual arguments suggested in chapter two.

That being said, pagan social networks were bound to suffer as conversion spread. Or were they? Adherence to Christianity would have been deleterious to paganism only if it meant that a convert could not continue to adhere to paganism (as either belief in pagan belief or participation in pagan dependency relationships). In this regard, MacMullen appears to have been correct in arguing that paganism did not require such choices.[1666] Unlike conversion to Christianity, initiation into a pagan cult did not, as a rule, prevent the adherent from participating in other cults. A shrine might have attempted to ensure that its clients did not stray[1667] and the religious requirements of a certain cult might have impeded participation in another cult,[1668] but paganism was not, by definition, exclusive. If we think of Christianity as just one of the many "new religious movements" that were so popular in the first few

[1666] MacMullen, *Christianizing*, 17.

[1667] We might interpret Philostratus' *Life of Apollonius of Tyana* as propaganda for the cult of Asclepius at the detriment of cults associated with Egypt. For pagan philosophers who discouraged "converts" to their philosophy from associating with outsiders, see Meeks, *Origins*, 25.

[1668] Participation in the execration practices involving the slaughter of a crocodile in one nome of Egypt might have theoretically posed a problem for participation in the veneration of crocodiles in another nome.

centuries of the Common Era, the notion that a person would convert to Christianity is not so surprising. It was somewhat fashionable to be initiated into one cult after another, or to undergo multiple initiations in the same cult.[1669] Christians differed from other cults though, by impeding the converts' future participation in rival cults. This would have given Christianity an advantage in terms of numbers, as it, like other cults, took in converts, but, unlike other cults, prevented (or at least attempt to prevent) them from going elsewhere afterwards.[1670] Even if religious identity during this period was as ambiguous as the previous chapter argued, conversion to Christianity would have had a deleterious effect on paganism to the extent that Christian leaders were successful in convincing adherents that they could not continue to participate in behaviors that were defined as pagan (by these leaders).

As chapter four discussed, paganism had clearly begun to fall into decline by the time that key members of the pagan social networks were converting (or dying without replacements). Pagan communities were surely thrown into turmoil by violence endured at the hands of Christian mobs. Some scholars argue that the use of force against paganism was crucial to the final triumph of Christianity.[1671] Theoretically, pagans could have exploited persecution by Christians to sustain

---

[1669] The Isis cult, for instance, attracted a great deal of attention, the appeal of it and other so-called new religious movements appearing to derive in part simply from its newness and, no doubt, by the appeal of the deviant. On the appeal of new cults ("new" from the perspective of Rome itself) see Beard, *Religions of Rome*, 278-91; Sanders, 622.

[1670] Admittedly, the equation of Christianity to pagan cults is not exact since there was, theoretically, only one Christian cult—Christians certainly discouraged adherents from seeking out so-called heretical sects—while there were many pagan cults which I am treating under the same umbrella. The latter seems justified because, first, Christians lumped pagans together and, second, pagans were unable to generate widespread acceptance of anything approaching orthodoxy. Scholars have suggested that Cicero, Ovid, and others were laying the groundwork for a pagan orthodoxy, but this had yet to come to fruition by the time that paganism fell into decline. And Julian's efforts on this score were cut short by his death. On proto-orthodox paganism see Leopold, 115; Douglas Gragg, "Old and New in Roman Religion: A Cognitive Account," in *Theorizing Religions Past: Archaeology, History and Cognition*, eds. Harvey Whitehouse and Luther Martin (NY: Altamira Press, 2004), 75.

[1671] See chapter four for scholarship on this topic.

paganism, contending that the brave endurance of suffering was a good in of itself, providing testimony as to the righteousness of paganism. But, as argued in chapters three and four, Christians appear to have been more effective than pagans when it came to emphasizing the graphic nature of their suffering. The value of such propaganda cannot be discounted, especially if, as the previous chapter argued, audience identification with a martyr facilitated vicarious participation in religious experiences, participation like this being the means by which believers are thought to "learn religion."

When looking for the sort of people who would have been attracted to the deviance represented by a martyr, it is probably no accident that many of our most interesting converts, like Clement of Alexandria and Paralius, appear to have converted when they were students.[1672] Scholars have long speculated that the identity-formation activities of youths might be conducive to conversion.[1673] These students are precisely the individuals who we could expect to find engaging in the participatory testing that, according to the previous chapter, produces belief. The reader may recall Clement's frustration as he went from school to school, seeking an instructor who lived up to his expectations, and not feeling satisfied in this regard until he encountered a Christian instructor (Clem. Al., *Strom.* 1.11). Among other things, this instructor no doubt proffered the sort of intellectual arguments discussed in chapter two, including the notion that Moses was the true source of some of the most appealing—appealing, that is, to fellows like Clement—features of Greco-

[1672] Cf. Jerome, *Vita Hilarionis* 1-2.

[1673] MacMullen, *Christianity*, 69. For a seminal text on the issue of identity development in youth see Erik Erickson, *Identity: Youth and Crisis* (NY: W. W. Norton & Company, 1968). Also see Carol Markstrom, "Religious Involvement and Adolescent Psychosocial Development," *Journal of Adolescence* 22 (1999): 205-21.

Roman pagan learning, thereby asserting the superiority of Christianity according to a paradigm of competitive historiography in which antiquity was paramount.

It is striking, then, that Clement of Alexandria's learning did not stop him from taking miracles as a definitive form of evidence. His love of logic was such that the final chapter of the *Stromateis* is a lesson on how to demonstrate a proof, but he considered miracles and faith critical to knowledge (Clem. Al., *Strom.* 1.88.1-8). Conversion, according to Clement, was the product of a rational process, with miracles playing an integral role. Considering the breadth of evidence brought to bear in the search for religious truth by individuals like Clement, it simply seems misguided to assert, as Simmons does,[1674] that there was one and only one reason why Christianity spread so successfully.[1675] There were different kinds of converts[1676] and different kinds of Christians, so why assume that there was only one reason for Christianity's (Christianit*ies*') success?[1677] If, as argued throughout this study, identity really is a deck of cards—being relational, representational, and in constant flux—why should we expect to find a normative reason for conversion even in the case of a single individual?[1678] Miracles, salvation, social negotiation, force, deviant appeal, participatory testing (vicarious or not), propagandistic use of graphic violence, and intellectual arguments were *all* factors.

[1674] Simmons, *Universal*, 210-26.

[1675] Frankfurter makes a similar argument. See Frankfurter, "Traditional Cult," 546.

[1676] See Clement of Alexandria's classification of four kinds of conversion. Clem. Al., *Strom.* 6.15.

[1677] On the challenge of judging merit in any decision-making process see Warren Thorngate, Robyn Dawes, Margaret Foddy, *Judging Merit* (NY: Psychology Press, 2009). For the same problem with regard to conversion to Christianity see Ross Kraemer, "The Conversion of Women to Ascetic Forms of Christianity," *Signs* (1980): 298-307.

[1678] Thus, we have men like Clement of Alexandria, eminent *intellectuals*, asserting the importance of *miracles*, as discussed in the conclusion of the previous chapter.

As the introduction admitted, in attempting to identify the factors that might have contributed to a conversion, this study might give the false impression that conversion should be thought of as a one-time event. In fact, scholars argue that we should think about it as a continuing process.[1679] The intellectual arguments, breathtaking narratives, bloody street battles, patronage practices, and miraculous events that might have persuaded a person to convert would have also served to foster recommitment and the maintenance of faith. Therefore, we should not expect to find that so-called confirmed Christians were any more static in their reasons for commitment than initial converts.

It would be a mistake to assume that religious beliefs in antiquity were ever clear-cut, if only because distinctions between pagans and Christians were being constantly re-negotiated as a matter of social competition. To deny this complexity is to miss out on one of the central features of Late Antiquity. Since the Christian construction of a pagan identity was so closely related to the construction of a Christian identity, we should expect to find that, as Christian identity changed, so too did Christian constructions of pagan identity. This is certainly true insofar as so-called heretics were increasingly identified with pagans, so much so that sometimes we cannot help but feel that we are losing touch with people who would have self-identified as pagan.

In other ways, Christian constructions of pagan identity remained relatively stable, especially in terms of the status of the pagans that were drawing attention. Apologetic works continued to focus on elite Greco-Roman pagans and Greco-

[1679] Thomas Brown, "Mystical Experiences, American Culture, and Conversion to Christian Spiritualism," in *The Anthropology of Religious Conversion*, eds. Andrew Buckser and Stephen Glazier (NY: Bowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2003), 142; Sanders, 626-27.

Roman prejudices, with hermeticism and a stereotypical and much derided traditional Egyptian paganism popping up here and there. Martyrologies continued to depict elite officials as the chief persecutors of the Christians. Zachariah of Mytilene's portrait of Alexandrian paganism concentrated on the same sort of semi-elite and elite pagan intellectuals that drew so much attention in the Church histories. But hagiographers other than Zachariah appear to have been more interested than the apologists and the Church historians in non-elite pagans. Aside from a few wandering elite pagan philosophers, hagiographers were more fascinated with village-based pagan circles, though they sometimes mentioned temple priests who were presumably of medium or high status.

The elite pagan Others who monopolized Christian discourse appear to have been a more or less direct reflection of the semi-elite and elite Christians who were responsible for composing these portraits. This makes sense insofar as elite pagans had been and continued to be the primary sources of competition for the semi-elite and elite Christians who, as argued in chapter three, played such an important role in Christianity beginning in at least the second century. These elite pagans were an inversion of the poor, low status individuals who supposedly dominated early Christian ranks. By contrast, Christian apologists rarely attempted to portray paganism as a religion of the poor, though they certainly associated it with the criminal behavior and irrational beliefs expected of low status individuals. The later martyrologies and hagiographies were more likely to accuse pagans of possessing the irrational thirst for blood that an elite pagan thinker like Seneca the Younger would have attributed to fellows of low status, while elite Christians were depicted as

possessing the very qualities that Seneca attributed to the best of the pagan elite, namely a sense of justice and deep-seated rationality.

The hagiographers occasionally touched upon the subject of traditional Egyptian pagan beliefs, but their portraits of the latter were no more detailed than those of the apologists, even though some of the desert fathers were supposedly raised as pagans.[1680] This could be read as a refusal to acknowledge the survival of traditional beliefs, as argued in chapter five, perhaps out of willful blindness, or because Christians had adopted elitist Greco-Roman pagan anti-Egyptian attitudes. While it is possible that traditional Egyptian faith had already fallen into such a state of decline that it had ceased to pose a real challenge, the depiction of paganism as a "dead" religion carried far too much symbolic weight for us to take this as definitive proof for the actual decline of paganism.

Interestingly, the references in the apologies to traditional Egyptian learning and hermeticism were largely absent from the hagiographies, the earliest of which post-date the earliest of the apologies under study here by at least a century. Besa claimed that Shenoute once confronted some pagans who were employing magic culled from certain books, the implication being that the books in question were somehow affiliated with a pagan temple (Besa, *Life of Shenoute* 83-84). But these so-called books appear to have been a far-cry from the sort of items that would have

[1680] For instance, hagiographers sometimes reference animal worship (*Hist. mon.* 8.21-23; *Pachomii vita bohairice* 4; *Vita prima graeca Pachomii* 3). The stories about desert fathers battling animal-shaped demons might have been allusions to the animal-human hybrid deities on the walls of the tombs and the temples in which the desert fathers were living (*Vita Antonii* 9). A hagiographer mentioned that Pachomius moved into a temple belonging to Pmampiserapis (*Pachomii vita bohairice* 8), a deity reflecting the sort of syncretic practices that, as chapter two discussed, could be taken as evidence of the deterioration of traditional Egyptian belief or as a lively and flourishing faith that was actively growing. Of course, the hagiographies also shed light on Ethiopian belief. If it is difficult to access traditional Egyptian paganism through a Greco-Roman pagan, Jewish, and Christian lens, it is doubly difficult to access the paganism of the Nubians, Blemmyes, and Ethiopians through Greco-Roman pagan, Egyptian pagan, and Christian lenses. In the texts I examined, I found little awareness of distinct Ethiopian beliefs.

been listed on the walls of the temples, and the other hagiographies contain nothing comparable to the book list found in Clement of Alexandria, which appears to have reflected some actual knowledge of the texts that were copied and stored in traditional Egyptian temples.[1681] Clement's concept of traditional Egyptian paganism—as a religion of allegory and concealed meanings—is nowhere to be found in the hagiographies. And Shenoute's sermon on the subject of what appear to have been temple hieroglyphs made no mention of what these hieroglyphs actually said or any notion of the possibility that these hieroglyphs might have been evocative of the allusive sort of thought that was considered to be indicative of traditional Egyptian paganism.[1682]

By stripping Egyptian paganism of its learned trappings, the hagiographers divested the Egyptian magicians in their narratives of any credibility that these magicians might have enjoyed in connection to their presumed identification with the pagan priests thought to be so knowledgeable in arcane and esoteric divine matters. That being said, neither the apologists nor the hagiographers made much of an effort to flesh out the Egyptian magicians who appeared in their narratives. In the story about a so-called Egyptian magician who allegedly turned a woman into a horse, no details were provided as to the nature of this magician's belief (*Hist. mon.* 21.17;

[1681] Clem. Al., *Strom.* 6.4; Fowden, *Hermes*, 58; Carr, 196.

[1682] Shenoute, *Monastic Invective against Hieroglyphs*. The notion that Egyptian religious thought was allusive was of course either a Greco-Roman distortion or a result of syncretic processes, as discussed in chapter two. The disinterest of the (later) hagiographies in traditional Egyptian script might be related to the decline of this script over time. As chapter two mentioned, the *Hieroglyphica* of Horapollo—who may or may not have been the same Horapollo who appeared in Damascius' history and was involved with the destruction of a shrine at Menouthis in the late fifth century—showed little understanding of actual hieroglyphics. The last dated Hieroglyphic and Demotic inscriptions were put up in Philae, the site of the *Life of Aaron*, as was only fitting insofar as Philae represented the edges of Greco-Roman and Christian space, a last bastion of Egyptian paganism. For these inscriptions see Eide, 1121-23. Interestingly, the *Life of Pisentius* implied that a monk was able to read the texts found in a tomb, but the language in which these texts were written was not specified (*Life of Pisentius*).

Rufinus, *Hist. mon.* 21.17; Pall., *LH* 17.6-9). For all we know, he might have been a Christian. That is, he might have believed that he believed in Christian belief. While traditional Egyptian pagans seem to have disappeared from the hagiographies *as* pagans, the case could be made that they resurfaced (*not* as pagan survivals, but as boundary-crossers) in the guise of Christian monks like Antony, who were in some ways just as alien (to non-Egyptians) as the traditional Egyptian pagan priests, possessing special knowledge of sacred literature and speaking an incomprehensible language—at least incomprehensible to non-speakers—that carried special sway with the divine and with demonic entities.

We know that these hagiographies enjoyed widespread popularity, the *Vita Antonii* being quickly translated into Latin, for instance. So how did audiences across the Roman Empire interpret the Egyptian pagan Other? It is impossible to exercise any certainty on the matter, but we must imagine that audience reactions differed region to region, shifting as the cultural and ethnic make-up of the audience shifted. A narrative asserting Egyptian Christian supremacy over Ethiopians/Nubians was probably more compelling for an Egyptian than a non-Egyptian audience (given the long history of Egyptian-Ethiopian/Nubian rivalry), though the same narrative might have been just as compelling for a non-Egyptian Roman audience if interpreted as an assertion of Roman supremacy over Ethiopians. And a declaration that Moses was the source of Egyptian learning might have looked very different through the eyes of an Athenian, for instance, than through the eyes of a Syrian who happened to be harboring Chaldean sympathies, for each would have had their own ax to grind when it came to establishing the origins of religion and learning.

Aside from Egypt's place in this competitive historiography, how does an Egyptian perspective enhance our understanding of Christian attitudes towards paganism? Exoticism is relative. The push-pull tendencies surrounding Egypt certainly might have operated in connection with other regions, such as Syria. Egypt did stand out, however, in some ways, particularly the worship of animals, a practice that Christians were quick to mock, adopting Greco-Roman pagan prejudices on the subject and asserting the dominance of Christian holy men over the animals that the Egyptians had identified with their deities. Egypt was associated with allegorical thinking as well, and whether this was a distortion of traditional belief or a reflection of syncretism, it complicated debates over the use of this sort of methodology by Christians and Greco-Roman pagans, both of whom sought (to differing degrees) to use allegorical methodology to defend themselves from attacks by the other.

Egypt, as the site of particularly harsh anti-Christian persecution, was also the site of many Greco-Roman fantasies—being a favorite with novelists—and was thus a good location for narratives meant to capture and hold the imaginations of potential converts. In the midst of the violence plaguing the empire as a whole, promises of Christian salvation might have looked especially attractive. And lest there be any lingering doubt on the subject, Christian narrators assured audiences that Christians had a much better chance of enjoying the afterlife than even the Egyptians, who were so renowned for their efforts to achieve immortality.

Unfortunately, religious violence (or at least violence attributed to religious motives) continued to break out well after Constantine embraced Christianity. Thanks to the surplus of evidence with regard to this violence in Alexandria, we can engage

in some fruitful speculation regarding the use of rhetoric in the construction of the sort of boundaries that foster violence. An Egyptian context also complicates the interpretation of violence against temples and idols, since animation rituals would have meant that this property was invested with a religious valence not necessarily found in other forms of paganism. These animation rituals meant that Christians might have felt a special onus to emphasize the powers of their living and breathing holy men over the so-called "lifeless" idols and temples of the pagans.

Holy men were not exclusive to Christianity, however, and the Egyptian pagan holy men were thought to be particularly powerful. In drawing attention to the ethnicity of their Egyptian converts, Christians surely hoped to appropriate the aura surrounding Egyptian pagan holy men—especially with regard to the performance of miracles thought to be contingent on communication with the divine, since Egyptians were supposed to be particularly gifted in this regard—while at the same time distancing themselves from the more illicit aspects of Egyptian identity as seen through the eyes of non-Egyptians. Hagiographers celebrated the triumph of Egyptian Christians over learned Greco-Roman pagans, exploiting both an assumption of Egyptian ignorance and, contradictorily, a respect for a fetishized Egyptian way of thinking that was too alien to be fully understood.

Alien as these Egyptians—and their Ethiopian and Nubian neighbors—were, their adoption of Christianity was acclaimed as substantial proof of Christianity's civilizing influence.[1683] Again, an Egyptian context complicates the situation, this

[1683] The same sort of narrative might be traceable in other contexts, in relation to the Syrians and Arabs, or the Gauls and the Goths, for instance. To my knowledge, scholars have explored the Christian treatment of each but not in a comparative setting that asks how each was seen through the eyes of the other. It might be useful to consider how such parallels match up against the Egyptian-Ethiopian/Nubian example, especially in connection to questions related to racism and ethnic prejudice.

time because a long-standing Egyptian-Ethiopian/Nubian rivalry would have lent a unique valence to the assertion of Christian supremacy over Ethiopia/Nubia.

The examination of Christianization through an Egyptian lens allows us to trace the manipulation of boundaries as Christians sought alternatively to identify with and to distance themselves from Egypt. The complications introduced by the use of this Egyptian lens demonstrate that we should be wary of generalizing about Christian-pagan interaction across the empire. While "Egypt" was distorted by both Greco-Roman pagan and Christian rivalry and inner-Christian rivalry, we can still detect evidence that Egypt itself—if only the idea of it—posed a problem for Christians and pagans alike. The accusation that an opponent appeared "Egyptian" was to some extent simply rhetoric, but it also reflected the degree to which identity was in fact a construction. And the construction of Christian identity(ies) proceeded in step with the construction of Egyptian pagan and Greco-Roman pagan identity(ies), the latter being foils against which this Christian identity(ies) was contrasted, each constantly undermining the other insofar as these categories were inherently subjective. In a way, identity construction must have functioned as a kind of conversion, with Christianity becoming more and more Christian as it became less pagan—a person converting as he constructed his Christian identity (however he defined this) and constructing his Christian identity as he converted—until, perhaps, the separation ("I am Christian because I am not pagan") would have seemed like an end in of itself.

Appendix

Post-persecution Religious Violence in Alexandria during Alexander and Athanasius' Terms as Patriarchs

Date	**Incident**	**Level of violence**	**Attributed to**	**Targeted**	**Source(s)**
324	Conversion of temple of Kronus or Saturn	At least one idol destroyed[1684]	Christians	Pagans	Eutychius, *Annales* 433-35
339	Mob attacked church and Christians	Unspecified number stripped naked, murdered, beaten, imprisoned, and exiled Church set on fire	Pagans, Heretics, and Jews[1685]	Orthodox[1686]	Athan., *Hist. Ar.* 10-13; Athanasius, *Epistola encyclica* 3-4; Socrates, *Hist. eccl.* 2.11, 2.14; Sozom., *Hist. eccl.* 3.6-7[1687]
343	Return of Athanasius resulted in riots	Unspecified number killed	Heretics	Orthodox	Socrates, *Hist. eccl.* 2.15
c. 346	Athanasius displaced heretics from churches	Unspecified	Orthodox	Heretics	Athan., *Hist. Ar.* 25; Athan., *Festal Index* 18; Sozom., *Hist. eccl.* 3.21
356	Pagans attacked church	Unspecified number scourged, beaten, partially stripping of clothing Church property destroyed	Pagans, with support of Heretics	Orthodox	Athan., *Hist. Ar.* 55-56

[1684] On this event see Haas, 209-10; McKenzie, *Art*, 406-407n25.

[1685] Haas takes Athanasius' accusation that Jews were among the assailants quite seriously. Haas, 288. However, Athanasius elsewhere referred to Arianism as a Jewish heresy (Athan., *Hist. Ar.* 19). So the constituency of this crowd seems uncertain to me.

[1686] Socrates Scholasticus and Sozomen claimed that the masses set fire to the church of Dionysius out of frustration over the installation of the heretical patriarch, Gregory, and that the heretics blamed Gregory for exciting this animosity, implying that heretics were the target of the violence, not the orthodox. However, Athanasius claimed that the violence was perpetrated by heretics against the orthodox.

[1687] Unspecified forms of violence attributed to the Arian patriarch, Gregory, in 340-341 (Athan., *Festal Index* 13).

Date	Incident	Level of violence	Attributed to	Targeted	Source(s)
356	Military attacked church seeking Athanasius and handed churches over to Arians	Unspecified	Heretics	Orthodox	Athan., *Festal Index* 28; *Hist. aceph.* 4.5; Athanasius, *Apologia ad Constantium* 25; Athan., *Apol. de fuga* 24
357	George the Cappadocian and military persecuted Christians found in cemetery	At least forty beaten, exposed to fire, stripped naked, scourged, and exiled	Heretics	Orthodox	Athan., *Festal Index* 29; Athan., *Apol. de fuga* 6-7; Socrates, *Hist. eccl.* 2.28
357-358	George the Cappadocian persecuted populace in general	Unspecified number imprisoned and maimed	Heretics	Pagans, Orthodox, and Jews[1688]	Sozom., *Hist. eccl.* 4.4, 4.10
358	George the Cappadocian driven from Alexandria	Unspecified	Unspecified religious affiliation[1689]	Heretics	Athan., *Festal Index* 30; *Hist. aceph.* 5.6; Sozom., *Hist. eccl.* 4.10
	Athanasius' supporters seized churches	Unspecified	Orthodox	Heretics	*Hist. aceph.* 4.5; Sozom., *Hist. eccl.* 4.10
	Military restored churches to Arians	Unspecified	Heretics	Orthodox	*Hist. aceph.* 4.5; Sozom., *Hist. eccl.* 4.10
359-360	Prefect persecuted orthodox	At least five, scourged (at least one to the point of death), imprisoned, and exiled	Heretics	Orthodox	Athan., *Hist. Ar.* 58-64; Athan., *Festal Index* 32
361	George the Cappadocian restored to Alexandria and persecuted populace	Unspecified	Heretics	Orthodox and pagans	Socrates, *Hist. eccl.* 2.45; Sozom., *Hist. eccl.* 4.30
	George the Cappadocian attempted to dismantle a temple	At least partial temple dismantlement	Heretics	Pagans	Socrates, *Hist. eccl.* 3.2

[1688] Sozomen implied that non-Christian were included among the victims (Sozom., *Hist. eccl.* 4.4). Haas believes that these victims included Jews. Haas, 288.

[1689] Regarding the make-up of this crowd, see Haas, 290, 464n28.

Date	Incident	Level of violence	Attributed to	Targeted	Source(s)
	George the Cappadocian murdered	At least three killed	Pagans[1690]	Heretics	*Hist. aceph.* 6.8; Socrates, *Hist. eccl.* 3.2; Sozom., *Hist. eccl.* 5.7; Amm. Marc. 22.11.8-10; Epiph., *Pan.* 76.1.1-8
365	Military attacked church looking for Athanasius	Broke down door	Heretics	Orthodox	*Hist. aceph.* 11.16; Sozom., *Hist. eccl.* 6.12
366	Fire involving a church associated with the Caesareum	Destruction of church	Pagans	Orthodox	Athan., *Festal Index* 38
367	Arian patriarch, Lucius, driven from Alexandria	None?[1691]	Orthodox and Pagans	Heretics	Athan., *Festal Index* 39; *Hist. aceph.* 13.18

Note: This list does not include Athanasius' returns from exile unless the source explicitly mentioned violence. It does not include his 362 return, for instance, even though Sozomen's claim that the people turned the churches over to Athanasius could be taken to imply some sort of violence was employed (Sozom., *Hist. eccl.* 5.7). This language seemed too mild to warrant inclusion in this list.[1692] This list also excludes searches conducted for Athanasius unless some sort of physical violence was mentioned. Finally, this list does not include the conversion of a temple of Bendis (or Mendis) into a church in 368-370 because no mention is made of an effort on the part of the pagans to prevent this conversion or of actual destruction of idols or temple features (Athan., *Festal Index* 41-42).

[1690] Note that Haas believes that orthodox Christians and Jews also participated in this violence. Haas, 288.

[1691] A military intervention appears to have prevented violence from breaking out (*Hist. aceph.* 13.18).

[1692] I was unable to find any record of the 351 riot that led to Athanasius' removal according to Alston, *City*, 287.

Bibliography

Sources

Achilles Tatius. *Leucippe and Clitophon*. Edited by E. Vilborg. Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1962.

-----. "Leucippe and Clitophon." In Reardon, 175-285. Translated by John Winkler.

Acta Alexandrinorum: de mortibus Alexandriae nobilium fragmenta papyracea Graeca. Edited by Herbert Musurillo. Lipsiae: Teubner, 1961.

Acta Appiani. In *The Acts of the Pagan Martyrs. Acta Alexandrinorum*. Edited by Herbert Musurillo. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1954.

Acts of Paul and Thecla. In *Acta Apostolorum Apocrypha*. Vol. 1. Edited by Max Bonnet and Richard Adelbert Lipsius, 235-72. Lipsiae: Mendelssohn, 1891.

-----. In *The Antinoopolis Papyri*. Edited by C. H. Roberts, John W. B. Barns, and Henrik Zilliacus, 26-28. London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1951.

-----. In Elliott, 364-74.

Acts of Phileas, Papyrus Bodmer XX. In *Apologie de Philéas, évêque de Thmouis: Papyrus Bodmer XX*, edited by Victor Martin, 24-52. Cologny-Genève: Bibliotheca Bodmeriana, 1964.

-----. in Musurillo, 328-53.

The Acts of Thomas. In *Acta Apostolorum Apocrypha*. Edited by R. A. Lipsius and M. Bonnet. Hildesheim: Olms, 1959.

-----. In Elliott, 447-511.

Aelian. *De Aeliani varia historia*. Edited by Rudolf Hercher. Rudolstadt: Druck der Fürstl. priv. Hofbuchdruckerei, 1857.

-----. *De natura animalium*. Edited by Rudolf Hercher. Lipsiae: Teubner, 1864-1866.

-----. *Historical Miscellany*. Translated by N. Wilson. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997.

-----. *On the Nature of Animals*. Translated by Gregory McNamee. San Antonio: Trinity University Press, 2011.

Aeneas of Gaza. *Teofrasto*. Edited by Maria Colonna. Napoli: Iodice, 1958.

-----. *Aeneas of Gaza Theophrastus and Zacharias of Mytilene Ammonius*. Translated by John Dillon, Donald Russel, and Sebastian Gertz. London: Bristol Classical Press, 2012.

Ammianus Marcellinus. *Ammiani Marcellini Rerum gestarum libri qui supersunt*. Edited by Wolfgang Seyfarth, Liselotte Jacob-Karau, and Ilse Ulmann. Leipzig: Teubner, 1978.

-----. *Ammianus Marcellinus*. Translated by Charles Upson Clark and John Carew Rolfe. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1935.

Anthony the Great. "Lettre 4." In *Lettres de Saint Antoine: Version géorgienne et fragments coptes*, edited by G. Garitte. Louvain: L. Durbecq, 1955.

-----. "Letter 4." In *The Letters of St. Antony: Origenist Theology, Monastic Tradition and the Making of a Saint*, translated by Samuel Rubenson, 210-11. Lund: Lund University Press, 1990.

The Apocalypse of Elijah: Based on P. Chester Beatty 2018: Coptic Text. Edited and translated by Albert Pietersma, Susan Comstock and Harold Attridge. Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1981.

Apocalypse of Paul. In *Acta Apostolorum Apocrypha*. Edited by Konstantin von Tischendorf. Lipsiae: Avenarius, 1851. xiv-xviii, 34-69.

-----. In Elliott, 616-44.

Apocalypse of Peter. In *Apocrypha*. Vol. 1. Edited by Erich Klostermann and Adolf von Harnack, 8-12. Bonn: A. Marcus und E. Weber, 1903.

-----. *Ein Stücke der urchristlichen Petrusapokalypse enthaltender Traktat der äthiopischen Pseudoklementinischen Literatur*. Edited by H. Duensing. Gießen: Töpelmann, 1913.

-----. *Das Evangelium und die Apokalypse des Petrus.* Edited by O. von Gebhardt. Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs, 1893.

-----. In Elliott, 595-612.

-----. *Evangelii secundum Petrum et Petri Apocalypseos que supersunt*. Edited by A. Lods. Paris: Leroux, 1892.

-----. "Fragments du texte grec du livre d'Enoch et de quelues écrits attribués à Saint Pierre." Edited by U. Bouriant 142-47. Paris: E. Leroux, 1892.

-----. *L'Evangile et l'Apocalypse de Pierre*. Edited by A. Lods. Paris: Leroux, 1893.

-----. *Littérature éthiopienne pseudo-Clémentine*. Edited by S. Grébaut. Paris: A. Picard et fils, 1912.

-----. *Your Eyes Will be Opened: A Study of the Greek (Ethiopic) Apocalypse of Peter*. Edited by D. D. Buchholz. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988.

Les Apophthegmes des Pères: Collection systématique. Edited by Jean-Claude Guy. Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1993.

-----. *Les Apophthegmes des Pères: Série des anonymes*. Edited by Lucien Regnault. Bégrolles-en-Mauges: Abbaye de Bellefontaine, 1985.

-----. *The Book of the Elders: Sayings of the Desert Fathers: The Systematic Collection*. Translated by John Wortley. Trappist, Kentucky: Cistercian Publications, 2012.

-----. *Patrologia Graeca*. Vol. 65. Paris: Migne, 1863-.

-----. *Patrologia Latina* Vol. 73. Paris: Migne, 1863-.

-----. *The Desert Fathers.* Translated by Helen Waddell. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1957.

-----. *The Sayings of the Desert Fathers: The Alphabetical Collection*. Translated by Benedicta Ward. Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1984.

Apuleius. *Las metamorfosis, o, El asno de oro*. Edited by Juan J. Martos. Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 2003.

-----. *Metamorphoses*. Edited by John Arthur Hanson. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989.

Aristides. *Die Apologie des Aristides*. Edited by Edgar Hennecke. Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs, 1893.

-----. *The Apology of Aristides*. Edited by J. Armitage Robinson. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1893.

Aristotle. *Aristotelis ars rhetorica*. Edited by Rudolf Kassel. Berlin: W. De Gruyter, 1976.

-----. *Aristotle: Poétique*. Edited by J. Hardy. Paris: Les belles lettres, 1965.

-----. *Aristotle, with an English Translation: The "Art" of Rhetoric*. Translated by John Henry Freese. London: W. Heinemann, 1926.

-----. *Aristotelous Peri Poiētikēs = Aristotelis De Arte Poetica*. Edited by Edward Ross Wharton and Walt Whitman. Oxford: Parker and Co, 1883.

-----. *Aristotelis Ars rhetorica*. Edited by Adolf Römer. Lipsiae: Teubner, 1898.

-----. *Poetics: On the Sublime / Longinus, Translated by W.H. Fyfe. On Style / Demetrius.* Translated by Doreen C. Innes. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995.

Aristophanes. *Aristophane.* Vol. 4. Edited by Victor Coulon and Hilaire Van Daele. Paris: Les belles lettres, 1928.

Comoedias. Vol. 3-4. Edited by Theodor Bergk. Lipsiae: Teubner, 1900.

-----. *Frogs, Assembly women, Wealth*. Translated by Jeffrey Henderson. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002.

Arnobius. *Arnobii adversus Nationes Libri VII.* Edited by Concetto Marchesi. Taurinorum: Paravia, 1960.

-----. *The Case against the Pagans*. Translated by George McCracken. Westminster, MD: The Newman Press, 1949.

Artemidorus. *Artemidori Daldiani onirocriticon libri v*. Edited by R. A Pack. Leipzig: Teubner, 1963.

-----. *The Interpretation of Dreams: Oneirocritica*. Translated by Robert White. Park Ridge, NJ: Noyes Press, 1975.

Athanasius. *Contra Gentes and De Incarnatione.* Edited and translated by Robert Thomson. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971.

-----. *Athanasiana Syriaca: Une lettre attribuée à St Athanase d'Alexandrie*. Edited by Joseph Lebon. Louvain: Istas, 1928.

-----. *The Festal Letters of Athanasius, Discovered in an Ancient Syriac Version*. Edited by William Cureton. London: Society for the Publication of Oriental Texts, 1848.

-----. *Histoire "Acéphale," et, Index syriaque des Lettres festales d'Athanase d'Alexandrie*. Edited by Annik Martin, Micheline Albert. Paris: Èditions du Cerf, 1985.

-----. *Les Lettres festales d'Athanase (CPG 2102)*. Edited by René-Georges Coquin. Leuven: Instituut voor oriëntalistiek, 1984.

-----. *S. Athanase: Lettres festales et pastorales en copte*. Edited by L.-Th. Lefort. Louvain: Durbecq, 1955.

-----. "Second Letter to the Virgins." In Brakke, *Athanasius*, 292-302.

[Athanasius?] *The Canons of Athanasius of Alexandria: The Arabic and Coptic Versions*. Edited and translated by Wilhelm Reidel and W. E. Crum. London: Williams and Norgate, 1904.

-----. "La Chasse aux reliques des martyrs en Egypte au Iv siècle." L.-Th. Lefort. *La Nouvelle Clio* 6 (1954): 225-30.

-----. "Homily on Virginity." In Valantasis, *Religions*. Translated by David Frankfurter, 475.

Athenaeus. *Athenaei Naucratitae Dipnosophistarum libri XV*. Edited by Georg Kaibel. Lipsiae: Teubner, 1887.

-----. *The Deipnosophists*. Translated by Charles Gulick. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1941.

Athenagoras. *Legatio and De resurrectione*. Edited and translated by William R. Schoedel. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972.

Augustine. *De civitate Dei*. Edited by Bernardus Dombart, and Alfonsus Kalb. Stuttgart: Teubner, 1993.

-----. *The City of God*. Translated by Marcus Dods. NY: Modern Library, 1950.

-----. *Vingt-six sermons au peuple d'Afrique*. Edited by François Dolbeau. Paris: Etudes augustiniennes, 1996.

-----. *Sermons: III/11 Newly Discovered Sermons*. Edited and translated by Edmund Hill and John Rotelle. Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 1990.

Basil. *Aux jeunes gens sur la manière de tirer profit des lettres helléniques*. Edited by Fernand Boulenger. Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1965.

-----. *The Letters; Address to Young Men*. Translated by Roy J. Deferrari, and Martin Rawson Patrick McGuire. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1934.

Besa. “Life of Shenoute.” In *Sinuthii Archimandritae: Vita et Opera Omnia*. Edited by Johannes Leipoldt and W. E. Crum. Paris: Imprimérie nationale, 1906-1913.

-----. In Bell, *Life*.

The Books of Jeu and the Untitled Text in the Bruce Codex. Translated by Violet MacDermot. Edited by Carl Schmidt. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1978.

Cassius Dio. *Historiarum romanarum quae supersunt*. Edited by Ursul Philip Boissevain, Hendrik Smilda, and W. Nawijn. Berlin: Weidmann, 1895.

-----. *Dio's Roman History*. Translated by Earnest Cary and Herbert Baldwin Foster. London: W. Heinemann, 1914.

-----. *Histoire romaine*. Edited by Estelle Bertrand, Pierre Cordier, Marianne Coudry, Marie-Laure Freyburger, François Hinard, Valérie Fromentin, Guy Lachenaud, Jean-Michel Roddaz. Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1991-.

[Callisthenes?] *Leben und Taten Alexanders von Makedonien*. Edited by H. van Thiel. Darmstadt, Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft,1974.

-----. “Alexander Romance.” In Reardon, 654-735. Translated by Ken Dowden.

Chaeremon. *Chaeremon Egyptian Priest and Stoic Philosopher: The Fragments*. Edited and Translated by P W van der Horst. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1984

Chariton. *Le roman de Chairéas et Callirhoé*. Edited by G. Molinié. Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1979.

-----. *Charitonis Aphrodisiensis de Chaerea et Callirhoe Amatoriarum Narrationum Libri Octo.* Edited by W. E. Blake. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1938.

-----. “Chaereas and Callirhoe.” In Reardon, 21-124. Translated by B. P. Reardon.

Cicero, Marcus Tullius. *De natura deorum*. Edited by Otto Plasberg, and Wilhelm Ax. Stutgardiae: Teubner, 1968.

-----. *De Natura Deorum, Academica*. Edited by H. Rackham. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1961.

-----. *De l'orateur* Edited by Edmond Courbaud and Henri Bornecque. Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1930.

-----. *De Oratore*. Edited by E. W. Sutton, and H. Rackham. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1959.

-----. *M. Tulli Ciceronis scripta quae manserunt omnia*. Edited by Rolf Westman and Max Pohlenz. Lipsiae: Teubner, 2013-2015.

-----. *Tusculanes*. Edited by Georges Fohlen and Jules Humbert. Paris: "Les Belles Lettres", 1960.

-----. *Tusculan disputations*. Translated by J. E. King. London: W. Heinemann, 1927.

[Clement?] *Die Pseudoklementinen*. Edited by Bernhard Rehm, Johannes Irmscher, and Georg Strecker. Die Griechischen Christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten Jahrhunderte 42. Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1953.

-----. *The Clementine Homilies, The Apostolical Constitutions*. Translated by James Donaldson. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1870.

Clement of Alexandria. *The Ante-Nicene Fathers. Translations of the Writings of the Fathers Down to A.D. 325*. Vol. 2. Translated by Alexander Roberts, James Donaldson, A. Cleveland Coxe, Allan Menzies, Ernest Cushing Richardson, and Bernhard Pick. Buffalo: The Christian literature Publishing Company, 1885.

-----. *The Exhortation to the Greeks, the Rich man's salvation, and the Fragment of an Address Entitled, To the Newly Baptized*. Edited by G. W. Butterworth. London: W. Heinemann, 1919.

-----. *Le Protreptique*. Edited by Claude Mondésert, and André Plassart. Paris: Éditions du Cerf 1949.

-----. Clement of Alexandria. *Stromateis*. Edited by B. W. Butterworth. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1919.

-----. *Les Stromates.* Vol. 1. Edited by Claude Mondésert and Marcel Caster. Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 2006.

Codex Justinianus. Edited by Gottfried Härtel. Leipzig: Reclam, 1991.

-----. Edited by Paulus Krueger. Hildesheim: Weidmann, 1954.

Codex Theodosianus. Edited by Paul Krueger, Theodor Mommsen, Paul M. Meyer, Otto Gradenwitz, and Alfred von Wretschko. Hildesheim: Weidmann, 1990.

Coffin Texts. In *The Ancient Egyptian Coffin Texts: Spells 1-1185*. Translated by R. O. Faulkner. Oxford: Ars & Phillips, 1973.

Corpus Papyrorum Judaicarum II 158. In *Alexandrinische und jüdische Gesandte vor Kaiser Hadrian*, edited by Anton von Premerstein. Berlin: Hermes, 1922.

Cyril of Alexandria. *Contre Julien. Tome 1*. Edited by P. Burguière and P. Evieux. Paris: Editions du Cerf, 1985.

-----. "Miracles of the Three Young Men." In *Homélies coptes de la Vaticane.* Vol. 2. Edited and translated by Henri de Vis, 160-202. Louvain: Peeters, 1990.

-----. *Oratiuncula*. *Patrologia Graeca*. Vol. 65. Paris: Migne, 1863-.

-----. *Patrologia Graeca*. Vol. 76. Paris: Migne, 1859.

Damascius. *The Philosophical History*. Edited and translated by Polymnia Athanassiadi. Athens: Apamea Cultural Association, 1999.

Death of Joseph. In *Aegyptiaca*. Edited by Paul de Lagarde, 1-37. Osnabrück: O. Zeller, 1972.

-----. *Coptic Apocryphal Gospels*. Translated by Forbes Robinson. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1896.

The Digest of Justinian. Edited by Theodor Mommsen, Paul Krueger, and Alan Watson. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985.

Dio Chrysostom. *Dio Chrysostom.* Translated by J. W. Cohoon and H. Lamar Crosby. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1940.

-----. *Orationes*. Edited by Ludwig August Dindorf and Guy de Budé. Leipzig: Teubner, 1857.

Diodorus Siculus. *Diodōru bibliothēkē historikē*. Edited by Immanuel Bekker, Ludwig August Dindorf, and Fridericus Vogel. Lipsiae: Teubner, 1890.

-----. *Diodorus of Sicily*. Edited by Henry Oldfather, Charles Lawton Sherman, C. Bradford Welles, Russel M. Geer, and Francis R. Walton. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1933.

Pseudo-Dionysius. *Panegyric on Macarius of Tkōw*. Edited and Translated by D. W. Johnson. Louvain: Sécretariat du CSCO, 1980.

Epictetus. *Epicteti Dissertationes ab Arriano digestae*. Edited by Henricus Schenkl, and Johann Schweighäuser. Lipsiae: Teubner, 1898.

-----. *The Discourses As Reported by Arrian, The Manual, and, the Fragments*. Edited by W. A. Oldfather. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1925.

Epiphanius. *Opera*. Edited by Wilhelm Dindorf and Denis Petau. Lipsiae: Weigel, 1860.

-----. *The Panarion. Book 1 - Sects 1-46*. Translated by Frank Williams. NY: E J. Brill, 1987.

-----. *The Panarion of St. Epiphanius, Selected Passages*. Translated by Philip R. Amidon. NY: Oxford University Press, 1990.

Eunapius. *Vies de philosophes et de sophistes*. Edited by Richard Goulet. Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2014.

-----. *Philostratus and Eunapius: The Lives of the Sophists.* Edited by W. C. Wright. Cambridge: W. Heinemann, 1921.

Euripides. *Bacchae*. Edited by E. Christian Kopff. Leipzig: Teubner, 1982.

-----. *Bacchae, Iphigenia at Aulis, Rhesus*. Edited by David Kovacs. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002.

-----. *Les Bacchantes*. Edited by Jeanne Roux. Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1970.

Eusebius. "Against Hierocles." In *The life of Apollonius of Tyana*. Translated by C. P. Jones. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005.

-----. *Contre Hiéroclès*. Edited by Édouard des Places. Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1986.

-----. *Histoire ecclésiastique*. Edited by Gustave Bardy and Pierre Périchon. Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1952.

-----. *Histoire ecclésiastique, De martyribus Palestinae.* Edited by Gustave Bardy. Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1958.

-----. *The History of the Church from Christ to Constantine.* Translated by G. A. Williamson. Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1965.

-----. *Historia ecclesiastica*. Edited and translated by J. E. L. Oulton and H. J. Lawlor. London: William Heinemann, 1932.

-----. *Life of Constantine*. Translated by Cameron, Averil and Stuart Hall. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999.

-----. *Martyrs of Palestine*. Edited and translated by Gustav Bardy. SC 55. Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1958.

-----. *La préparation évangélique*. Edited by Édouard Des Places. Paris: Èditions du Cerf, 1980.

-----. *Preparation for the Gospel*. Translated by Edwin Gifford. Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2002.

-----. *The Ecclesiastical History*. Translated by Kirsopp Lake, J. E. L. Oulton and Hugh Jackson Lawlor. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press 1932.

-----. *Vie de Constantin*. Edited by Friedhelm Winkelmann, Luce Pietri, and Marie-Josèphe Rondeau. Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 2013.

Eutychius. *Annales. Patrologiae Graecae.* Vol. 111. Lutetiae Parisiorum : Migne, 1864.

Evagrius Scholasticus. *The Ecclesiastical History of Evagrius with the Scholia*. Edited by Joseph Bidez and Léon Parmentier. London: Methuen, 1898.

-----. *The Ecclesiastical History of Evagrius Scholasticus*. Translated by Michael Whitby. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2000.

Expositio totius mundi et gentium. In *Geographi Latini Minoris*. Edited by Alexander Riese. Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1964.

------. *Expositio totius mundi et gentium*. Edited by Jean Rougé. Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1966.

Galen. *Galeni De usu partium libri XVII*. Edited by Claude and Georg Helmreich. Amsterdam: A. M. Hakkert, 1968.

------. *On the Usefulness of Parts*. Translated by Margaret Tallmadge May. NY: Cornell University Press, 1968.

Heliodorus. *Les Ethiopiques (Théagène et Chariclée)*. Edited by R. M. Rattenbury and T. W. Lumb. Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1935-43.

-----. *Aethiopica*. Edited by A. Colonna. Rome: Reg. Off. Polygraphica, 1938.

-----. "An Ethiopian Story." Translated by J. R. Morgan. In Reardon, 353-589.

Herodotus. *Herodoti Historiae*. Edited by Haiim B. Rosén. Leipzig: Teubner, 1987.

-----. *Herodotus*. Edited by A. D. Godley. London: W. Heinemann, 1921.

Hermès Trismégiste. Edited by Louis Ménard. Paris: Perrin et cie, 1910.

-----. *Hermetica.* Translated by Brian Copenhaver. NY: Cambridge University Press, 1992.

Hippolytus. *Contre les hérésies: Fragment*. Edited by Pierre Nautin. Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1949.

-----. *Refutatio omnium haeresium*. Edited by Paul Wendland. NY: Georg Olms Verlag, 1977.

Histoire "Acéphale," et, Index syriaque des Lettres festales d'Athanase d'Alexandrie. Edited by Annik Martin, and Micheline Albert. Paris: Èditions du Cerf, 1985.

-----. *Athanasii historia acephala*. Edited by Heinz Fromen. Münster i.W.: Bredt, 1914.

Historia monachorum in Aegypto. Edited by A. J. Festugiére. Bruxelles: Société des Bollandistes, 1971.

-----. *The Lives of the Desert Fathers: The Historia Monachorum in Aegypto*. Translated by Norman Russell. Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1980.

History of the Patriarchs of the Coptic Church of Alexandria. Vol. 2. Edited and translated by Basil Evetts. Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1948.

Homer. *Homers Ilias*. Edited by Jacob La Roche, Karl Friedrich Ameis, Karl Hentze, et al. Leipzig: Teubner, 1883-.

-----. *Homeri Odyssee*. Edited by Wilhelm Dindorf, Karl Ameis, and Karl Hentze. Lipsiae: Teubner, 1894-1900.

-----. *Iliad*. Translated by A. T. Murray and William F. Wyatt. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999.

-----. *The Odyssey*. Translated by A. T. Murray and George E. Dimock. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995.

Horapollo. *The Hieroglyphics of Horapollo.* Translated by Georg Boas. Rev.edited by Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993.

-----. *Hori Apollinis Hieroglyphica*. Edited by Francesco Sbordone. Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 2002.

Iamblichus. *Les mystères d'Égypte*. Edited by É Des Places. Paris: Belles Lettres, 1966.

-----. *On the Mysteries.* Translated by Thomas Taylor. London: Bertram Dobell, 1895.

Iamblichus. *Iamblichi de vita Pythagorica*. Edited by August Nauck. Amsterdam: Hakkert, 1965.

-----. *Life of Pythagoras.* Translated by Thomas Taylor. London A. J. Valpy, 1818.

"The Instruction of Papyrus Insinger." *Papyrus Insinger: les enseignements moraux d'un scribe égyptien du premier siècle après J.-C.* Edited by François Lexa. Paris: Librarie orientaliste Paul Geuthner, 1926.

-----. In *Ancient Egyptian Literature: The Late Period.* Vol 3. Edited by Miriam Lichtheim. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973.

Irenaeus of Lyons. *Contre les hérésies*. Edited by Adelin Rousseau, Louis Doutreleau, Bertrand Hemmerdinger, and Charles Mercier. Paris: Les Editions du Cerf, 1965.

-----. *The Writings of Irenaeus*. Translated by Alexander Roberts and William Hautenville Rambaut. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1868.

Isidore of Pelusium. *Lettres*. Edited by Pierre Évieux. Paris: Editions du Cerf 1997.

-----. *Sancti Isidori Pelusiotae Epistolarum libri quinque*. Edited by J. P. Migne. *Patrologiae Graecae.* Vol. 78. Lutetiae Parisiorum : Migne, 1864.

Jerome. *Trois vies de moines: Paul, Malchus, Hilarion*. Edited by Pierre Leclerc, Edgardo Martín Morales, Adalbert de Vogüé. Paris: Èditions du Cerf, 2007.

-----. "Life of Hilarion." *Early Christian Lives*. Translated by Carolinne White, 85-117. NY: Penguin Classics, 1998.

-----. "Life of Paul of Thebes." *Early Christian Lives*. Translated by Carolinne White, 71-84. NY: Penguin Classics, 1998.

John Cassian. *Conférences*. Edited by E. Pichery. Paris: Editions du Cerf, 1955.

-----. *Conferences*. Translated by Colm Luibhéid and E. Pichery. NY: Paulist Press, 1985.

John of Ephesus. *Iohannis Ephesini Historiae ecclesiasticae pars tertia*. Edited by E. W. Brooks. Louvain: Secretariat du Corpus SCO, 1935.

-----. *The Third Part of the Ecclesiastical History of John of Ephesus.* Translated by R. Payne Smith. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1860.

John Moschus. *Morceaux choisis du Pré spirituel de Jean Moschos, avec un aperçu sur l'auteur, une introduction à l'étude de la koinê, une traduction, des notes*

et un index. Edited by Dirk Christiaan Hesseling. Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1931.

-----. *The Spiritual Meadow*. Translated by John Wortley. Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 2008.

-----. *Patrologia Graeca*. Vol. 87. Paris: Migne, 1863-.

John of Nikiu. *The Chronicle of John, Bishop of Nikiu*. Translated by Hermann Zotenberg and R. H. Charles. London: William & Northgate, 1916.

Chronique de Jean, évêque de Nikiou: texte éthiopien. Edited by Hermann Zotenberg. Paris: Impr. nationale, 1883.

John Rufus. *The Lives of Peter the Iberian, Theodosius of Jerusalem, and the Monk Romanus*. Edited and translated by Cornelia Horn and Robert Pheonix, Jr. Boston: Brill, 2008.

Josephus, Flavius. *Flavii Josephi Opera.* Edited by Benedictus Niese. Berolini: Weidmann, 1885-1889.

-----. *Jewish Antiquities*. Translated by H. St. J. Thackeray. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998.

-----. *The Jewish War*. Translated by H. St. J. Thackeray. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997.

-----. *The Life, Against Apion*. Translated by H. St. J. Thackeray. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1926.

Julian. *Juliani Imperatoris librorum contra christianos quae supersunt*. Edited by Karl Johannes Neumann. Lipsiae: Teubner, 1880.

-----. *Œuvres complètes*. Edited by Joseph Bidez, Gabriel Rochefort, and Christian Lacombrade. Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1924-1965.

-----. *The Works of the Emperor Julian*. Translated by Wilmer Cave Wright. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1980.

Justin. *Apologie pour les Chrétiens*. Edited by Charles Munier. Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 2006.

-----. *The First and Second Apologies*. Translated by Leslie Barnard. NY: Paulinst Press, 1997.

Juvenalis. *D. Iunii Iuvenalis Saturae sedecim*. Edited by James A. Willis. Stutgardiae: Teubner, 1997.

-----. *Juvenal and Persius*. Translated by Susanna Morton Braund. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004.

[Justin?] *Ouvrages apologétiques*. Edited by Bernard Pouderon, Cécile Bost Pouderon, Marie-Joseph Pierre, and Pierre Pilard. Paris: Èditions du Cerf, 2009.

------. *The Fathers of the Church: A New Translation*. Translated by Thomas Falls. NY: Cima Pub. Co, 1947.

Lactantius. *L Opera Omnia*. Edited by Samuel Brandt and G. Laubmann. NY, N.Y.: Johnson Reprint Corp, 1965.

-----. *The Divine Institutes*. Translated by Sister Mary Francis McDonald. Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1964.

-----. *The Minor Works*. Translated by Sister Mary Francis McDonald. Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1965

Leiden Hymns. In *Ancient Egyptian Literature: An Anthology*. Translated by John Foster. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2001.

Libanius. *Autobiography and Selected Letters*. Edited by A. F. Norman. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992.

-----. *Discours.* Edited by Jean Martin and Paul Petit. Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1979-1988.

-----. *Opera.* Vol. 3. Edited by Richard Förster. Hildesheim: G. Olms, 1963.

-----. *Selected orations*. Edited by A. F. Norman. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1969.

Life of Aaron. In *Miscellaneous Coptic Texts in the Dialect of Upper Egypt*. Vol. 5. Edited by E. A. Wallis Budge, 432-55. London: Longmans and Co., 1915.

-----. *Paphnutius. Histories of the Monks of Upper Egypt and the Life of Onnophrius*. Translated by T. Vivian. Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1993.

Life of Abba Pidjimi. In Evelyn-White, Vol. 1, 162.

Life of Apa Aphou. In *Christian Oxyrhynchus: Texts, Documents, and Sources*, edited by Lincoln Blumell and Thomas Wayment, 638-57. Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2015.

Life of Apa Moses. In *Koptische Heiligen- und Märtyrerlegenden.* Edited by W. Till. Rome: Pont. institutum orientalium studiorum, 1935-1936.

-----. In *Monuments pour servir à l'histoire de l'Egypte chrétienne aux IVe, Ve, VIe et VIIe siècles.* Vol. 4. Edited by E. Amélineau. Paris: Mémoires publiés par les membres de la mission archéologique française au Caire, 1886-1888.

Life of Onnophrius. In *Miscellaneous Coptic Texts in the Dialect of Upper Egypt*. Vol. 4. Edited by E. A. Wallis Budge, 205-224. NY: AMS Press, 1977.

-----. *Paphnutius. Histories of the Monks of Upper Egypt and the Life of Onnophrius*. Translated by T. Vivian. Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1993.

Life of Pisentius. In *Coptic Apocrypha in the Dialect of Upper Egypt.* Edited by E. A. Wallis Budge, 326-30. London: the British Museum, 1913.

-----. *Étude sur le Christianisme en Égypte au septième siècle* (*Christianisme en Égypte au Septième Siècle*. Edited by E. Amélineau, 73-163. Paris: E. Leroux, 1887.

Longinus. *Dionysiou ē Logginou Peri hypsous = De sublimitate libellus*. Edited by Otto Jahn and Johannes Vahlen. Lipsiae: B.G. Teubner, 1905.

-----. *Du sublime*. Edited by Henri Lebègue. Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1939.

-----. *On the Sublime*. Translated by W. Hamilton Fyfe. 1927. Reprint, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1953.

Longus. *Daphnis and Chloe.* Edited by O. Schönberger. Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1960.

-----. *Daphnis and Chloe.* Edited by M. D. Reeve. Leipzig: Teubner, 1982.

-----. *Pastorales (Daphnis et Chloé).* Edited by G. Dalmeyda. Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1934.

-----. "Longus Daphne and Chloe." In Reardon, 288-348. Translated by Christopher Gill.

Livy. *Titi Livi Ab urbe condita liber*. Edited by Moritz Müller, P. G. Walsh, T. Dorey, John Briscoe, et al. Leipzig: Teubner, 1875-1991.

-----. *Livy*. Edited by B. O. Foster. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1976.

Lucan. *La guerre civile: La Pharsale*. Edited by A. Bourgery and Max Ponchont. Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1926.

-----. *Lucan*. Translated by J. D. Duff. London: W. Heinemann, 1928.

-----. *M. Annaei Lucani De bello civili libri X*. Edited by D. R. Shackleton Bailey. Stutgardiae: Teubner, 1892-1988.

Lucian, *Lucianus. Edidit Nils Nilén*. Edited by Nils Fredrik Nilén. Lipsiae: Teubner, 1906.

-----. *Lucian*. Translated by A. M. Harmon, K. Kilburn, and M. D. Macleod. London: W. Heinemann, 1913.

Lucretius Carus, Titus. *De la nature*. Edited by A. Ernout. Paris: Les belles lettres, 1924.

-----. *De rerum natura*. Translated by W. H. D. Rouse and Martin Ferguson Smith. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1975.

-----. *T. Lucreti Cari De rerum natura libri sex*. Edited by Jacob Bernays. Lipsiae: Teubner, 1852.

Macrobius. *Les Saturnales*. Edited by Charles Guittard. Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1997.

-----. *Saturnalia*. Translated by Robert A. Kaster. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011.

Malalas, John. *Die römische Kaisergeschichte bei Malalas: Griechischer Text der Bücher IX-XII und Untersuchungen*. Edited by Alexander Schenk. Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer,1931.

-----. *Ioannis Malalae chronographia*. Edited by Ludwig August Dindorf. Bonnae: Impensis E. Weberi, 1831.

-----. *The Chronicle of John Malalas*. Translated by Elizabeth Jeffreys, Michael Jeffreys, Roger Scott, and Brian Croke. Melbourne: Australian Association for Byzantine Studies, 1986.

-----. *Ioannis Malalae Chronographia*. Edited by Hans Thurn. Berolini [Berlin]: De Gruyter, 2000.

Manetho. *Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker*. Edited by Felix Jacoby. Berlin: Weidmann, 1923.

-----. *Manetho.* Translated by W. G. Waddell. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1940.

Marcus Aurelius. *Marci Aurelii Antonini ad se ipsum libri XII*. Edited by Joachim Dalfen. Leipzig: Teubner, 1979.

-----. *Meditations*. Translated by A. S. L. Farquharson. NY: Knopf, 1992.

Martial. *Epigrammaton Libri*. Edited by Walther Gilbert. Leipzig: Teubner, 1896.

-----. *Épigrammes*. Edited by H. J. Izaac. Paris: Les Belles lettres, 1930.

-----. *Epigrams.* Translated by D. R. Shackleton Bailey. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993.

Martyrdom of Apollonius. In *Der Process und die Acta s. Apollonii*. Edited by Theodor Klette, 92-131. Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1897.

-----. In Musurillo, 36-42.

Martyrdom of Thomas of Shentalet. In Evelyn-White, Vol. 1, 94-101.

Mishnah Avodah Zarah. In *The Mishnah*. Translated by Herbert Danby. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1933.

-----. *The Talmud of the Land of Israel.* Vol. 33. Translated by Jacob Neusner. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982.

*Mekhilta Mishpatim.*In *Mekilta De-Rabbi Ishmael*. Translated by Jacob Zallel Lauterbach. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1976.

-----. In van Henten, 167-68.

Mena of Nikiou. "The Martyrdom of Saint Macrobius." In *Mena of Nikiou*. Translated by David Bell. Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 1988.

[Methodius?] *Apocalypse* 9. In *Eastern Christian Apocalyptic in the Early Muslim Period: Pseudo-Methodius and Pseudo Athanasius*. Translated by Francisco Javier Martinez. Ph.D. diss., The Catholic University of America, 1985.

Minucius Felix, Marcus. *Octavius*. Edited by Michele Pellegrino. Aug. Taurinorum: In aedibus I.B. Paraviae, 1950.

-----. *Apology De Spectaculis, Minucius Felix.* Translated by Gerald H. Rendall and W.C.A. Kerr. London: Heinemann, 1931.

Miracles of Saint Menas. In *Apa Mena*. Edited by James Drescher, 7-34. Le Caire: Impr. de l'Institut français d'archéologie orientale, 1946.

----. *Zhitie prepodobnago Paisiia Velikago i Timofeia patriarha aleksansriiskago povestvovanie o chudesakh Sv. velikomuchenika Miny*. Edited by Ivan Pomialovskii, 62-89. Saint Petersburg: Saint Petersburg University, 1900.

Ibn al-Nadīm, Muḥammad ibn Isḥāq. *The Fihrist of Al-Nadīm; A Tenth-Century Survey of Muslim Culture*. Translated by Bayard Dodge. NY: Columbia University Press, 1970.

Nag Hammadi cache in *The Apocryphon of John: Synopsis of Nag Hammadi Codices II,1 ; III,1 ; and IV,1 with BG 8502,2*. Edited by Michael Waldstein and Frederik Wisse. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1995.

-----. *The Coptic Apocalypse of Peter (Nag-Hammadi-Codex VII, 3)*. Edited by Henriette Havelaar. Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1999.

-----. *L'Exégèse de l'âme: (NH II, 6)*. Edited by Jean-Marie Sevrin. Québec: Presses de l'Université Laval, 1983.

-----. *Nag Hammadi Codices III, 3-4 and V, 1 with Papyrus Berolinensis 8502, 3 and Oxyrhynchus papyrus 1081: Eugnostos and the Sophia of Jesus Christ*. Edited by Douglas M Parrott. NY: E.J. Brill, 1991.

-----. *Nag Hammadi Codices V, 2-5 and VI with Papyrus Berolinensis 8502, 1 and 4*. Edited by Douglas M Parrott and James Brashler. Leiden: Brill, 1979.

-----. *Nag Hammadi Codex VII*. Edited by Birger Pearson. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1995.

-----. *Nag Hammadi Codices IX and X*. Edited by Birger Pearson and Soren Giversen. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1981.

-----. *Nag Hammadi Codices, XI, XII, XIII*. Edited by Elaine Pagels. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1990.

-----. *The Nag Hammadi Library in English*. Edited by James Robinson. San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 1988.

Nestorius. *The Bazaar of Heracleides.* Translated by G. R. Driver and L. Hodgson. Oxford: AMS Press, 1978.

-----. *Le Livre d'Héraclide de Damas*. Edited by François Nicolas Nau, Paul Bejan, and Maurice Brière. Paris: Letouzey et ané, 1910.

Nonnus. *Dionysiaca*. Translated by W. H. D. Rouse. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1940.

-----. *Les dionysiaques*. Edited by Gisèle Chrétien, Pierre Chuvin, Marie-Christine Fayant, Hélène Frangoulis, et al. Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1976-2006.

Numenius. *Fragments.* Edited by E. des Places. Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1973.

-----. *The Neoplatonic Writings of Numenius*. Translated by Kenneth Sylvan Guthrie. Lawrence, Kan: Selene Books, 1987.

Olympiodorus. *The Fragmentary Classicising Historians of the Later Roman Empire: Eunapius, Olympodorus, Priscus and Malchus*. Edited and translated by R. C. Blockley. Liverpool: Francis Cairns, 1983.

"Oracle of the Potter." In *Graeco-Africana: Studies in the History of Greek Relations with Egypt and Nubia*. Edited and translated by Stanley Burstein, 136-38. New Rochelle, NY: Aristide D. Caratzas, 1995.

Origen. *Gegen Celsus*. Edited by Paul Koetschau. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2012.

-----. *Contra Celsum*. Translated by Henry Chadwick. NY: Cambridge at the University Press, 1953.

-----. *Origenes Werke*. Edited by Paul Koetschau. Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs, 1899.

-----. "Exhortation to Martyrdom." In *Alexandrian Christianity*. Vol. 2. Translated by John Oulton and Henry Chadwick. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1954.

Orosius. *Orose: Histoires*. Edited by M.-P. Arnaud-Lindet. Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1990-1991.

-----. *The Seven Books of History Against the Pagans.* Translated by Roy J Deferrari. Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1964.

Ovid. *Amores, Medicamina Faciei Feminae, Ars amatoria, Remedia Amoris*. Edited by E. J. Kenney. Oxonii: E typographeo Clarendoniano, 1961.

-----. *Ovid*. Translated by Grant Showerman, Frank Justus Miller, and G. P. Goold. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1977.

-----. *Ovidii Nasonis Metamorphoses.* Edited by William Scovil Anderson. Leipzig: Teubner, 1977.

-----. *Metamorphoses*. Edited by Frank Justus Miller. London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1916.

The Oxyrhynchus Papyri. Edited by Bernard P Grenfell and Arthur S. Hunt. London: Egypt Exploration Fund, 1898-.

-----. *Astronomical Papyri from Oxyrhynchus: P.Oxy. 4133-4300a.* Edited by Alexander Jones. Philadelphia: American Philosophical Center, 1999.

Pachomius. *La règle*. In *Oeuvres de S. Pachôme et de ses disciples.* Edited by L.-Th. Lefort. Louvain: Imprierie orientaliste L. Durbecq, 1956.

-----. "Regulations." In Veilleux, *Koinonia*, Vol. 2.

Palladas. *Anthologia Graeca epigrammatvm Palatina cvm Planvdea*. Edited by Hugo Stadtmüller. Lipsiae: Teubner, 1894-1906.

-----. *The Greek Anthology*. Translated by William Roger Paton. London: W. Heinemann, 1916.

Palladius. *Palladii Dialogus De Vita S. Joannis Chrysostomi*. Edited by P. R. Coleman-Norton. London: Cambridge University Press, 1928.

-----. *Dialogue on the Life of St. John Chrysostom*. Translated by Robert Meyer. NY: Newman Press 1985.

Palladius. *The Lausiac History of Palladius*. 1898-1904. Reprint, Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1967.

------. *The Lausiac History.* Translated by Robert Meyer. Westminster: The Newman Press, 1965.

Papyri Collection Youtie. In *New Documents Illustrating Early Christianity*. Edited and translated by G. H. R. Horsley, 124-25. North Ryde, Australia: Macquarie University, 1981.

Papyri Graecae Magicae: Die griechischen Zauberpapyri. Edited by Karl Preisendanz. Stuttgart: Teubner, 1973.

-----. *The Greek Magical Papyri in Translation.* Translated by Hans Dieter Betz. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992.

Papyri Graecae Haunienses III, edited by T. Larsen and A. Bülow-Jacobsen, 80-81. Hauniae: Munksgaard, 1942-

-----. *Christian Oxyrhynchus: Texts, Documents, and Sources*, edited by Lincoln Blumell and Thomas Wayment, 444-46. Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2015.

Papyri Harris. "Questions to a Christian Oracle." Edited and translated by Herbert C. Youtie. *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 18 (1975): 253-57.

Papyri London VI. In Bell, *Jews*, 58-71.

Papyri London Coptic. In *Catalogue of the Coptic Manuscripts in the British Museum*. Edited by W. E. Crum. London: British Museum, 1905.

Papyri Michigan. In *Papyri and Ostraca from Karanis*. Vol. 6. Edited and translated by H. C. Youtie and O. M. Pearl. Ann Arbor 1944.

Papyri Ryland Coptic. In *Catalogue of the Coptic Manuscripts in the Collection of the John Rylands Library, Manchester.* Edited by W. E. Crum, James Ludovic, and Lindsay Crawford. Manchester: University Press 1909.

Papyri Tebtunis. In *The Tebtunis Papyri*. Edited and translated by Bernard Grenfell, Arthur Hunt, Edgar Goodspeed. New York: Oxford University Press, 1907.

Paralipomena. In *Sancti Pachomii vitae Graecae*. Edited by F. Halkin. Bruxelles: Société des Bollandistes, 1932.

-----. In Veilleux, *Koinonia*, Vol. 2.

Passio Sanctarum Perpetuae et Felicitatis. Edited by Cornelius van Beek. Bonnae: Sumptibus Petri Hanstein, 1938.

-----. "The Passion of Perpetua." In Musurillo, 106-31.

Paulinus of Nola Carmen. *The Poems of St. Paulinus of Nola*. Translated by P. G Walsh. NY: Newman Press, 1975.

-----. *Sancti Pontii Meropii Pavlini Nolani Carmina*. Edited by Wilhelm von Hartel. Vindobonae: F. Tempsky, 1894.

Pausanias. *Description de la Grèce*. Edited by Janick Auberger, Michel Casevitz, François Chamoux, Anne Jacquemin, Madeleine Jost, Yves Lafond, Jean Marcadé, and Jean Pouilloux. Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1992.

-----. *Pausaniae Graeciae descriptio*. Edited by Maria Helena da Rocha-Pereira. Leipzig: Teubner, 1973.

-----. *Pausanias Description of Greece*. Translated by W. H. S. Jones, Henry Arderne Ormerod, and R. E. Wycherley. London: W. Heinemann, 1918.

Peter of Alexandria, *Canons*. *Patrologia Graeca*. Vol. 18. Paris: Migne, 1863-.

-----. *Reliquiae Iuris Ecclesiastici Antiquissimae. Graece Edidit A.P. De Lagarde*. Edited by Paul Anton de Lagarde, 63-73. Leipzig: Teubner, 1856.

-----. *Spicilegium romanum*. Edited by Mai Angelo. Romae: Typis Collegii Urbani, 1839.

-----. In Vivian, *Peter*, 185-92.

Petronius. *Petrone. Le Satiricon*. Edited by A Ernout. Paris: Les belles lettres, 1922.

-----. *Petronii Arbitri Satyricon reliquiae*. Edited by Konrad Müller. Stutgardiae: Teubner, 1995.

-----. *Petronius*. Translated by Michael Heseltine and W. H. D. Rouse. London: W. Heinemann, 1913.

Philo. *Philonis Alexandrini opera quae supersunt*. Edited by Leopold Cohn, Paul Wendland, and Siegfried Reiter. Berolini: Typis et impensis G. Reimerii, 1896.

-----. *Philo*. Philo. Translated by Francis Henry Colson and J.W. Earp. London: Heinemann, 1962.

Philostorgius. *Histoire ecclésiastique*. Edited by Joseph Bidez, Édouard Des Places, Bruno Bleckmann, Doris Meyer, and Jean-Marc Prieur. Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 2013.

-----. *Kirchengeschichte*. Edited by Joseph Bidez and Friedhelm Winkelmann. Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1972.

-----. *Philostorgius Church History*. Translated by Philip R. Amidon. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2007.

Philostratus. *Flavii Philostrati Opera*. Edited by C. L. Kayser. Lipsiae: Teubner, 1870.

-----. *The life of Apollonius of Tyana*. Translated by C. P. Jones. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005.

-----. *Philostratus and Eunapius: the Lives of the Sophists.* Edited by W. C. Wright. Cambridge: W. Heinemann, 1921.

-----. *Philostratus: Lives of the Sophists (Flavii Philostrati Vitae Sophistarum)*. Edited by Rudolf S. Stefec London: Oxford University Press, 2016.

Phlegon of Tralles. *Rerum naturalium scriptores Graeci minores / Paradoxographi Antigonus, Apollonius, Phlegon, Anonymus Vaticanus*. Edited by Otto Keller. Lipsiae: Teubner, 1877.

-----. *Book of Marvels*. Translated by William Hansen. Exeter, Devon: University of Exeter Press, 1996.

Pindar. *The Odes of Pindar*. Translated by John Edwin Sandys. London: W. Heinemann, 1968.

-----. *Pindari Carmina Cum Fragmentis*. Edited by Herwig Maehler. Leipzig: Teubner, 1987-1989.

Platon. *Œuvres complètes. Tome VI, Livres I-III Tome VI, Livres I-III*. Edited by Émile Chambry and Auguste Diès. Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1932.

-----. *Plato*. Translated by Harold North Fowler and W. R. M. Lamb. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1960.

P.Leiden Z. = SB XX 14606. *Sammelbuch griechischer Urkunden aus Aegypten XX*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 1998.

-----. In *Fontes historiae Nubiorum.*Vol. 3. Edited by T. Eide, T. Hägg, R. Pierce, L. Török, 1138-41. Bergen: University of Bergen: 1994-.

Pliny the Younger. *Briefe des jüngeren Plinius*. Edited by R. C. Kukula. Leipzig: B.G. Teubner, 1904.

Epistularum Libri Novem, Epistularum Ad Traianum Liber, Panegyricus. Edited by Carl Friedrich Wilhelm Müller. Leipzig: Teubner, 1903.

-----. *Histoire naturelle.* Edited by Jehan Desanges, Jean Beaujeu, Jacques André, Guy Serbat, Eugene de Saint-Denis, Alfred Ernout, R. Répin, Henri Le Bonniec, and H. Gallet de Santerre. Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1947-.

-----. *Natural history*. Translated by H. Rackham, W. H. S. Jones, and D. E. Eichholz. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1940.

-----. *Pline le Jeune. Lettres*. Edited by Anne-Marie Guillemin. Paris: Les belles lettres, 1927.

Plotinus. *Ennéades.* Edited by Émile Bréhier. Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1924.

-----. *The Enneads.* Translated by Stephen MacKenna. London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1969.

Plutarch. *Oeuvres morales.* Vol. 1-11. Edited by Jean Defradas, Christian Froidefond, Jean Hani, Jean-Claude Carrière, Marcel Cuvigny, and Robert Klaerr. Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1985.

-----. *Plutarch's Moralia*. Translated by Frank Cole Babbitt, Harold F Cherniss, Paul A Clement, Phillip De Lacy, Benedict Einarson, Harold North Fowler, W C Helmbold, Herbert B Hoffleit, Edwin L Minar, Jr., Lionel Pearson, and F H Sandbach. London: W. Heinemann, 1927.

-----. *Plutarque: Vies: Solon-Publicola, Thémistocle-Camille*. Edited by Robert Flacelière, Émile Chambry, and Marcel Juneaux. Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1968.

----. *Plutarch's Lives*. Translated by Bernadotte Perrin. London: W. Heinemann, 1914.

-----. *Vitae parallelae*. Edited by Cl Lindskog and Konrat Ziegler. Lipsiae: Teubner, 1960

-----. *Plutarchi Moralia*. Edited by Wilhelm Nachstadt, Wilhelm Sieveking, John Bradford Titchener, Curt Ernst Hermann Hubert, M. Pohlenz, Jürgen Mau, Hans Drexler, Konrat Ziegler, and F. H. Sandbach. Leipzig: Teubner, 1952.

-----. *Sur les délais de la justice divine*. Edited by Françoise Frazier and Yvonne Vernière. Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2010.

-----. *Sur les oracles de la Pythie*. Edited by Robert Flacelière. Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1937.

[Plutarch?] *Corpus Plutarchi Moralium.* Edited by Esteban Calderon Dorda, Alessandro De Lazzer, and Ezio Pellizer. Napoli: M. D'Auria, 2003.

-----. *Plutarch's Essays and Miscellanies*. Translated by William Watson Goodwin. Brown: Little & Brown, 1909.

-----. *Plutarchi Libellus de fluviis.* Edited by Rudolf Hercher. Lipsiae: apud Weidmannos, 1851.

Porphyry. *De l'abstinence*. Edited by Michel Patillon and Jean Bouffartigue. Paris: Belles Lettres, 1977.

-----. *Lettre à Anébon l'Égyptien*. Edited by H. D. Saffrey and A. Ph Segonds. Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2012.

-----. *Porphyrii philosophi fragmenta*. Edited by Andrew Smith and David Wasserstein. Stutgardiae: Teubner, 1993.

Porphyry. *La vie de Plotin*. Edited by Luc Brisson. Paris: J. Vrin, 1982.

-----. “Life of Plotinus.” In *Plotinus*. Translated by A. H. Armstrong, Paul Henry, and Hans-Rudolf Schwyzer. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1966.

Porphyry. *Vie de Pythagore, Lettre à Marcella*. Edited by Édouard Des Places and A. Ph Segonds. Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1982.

-----. *The Life of Pythagoras*. Translated by Kenneth Sylvan Guthrie. Alpine, NJ: Platonist Press, 1919.

Priscus. *The Fragmentary Classicising Historians of the Later Roman Empire: Eunapius, Olympodorus, Priscus and Malchus*. Edited and translated by R. C. Blockley. Liverpool: Francis Cairns, 1983.

Procopius. *Procopii Caesariensis opera omnia.* Edited by Jakob Haury and Gerhard Wirth. Lipsiae: Teubner, 1964-.

-----. *Procopius*. Translated by H. B. Dewing. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1968.

Propertius, Sextus. *Élégies*. Edited by D Paganelli and Simone Viarre. Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1929-.

-----. *Elegies.* Translated by G.P. Goold. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1990.

-----. *Sex. Propertii Elegiarum libri IV*. Edited by Rudolf Hanslik. Leipzig: Teubner, 1979.

Quintilian. *Institution oratoire.* Edited by Jean Cousin. Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1979.

-----. *The Instituto oratoria of Quintilian*. Translated by Harold Edgeworth Butler. London: W. Heinemann, 1921.

-----. *M. Fabi Quintiliani Institutionis oratoriae libri XII*. Edited by Ludwig Radermacher and Vinzenz Buchheit. Lipsiae: Teubner, 1965.

Rhetorica ad Herennium. Translated by Harry Caplan. London: Heinemann, 1954.

-----. *Rhétorique à Herennius*. Edited by Guy Achard. Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1989.

Rufinus. *Eusebius Werke*. Vol. 2. Edited by E. Schwartz and Theodor Mommsen. Leipzig: Hirnichs, 1903.

-----. *Tyrannis Rufinus: Historia monachorum, sive De vita sactorm partum*. Edited by Eva Schulz-Flügel. NY: W. Gruyter, 1990.

Scriptores historiae Augustae. Edited by Cécile Bertrand-Dagenbach, Jean-Pierre Callu, O Desbordes, A Gaden, François Paschoud, Robert Turcan, Stéphane Ratti, and Agnès Molinier-Arbo. Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1992.

-----. *The Scriptores Historiae Augustae*. Translated by David Magie, Ainsworth O'Brien-Moore, and Susan Helen Ballou. London: W. Heinemann, 1922.

SB XXIV 16252. In Bryen, *Violence*, 237-38.

Seneca the Elder. *Annæi Senecæ oratorum et rhetorum sententiae, divisiones, colores*. Edited by Conrad Bursian and Adolf Kiessling. Lipsiae: Teubner, 1857-.

-----. *Declamations [of] the Elder Seneca.* Translated by Michael Winterbottom. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1974.

Seneca the Younger. *Ad Marciam de consolatione; De providentia*. Edited by P. Becker. Leipzig: Teubner, 1934.

-----. *Dialogorum liber VI, Ad Marciam de consolatione.* Edited by Charles Favez. Paris: E. De Boccard, 1928.

-----. *Dialogues.* Edited by René Waltz. Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1923.

-----. *Epistles*. Translated by Richard M. Gummere. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1996.

-----. *Moral Essays, Volume I De Providentia. De Constantia. De Ira. De Clementia*. Translated by John W. Basore. London: W. Heinemann, 1928.

-----. *Naturales quaestiones*. Translated by Thomas H. Corcoran. London: W. Heinemann, 1971.

-----. *Oedipus, Agamemnon, Thyestes*. Translated by John Fitch. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004.

-----. *Opera: quae supersunt*. Edited by Friedrich Haase, E. Hermes, C. Hosius, and A. Gercke. Lipsiae: Teubneri, 1852-

-----. *Seneca.* Vol. 8. Translated by Thomas H. Corcoran and Frank J. Miller. London: W. Heinemann, 1968.

-----. *Tragoediae*. Edited by Rudolf Peiper and Gustav Richter. Lipsiae: Teubner, 1902.

Setna I. *Der verblendete Gelehrte: der erste Setna-Roman (P. Kairo 30646)*. Edited by Sara Goldbrunner. Sommerhausen: Gisela Zauzich Verlag, 2006.

-----. English in Simpson, 454-69. Translated by R. Ritner.

Setna II. *Stories of the High Priests of Memphis; The Sethon of Herodotus and the Demotic Tales of Khamuas*. Edited by F. Griffith, 147-207. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1900.

-----. English in Simpson, 470-89. Translated by R. Ritner.

Shepherd of Hermas. *Fathers of the Second Century: Hermas, Tatian, Athenagoras, Theophilus, and Clement of Alexandria*. Vol. 2. Translated by Alexander Roberts, James Donaldson, and A. Cleveland Coxe. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994.

-----. *Le pasteur*. Edited by Robert Joly. Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1958.

Shenoute. *Against the Origenists.* In Valantasis, *Religions*. Translated by David Frankfurter, 476.

-----. "A Monastic Invective against Egyptian Hieroglyphs." In *Studies Presented to Hans Jakob Polotsky*, edited and translated by D. W. Young, 348-60. East Gloucester, MA: Pirtle & Poison Beacon Hill, 1981.

-----. "Let our Eyes." In Emmel, "Destruction," 190-97.

-----. *Oeuvres de Schenoudi*. Edited by É. Amélineau. Paris: E. Leroux, 1907.

-----. "Open Letter to a Pagan Notable" In *Actes du X Congrès International de Papyrologues Varsovie-Cracovie 3-9 Septembre 1961*, edited and translated by J. W. B. Barns, 151-56. Wroclaw: Zakl. Narod. im. Ossolińskich, 1961.

-----. *Shenute: Contra Origenistas.* Edited by Tito Orlandi. Rome: CIM, 1985.

-----. *Sinuthii archimandritae vita et opera omnia*. Edited by Johannes Leipoldt. Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1908.

Socrates Scholasticus. *Kirchengeschichte*. Edited by Günther Christian Hansen and Manja Širinjan. Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1995.

-----. *Historia ecclesiastica*. Edited by R. Hussey. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1878

Sophronius. *Sophrone de Jérusalem: Panégyrique des Saints Cyr et Jean*. Edited by Pauline Bringel. Turnhout: Brepols, 2008.

Sozomen. *Historia ecclesiastica*. Edited by J. Bidez and G. C. Hansen. Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1960.

-----. *The Ecclesiastical History of Sozomen: Comprising a History of the Church from A.D. 324 to A.D. 440*. Translated by Edward Walford. London: Henry G. Bohn, 1855.

Sibylline Oracles. *Die Oracula Sibyllina.* Edited by J. Geffcken. Leipzig: Teubner, 1902.

-----. Charlesworth, Vol. 1, 317-472.

Sifre Deuteronomy. In *The Components of the Rabbinic Documents: From the Whole to the Parts*. Vol. 1. Part 3. Translated by Jacob Neusner. Atlanta, Ga: Scholars Press, 1997.

-----. In van Henten, 158-59.

Sifra Emor. In *The Components of the Rabbinic Documents: From the Whole to the Parts*. Vol. 7. Part 2. Translated by Jacob Neusner. Atlanta, Ga: Scholars Press, 1997.

-----. In van Henten, 144-45.

SS. Paese and Thecla. In Reymond, 31-80, 151-84.

S. Shenoufe and His Brethren. In Reymond, 81-128, 185-222.

Storia della Chiesa di Alessandria. Edited and translated by Tito Orlandi. Milano: Istituto editoriale Cisalpino, impr., 1968.

Strabo. *Géographie*. Edited by Benoît Laudenbach. Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2015.

-----. *The Geography of Strabo*. Translated by Horace Jones. 1932. Reprint, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1949.

Suetonius. *Suétone. Vies des douze Césars*. Edited by Henri Ailloud. Paris: Les belles lettres, 1931.'

-----. *Suetonius*. Translated by John Carew Rolfe K. R. Bradley. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998.

Sulpicia. *Tibulle et les auteurs du Corpus Tibullianum (Oeuvres de Tibulle. Oeuvres de Lygdamus. Panegyricus Messallae. Épigrammes élégiaques de Sulpicia)*. Edited by Max Ponchont. Paris: les Belles lettres, 1968.

Synesius of Cyrene. *Il 'De Providentia' di Sinesio di Cirene.* Edited by Salvatore Nicolosi. Padova: CEDAM, 1959.

Tacitus, Cornelius. *Annales*. Edited by Pierre Wuilleumier. Paris: Les Belles lettres, 1974.

-----. *Cornelii Taciti Libri Qui Supersunt.* Edited by E. Koesterman, H. Heubner, István Borzsák, and K. Wellesley. Stutgardiae: Teubner, 1965-.

-----. *Histoires*. Edited by Pierre Wuilleumier, Henri Le Bonniec, and Joseph Hellegouarc'h. Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1987.

-----. *The Histories*. Translated by Clifford Herschel Moore and John Jackson. London: W. Heinemann, 1925.

-----. *The Annals.* Translated by John Jackson. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1937.

Tatian. *Oratio ad Graecos.* Edited by Eduard Schwartz. Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs, 1888.

-----. *Oratio ad Graecos and Fragments*. Translated by Molly Whittaker. Clarendon Press Oxford 1982

-----. *Tatiani Oratio ad Graecos*. Edited by Miroslav Marcovich. Berlin De Gruyter, 1995.

Tertullian. *Apologetic Works*. Translated by Rudolphus Arbesmann, Emily Daly, and Edwin Quain. Washington, D.C: Catholic University of America Press, 1962.

-----. *Apologétique*. Edited by Jean Pierre Waltzing and Albert Severyns. Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1929.

-----. *Apology De Spectaculis, Minucius Felix.* Translated by Gerald H. Rendall and W.C.A. Kerr. London: Heinemann, 1931.

-----. *Les spectacles = De spectaculis*. Edited by Marie Turcan. Paris: Èditions du Cerf, 1986.

-----. *Quinti Septimi Florentis Tertulliani Ad nationes libri duo*. Edited by Jan Willem Philip Borleffs. Leiden: Brill, 1929.

-----. *Traite de la prescription contre les heretiques*. Edited by F. Refoule. Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1957.

-----. *The Writings of Quintus Sept. Flor. Tertullianus*. Translated by John Kaye, Sydney Thelwall, Peter Holmes, and Robert Ernest Wallis. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1869.

Theodore of Paphos. *La Legende de S. Spyriden eveque de Trimithonte*. Edited by P. Van den Ven. Louvain: Bibliotheqe du Museon, 1953.

Theodoret of Cyrus. *A Cure for Pagan Maladies*. Translated by Thomas Halton. NY: The Newman Press, 2013.

-----. *Kirchengeschichte*. Edited by Léon Parmentier and Felix Scheidweiler. Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1954.

-----. *The Ecclesiastical History [of] Theodoret*. Ilkley: Scolar Press, 1976.

-----. *Théodorèt de Cyr: Thérapeutique des maladies helleniques*. Edited by P. Canivet. Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 2006-2009.

Theophilus of Alexandria. *Homélies coptes de la Vaticane.* Vol. 2. Translated by Henri de Vis, 124-57. Louvain: Peeters, 1990.

-----. *I papiri copti del Museo egizio di Torino; trascritti e tradotti*. Edited by F. Rossi. Torino: E. Loescher, 1883.

----- In Russell, *Theophilus*, 63-70, 93-99, 101-39.

-----. *Sancti Eusebii Hieronymi Epistulae*. Edited by Margit Kamptner. Vindobonae: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1996.

-----. *Saint Jerome: Lettres: Texte etabli et traduit*. Edited by J. Labourt. Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1949.

Theophylact Simocatta. *The History of Theophyact Simocatta*. Translated by Michael Whitby and Mary Whitby. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986.

-----. *T. Simocattae Historiae.* Edited by C. de Boor and Peter Wirth. Stuttgart: Teubner, 1972.

Theophilus of Antioch. *Ad Autolycum*. Translated by Robert M. Grant. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970.

-----. *Trois livres à Autolycus*. Edited by Jean Sender and Gustave Bardy. Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1948.

Theophylact Simocata. *Historiae*. Edited by C. De Boor. Stuttgart: Teubner, 1972.

------. *The History of Theophylact Simocatta*. Translated by Michael and Mary Whitby. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986.

Thessalos of Tralles. In Moyer, *Limits*, 287-92.

-----. *Thessalos von Tralles. Griechisch und lateinisch*. Edited by Friedrich Hans-Veit. Meisenheim am Glan: Hain, 1968.

Tibullus. *Catullus, Tibullus, and Pervigilium Veneri.* Translated by Francis Warre Cornish, J P Postgate, and J W Mackail. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1966

-----. *Tibulle et les auteurs du Corpus Tibullianum (Oeuvres de Tibulle. Oeuvres de Lygdamus. Panegyricus Messallae. Épigrammes élégiaques de Sulpicia).* Edited by Max Ponchont. Paris: les Belles lettres, 1968.

Valerius Maximus. *Memorable Doings and Sayings*. Translated by D. R. Shackleton Bailey. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2000.

-----. *Valeri Maximi Facta et dicta memorabilia*. Edited by John Briscoe. Stutgardiae: Teubner, 1998.

Virgil. *Aeneis.* Edited by Eduard Norden. Leipzig: Teubner, 1916

-----. *Enéide*. 1977. Edited by Jacques Perret. Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1977-1980.

-----. *Vergil*. Translated by H. Rushton Fairclough. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967.

-----. *Vergils Aeneide*. Edited by Karl Kappes. Leipzig: Teubner, 1880.

Vision of Ezra. In Charlesworth, Vol. 1, 581-90.

-----. *Note di letteratura biblica e Cristiana antica*. Edited by G. Mercati, 70-73. Città del Vaticano: Biblioteca apostolica vaticana, 1941.

Vita Antonii. In *Athanase d'Aexandrie: Vie d'Antoine*. Edited by G. J. M. Paris: Èditions du Cerf, 1994.

-----. *The Life of Antony*. Translated by Robert Gregg. NY: Paulist Press, 1980.

Vita bohairice Pachomii. In Veilleux, *Koinonia*, Vol. 1.

-----. *S. Pachomii vita boharice scripta.* Edited by L. Lefort. Bellefontaine: Abbaye de Bellefonaine, 1925.

Vita Melaniae Iunioris. Gerontius. *Vie de sainte Mélanie*. Edited by Denys Gorce. Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1962.

-----. *The Life of Melania the Younger*. Translated by Elizabeth Clark. NY: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1984.

Vita prima graeca Pachomii. In *The First Greek Life of Pachomius*. Translated by Apostolos Athanassakis. Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1975.

-----. *Sancti Pachomii Vitae Graecae*. Edited by F. Halkin. Bruxelles: Société des Bollandistes, 1932.

Xénophon d'Ephèse. *Les Ephésiaques*. Edited by G. Dalmeyda. Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1924.

-----. *Ephesiacorum Libri V*. Edited by A. D. Papanikolaou. Leipzig: Teubner, 1978.

-----. "An Ephesian Tale." In Reardon, 129-69. Translated by Graham Anderson.

Zachariah of Mytilene. *Aeneas of Gaza Theophrastus and Zacharias of Mytilene Ammonius*. Translated by John Dillon, Donald Russel, and Sebastian Gertz. London: Bristol Classical Press, 2012.

-----. *The Chronicle of Pseudo-Zachariah Rhetor*. Edited by Geoffrey Greatrex. Translated by Robert Phenix and Cornelia Horn (Cambridge: Liverpool University Press, 2011).

Zosimos. *Histoire nouvelle*. Edited by François Paschoud. Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1971-1989.

-----. *New History*. Translated by Ronald Ridley. Sydney: Australian Association for Byzantine Studies, 1982.

Studies

El-Abbadi, Mostafa and Omnia Mounir Fathallaho. *What Happened to the Ancient Library of Alexandria?* Leiden: Brill, 2008.

Abd-el-Ghani, Mohammed. "Alexandria and Middle Egypt: Some Aspects of Social and Economic Contacts under Roman Rule." In Harris, *Alexandria*, 161-178.

Accorinti, Domenico. *Brill's Companion to Nonnus of Panopolis*. Boston: Brill, 2016.

Adams, C. *Land Transport in Roman Egypt: A Study of Economics and Adminstration in a Roman Province*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007.

Adams, C. E. P., J. Roy, editors. *Travel, Geography and Culture in Ancient Greece, Egypt and the Near East.* Oakville, CT: David Brown Books Co., 2007.

Adams, David Wallace. *Education for Extinction: American Indians and the Boarding School Experience, 1875-1928.* Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1995.

Adams, William. *Nubia: Corridor to Africa.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977.

Adang, Otto. "Initiation and Escalation of Collective Violence: An Observational Study." In *Preventing Crowd Violence*, edited by Tamara Madensen and Johannes Knutsson, 47-48. London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2011.

Adler, William. *Time Immemorial: Archaic History and Its Sources in Christian Chronography from Julius Africanus to George Syncellus*. Washington D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 1989.

Albinus, Lars. *The House of Hades: Studies in Ancient Greek Eschatology*. Oakville, CN: Aarhus University Press, 2000.

Aldrete, Gregory. "Material Evidence for Roman Spectacle and Sport." In Christesen, 438-50.

Alföldi, A., Magyar Numizmatikai Társulat. *Die Kontorniaten: Ein verkanntes Propagandamittel Der Stadt-Römischen Heidnischen Aristokratie in ihrem Kampfe gegen das Christliche Kaisertum.* Budapest: Magyar Numizmatikai Társulat, 1943.

Aldrete, Gregory. *Gestures and Acclamations in Ancient Rome*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopins University Press, 1999.

Allen, James. *Middle Egyptian: An Introduction to the Language and Culture of Hieroglyphs.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.

Allen, Thomas George. *The Book of the Dead.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974.

Alston, Richard, Edith Hall and Laura Proffitt, editors. *Reading Ancient Slavery*. London: Bristol Classical Press, 2011.

-----. *Soldier and Society in Roman Egypt: A Social History*. NY: Routledge, 1995.

-----. *The City in Roman Egypt*. London: Routledge, 2002.

Anderson, Graham. *Sage, Saint and Sophist: Holy Men and Their Associates in the Early Roman Empire.* NY: Routledge, 1994.

-----. "Xenophon of Ephesus An Ephesian Tale." In Reardon, 125-28.

Ando, Clifford. *The Matter of the Gods: Religion and the Roman Empire*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008.

-----. "Pagan Apologetics and Christian Intolerance in the Age of Themistius and Augustine." *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 4 (1996): 171-207.

Arbesmann, Rudolph. "Fasting and Prophecy in Pagan and Christian Antiquity." *Traditio* 7 (1949-51): 1-71.

Armstrong, A. Hilary. "The Self-Definition of Christianity in Relation to Later Platonism." In Meyer, *Jewish*, Vol. 1, 74-99.

Armstrong, C. B. "The Synod of Alexandria and the Schism at Antioch in A.D. 362." *The Journal of Theological Studies* 22 (1921): 206-21.

Asad, Talal. *Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2003.

Assmann, Aleida. *Cultural Memory and Western Civilization: Functions, Media, Archives.* NY: Cambridge University Press, 2011.

Assmann, Jan. *Moses the Egyptian: The Memory of Egypt in Western Monotheism*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997.

-----. *Of God and God: Egypt, Israel, and the Rise of Monotheism*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2008.

-----. "When Justice Fails: Jurisdiction and Imprecation in Ancient Egypt and the Near East." *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 78 (1992): 149-162.

Athanassiadi, Polymnia. "Persecution and Response in Late Paganism: The Evidence of Damascius." *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 113 (1993): 1-29.

Athanassiadi, Polymnia, editor. "Introduction." In *The Philosophical History*. 19-70. Athens: Apamea Cultural Association, 1999.

Athanassiadi, Polymnia and Michael Frede, editors. *Pagan Monotheism in Late Antiquity*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999.

Atiya, Aziz, editor. *The Coptic Encyclopedia.* NY: Macmillan, 1991.

Atkin, Albert. *The Philosophy of Race*. Durham: Acumen, 2012.

Atkins, E. A. and R. Osborne, editors. *Poverty in the Roman World*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006.

Attridge, Harold. ”Liberating Death’s Captives: Reconsideration of an Early Christian Myth.” In Goehring, *Gnosticism*, 103-16.

Attwood, Feona. "The Paradigm Shift: Pornography Research, Sexualization and Extreme Images." *Sociology Compass* 5/1 (2011): 13–22.

Auguet, Roland. *Cruelty and Civilization: The Roman Games*. London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1972.

Avi-Yonah, Michael, Hannah Katzenstein, and Tsafrir Yoram. *Art in Ancient Palestine: Selected Studies.* Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1981.

Badawy, Alexander. *Coptic Art and Archaeology: The Art of the Christian Egyptians from the Late Antique to the Middle Ages*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1978.

Baer, Y. A. “Israel, the Christian Church, and the Roman Empire from the Time of Septimius Severus to the Edict of Toleration of A.D. 313.” In *Studies in History*, edited by A. Fuks and I. Halpern, 79-147. Jerusalem: Hebrew University,1961.

Bagnall, Roger. “Army and Police in Roman Upper Egypt.” *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt* 14 (1977): 67-86.

-----. *Early Christian Books in Egypt*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009.

-----. *Egypt in Late Antiquity*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993.

-----, editor. *Egypt in the Byzantine World: Between Tradition and Innovation*. NY: Cambridge University Press, 2007.

-----. *Everyday Writing in the Graeco-Roman East.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011.

-----. “Alexandria: Library of Dreams.” *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 146 (2002): 348-62.

-----. "Linguistic Change and Religious Change: Thinking about the Temples of The Fayoum in the Roman Period." In Gabra, *Christianity*, 11-20.

-----. “Models and Evidence in the Study of Religion in Late Roman Egypt.” In Hahn, *Temple to Church*, 23-42.

-----. “Religious Conversion an Onomastic Change in Early Byzantine Egypt.” *Bulletin of the American Society of Papyrologists* 19 (1982): 105-23.

-----. “Slavery and Society in Late Roman Egypt.” In *Law, Politics and Society in the Ancient Mediterranean World*, edited by Baruch Halpern and Deborah Hobson, 220-40. Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993.

Bagnall, Roger S., and Bruce W. Frier. *The Demography of Roman Egypt*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1994.

Bagnall, Roger and Dominic Rathbone. *Egypt from Alexander to the Early Christians: An Archaeology and Historical Guide*. Los Angeles: The J. Paul Getty Museum, 2004.

Bahktin, Mikhail. *Rabelais and His World*. Translated by Helene Iswolsky. Cambridge, MA: The M.I.T. Press, 1968.

Baines, John and Peter Lacovara "Burial and the Dead in Ancient Egyptian Society." *Journal of Social Archaeology* 2 (2002): 5–36.

Baines, John. “Egyptian Myth and Discourse: Myth, Gods, and the Early Written and Iconographic Record.” *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 50 (1991): 81-105.

Baines, John. “Myth and Literature.” In Loprieno, *History*, 361-78.

Balaev, Michelle, editor. “Literary Trauma Theory Reconsidered.” In *Contemporary Approaches in Literary Trauma Theory*. 1-14. NY: Palgrave MacMillan, 2014.

Baldini, A. “Problemi della tradizione sulla ‘distruzione’ del Serapeo di Alessandria.” *Rivista storica dell’antichita* 15 (1985): 97-152.

Balty, J. “Themes nilotiques dans la mosaique tardive du Proche-Orient.” In *Alessandria e il mondo ellenistico-romano: studi in onore di Achille Adriani*, edited by Achille Adriani, Nicola Bonacasa, Antonino Di Vita, Guiseppina Barone, 827-34. Roma: L’Erma di Bretschneider, 1992.

“‘Bambi Butchers’ Horror!” PETA. Accessed March 22, 2015, https://secure.peta.org/site/Advocacy?cmd=display&page=UserAction&id=1548.

Banning, E. B. “Peasants, Pastoralists, and ‘Pax Romana’: Mutualism in the Southern Highlands of Jordan.” *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 261 (1987): 25-50.

Barasch, Moshe. *Icon: Studies in the History of an Idea.* NY: New York University Press, 1992.

Baraz, Daniel. *Medieval Cruelty: Changing Perceptions, Late Antiquity to the Early Modern Period.* Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003.

Barnard, Hans, and Kim Duistermaat. *The History of the Peoples of the Eastern Desert*. Los Angeles: University of California, 2012.

Barnes, Colin, Michael Oliver, and Lee Barton. *Disability Studies Today*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2002.

Barnes, Timothy. *Athanasius and Constantius: Theology and Politics in the Constantinian Empire.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993.

-----. "Christians and the Theater." In *Roman Theater and Society: E. Togo Salmon Papers I*, edited by William Slater, 161-80. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1996.

-----. *Constantine and Eusebius*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1981.

-----. "Constantine's Prohibition of Pagan Sacrifice." *The American Journal of Philology* 105 (1984): 69-72.

-----. "Early Christian Hagiography and the Roman Historian," In *Christian Martyrdom in Late Antiquity History and Discourse, Tradition and Religious Identity*, edited by Peter Gemeinhardt and Johan Leemans, 15-34. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2012.

-----. *Early Christian Hagiography and Roman History*. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010.

-----. "Pre-Decian *Acta Martyrum.*" *Journal of Theological Studies* 19 (1968): 509-31.

-----. *Constantine and Eusebius*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1981.

-----. *Tertullian: A Historical and Literary Study*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971

Barns, J. W. B. "Shenute as a Historical Source." In *Actes du X Congrès International de Papyrologues Varsovie-Cracovie 3-9 Septembre 1961*, edited by Józef Wolski, 151-56. Wroclaw: Zakl. Narod. im. Ossolińskich, 1961.

Barry, William Dunne. "Faces of the Crowd: Popular Society and Politics of Roman Alexandria, 30 BC - AD 215." PhD diss., The University of Michigan 1988.

Bartelink, G. J. M., editor. *Athanase d'Aexandrie: Vie d'Antoine*. Paris: Èditions du Cerf, 1994.

Barth, Fredrik. In *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Cultural Difference*. Boston, Little, Brown and Company, 1969.

Barton, Carlin. "Savage Miracles: The Redemption of Lost Honor in Roman Society and the Sacrament of the Gladiator and the Martyr." *Representations* 45 (1994): 41-71.

-----. *The Sorrows of the Ancient Romans: The Gladiator and the Monster*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993.

Batson, C. Daniel. "These Things Called Empathy: Eight Related But Distinct Phenomena." In *The Social Neuroscience of Empathy*, edited by Jean Decety and William Ickes, 3-16. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2009.

Bauer, Walter. *Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity.* Translated by Georg Strecker. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976.

Bauschatz, John. *Law and Enforcement in Ptolemaic Egypt*. NY: Cambridge University Press, 2013.

Beard, Mary, John North, and Simon Price. *Religions of Rome.* NY: Cambridge University Press, 1998.

Beard, Mary. "Writing and Religion: Ancient Literacy and the Function of the Written Word in Roman Religion." In Humphrey, *Literacy*, 35-58.

Beardsley, G. H. *The Negro in Greek and Roman Civilization: A Study of the Ethiopian Type.* NY: Russell & Russell, 1929.

Beatty, Michael and Micelle Pence. "Verbal Aggressiveness as an Experssion of Selected Biological Influences." In *Arguments, Agression, and Conflict: New Directions in Theory and Research*, edited by Theodore Avtgis and Andrew Rancer, 3-25. NY: Routledge 2010.

Beaucamp, Joëlle. "Aristocratic Landholding and the Economy of Byzantine Egypt." In Bagnall, *Byzantine*, 271-87.

Behlmer, Heike. "Ancient Egyptian Survivals in Coptic Literature: An Overview." In Loprieno, *History*, 567-90.

-----. "Christian Use of Pharaonic Space in Western Thebes." In *Sacred Space and Sacred Function in Ancient Thebes*, edited by Peter Dorman and Betsy Bryan, 163-76. Chicago: The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 2007.

Belayche, Nicole. "*Deus deum…summorum maximus* (Apuleius): Ritual Expressions of Distinction in the Divine World in the Imperial Period." In Mitchell, *One*, 141-66.

Belenkiy, Ari. "An Astronomical Murder?" *A&G* 51 (2010): 9-13.

Bell, David, translator. *Life of Shenoute.* Kalamazoo, Michigan: Cistercian Publications: 1983.

Bell, H. Idris. *Cults and Creeds in Graeco-Roman Egypt.* NY: Philosophical Library, 1953.

-----. *Egypt: From Alexander the Great to the Arab Conquest.* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1948.

-----. *Jews and Christians in Egypt*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1924.

Bellah, Robert. *Religion in Human Evolution: From the Paleolithic to the Axial Age*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011.

Ben-Eliyahu, Eyal, Yehudah Cohn, Fergus Millar. *Handbook of Jewish Literature from Late Antiquity, 135-700 CE*. NY: Oxford University Press, 2012.

Ben-Ezra, Menachem. "Traumatic Reactions from Antiquity to the 16th Century: Was there a Common Denominator?" *Stress and Health* 27 (2011): 223–40.

Benavides, Gustavo. "Magic." In Segal, 295-308.

Ben-Yehuda, Nachman. "Social Change and Deviance." In Bryant,: 38-45.

Berliner, David and Ramon Sarró, editors. *Learning Religion: Anthropological Approaches*. NY: Berghahn Books, 2007.

Berlonghi, Alexander E. "Understanding and Planning for Different Spectator Crowds." *Safety Science* 18 (1995): 239-47.

Bernal, M. *Black Athena: The Afrosiasitic Roots of Classical Civilizations*. Vols. 1-2. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1987.

Bernstein, Alan. *The Formation of Hell: Death and Retribution in the Ancient and Early Christian Worlds.* London: Cornell University Press, 1993.

Berthelot, K. "The Use of Greek and Roman Stereotypes of the Egyptians by Hellenstic Jewish Apologists with Special Reference to Josephus' *Against Apion."* In *Internatonales Josephus-Kolloquium*, edited by J. U. Kalms, 185-221. London: Lit Verlag, 1999.

Bertrand-Dagenbach, Cécile. *Carcer: Prison et Privation de liberté dans l'Antiquité classique: Actes du colloque de Strasbourg (5 et 6 décembre 1997).* Paris: De Boccard, 1999.

Besserman, Lawrence. "Introduction Sacred and Secular in Medieval and Early Modern Cultures: Issues and Approaches." In Besserman, 1-18.

-----. “Preface.” In Besserman, xv-xviii.

-----, editor. *Sacred and Secular in Medieval and Early Modern Cultures: New Essays*. NY: Palgrave MacMillan, 2006.

Bettelheim, Bruno. *Surviving and Other Essays.* NY: Vintage Books, 1980.

Betz, Hans Dieter. “Secrecy in the Greek Magical Papyri.” In Kippenberg, *Secrecy*,153-76.

Bilgrami, Akeel. *Secularism, Identity, and Enchantment*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014.

Bilde, Per. *Ethnicity in Hellenistic Egypt*. Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 1992.

Bilu, Yoram, Eliezer Witztum, and Onno van der Hart. “Paradise Regained: ‘Miraculous Healing’ in an Israeli Psychiatric Clinic.” *Culture, Medicine and Psychiatry* 14 (1990): 105-27.

Binford, Leigh. *The El Mozote Massacre: Anthropology and Human Rights.* Tucson: The Univesity of Arizona Press, 1996.

Bivins, Jason. “Religious and Legal Others: Identity, Law, and Representation in American Christian Right and Neopagan Cultural Conflicts.” *Culture and Religion* 6 (2005): 31-56.

Blackman, Aylward and H. W. Fairman. "Consecration of an Egyptian Temple according to the Use of Edfu." *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 32 (1946): 75-91.

Bleeker, C.J. *Egyptian Festivals: Enactments of Religious Renewal.* Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1967.

Bloch, H. “A New Document of the Last Pagan Revival in the West,” *Harvard Theological Review* 38 (1945): 199-244

Boas, George. “Introduction.” P 1-40. *The Hieroglyphics of Horapollo.* 1950 by Bollingen Foundation Inc NY NY and new edition 1993 Princeton University Press Princeton NJ.

Bodel, John. “Dealing with the Dead: Undertakers, Executioners and Potter’s Fields in Ancient Rome.” In *Death and Disease in the Ancient City*, edited by Valerie Hope and Eireann Marshall, 128-51. NY: Routledge, 2000.

Bohak, Gideon. *Ancient Jewish Magic: A History*. NY: Cambridge University Press, 2008.

-----. “Hebrew, Hebrew Everywhere? Notes on the Interpretation of *Voces Magicae*.” In Noegel, 69-82.

Bolman, Elizabeth, Stephen J. Davis, and Gillian Pyke. "Shenoute and a Recently Discovered Tomb Chapel at the White Monastery." *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 18 (Fall 2010): 453-62.

Le Bon, Gustave. *The Crowd: A Study of the Popular-Mind.* NY: Viking Press, 1960.

Bonner, Campbell. *Demons of the Bath*. London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1932.

-----. *Studies in Magical Amulets Chiefly Graeco-Egyptian*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1950.

Booth, Phil. *Crisis of Empire: Doctrine and Dissent at the End of Late Antiquity*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013.

Borghouts, J. F., translator. *Ancient Egyptian Magical Texts*. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1978.

Borrut, Antoine. *Entre Mémoire et Pouvoir: l'Espace Syrien sous les derniers Omeyyades et les premiers Abbassides (v. 72-193/692-809)*. Leiden: Brill, 2011.

Borrut, Antoine and Paul M. Cobb, editors. *Umayyad Legacies: Medieval Memories from Syria to Spain*. Leiden: Brill, 2010.

Boswell, John. *Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality: Gay People in Western Europe from the Beginning of the Christian Era to the Fourteenth Century*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1980.

Bourdieu, Pierre. *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984.

Bousset, Wilhelm. *Apophthegmata: Studien zur Geschichte des ältesten Mönchtums*. Tübingen: Mohr, 1923.

Boustan, Ra’ana. “Confounding Blood: Jewish Narraives of Sacrifice and Violence in Late Antiquity.” In Knust, 265-86.

Bowersock, G.W. *Hellenism in Late Antiquity.* Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1990.

-----. *Martyrdom and Rome*. NY: Cambridge University Press, 1995.

Bowie, Ewen. “The Readership of Greek Novels in the Ancient World.” In Tatum, 435-60.

Bowman, Alan. *Egypt after the Pharaohs: 332 BC-AD 642, from Alexander to the Arab Conquest.* London: British Museum Press, 1986.

-----, editor. *Oxyrhynchus: A City and Its Texts*. London: Published for the Arts and Humanities Research Council by the Egypt Exploration Society, 2007.

Bowman, Alan and Greg Woolf, editors. *Literacy and Power in the Ancient World.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994.

Bowra, C. M. "The Fate of Gessius." *The Classical Review* 10 (1960): 91-95.

Boyarin, Daniel. *Dying for God: Martyrdom and the Making of Christianity and Judaism*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999.

Bradbury, Scott. "Constantine and the Problem of Anti-Pagan Legislation in the Fourth Century." *Classical Philology* 89 (1994): 120-39.

Bradshaw, Paul, editor. *Essays in Early Eastern Initiation.* Bramcote, Nottingham: Grove Books, 1988.

Brakke, David. *Athanasius and the Politics of Asceticism.* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995.

-----. "The Body as/at the Boundary of Gnosis. " *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 17 (2009): 195-214.

-----. *Demons and the Making of the Monk: Spiritual Combat in Early Christianity*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006.

-----. "Outside of the Places, Within the Truth': Athanasius of Alexandria and the Localization of the Holy." In Frankfurter, *Pilgrimage*, 445-82.

Braun, Martin. *History and Romance in Graeco-Oriental Literature.* NY: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1987.

Bray, Gerald. "The Early Theologians." In *The Early Christian World*. Vol. 1. Edited by Philip Esler, 552-79. NY: Routledge.

Bregman, Jay. *Synesius of Cyrene: Philosopher-bishop.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982.

Bremmer, Jan. "Christian Hell: From the Apocalypse of Peter to the Apocalypse of Paul." *Numen* 56 (2009): 298-325.

-----. "Descents to Hell and Ascents to Heaven in Apocalyptic Literature." In Collins, *Oxford*, 340-57.

-----. “Foolish Egyptians: Apion and Anoubion in the *Pseudo-Clementines*.” In Hilhorst, *Wisdom*, 311-30.

-----. “Religious Secrets and Secrecy in Classical Greece.” In Kippenberg, *Secrecy*,61-78.

Brent, A. “Diogenes Laertius and the Apostolic Succession.” *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 44 (1993): 367-89.

Brisson, Luc. “L'Égypte de Platon.” *Les Études philosophiques* 2/3 (1987): 153-68.

Britt, Brian. “Curses Left and Right: Hate Speech and Biblical Tradition.” *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 78 (2010): 633–61.

Brooklyn Museum. *Pagan and Christian Egypt: Egyptian Art from the First to the Tenth Century A.D.* Brooklyn. 1941. Reprint, Arno Press, Inc., 1969.

Brow, James. *Demons and Development: The Struggle for Community in a Sri Lankan Village*. Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 1996.

Brown, Peter. *Augustine of Hippo: A Biography*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967.

-----. *Authority and the Sacred: Aspects of the Christianization of the Roman World.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995.

-----. *The Body and Society: Men, Women, and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity*. NY: Columbia University Press, 1988.

-----. "Christianization and Religious Conflict in the Late Empire.” In *The Cambridge Ancient History A.D. 337-425*, edited by Averil Cameron and Peter Garnsey, 632-64. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.

-----. *The Cult of the Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity.* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1981.

-----. *The Making of Late Antiquity*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978.

-----. *Poverty and Leadership.* Hanover: University Press of New England, 2002.

-----. *Power and Persuasion in Late Antiquity: Towards a Christian Empire*. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1992.

-----. “The Rise and Function of the Holy Man in Late Antiquity.” *Journal of Roman Studies* 61 (1971): 80-101.

-----. “The Saint as Exemplar in Late Antiquity.” *Representations* 2 (1983): 1-25.

-----. “Sorcery, Demons and the Rise of Christianity from Late Antiquity into the Middle Ages.” In *Witchcraft Confessions and Accusations*, edited by Mary Douglass, 17-46. London: Tavistock, 1970.

-----. *Through the Eye of a Needle: Wealth, the Fall of Rome, and the Making of Christianity in the West, 350-550 AD*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012.

Brown, Shelby. “Death as Decoration: Scenes from the Arena on Roman Domestic Mosaics.” In *Pornography and Represenation in Greece and Rome*, edited by Amy Richlin, 180-211. NY: Oxford University Press, 1992.

Brown, Thomas. “Mystical Experiences, American Culture, and Conversion to Christian Spiritualism.” In *The Anthropology of Religious Conversion*, edited by Andrew Buckser and Stephen Glazier, 133-45. NY: Bowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2003.

Brune, Karl-Heinz. “Schooldays in the Fayou in the First Millennium.” In Gabra, *Christianity*, 33-43.

Brunner, H. “Änigmatische Schrift (Kryptographie)." In Ä*gyptische Schrift und Sprache*, edited by H Kees, et al., 51-58. Leiden: Brill, 1973.

Brunt, P. A. “The Administrators of Roman Egypt.” *The Journal of Roman Studies* 65 (1975): 124-47.

Bryant, Clifton, editor. *The Routledge Handbook of Deviant Behavior*. NY: Routledge, 2011.

Bryen, Ari and Andrzej Wypustek. “Gemellus’ Evil Eyes (P.Mich. VI 423–424).” *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies* 49 (2009): 535–55.

Bryen, Ari. “Judging Empire: Courts and Culture in Rome's Eastern Provinces.” *Law and History Review* 30 (2012): 771-811.

-----. *Violence in Roman Egypt: A Study in Legal Interpretation*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013.

Buell, Denise. “Early Christian Universalism and Modern Forms of Racism.” In Eliav-Feldon, 109-31.

-----. *Making Christians: Clement of Alexandria and the Rhetoric of Legitimacy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999.

-----. *Why This New Race? Ethnic Reasoning in Early Christianity*. NY: Columbia University Press, 1995.

Bulliet, Richard W. *Hunters, Herders, and Hamburgers: The Past and Future of Human-Animal Relationships*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2005.

Burke, Edmund. "A Philosophical Inquiry into the Origins of Our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful." In *The Portable Edmund Burke*, edited by Isaac Kramnick, 29-63. New York: Penguin Books, 1999.

Burkert, Walter. *Ancient Mystery Cults*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1987.

-----. *Homo Necans: The Anthropology of Ancient Greek Sacrificial Ritual and Myth*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983.

Burr, Viv. "'Oh Spike You're Covered in Sexy Wounds! The Erotic Significance of Wounding and Torture in *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*." In Hearn, 137-56.

Burstein, Stanley. *Graeco-Africana: Studies in the History of Greek Relations with Egypt and Nubia*. New Rochelle, NY: Aristide D. Caratzas, 1995.

-----. "When Greek Was an African Language: The Role of Greek Culture in Ancient and Medieval Nubia." *Journal of World History* 19 (2008): 41-61.

Burton, Anne. *Diodorus Siculus, Book I: A Commentary*. Leiden E. J. Brill, 1972.

Burton-Christie, Douglas. *The Word in the Desert: Scripture and the Quest for Holiness in Early Christian Monasticism.* NY: Oxford University Press, 1993.

Busine, Aude. "From Stones to Myth: Temple Destruction and Civic Identity in the Late Antique Roman East." *Journal of Late Antiquity* 6 (2013): 325-46.

-----. "Introduction: Religious Practices and Christianization of the Late Antique City." In Busine, *Religious*,1-19.

-----, editor. *Religious Practices and Christianization of the Late Antique City (4th-7th Cent.).* Boston: Brill, 2015.

Bussels, Stijn. *The Animated Image: Roman Theory on Naturalism, Vividness and Divine Power.* Leiden: Leiden University Press, 2012.

Butler, Cuthbert. *The Lausiac History of Palladius: A Critical Discussion Together with Notes on Early Egyptian Monasticism.* 1898. Reprint, Hildestheim: Olms, 1967.

Butler, Judith. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity.* NY: Routledge, 1990.

Butterworth, G. W. "Introduction." In *Clement of Alexandria*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1919, i-l.

Buyse, Antoine. "Words of Violence: "Fear Speech," or How Violent Conflict Escalation Relates to the Freedom of Expression." *Human Rights Quarterly* 36 (2014): 779-97.

Byrne, Bryan. "Review of *Science, Reason, and Anthropology: The Principles of Rational Inquiry*." *American Anthropologist* 101 (1999): 682-83.

Byron, Gay. *Symbolic Blackness and Ethnic Difference in Early Christian Literature*. NY: Routledge, 2002.

Cain, Andrew. "The Greek *Historia monachorum in Aegypto* and Athanasius' *Life of Anthony*." *Vigiliae Christianae* 67 (2013): 349-63.

Cameron, Alan, Jacqueline Long, and Lee Sherry. *Barbarians and Politics at the Court of Arcadius*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993.

Cameron, Alan. *The Last Pagans of Rome*. NY, NY: Oxford University Press, 2011.

-----. "Palladas and Christian Polemic." *The Journal of Roman Studies* 55 (1965):17-30.

-----. "Poets and Pagans in Byzantine Egypt." In Bagnall, *Byzantine*, 21-46.

Cameron, Averil. "Christian Conversion in Antiquity: Some Issues." In *Conversion in Late Antiquity*, edited by Arietta Papaconstantinou, Daniel Schwartz, Neil McLynn, 3-22. Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2015.

-----. *Christianity and the Rhetoric of Empire: The Development of Christian Discourse*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994.

-----. *Dialoguing in Late Antiquity*. Washington, D.C.: Center for Hellenic Studies, Trustees for Harvard University, 2014.

-----. "New Themes and Styles in Greek Literature, A Title Revisited." In Johnson, *Greek*, 11-28.

-----. "The Violence of Orthodoxy." In Iricinischi, 102-15.

Camp, John. *The Archaeology of Athens*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001.

Caner, Daniel. "The Practice and Prohibition of Self-Castration in Early Christianity." *Vigiliae Christianae* 51 (1997): 396-415.

Caner, Daniel. *Wandering, Begging Monks: Spiritual Authority and the Promotion of Monasticism in Late Antiquity*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002.

Capponi, Livia. *Roman Egypt.* NY: Bristol Classics Press, 2011.

-----. "Serapis, Boukoloi and Christians from Hadrian to Marcus Aurelius." In Rizzi,121-40.

Carotenuto, Erica. "Five Egyptians Coming from Jerusalem: Some Remarks on Eusebius, "*De martyribus palestinae*" 11.6-13." *The Classical Quarterly* 52 (2002): 500-506.

Carr, David. *Writing on the Tablet of the Heart: Origins of Scripture and Literature*. NY: Oxford University Press, 2005.

Carriker, A. J. *The Library of Eusebius of Caesarea.* Boston: Brill, 2003.

Carroll, Noël. *The Philosophy of Horror or Paradoxes of the Heart.* NY: Routledge, Chapman and Hall, Inc., 1990.

Carroll, Stuart, editor. *Cultures of Violence: Interpersonal Violence in Historical Perspective*. NY: Palgrave MacMillan, 2007.

-----. "Introduction." In Carroll, *Cultures*, 7-46.

Caruth, Cathy. *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996.

Casanova, José. "Public Religions Revisited." In *Religion: Beyond a Concept*, edited by Hent de Vries, 101-19. NY: Fordham University Press, 2008.

Caseau, Béatrice. "Late Antique Paganism: Adaptation under Duress." In Lavan, *Archaeology*, 111-34.

-----. "Religious Intolerance and Pagan Statuary." In Lavan, *Archaeology*, 479-504.

Casson, Lionel. *Libraries in the Ancient World*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001.

-----. *Travel in the Ancient World.* Toronto: Hakkert, 1974.

Castelli, Elizabeth. *Martyrdom and Memory: Early Christian Culture Making*. NY: Columbia University Press, 2004.

Cattell, M. G. and J. J. Climo. *Social Memory and History: Anthropological Perspectives*. Walnut Creek: Altamira Press, 2002.

Cavadini, John, editor. *Miracles in Jewish and Christian Antiquity: Imagining Truth.* Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1999.

Cavanaugh, William. *The Myth of Religious Violence: Secular Ideology and the Roots of Modern Conflict.* NY: Oxford University Press, 2009.

Cavero, Laura. *Poems in Context: Greek Poetry in the Egyptian Thebaid 200-600 AD.* NY: Walter de Gruyter, 2008.

Chadwick, Henry. *Early Christian Thought and the Classical Tradition; Studies in Justin, Clement, and Origen*. NY: Oxford University Press, 1966.

-----. "Introduction." In *Origen: Contra Celsum*. Edited by Henry Chadwick, ix-xxxii. NY: Cambridge at the University Press, 1953.

Chapa, Juan. *Letters of Condolence in Greek Papyri.* Firenze: Edizioni Gonnelli, 1998.

Charlesworth, James. *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha.* Vol. 1-2. Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1985.

Chandler, Jake and Victoria Harrison, editors. *Probability in the Philosophy of Religion*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012.

Chesnut, Glenn. *The First Christian Historians: Eusebius, Socrates, Sozomen, Theodoret, and Evagrius*. Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1986.

Chew, Cathryn. "The Representation of Violence in the Greek Novels and Martyr Accounts." In Panayotakis, *Ancient,* 129-42.

Chitty, Derwas. *The Desert a City: An Introduction to the Study of Egyptian and Palestinian Monasticism under the Christian Empire*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1966.

Choat, Malcolm. *Belief and Cult in Fourth-Century Papyri*. Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols Publishers, 2006.

-----. "Coptic." In Riggs, *Oxford,* 581-93.

-----. "Language and Culture in Late Antique Egypt." In Rousseau, *Companion,* 342-56.

Choufrine, Arkadi. *Gnosis, Theophany, Theosis: Studies in Clement of Alexandria's Appropriation of His Background.* NY: Peter Lang, 2002.

Christesen, Paul and Donald Kyle, editors. *A Companion to Sport and Spectacle in Greek and Roman Antiquity*. Malden, MA: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2014.

Christides, Vassilios. "Ethnic Movements in Southern Egypt and Northern Sudan: Blemmyes-Beja in Late Antique and Early Arab Egypt until 707 A. D." *Listy filologické / Folia philologica* 103 (1980): 129-43.

Chuvin, Pierre. *A Chronicle of the Last Pagans*. Translated by B. A. Archer. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990.

Clackson, Sarah. "Coptic or Greek? Bilingualism in the Papyri." In Papaconstantinou, 73-104.

Clark, Elizabeth. *The Origenist Controversy: The Cultural Construction of an Early Christian Debate.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992.

Clark, Stephen."'Ask now the Beasts and They Shall Teach Thee.'" In Deane-Drummond, 15-34.

Clarke, Emma. *Iamblichus' De Mysteriis*. Burlington, VT: Ashgate 2001.

Clarysse, W. "The Coptic Martyr Cult." In *Martyrium in Multidisciplinary Perspective: Memorial Louis Reekmans*, edited by M. Lamberights and P. van Deun. Leuven-Louvain, 377-96. Belgium: Leuven University Press, 1995.

"Classroom Simulations." Accessed on 27Jan2015. http://www.tolerance.org/magazine/number-33-spring-2008/feature/classroom-simulations-proceed-caution.

Cloke, Gillian. *'This Female Man of God' Women and Spiritual Power in the Patristic Age, A.D. 350-450.* NY: Routledge, 1995.

Cohen, S. *From the Maccabees to the Mishnah*. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1987.

Cole, Ernest. *Theorizing the Disfigured Body: Mutilation, Amputation and Disability Culture in Post-Conflict Sierra Leone.* Trenton, NY: Africa World Press, 2014.

Coleman, John and Clark Walz, editors. *Greeks and Barbarians: Essays on the Interactions between Greeks and Non-Greeks in Antiquity and the Consequences for Eurocentrism*. Bethesda: CDL Press, 1997.

Coleman, Kathleen. "The Contagion of the Throng': Absorbing Violence in the Roman World." *Hermathena* 164 (1998): 65-88.

-----. “Entertaining Rome.” In *Ancient Rome: The Archaeology of the Eternal City*. Edited by Jon Coulston and Hazel Dodge, 210-58. Oxford, UK: Oxford University School of Archaeology, 2000.

-----. “Fatal Charades: Roman Executions Staged as Mythological Enactments.” *Journal of Roman Studies* 80 (1990): 44-73.

Coleman, Simon. “Pilgrimage.” In Segal, 385-96.

Collins, J. J. “Introduction to Artapanus.” In Charlesworth, Vol. 2, 889-96.

-----. “Reinventing Exodus: Exegesis and Legend in Hellenistic Egypt.” In *For a Later Generation: The Transformation of Tradition in Israel, Early Judaism, and Early Christianity*, edited by Randal Argall, Beverly Bow, and Rodney Werline, 52-62. Harrisburg, Pennsylvania: Trinity Press International, 2000.

-----, editor. *The Oxford Handbook of Apocalyptic Literature*. NY: Oxford University Press, 2014.

-----. “What is Apocalyptic Literature?” In Collins, *Oxford*, 1-18.

Collins, Randall. *Violence: A Micro-Sociological Theory*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008.

Conner, Elizabeth. “Mapping a Late Antique Republic of Letters.” PhD diss., University of Maryland, 2015.

Contis, George. “Environment, Health and Disease in Alexandria and the Nile Delta” In Hirst, 227-46.

Coogan, M. *A Brief Introduction to the Old Testament: The Hebrew Bible in its Context*. NY: Oxford University Press, 2009.

Cook, John Granger. *The Interpretation of the Old Testament in Greco-Roman Paganism*. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004.

Cooper, Kate. “Epilogue: Approaching Christendom,” in *The Origins of Christendom in the West*, edited by Alan Kreider, 359-64. NY: T&T Clark. 2001.

-----. “Insinuations of Womanly Influence: An Aspect of the Christianization of the Roman Aristocracy.” *The Journal of Roman Studies* 82 (1992): 150-64.

-----. “Martyrdom, Memory, and the ‘Media Event’: Visionary Writing and Christian Apology in Second Century Christianity.” In Janes, 23-39.

Copenhaver, Brian, translator. *Hermetica.* NY: Cambridge University Press, 1992.

Coquin, R.-G. “Moïse d'Abydos.” In *Deuxième Journée d’Études Coptes, Strasbourg 25 Mai 1984*. 1-14. Louvain: Peeters, 1986.

-----. "La ‘Règle’ de Moïse d'Abydos." In *Mélanges Antoine Guillaumont: Contributions à l’Étude des Christianismes Orientaux*. 103-110. Geneva: Patrick Cramer, 1988.

Cortès, Jean. “The Theme of ‘Ethiopia’ and ‘Ethiopians’ in Patristic Literature.” In *The Image of the Black in Western Art.* Vol II, edited by Jean Devisse, 9-34. Translated by William Ryan. NY: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1979.

Cosgrove-Mather, Bootie. “Lion Mummy Found in Egyptian Tomb.” *AP.* Accessed January 14, 2004. http://www.cbsnews.com/news/lion-mummy-found-in-egyptian-tomb/

Courcelle, P. “Anti-Christian Arguments and Christian Platonism: From Arnobius to St. Ambrose.” In Momigliano, *Conflict*, 151-92.

Cowan, Douglas. *Sacred Terror: Religion and Horror on the Silver Screen.* Waco: Baylor University Press, 2008.

Cox, James. *An Introduction to the Phenomenology of Religion*. NY: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2010.

Crapo, Richley. *Anthropology of Religion: The Unity and Diversity of Religions.* NY: McGraw Hill, 2003.

Crenshaw, J. L. *Old Testament Wisdom: An Introduction.* Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1981.

Crewe, Ben. “The Sociology of Imprisonment.” In Jewkes, 123-51.

Cribiore, Raffaella. *Writing, Teachers and Students in Graeco-Roman Egypt*. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996.

-----. *Gymnastics of the Mind: Greek Education in Hellenistic and Roman Egypt*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001.

Crislip, Andrew. *Thorns in the Flesh: Illness and Sanctity in Late Ancient Christianity*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013.

De Ste. Croix, G. “Aspects of the ‘Great’ Persecution.” *Harvard Theological Review* 47 (1954): 75-113.

-----. “Why Were the Early Christians Persecuted?” *Past and Present* 26 (1963): 6-38.

Cross, F. L. *The Early Christian Fathers* London: Gerald Duckworth & Co. Ltd., 1960.

Crowfoot, J. W. “Christian Nubia.” *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 13 (1927): 141-50.

Cumberland, Sharon. “Private Uses of Cyberspace: Women, Desire, and Fan Culture.” Accessed May 8, 2015. http://web.mit.edu/comm-forum/papers/cumberland.html.

Cuypers, Martine. “Historiography, Rhetoric, and Science: Rethinking a Few Assumptions on Hellenistic Prose.” In *A Companion to Hellenistic Literature*, edited by James Clauss and Martine Cuypers, 317-36. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 2010.

Czachesz, I. “The Grotesque Body in the Apocalypse of Peter.” In *The Apocalypse of Peter*. Edited by Jan Bremmer and István Czachesz, 108-26. Leueven: Peeters, 2003.

Dagron, Gilbert. “Holy Images and Likeness.” *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 45 (1991): 23-33.

-----. *Travaux et mémoires*. Paris: De Boccard, 1968.

Daly, Nicolas. “That Obscure Object of Desire: Victorian Commodity Culture and Fictions of the Mummy.” *NOVEL: A Forum on Fiction* 28 (1994): 24-51.

Damgaard, Finn. “Propaganda against Propaganda: Revisiting Eusebius’ Use of the Figure of Moses in the *Life of Constantine*.” In Johnson, *Eusebius*, 115-32.

Damisch, Lysann, Barbara Stoberock, and Thomas Mussweiler. “Keep Your Fingers Crossed! How Superstition Improves Performance.” *Psychological Science* 21 (2010): 1014-20.

Daschke, Derek. "Apocalypse and Trauma." In Collins, *Oxford*, 457-72.

David, Rosalie. *Religion and Magic in Ancient Egypt*. NY: Penguin Books, 2002.

Davidson, James. *Courtesans and Fishcakes: The Consuming Passions of Classical Athens*. NY: St. Martin’s Press, 1997.

Davies, J. G. “Was the Devotion of Septimius Severus to Serapsi the Cause of the Persecution?” *Journal of Theological Studies* 5 (1954): 73-76.

Davis, Janet. “Teaching Violence in the Schools of Rhetoric.” In Drake, *Violence*, 197-204.

Davis, Stephen J. “Biblical Interpretation and Alexandrian Episcopal Authority in the early Christian Fayoum.” In Gabra, *Christianity*, 45-61.

-----. “Pilgrimage and the Cult of Saint Thecla in Late Antique Egypt.” In Frankfurter, *Pilgrimage*, 303-40.

-----. *The Cult of Saint Thecla: A Tradition of Women’s Piety in Late Antiquity.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001.

-----. *The Early Coptic Papacy: The Egyptian Church and Its Leadership in Late Antiquity*. NY: The American University in Cairo Press, 2004.

Dawson, David. *Allegorical Readers and Cultural Revision in Ancient Alexandria.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992.

Dawson, Warren. "References to Mummification by Greek and Latin Authors." *Aegyptus* 9 (1928): 106-12.

Day, William Patrick. *In the Circles of Fear and Desire: A Study of Gothic Fantasy*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1985.

Deakin, Michael. *Hypatia of Alexandria: Mathematician and Martyr.* Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 2007.

Deane-Drummond, Celia, Rebecca Artinian-Kaiser, David Clough, editors. *Animals as Religious Subjects*. NY: Bloomsbury T & T Clark, 2013.

Dein, Simon, Malcolm Alexander, and A. Napier, “Jinn, Psychiatry and Contested Notions of Misfortune among East London Bangladeshis.” *Transcultural Psychiatry* 45 (2008): 31-55.

Deligiannakis, Georgios. “Pagans, Christians and Jews in the Aegean Islands: The Christianization of an Island Landscape.” In Busine, *Religious*, 188-205.

-----. “Religious Viewing of Sculptural Images of Gods in the World of Late Antiquity: From Dio Chrysostom to Damaskios.” *Journal of Late Antiquity* 8 (2015): 168–94.

Delisle, James. *Dumbing Down America: The War on Our Nation's Brightest Young Minds (And What We Can Do to Fight Back).* Waco, TX: Prufrock Press, Inc., 2014.

Demarsin, Koen. “‘Paganism’ in Late Antiquity: Thematic Studies.” In Lavan, *Archaeology*, 3-40.

Dennett, Daniel. *Breaking the Spell: Religion as a Natural Phenomenon.* NY, NY: Penguin Group, 2006.

Depauw, M., W. Clarysse. "How Christian was Fourth Century Egypt? Onomastic Perspectives on Conversion." *Vigiliae Christianae* 67 (2073): 407-35.

Derchain, Philippe. “Pseudo-Jamblique ou Abammon? Quelques observations sur l'égyptianisme du *De Mysteriis*'” *Chronique d'Egypte* 38 (1963): 220-26.

Des Pres, Terrence. *The Survivor: An Anatomy of Life in the Death Camps.* NY: Oxford University Press, 1976.

Dickie, Matthew. *Magic and Magicians in the Greco-Roman World*. NY: Routledge, 2001.

Dieleman, Jacco. “Coping with a Difficult Life: Magic, Healing, and Sacred Knowledge.” In Riggs, *Oxford*, 337-62.

-----. *Priests, Tongues and Rites: The London-Leiden Magical Manuscripts and Translation in Egyptian Ritual (100-300 CE).* Leuven: Peeters, 2008.

-----. "Stars and the Egyptian Priesthood in the Graeco-Roman Period." In Noegel, 137-53.

Dieleman, Jacco and Ian Moyer. “Egyptian Literature.” In *A Companion to Hellenistic Literature*, edited by James Clauss and Martine Cuypers, 429-47. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 2010.

Digeser, Elizabeth DePalma. *A Threat to Public Piety: Christians, Platonists, and the Great Persecution.* Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2012.

-----. *The Making of a Christian Empire: Lactantius & Rome.* Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2000.

Djikstra, J. H. F. “Blemyes, Noubades and the Eastern Desert in Late Antiquity: Reassessing the Written Sources.” In Barnard, 238-47.

-----. “A Cult of Isis at Philae after Justinian? Reconsidering "P. Cair. Masp." I 67004.” *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 146 (2004): 137-54.

-----. “The Fate of the Temples in Late Antique Egypt.” In Lavan, *Archaeology*, 389-438.

-----. *Philae and the End of Ancient Egyptian Religion: A Regional Study of Religious Transformation (298-642 CE).* Leuven: Peeters, 2008.

Dillon, Matthew. *Pilgrims and Pilgrimage in Ancient Greece.* London: Routledge, 1997.

Dodds, E. R. *Pagans and Christians in an Age of Anxiety: Some Aspects of Religious Experience from Marcus Aurelius to Constantine*. NY: W. W. Norton and Company, 1965.

Donner, Fred. *Narratives of Islamic Origins: The Beginnings of Islamic Historical Writing*. Princeton: The Darwin Press, Inc., 1998.

Doresse, J. "Cryptographie copte et cryptographie grecque," *Bulletin de l'Institut de l'Égypte* 33 (1950-1951): 215-28.

Dörries, Hermann. *Die Vita Antonii als Geschichtsquelle*. Gottingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1949.

Douglass, Laurie. "A New Look at the Itinerarium Burdigalense." *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 4 (1996): 313-33.

Dousa, Thomas. "Imagining Isis: On Some Continuities and Discontinuities in the Image of Isis in Greek Isis Hymns and Demotic Texts." *Acts of the Seventh International Conference of Demotic Studies, Copenhagen, 23-27 August 1999,* edited by Kim Ryholt, 149-84. Copenhagen: University of Copenhagen, 2002.

Dover, K. J. *Greek Homosexuality*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1978.

Dowden, Ken. "The Roman Audience of *The Golden Ass*." In Tatum, 419-34.

Downey, Glanville. *A History of Antioch in Syria: From Seleucus to the Arab Conquest.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961.

Downing, F. Gerald. "Cosmic Eschatology in the First Century: 'Pagan,' Jewish and Christian." *L'Antiquité Classique* 64 (1995): 99-109.

Downing, F. Gerald. "Magic and Scepticism in and around the First Christian Century." In Klutz, 86-99.

Drake, H. A. "Lambs into Lions: Explaining Early Christian Intolerance." *Past and Present* 153 (1996): 3-36.

-----. "Lessons from Diocletian's Persecution." In Twomey, 49-60.

-----, editor. *Violence in Late Antiquity: Perceptions and Practices*. Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2006.

Drijvers, Jans and David Hunt. *The Late Roman World and Its Historian: Interpreting Ammianus Marcellinus*. London: Routledge, 1999.

Drioton, Étienne. “Les principes de la cryptographie égyptienne.” *Comptes rendus des séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres* 97 (1953) 355-64.

Droge, Arthur. *Homer or Moses? Early Christian Interpretations of the History of Culture*. Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1989.

----. "The Lying Pen of the Scribes: Of Holy Books and Pious Frauds.” *Method & Theory in the Study of Religion* 15 (2003): 117-47.

Droge, Arthur and James Tabor. *A Noble Death: Suicide and Martyrdom among Christians and Jews in Antiquity*. San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1992.

Drory, Rina. “The Abbasid Construction of the Jahiliyya: Cultural Authority in the Making.” *Studia Islamica* 83 (1996) 33-49.

Duffy, John. “Observations on Sophronius’ ‘Miracles of Cyrus and John.’” *The Journal of Theological Studies* 35 (1984): 71-90.

Dunand, Françoise. “Egyptian Funerary Practices in Late Antiquity.” In Bagnall, *Byzantine*, 163-84.

-----. “Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt.” In *Gods and Men in Egypt: 3000 B.C.E. to 395 C.E.* Translated by David Lorton, 197-342. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2002.

Dunand, Françoise and Roger Lichtenberg. *Mummies and Death in Egypt*. Translated by David Lorton. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006.

Duncan, Anne. *Performance and Identity in the Classical World*. NY: Cambridge University Press, 2006.

Dunn-Wilson, David. *A Mirror for the Church: Preaching in the First Five Centuries*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2005.

Durkheim, Émile. *Elementary Forms of Religious Life.* NY: Free Press, 1966.

Durodié, Bill. “Fear in an Age without Meaning.” In *Fear: Essays on the Meaning and Experience of Fear*, edited by Kate Hebblethwaite and Elizabeth McCarthy, 123-36. Portland, OR: Four Courts Press, 2007.

Dutton, Donald. *The Psychology of Genocide, Massacres, and Extreme Violence: Why ‘Normal’ People Come to Commit Attrocities*. Westport, CN: Praeger Security International, 2007.

Dzielska, Maria. *Hypatia of Alexandria*. Translated by F. Lyra. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995.

Eastin, Matthew, editor. *Encyclopedia of Media Violence*. Washington, D.C.: Sage, 2013.

Echols, Stephanie and Joshua Correll. "It's More than Skin Deep: Empathy and Helping Behavior across Social Groups." In *Empathy: From Bench to Bedside*, edited by Jean Decety, 55-72. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2012.

Eckstein, Arthur M. "Human Sacrifice and the Fear of Military Disaster." *American Journal of Ancient History* 7 (1982): 69–95.

-----. *Moral Vision in the Histories of Polybius.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995.

Edmonds, Radcliffe G. *Myths of the Underworld Journey: Plato, Aristophanes, and the 'Orphic' Gold Tablets.* NY: Cambridge University Press, 2004.

Edwards, Amelia. *A Thousand Miles up the Nile*. 1887. Reprint, London: Darf Publishers, 1877.

Edwards, M. J. "Atticizing Moses? Numenius, the Fathers and the Jews." *Vigiliae Christianae* 44 (1990): 64-75.

-----. *Origen against Plato*. Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2002.

Edwards, Mark and Martin Goodman and Simon Price, editors. *Apologetics in the Roman Empire: Pagans, Jews and Christians*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999:

-----. "The Flowering of Latin Apologetic: Lactantius and Arnobius." In Edwards, *Apologetics*, 197-222.

Egberts, A., B. P. Muhs, and J. van der Vliet, editors. *Perspectives on Panopolis: An Egyptian Town from Alexander the Great to the Arab Conquest.* Boston: Brill, 2002

Egger, Brigitte. "Women and Marriage in the Greek Novels: The Boundaries of Romance." In Tatum, 260-82.

Ehrman, Bart. *Forgery and Counter-Forgery: The Use of Literary Deceit in Early Christian Polemics.* NY: Oxford University Press, 2012.

Eidinow, Esther. *Oracles, Curses, and Risk among the Ancient Greeks*. NY: Oxford University Press, 2007.

van der Eijk, Ph. J. *Medicine and Philosophy in Classical Antiquity: Doctors and Philosophers on Nature, Soul, Health and Disease*. NY: Cambridge University Press, 2005.

Eliade, Mircea. *Cosmos and History: The Myth of the Eternal Return.* NY: Harper, 1959.

Eliade, Mircea. *Myth and Reality*. NY: Harper, 1963.

Eliav, Yaron. "Viewing the Sculptural Environment: Shaping the Second Comandment." In *The Talmud Yerushalmi and Graeco-Roman Culture*. Vol. 3. Edited by Peter Schäfer, 411-34. Tübngen: Mohr Siebeck, 2002.

Eliav-Feldon, Miriam and Benjamin Isaac, editors. *The Origins of Racism in the West*. NY: Cambridge University Press, 2009.

Elliott, J. K. *The Apocryphal New Testament: A Collection of Apocryphal Christian Literature in an English Translation.* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993.

Elm, Susanna. "Isis' Loss—Gender, Dependence and Ethnicity in Synesius' *De Providentia* or *Egyptian Tale*." *Zeitschrift für antikes Christentum* 1 (1997): 96-115.

-----. *'Virgins of God' The Making of Asceticism in Late Antiquity*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994.

Elsner, Jaś . *Art and the Roman Viewer: The Transformation of Art from the Pagan World to Christianity*. NY: Cambridge University Press, 1995.

Elsom, Helen. "Callirhoe: Displaying the Phallic Woman." In *Pornography and Represenation in Greece and Rome*. Edited by Amy Richlin, 212-30. NY: Oxford University Press, 1992.

Emmel, Stephen. "From the Other Side of the Nile: Shenute and Panopolis." In Egberts, 95-114.

-----. "Reconstructing a Dismembered Coptic Library." In Goehring, *Gnosticism*, 145-61

-----. "Shenoute of Atripe and the Christian Destruction of Temples in Egypt: Rhetoric and Reality." In Hahn, *Temple*, 161-202.

-----. "Shenoute's Literary Corpus." Ph.D. Diss., Yale University, 1993.

Emmel, Stephen, Ulrich Gotter, and Johannes Hahn. "'From Temple to Church'" Analysing a Late Antique Phenomenon of Transformation." In Hahn, *Temple*, 1-22.

Endsjø, Dag. *Primordial Landscapes, Incorruptible Bodies: Desert Asceticism and the Christian Appropriation of Greek Ideas on Geography, Bodies, and Immortality.* Baltimore: Peter Lang, 2008.

Erickson, Erik. *Identity: Youth and Crisis*. NY: W. W. Norton & Company, 1968.

Evans-Pritchard, E. E. *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic amongst the Azande*. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1937.

Evelyn-White, Hugh. *The Monasteries of the Wadi 'N Natrun.* Vol. 1-2. NY: Arno Press, 1973.

Évieux, Peirre. *Isidore de Péluse*. Paris: Beauchesne, 1995.

Eyre, Christopher. *The Cannibal Hymn: A Cultural and Literary Study*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2002.

-----. "Crime and Adultery in Ancient Egypt". *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 70 (1984): 92-105.

-----. "Fate, Crocodiles and the Judgement of the Dead: Some Mythological Allusions in Egyptian Literature." *Studien zur Altägyptischen Kultur* 4 (1976): 103-14.

Fagan, Brian. *The Rape of the Nile: Tomb Robbers, Tourists and Archeologists in Egypt*. NY: Scribners, 1975.

Fagan, Garrett. "Leisure." In Potter, *Companion*, 369-84.

-----. *The Lure of the Arena: Social Psychology and the Crowd at the Roman Games*. NY: Cambridge University Press, 2011.

-----. "Violence in Roman Social Relations." In Peachin, 467-98.

Falls, Thomas. "Introduction," in *Saint Justin Martyr The First Apology, the Second Apology, Dialogue with Trypho, Exhortation to the Greeks, Discourse to the Greeks, the Monarchy, or the Rule of God*. Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1965.

Faraone, Christopher A. "Necromancy Goes Underground: The Disguise of Skull- and Corpse-Divination in the Paris Magical Papyri (PGM IV 1928-2144)." In Johnston, *Mantikê*, 255-82.

-----. *Talismans and Trojan Horses: Magical Statues in Ancient Greek Myth and Ritual.* NY: Oxford University Press, 1992.

-----. "The Ethnic Origins of a Roman-Era *Philtrokatadesos (PGM IV* 296-434)." in Meyer, *Ritual*, 319-43.

Faorone, Christopher and Dirk Obbink, editors. *Magika Hiera: Ancient Greek Magic and Religion*. NY: Oxford University Press, 1991.

Farag, F. Rofail. “Is There Any Justification for the Existence of Coptic Art? Two Recent Critical Opinions.” *Kunst des Orients* 11 (1976/1977): 22-42.

Fassin, Didier, Richard Rechtman. *The Empire of Trauma: An Inquiry into the Condition of Victimhood.* Princeton: Princeton University of Press, 2009.

Favale, Agostino. *Teofilo d'Alessandria: Scritti, vita e dottrina.* Torino: Società Editrice Internazonale, 1958.

Favret-Saada, Jeanne. *Deadly Words: Witchcraft in the Bocage*. NY: Cambridge University Press, 1980.

Feldman, Louis. *Philo’s Portrayal of Moses in the Context of Ancient Judaism*. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007.

-----. “Origen's *Contra Celsum* and Josephus' *Contra Apionem*: The Issue of Jewish Origins.” *Vigiliae Christianae* 44 (1990): 105-35.

Fentress, James and Chris Wickham. *Social Memory*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1992.

Ferguson, Everett. "Early Christian Martyrdom and Civil Disobedience." *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 1 (1993): 73-83.

Ferguson, John. *Clement of Alexandria*. NY: Twayne Publishers, Inc., 1974.

Finkelstein, Israel and Neil Asher Silberman, *The Bible Unearthed: Archaeology's New Vision of Ancient Israel and the Origin of Its Sacred Texts*. NY: Free Press, 2001.

Finley, M. *Classical Slavery.* London: F. Cass, 2003.

Finney, Paul. *The Invisible God: The Earliest Christians on Art.* NY: Oxford University Press, 1994.

Flemming, Rebecca. “Empires of Knowledge: Medicine and Health in the Hellenistic World.” In *A Companion to the Hellenistic World*, edited by Andrew Erskine, 449-63. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2003.

Flower, Richard. “Genealogies of Unbelief: Epiphanius of Salamis and Heresiological Authority.” In *Unclassical Traditions.* Vol. 2. Edited by C. Kelly, R. Flower, and M. S. Williams, 70-87. Cambridge: Cambridge Philological Society, 2011.

Foertmeyer, V. “Tourism in Graeco-Roman Egypt.” PhD diss., Princeton University, 1989.

Foucault, Michel. *Histoire de la sexualité*. Paris: Gallimard, 1976.

-----. *L'archéologie du savoir*. Paris: Gallimard, 2000.

Fournier, Eric. “Exiled Bishops in the Christian Empire: Victims of Imperial Violence?” In Drake *Violence*, 157-166.

Fowden, Garth. “Bishops and Temples in the Eastern Roman Empire A.D. 350-435.” *The Journal of Theological Studies* 29 (1978): 53-78.

-----. *The Egyptian Hermes: A Historical Approach to the Late Pagan Mind.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986.

-----. “The Pagan Holy Man in Late Antique Society,” *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 102 (1982): 33-59.

Fox, Robin Lane. *Pagans and Christians*. NY: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1987.

Frandsen, Paul. *Incestuous and Close-Kin Marriage in Ancient Egypt and Persia: An Examination of the Evidence* (Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press, 2009.

Frank, Georgia. *The Memory of the Eyes: Pilgrims to the Living Saints in Christian Late Antiquity*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000.

Frankfurter, David. “Approaches to Coptic Pilgrimage.” In Frankfurter, *Pilgrimage*, 3-50.

-----. “The Binding of Antelopes: A Coptic Frieze and its Egyptian Religious Context.” *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 63 (2004): 97-109.

-----. *Elijah in Upper Egypt: The Apocalypse of Elijah and Early Egyptian Christianity*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993.

-----. “Egyptian Religion and the Problem of the Category of ‘Sacrifice.’” In Knust, 75-93.

-----. “Healing Spells.” In Meyer, *Coptic*, 79-82.

-----. “Iconoclasm and Christianization in Late Antique Egypt: Christian Treatments of Space and Image.” In Hahn, *Temple*, 135-60.

-----. “Illuminating the Cult of Kothos: The *Panegyric on Macarius* and Local Religion in Fifth-Century Egypt.” In *The World of Early Egyptian Christianity: Language, Literature, and Social Context*, edited by James

Goehring and Janet Timbie, 176-88. Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2007.

-----. "Martyrology and the Prurient Gaze." *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 17 (2009): 215-45.

-----. "Narrating Power: The Theory and Practice of the Magical *Historiola* in Ritual Spells." In Meyer, *Ancient Magic*, 457-76.

-----. "The Perils of Love: Magic and Countermagic in Coptic Egypt." *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 10 (2001): 480-500.

-----, editor. *Pilgrimage and Holy Space in Late Antique Egypt.* Boston: Brill, 1998.

-----. "Protective Spells." In Meyer, *Coptic*, 105-109.

-----. *Religion in Roman Egypt: Assimilation and Resistance.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998.

-----. "'*Things Unbefitting Christians:' Violence and Christianization in Fifth-Century Panopolis*." *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 8 (2000): 273–95.

-----. "Traditional Cult." In Potter, *Companion*, 543-64.

-----. "Urban Shrine and Rural Saint in Fifth-Century Alexandria." In *Pilgrimage in Graeco-Roman & Early Christian Antiquity: Seeing the Gods*, edited by Jaś Elsner and Ian Rutherford, 435-50. NY: Oxford University Press, 2005.

-----. "Voices, Books, and Dreams: The Diversification of Divination Media in Late Antique Egypt." In Johnston, *Mantikê*, 233-54.

-----. "Syncretism and the Holy Man in Late Antique Egypt." *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 11 (2003): 339-85.

Fraser, P. M. "A Syriac 'Notitia Urbis Alexandrinae.'" *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 37 (1951): 103-108.

Frede, Michael. "Origen's Treatise *Against Celsus*." In Edwards, *Apologetics*, 131-55.

-----. "Eusebius' Apologetic Writings." In Edwards, *Apologetics*, 223-50.

-----. "Monotheism and Pagan Philosophy in Later Antiquity." In Athanassiadi, *Pagan*, 41-68.

Frend, W. H. C. *Heresy and Schism as Social and National Movements.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972.

-----. *Martyrdom and Persecution in the Early Church*. London: Basil Blackwell, 1965.

-----. *The Rise of Christianity*. London: Dartman, Longman and Todd, 1984.

Freudenthal, Gideon. *No Religion without Idolatry: Mendelssohn's Jewish Enlightenment*. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2012.

Friesen, Steven. "Apocalypse and Empire." In Collins, *Oxford*, 163-79.

Frizzell, Lawrence. "'Spoils from Egypt,' Between Jews and Gnostics." In *Hellenization Revisited: Shaping a Christian Response within the Greco-Roman World*. Edited by Wendy Helleman, 383-94. NY: University Press of America, 1994.

Furedi, Frank. "Towards a Sociology of Fear." In *Fear: Essays on the Meaning and Experience of Fear*. Edited by Kate Hebblethwaite and Elizabeth McCarthy, 18-30. Portland, OR: Four Courts Press, 2007.

Furstenberg, Yair. "The Rabbinic View of Idolatry and the Roman Political Conception of Divinity." *The Journal of Religion* 90 (2010): 335-66.

Gabra, Gawdat, editor. *Christianity and Monasticism in the Fayoum Oasis*. NY: The American University in Cairo Press, 2005.

-----. *Coptic Monasteries: Egypt's Monastic Art and Architecture.* NY: The American University in Cairo Press, 2002.

Gaddis, Michael. *There is No Crime for Those who Have Christ.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005.

Gager, John G., editor. *Curse Tablets and Binding Spells from the Ancient World*. NY: Oxford University Press, 1992.

-----. *Moses in Greco-Roman Paganism*. NY: Abingdon Press, 1972.

Galimberti, Alessandro. "The Pseudo-Hadrianic Epistle in the Historia Augusta and Hadrian's Religious Policy." In Rizzi, 111-20.

Galvao-Sobrinho, Carlos. "Embodied Theologies: Christian Identity and Violence in Alexandria in the Early Arian Controversy." In Drake, *Violence*, 322-31.

Gamble, Harry. *Books and Readers in the Early Church: A History of Early Christian Texts*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995.

Garnsey, Peter. *Ideas of Slavery from Aristotle to Augustine*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1996.

Gascou, J. "Les origines du culte des saints Cyr et Jean." *Analecta Bollandiana* 125 (2007): 241-81.

Geary, Patrick J. *Phantoms of Remembrance: Memory and Oblivion at the End of the First Millennium*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994.

Geens, Karolien. "Hellenism as a Vehicle for Local Traditions in Third-Century-Egypt: The Evidence from Panopolis." *Studies of Hellenism: Studies in the History of the Eastern Mediterranean (4th Century B.C. – 5th Century A.D.*). Edited by Peter Van Nuffelen, 289-320. Walpole, MA: Peeters, 2009.

Gerhardsson, B. *Memory and Manuscript: Oral Tradition and Written Transmission in Rabbinic Judaism and Early Christianity.* Copenhagen: Munksgaard, 1964.

Gilhus, Ingvild. *Animals, Gods and Humans: Changing Attitudes to Animals in Greek, Roman and Early Christian Ideas*. NY: Rouledge 2006.

Gill, Christopher, Tim Whitmarsh, and John Wilkins, editors. *Galen and the World of Knowledge*. NY: Cambridge University Press, 2009.

Gioanni, Stéphane. "La Culture Profane et la Littérature Monastique en Occident," in Rebillard ,177-95.

Girard, René. *Violence and the Sacred*. Translated by Patrick Gregory. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977.

Gleason, Maud. "Elite Male Identity in the Roman Empire." In Potter, *Life,* 67-84.

-----. "Mutilated Mesengers: Body Language in Josephus." In Goldhill, *Being,* 50-85.

Gmirkin, Russell. *Berossus and Genesis, Manetho and Exodus: Hellenistic Histories and the Date of the Pentateuch.* NY: T & T Clark, 2006.

Goehring, James, Charles Hendrick, Jack Sanders, and Hans Dieter Betz, editors. *Gnosticism and the Early Christian World: In Honor of James M. Robinson*. Sonoma, CA: Polebridge Press, 1990.

Goehring, James. *Ascetics, Society, and the Desert: Studies in Early Egyptian Monasticism*. Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 1999.

-----. "The World Engaged: The Social and Economic World of Early Egyptian Monasticism." In Goehring, *Gnosticism,* 134-44.

Goffart, Walter. “Zosimos, the First Historian of Rome’s Fall.” *The American Historical Review* 76 (1971): 412-41.

Goldenberg, David. “Racism, Color Symbolism, and Color Prejudice.” In Eliav-Feldon, 88-108.

Goldhill, Simon. "The Erotic Eye: Visual Stimulation and Cultural Conflict." In Goldhill, *Being*, 154-94.

-----, editor. *Being Greek Under Rome: Cultural Identity, the Second Sophistic and the Development of Empire*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2001.

-----, editor. *The End of Dialogue in Antiquity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009.

Goldman, Alvin. “What Is Justified Belief?” In *Knowledge and Reality: Classic and Contemporary Readings*, edited by Steven Cahn, Maureen Eckert, and Robert Buckley, 119-35. Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Pearson/Prentice Hall, 2004.

Goldstein, Arnold. *The Psychology of Group Aggression*. NY, NY: John Wiley & Sons, Ltd., 2002.

Goldziher, Ignác and S. M.Stern. *Muslim Studies*. Vol. 1. New Brunswick, NJ: Aldine, 2006.

Goode, Erich and Nachman Ben-Yehuda. “Moral Panic.” In Bryant,: 46-52.

Goodenough, Erwin. *Jewish Symbols in the Graeco-Roman World.* NY: Pantheon Books, 1953.

Goodspeed, Edgar and Robert Grant. *A History of Early Christian Literature.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966.

Gordon, Richard. “Religion in the Roman Empire: The Civic Compromise and Its Limits.” In *Pagan Priests: Religion and Power in the Ancient World*, edited by Mary Beard and John North, 233-56. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990.

Gould, Graham. “The *Life of Antony* and the Origins of Christian Monasticism in Fourth-Century Egypt.” *Medieval History* 1 (1991): 3-11.

-----. *The Desert Fathers on Monastic Community*. NY: Clarendon Press, 1993.

Graf, F. *Magic in the Ancient World*. Translated by Franklin Philipp. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997.

-----. *Roman Festivals in the Greek East: From the Early Empire to the Middle Byzantine Era*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2015.

-----. "Theories of Magic in Antiquity." In Mirecki, 92-104.

Grafton, Anthony and Megan Hale Williams. *Christianity and the Transformation of the Book: Origen, Eusebius, and the Library of Caesarea*. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2006.

Gragg, Douglas. "Old and New in Roman Religion: A Cognitive Account." In *Theorizing Religions Past: Archaeology, History and Cognition*, edited by Harvey Whitehouse and Luther Martin, 69-86. NY: Altamira Press, 2004.

Grant, Robert. *Eusebius as Church Historian*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1980.

Grant, Robert. *Miracle and Natural Law in Graeco-Roman and Early Christian Thought*. Amsterdam: North-Holland Publishing Company, 1952.

Graverini, Luca. *Literature and Identity in* The Golden Ass *of Apuleius*. Translated by Benjamin Lee. Columbus: Ohio State University, 2007.

Green, Melanie and Jenna Clark. "Transportation Theory." In Eastin, 356-57.

Green, Nile and Mary Searle-Chatterjee. "Religion, Language, and Power: An Introductory Essay." In *Religion, Language and Power*. Edited by Nile Green and Mary Searle-Chatterjee, 1-26. NY: Routledge, 2008.

Greenfield, Kent. *The Myth of Choice: Personal Responsibility in a World of Limits*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011.

Grenfell, Bernard and Arthur Hunt, Edgar Goodspeed, editors. *The Tebtunis Papyri*. Vol. 2. New York: Oxford University Press, 1907.

Grenier, Jean-Claude. *Anubis Alexandrin Et Romain*. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1977

Griffin, Larry. "Causal Interpretation in Historical Sociology." *American Journal of Sociology* 98 (1993): 1094-1133.

Griffith, Sidney. "The Signs and Wonders of Orthodoxy: Miracles and Monks' Lives in Sixth-Century Palestine." In Cavadini, 139-68

Griffiths, J. Gwyn. "Allegory in Greece and Egypt." *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 53 (1967): 79-102.

-----. *The Conflict of Horus and Seth from Egyptian and Classical Sources.* Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1960.

-----. “Egyptian Influences on Athanasius.” In *Studien zu Sprache und Religion Ägyptens* 2 (1984): 1023-37.

-----. “The Flight of the Gods before Typhon: An Unrecognized Myth.” *Hermes* 88 (1960): 374-76.

-----. “Human sacrifices in Egypt. The classical evidence.” *Annales du Service des antiquités de l'Egypte* 48 (1948): 409-23.

Grig, Lucy. *Making Martyrs in Late Antiquity.* London: Duckworth, 2004.

Griggs, C. Wilfred. *Early Egyptian Christianity: From Its Origins to 451 C.E.* NY: Brill, 1991.

Groeger, John. *Memory and Remembering: Everyday Memory in Context.* NY: Addison Wesley Longman Inc., 1997.

Grossman,Maxine. *Reading for History in the Damascus Document: A Methodological Method*. Leiden: Brill, 2002.

Grossman, Peter. “Modalitäten der Zerstörung und Christianisierung pharaonischer Tempelanlagen.” In Hahn, *Temple*, 299-334.

Gruen, Erich. *Diaspora: Jews amidst Greeks and Romans*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002.

-----. *Rethinking the Other in Antiquity*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011.

Grzybowski, Andrzej and Małgorzata Nita. “Leprosy in the Bible.” *Clinics in Dermatology* 34 (2016): 3–7.

Guillaumont, Antoine. *Études sur la spiritualité de l'Orient chrétien*. Maine-& -Loire: Abbaye de Bellefontaine, 1996.

Gunderson, Erik. “The Ideology of the Arena.” *Classical Antiquity* 15 (1996): 113-51.

Gwynn David. "Archaeology and the 'Arian Controversy' in the Fourth Century." In Gwynn, *Diversity*, 229-64.

Gwynn, David and Susanne Bangert, editors. *Religious Diversity in Late Antiquity*. Leiden: Brill, 2010.

Haaland, Randi. “The Meroitic Empire: Trade and Cultural Influences in an Indian Ocean Context,” *African Archaeological Review* 31 (2014): 649-73.

Haarmann, Ulrich. “Medieval Muslim Perceptions of Pharaonic Egypt.” In Loprieno, *History*, 605-28.

Haas, Christopher. *Alexandria in Late Antiquity: Topography and Social Conflict.* Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997.

-----. “The Arians of Alexandria.” *Vigiliae Christianae* 47 (1993): 234-45.

Habermas, J. *On the Pragmatics of Social Interaction: Preliminary Studies in the Theory of Communicative Action.* Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2001.

Hahn, Cynthia. “Seeing and Believing: The Construction of Sanctity in Early-Medieval Saints' Shrines.” *Speculum* 72 (1997): 1079-1106.

Hahn, Johannes. “Die Zerstörung der Kulte von Philae Geschichte und Legende am ersten Nilkatarakt.” In Hahn, *Temple*, 203-42.

-----. “The Conversion of the Cult States: The Destruction of the Serapeum 392 A.D. and the Transformation of Alexandria into the ‘Christ-Loving’ City.” In Hahn, *Temple*, 335-66.

-----. *Gewalt und religiöser Konflict: Studien zu den Auseinandersetzungen zwischen Christen, Heiden un Juden im Osten des Römischen Reiches (von Konstantin bis Theodosius II).* Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2004.

Hahn, Johannes, Stephen Emmel, and Ulrich Gotter, editors. *From Temple to Church: Destruction and Renewal of Local Cultic Topography in Late Antiquity*. Boston: Brill, 2008.

Haighton, Angela. “Roman Methods of Authentication in the First Two Centuries AD.” *Journal of the Society of Archivists* 31 (2010): 29–49.

Halbwachs, Maurice. *Collective Memory.* Translated by Lewis Coser. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992.

Hall, Jonathan M. *Hellenicity: Between Ethnicity and Culture*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002.

Halsall, Guy. “Social Identities and Social Relationships in Early Merovingian Gaul.” In *Franks and Alamanni in the Merovingian Period: An Ethnographic Perspective*. Edited by Ian Wood, 141-75. San Marino: Boydell Press, 1998.

Halvor, Karl, Teigen Brun, and Wibecke Brun. “Anticipating the Future: Appraising Risk and Uncertainty.” In *Decision Making: Cognitive Models and Explanations*, edited by Rob Ranyard, W. Ray Crozier, and Ola Svenson, 112-27. NY: Routledge, 1997.

Hansen, Nicole. “Ancient Execration Magic in Coptic and Islamic Egypt.” In Mirecki, 427-446.

Hansen, William, editor. *Anthology of Ancient Greek Popular Literature.* Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1998.

-----. “Strategies of Authentication in Ancient Popular Literature.” In Panayotakis, *Ancient*, 301-16.

Hanson, R. P. C. “Transformation of Pagan Temples into Churches.” *Journal of Semitic Studies* 23 (1978): 257-67.

Harker, Andrew. *Loyalty and Dissidence in Roman Egypt: The Case of the* Acta Alexandrinorum. NY: Cambridge University Press, 2008.

Harmless, William. “Remembering Poemen Remembering: The Desert Fathers and the Spirituality of Memory.” *Church History* 69 (2000): 483-518.

-----. *Desert Christians: An Introduction to the Literature of Early Monasticism.* NY: Oxford University Press, 2004.

Harper, Kyle. *From Shame to Sin: The Christian Transformation of Sexual Morality in Late Antiquity*. Cambridge, MA: Havard University Press, 2013.

-----. *Slavery in the Late Roman World, AD 275-425*. NY: Cambridge University Press, 2011.

Harries, Jill. *Law and Empire in Late Antiquity*. NY: Cambridge University Press, 1999.

Harris, William. *Ancient Literacy*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989.

-----. *Dreams and Experience in Classical Antiquity.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009.

-----. “Greek and Roman Hallucinations.” In *Mental Disorders in the Classical World*, edited by W. V. Harris, 285-306. Boston: Brill, 2013.

Harris, W. and Giovanni Ruffini, editors. *Ancient Alexandria between Egypt and Greece.* Boston: Brill, 2004.

Hart, Tobin. “Interiority and Education: The Neurophenomenology of Contemplation.” In *Meditation and the Classroom: Contemplative Pedagogy for Religious Studies*, edited by Judith Simmer-Brown and Fran Grace, 129-38. Albany: State University of NY Press, 2011.

Hartley, L. P. *The Go-Between*. 1953. Reprint, NY: NY Review of Books, 2002.

Harvey, Susan Ashbrook *Asceticism and Society in Crisis John of Ephesus and the Lives of the Eastern Saints*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990.

Hawting, G. R. *The Idea of Idolatry and the Emergence of Islam: From Polemic to History*. NY: Cambridge University Press, 1999.

Hays, Judith and Cristina Hendrix. "The Role of Religion in Bereavement." In *Handbook of Bereavement Research and Practice: Advances in Theory and Intervention*, edited by Margaret Stroebe, Robert Hansson, Henk Schut, and Wolfgang Stroebe, 327-48. Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association, 2008.

Hearn, Jeff and Viv Burr. "Introducing the Erotics of Wounding: Sex, Violence and the Body." In Hearn, 1-14.

-----, editors. *Sex, Violence and the Body: The Erotics of Wounding*. NY: Palgrave Macmillian, 2008.

Heck, Paul. "The Hierarchy of Knowledge in Islamic Civilization." *Arabica* 49 (2002): 27-54.

Hedrick, Charles, Jr. *History and Silence: Purge and Rehabilitation of Memory in Late Antiquity*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2000.

Hedstrom, Darlene. "Divine Architects: Designing the Monastic Dwelling Place." In Bagnall, *Byzantine*, 368-89.

Hegedus, Tim. *Early Christianity and Ancient Astrology*. Washington, D.C.: Peter Lang, 2007.

Hendrick, Jr., Charles. "Literature and Communication." In Peachin, 167-90.

Hermann, John and Annewies van den Hoek. "The Sphinx: Sculpture as a Theological Symbol in Plutarch and Clement of Alexandria." In Hilhorst, *Wisdom*, 285-310.

Hermes Nizar, F. *The [European] Other in Medieval Arabic Literature and Culture: Ninth-Twelfth Century AD.* NY: Palgrave MacMillan, 2012.

Heyden, Katharina. "Christliche Transformation des antiken Dialogs bei Justin und Minucius Felix." *Zeitschrift für antikes Christentum* 13 (2009): 204-32.

Heyman, George. *The Power of Sacrifice: Roman and Christian Discourses in Conflict*. Washington D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2007.

Hezser, Catherine. “Material Culture and Daily Life.” *Rabbinic Texts and the History of Late-Roman Palestine*, edited by Martin Goodman and and Philip S. Alexander, 301-18. Oxford: Published for the British Academy by Oxford University Press, 2010.

Hilhorst, Anthony. “‘And Moses was Instructed in All the Wisdom of the Egyptians’ (Acts 7.22).” In Hilhorst, *Wisdom*, 153-72.

Hilhorst, Anthony and George van Kooten, editors. *The Wisdom of Egypt: Jewish, Early Christian and Gnostic Essays in Honour of Gerard P. Luttikhuizen*. Boston: Brill, 2005

Hill, Edmund. *Sermons: III/11 Newly Discovered Sermons*. Edited by John Rotelle. Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 1990.

Himmelfarb, Martha. *Tours of Hell: An Apocalyptic Form in Jewish and Christian Literature*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1983.

Hirst, Anthony and M. S. Silk, editors. *Alexandria, Real and Imagined*. Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2004.

Hobson, Deborah. “The Impact of Law on Village Life in Roman Egypt.” In *Law, Politics and Society in the Ancient Mediterranean World*. Edited by Baruch Halpern and Deborah Hobson, 193-219. Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993.

Höfer, Bernadette. *Psychosomatic Disorders in Seventeenth-century French Literature*. Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2009.

Hoffman, C. A. “Fiat Magia.” In Mirecki, 179-96.

Hoffman, Martin. “Empathy and Prosocial Behavior.” In Lewis, *Handbook*, 440-55.

Hoffman, R. Joseph. *Celsus on* The True Doctrine*: A Discourse Against the Christians*. NY: Oxford University Press, 1987.

Hogg, Michael A., Janice R. Adelman, and Robert D. Blagg. “Religion in the Face of Uncertainty: An Uncertainty-Identity Theory Account of Religiousness.” *Personality and Social Psychology Review* 14 (2010): 72-83.

Hohlwein, M. “Déplacements et tourisme dans l'Égypte romaine.” *Chronique d'Égypte* 15 (1940): 253-78.

Holland, Bart. *Prospecting for Drugs in Ancient and Medieval European Texts: A Scientific Approach*. Amsterdam: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1996.

Holowchak, M. Andrew. *Ancient Science and Dreams: Oneirology in Greco-Roman Antiquity.* NY: University Press of America, 2002.

Holum, Kenneth G. "The Christianizing of Caesarea Palaestinae." In *Die spätantike Stadt und ihre Christianisierung: Symposium vom 14. bis 16 Februar 2000 in Halle/Salle.* Edited by G. Brands and H.-G. Severin, 151-64. Wiesbaden: Reichert, 2003.

-----. "In the Blinking of an Eye: The Christianizing of Classical Cities in the Levant." In *Religion and Politics in the Ancient Near East,* edited by Adele Berlin, 131-50. Bethesda: University Press of Maryland, 1996.

-----. "Caesarea's Fortune: Ancient Statuary and the Beholder in a Late Antique City." In *The Sculptural Environment of the Roman Near East: Reflections on Culture, Ideology, and Power,* edited by Yaron Eliav, Elise Friedland, and Sharon Herbert, 539-58. Leuven: Peeters, 2008.

-----. "The Gods of Sebastos: King Herod's Harbor Temple at Caesarea Maritima." In *Eretz-Israel: Archaeological, Historical and Geographical Studies,* vol. 31, edited by Zeev Weiss. Jerusalem: The Israel Exploration Society, 2015.

-----. *The Theodosian Empresses: Women and Imperial Dominion in Late Antiquity*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982.

Hood, Robert. *Begrimed and Black: Christian Traditions on Blacks and Blackness*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994.

Hope, Valerie. "Contempt and Respect: The Treatment of the Corpse in Ancient Rome." In *Death and Disease in the Ancient City,* edited by Valerie Hope and Eireann Marshall, 104-27. NY: Routledge, 2000.

Hopkins, Keith. *Death and Renewal.* NY: Cambridge University Press, 1983.

Hornung, Eric. *Conceptions of God in Ancient Egypt: The One and the Many*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1982.

Horsley, G H. R. *New Documents Illustrating Early Christianity*. North Ryde, Australia: Macquarie University, 1981.

Horstmanshoff, H. F. J. "The Ancient Physician: Craftsman or Scientist." *The Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences* 45 (1990): 176-97.

Howard-Johnston, James. *Witnesses to a World in Crisis: Historians and Histories of the Middle East in the Seventh Century*. NY: Oxford University Press, 2010.

Humphrey, John, editor. *Literacy in the Roman World.* Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1991.

Humphries, Caroline. *Orthdoxy and the Courts in Late Antiquity*. NY: Oxford University Press, 2007.

Humphries, Mark. "The Mind of the Persecutors: 'By the Gracious Favour of the Gods.'" In Twomey, 11-32.

Hunt, Emily J. *Christianity in the Second Century: The Case of Tatian*. NY: Routledge, 2003.

Hunter, Richard. "Ancient Readers." In *The Cambridge Companion to The Greek and Roman Novel*, edited by Tim Whitmarsh, 261-71. NY: Cambridge University Press, 2008.

Hurley, Patrick. *A Concise Introduction to Logic.* Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, Cengage Learning, 2008.

Inowlocki, Sabrina. *Eusebius and the Jewish Authors: His Citation Technique in an Apologetic Context.* Boston: Brill, 2006.

Iricinischi, Eduard and Holger Zellentin, editors. *Heresy and Identity in Late Antiquity*. Tübingen, Germany: Mohr Siebeck, 2008.

-----. "Making Selves and Marking Others: Identity and Late Antique Hersiologies." In Iricinischi, 1-27.

Isaac, Benjamin. *The Invention of Racism in Classical Antiquity.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004.

Isaac, Benjamin, Joseph Ziegler, and Miriam Eliav-Feldon. "Introduction." In Eliav-Feldon, 1-31.

Iversen, Erik. *Egyptian and Hermetic Doctrine.* Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press, 1984.

-----. *The Myth of Egypt and its Hieroglyphs: In European Tradition.* Copenhagen: Gec Gad Publishers, 1961.

Ivory, James. "Character Development within Violent Content." In Eastin, 66-70.

Jackson, Ralph. *Doctors and Diseases in the Roman Empire*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1988.

Jackson, Robert. *At Empire's Edge: Exploring Rome's Egyptian Frontier.* New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002.

Jacobs, Andrew. *Christ Circumcised: A Study in Early Christian History and Difference*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012.

Jacobs, Ine. "Production to Destruction? Pagan and Mythological Statuary in Asia Minor." *American Journal of Archaeology* 114 (2010): 267-303.

Jacq, Christian. *Egyptian Magic*. Chicago: Bolchazy-Carducci, 1985.

Jaeger, Werner. *Early Christianity and Greek Paideia*. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1961.

Jaffee, Martin S. *Torah in the Mouth: Writing and Oral Tradition in Palestinian Judaism, 200 BCE-400 CE*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2001.

James, G. G. M. *Stolen Legacy*. NY: African Islamic Mission Publications, 1988.

Janes, Dominic and Alex Houen. "Introduction." In Janes, 1-22.

-----, editors. *Martyrdom and Terrorism: Pre-Modern to Contemporary Perspectives*. NY: Oxford University Press, 2014.

Janowitz, Naomi. *Icons of Power: Ritual Practices in Late Antiquity*. University Park, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2002.

Janssen, L. F. "'Superstitio' and the Persecution of the Christians." *Vigiliae Christianae* 33 (1979): 131-59.

Jarus, Owen. "Ancient Amulet Discovered with Curious Palindrome Inscription." *Live Science*. Accessed March 22, 2015. http://www.livescience.com/49239-ancient-amulet-palindrome-inscription.html.

Jastrow, Jr., Morris. "Dust, Earth, and Ashes as Symbols of Mourning among the Ancient Hebrews." *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 20 (1899) 133-50.

de Jáuregui, Miguel Herrero. *Orphism and Christianity in Late Antiquity*. NY: Walter de Gruyter, 2010.

Jay, Jacqueline. "Religious Literature of Late Period and Greco-Roman Egypt." *Religion Compass* 1 (2007): 93-106.

Jean-Claude, Guy. *Recherches sur la tradition grecque des Apophthegmata patrum*. Bruxelles: Société des Bollandistes, 1962.

Jeffreys, Elizabeth, Brian Croke, and Roger Scott. *Studies in John Malalas*. Sydney: Australian Association for Byzantine Studies, 1990.

Jenkins, Richard. *Social Identity*. Hoboken: Routledge, Taylor and Francis Group, 2014.

Jenott, Lance and Elaine Pagel. “Antony's Letters and Nag Hammadi Codex I: Sources of Religious Conflict in Fourth-Century Egypt.” *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 18 (2010): 557-89.

Jensen, Gary. “Deviance and Social Control.” In Bryant, 11-16.

Jensen, Gary. “Social Learning and Violent Behavior.” In *The Cambridge Handbook of Violent Behavior and Aggression*, edited by Daniel Flannery, Alexander Vazsonyi, and Irwin Waldman, 636-46. NY: Cambridge University Press, 2009.

Jewkes, Yvonne, editor. *Handbook on Prisons*. Portland, Oregon: Willan Publishing, 2007.

-----. “Introduction.” In Jewkes, xxiii-xxx.

Joëls, M., Zhenwei Pu, Olof Wiegert, Melly S. Oitzl, and Harm J. Krugers. “Learning under Stress: How Does It Work?” *Trends in Cognitive Sciences* 10 (2006): 152-58.

Johnson, Aaron. *Ethnicity and Argument in Eusebius’* Praeparatio Evangelica. NY: Oxford University Press, 2006.

Johnson, Aaron and Jeremy Schott, editors. *Eusebius of Caesarea: Tradition and Innovations.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2013.

Johnson, Aaron. *Religion and Identity in Porphyry of Tyre the Limits of Hellenism in Late Antiquity.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013.

Johnson, D. W. “Introduction.” In *A Panegyic on Macarius Bishop of Tkōw Attributed to Dioscorus of Alexandria*. 5-13. Louvain: Secrétariat du Corpus Scriptorum Chistianoum Orientalium, 1980.

Johnson, Maxwell, editor. *Living Water, Sealing Spirit: Readings on Christian Initiation*. Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1995.

Johnson, Scott, editor. *Greek Literature in Late Antiquity: Dynamism, Didactism, Classicism.* Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2006.

Johnson, William. *Readers and Reading Culture in the High Roman Empire: A Study of Elite Communities.* NY: Oxford University Press, 2010.

Johnson, William and H. N. Parker, editors. *Ancient Literacies: The Culture of Reading in Greece and Rome*. NY: Oxford University Press, 2009.

Johnston, Sarah Iles. “Animating Statues: A Case Study in Ritual.” *Arethusa* 41 (2008): 445-77.

-----. *Restless Dead: Encounters between the Living and the Dead in Ancient Greece.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999.

Johnston, Sarah and Peter Struck, editors. *Mantikê: Studies in Ancient Divination.* Leiden: Brill, 2005.

Johnstone, S. “A New History of Libraries and Books in the Hellenistic Period.” *Classical Antiquity* 33 (2014): 347-93.

Jones, A. H. M. “Were Ancient Heresies National or Social Movements in Disguse?” *Journal of Theological Studies* 10 (1959): 280-98.

-----. “The Social Background of the Struggle Between Paganism and Christianity.” In *The Conflict Between Paganism and Christianity in the Fourth Century*, edited by A. Momigliano, 17-37. Oxford: Oxford Univeristy Press, 1963.

Jones, Alexander. *Astronomical Papyri from Oxyrhynchus: P.Oxy. 4133-4300a.* Vol. 1. Philadelphia: American Philosophical Center, 1999.

Jones, Christopher P. *Between Pagan and Christian*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014.

Jones, Ivor. “Cultural and Historical Aspects of Male Sexual Assault.” In *Male Victims of Sexual Assault*, edited by Gillian Mezey and Michael King, 104-15. NY: Oxford University Press, 1992.

Joshel, Sandra. *Slavery in the Roman World.* NY: Cambridge University Press, 2010.

Judy. “Response: The Secret Lives of Women: Cyberspace and Fan Erotica.” Accessed May 8, 2015. http://newmediagenres.org/2013/02/25/response-the-secret-lives-of-women-cyberspace-and-fan-erotica/.

Juliussen, Heather. “Thinking about Women in Early Christian Alexandria.” M.A. Thesis. University of Maryland, 2008.

Kahlos, M. *Forbearance and Compulsion: The Rhetoric of Religious Tolerance and Intolerance in Late Antiquity.* London: Duckworth, 2009.

-----. *Debate and Dialogue: Christian and Pagan Cultures c. 360-430*. Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2007.

Kákosy, László. “A Christian Interpretation of the Sun-Disk.” In *Studies in Egyptian Religion Dedicated to Professor Jan Zandee*. Edited by M. Heerma van Voss,

D. J. Hoens, G. Mussies, D. van der Plas, and H. Te Velde, 72-75. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1982.

Kalavrezou-Maxeiner, Ioli. “The Imperial Chamber at Luxor.” *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 29 (1975): 225-51.

Kaldellis, Anthony. *Procopius of Caesarea: Tyranny, History, and Philosophy at the End of Antiquity*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004.

Kaplan, E. Ann. “Empathy and Trauma Culture: Imaging Catastrophe.” In *Empathy: Philosophical and Psychological Perspectives*. Edited by Amy Coplan and Peter Goldie, 255-76. NY: Oxford University Press, 2011.

Kannengiesser, Charles, William Lawrence Petersen, editors. *Origen of Alexandria: His World and His Legacy*. Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1988.

Kaster, Robert. *Emotion, Restraint, and Community in Ancient Rome*. NY: Oxford University Press, 2005.

Kearney, Michael. *The Winds of Ixtepeji; World View and Society in a Zapotec Town*. NY: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1972.

Kee, Howard Clark. *Miracle in the Early Christian World: A Study in the Sociohistorical Method*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983.

Kehoe, Dennis. “Law and Social Formation in the Roman Empire.” In Peachin,144-66.

Kehoe, D. *Management and Investment on Estates in Roman Egypt in during the Eary Empire.* Bonn: Habelt, 1992.

Kelly, J. N. D. *Jerome: His Life, Writings, and Controversies.* NY: Harper & Row, 1975.

Kennedy, George. *Classical Rhetoric and Its Christian and Secular Tradition from Ancient to Modern Times*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1980.

-----. *Greek Rhetoric under Christian Emperors.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983.

-----. *Progymnasmata: Greek Textbooks of Prose Composition and Rhetoric*. Boston: Brill, 2003.

Kenyon, Frederic. *Books and Readers in Ancient Greece and Rome*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1951.

Ker, James and Christoph Pieper. “General Introduction: Valuing Antiquity in Antiquity.” In *Valuing the Past in the Greco-Roman World: Proceedings from the Penn-Leiden Colloquia on Ancient Values VII*, edited by James Ker and Christoph Pieper, 1-22. Boston: Brill, 2014.

Kerkeslager, Allen. “Jewish Pilgrimage and Jewish Identity in Hellenistic and Early Roman Egypt.” In Frankfurter, *Pilgrimage*, 99-228.

Khalidi, Tarif. *Arabic Historical Thought in the Classical Period.* NY: Cambridge University Press, 1994.

Kiel, L. Douglas, Euel W. Elliott. *Chaos Theory in the Social Sciences Foundations and Applications*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1997.

Kim, Young. “Epiphanius of Cyprus and the Geography of Heresy.” In Drake, *Violence*, 235-62.

King, Helen, editor. *Health in Antiquity*. NY: Routledge, 2005.

King, Karen. *What is Gnosticism?* Cambridge: Belknap, 2003.

Kippenberg, Hans. “Searching for the Link between Religion and Violence by Means of the Thomas-Theorem,” *Method and Theory in the Study of Religion* 22 (2010): 97-115.

Kippenberg, Hans G. and Guy G. Stroumsa, editors. *Secrecy and Concealment: Studies in the History of Mediterranean and Near Eastern Religions.* NY: E. J. Brill, 1995.

Kirschner, Robert. “The Vocation of Holiness in Late Antiquity.” *Vigiliae Christianae* 38 (1984): 105-24.

Kirwan, Lawrence. *Studies on the History of Late Antique and Christian Nubia*. Edited by T. Hägg, L. Török, and D. A. Welsby. Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2002.

Kiss, Zsolt. “Alexandria in the Fourth to Seventh Centuries.” In Bagnall, *Byzantine*, 187-206.

Kitzinger, Ernst. “The Cult of Images in the Age before Iconoclasm.” *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 8 (1954): 83-150.

Kivisto, Peter and Paul Croll. *Race and Ethnicity: The Basics.* NY: Routledge, 2012.

Klein, K. M. “Invisible Monks, Human Eyes and the Egyptian Desert in Late Antique Hagiography.” In Barnard, 298-311.

Klingshirn, William. *The Early Christian Book*. Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2007.

Kloppenborg, John. "Literate Media in Early Christ Groups: The Creation of a Christian Book Culture." *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 22 (2014): 21-59.

Klutz, Todd, editor. *Magic in the Biblical World*. NY: T & T Clark International, 2003.

-----. “Reinterpreting ‘Magic’ in the World of Jewish and Christian Scripture: An Introduction.” In Klutz, 1-11.

Knipfing, John R. “The Libelli of the Decian Persecution.” *The Harvard Theological Review* 16 (1923): 345-90.

Knust, Jenifer and Zsuzsanna Varhelvi, editors. *Ancient Mediterranean Sacrifice*. NY Oxford University Press 2011.

Kofsky, Aryeh. *Eusebius of Caesarea against Paganism*. Boston: Brill, 2000.

Kohlberg, Etan. “Taqiyya in Shī‘ī Theology and Religion.” In Kippenberg, *Secrecy*,345-80.

Konig, Jason. *Ancient Libraries.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013.

Konstan, David. *The Emotions of the Ancient Greeks: Studies in Aristotle and Classical Literature*. Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 2006.

-----. *Pity Transformed*. London: Duckworth, 2001.

-----. “Rhetoric and Emotion.” In *A Companion to Greek Rhetoric*. Edited by Ian Worthington. Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2007. 411-26.

Konstan, David and Ilaria Ramelli. “The Novel and Christian Narrative.” In *A Companion to the Ancient Novel*. Edited by Edmund Cueva and Shannon Byrne. Malden, MA: Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2014. 180-98.

Konty, Mark. “The Deconstruction of Deviance.” In Bryant,: 31-37.

de Kosnik, Abigail. "Fifty Shades and the Archives of Women's Culture." *Cinema Journal* 54 (2015): 116-25.

Kotansky, Roy. “Greek Exorcistic Amulets.” In Mirecki, 243-78.

Kötting, Bernhard. *Peregrinatio Religiosa: Wallfahrten in der Antike und das Pilgerwesen in der alten Kirche*. Münster: Regensberg, 1950.

Kraemer, Ross Shepard. "The Conversion of Women to Ascetic Forms of Christianity. *Signs* 6 (1980): 298-307.

Kraft, James. *The Epistemology of Religious Disagreement: A Better Understanding.* NY: Palgrave MacMillan, 2012.

Krause, Jens-Uwe. *Gefängnisse im römischen Reich*. Stuttgart: F. Steiner, 1996.

Krawiec, Rebecca. *Shenoute and the Women of the White Monastery: Egyptian Monasticism in Late Antiquity*. NY: Oxford University Press, 2002.

Kreider, Alan, editor. "Changing Patterns of Conversion in the West." In *The Origins of Christendom in the West*. 3-46. NY: T&T Clark. 2001.

Kripal, Jeffrey. "Mysticism." In Segal, 321-36.

Kristensen, Troels Myrup. "Embodied Images Christian Response and Destruction in Late Antique Egypt." *Journal of Late Antiquity* 2 (2009): 224-50.

Krystal, Henry. *Massive Psychic Trauma.* NY: International Universities Press, 1969.

Kuck, David. *Judgment and Community Conflict: Paul's Use of Apocalyptic Judgment Language in 1Corinthians 3:5-4:5*. NY: E. J. Brill, 1992.

Kuefler, Matthew. *The Manly Eunuch: Masculinity, Gender Ambiguity, and Christian Ideology in Late Antiquity.* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2001.

Kugler, Rob. "Hearing the Story of Moses in Ptolemaic Egypt: Artapanus Accommodates the Tradition." In Hilhorst, *Wisdom*, 67-80.

Kühberer, Anton. "Theoretical Conceptions of Framing Effects in Risky Decisions." In *Decision Making: Cognitive Models and Explanations*, edited by Rob Ranyard, W. Ray Crozier, Ola Svenson, 128-44. NY: Routledge, 1997.

Kyle, Donald. *Spectacles of Death in Ancient Rome*. NY: Routledge, 1998.

-----. *Sport and Spectacle in the Ancient World*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2007.

Lacan, J. "*Le séminaire sur 'La Lettre volée.'"* In *Écrits*, 11-61. Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1966).

Lafferty, Sean. "*Ad sanctitatem mortuorum*: Tomb Raiders, Body Snatchers and Relic Hunters in Late Antiquity." *Early Medieval Europe* 22 (2014): 249–79.

Lamberton, Robert. “The ἀπόρρητος θεωρία and the Roles of Secrecy in the History of Platonism.” In Kippenberg, *Secrecy*, 139-52.

Lanzillotta, L. Roig. “The Early Christians and Human Sacrifice.” In *The Strange World of Human Sacrifice*, edited by Jan Bremmer, 81-102. Dudley, MA: Peeters, 2007.

Lapin, Hayim. *Rabbis as Romans: The Rabbinic Movement in Palestine, 100-400 CE*. NY: Oxford University Press, 2012.

Largier, Niklaus. *In Praise of the Whip: A Cultural History of Arousal*. NY: Zone Books, 2007.

Lavan, Luke. “Introduction.” In Lavan, *Archaeology*, xv-lxv.

-----. “Political Talismans? Residual ‘Pagan’ Statues in Late Antique Public Space.” In Lavan, *Archaeology*, 439-78.

Lavan, Luke and Michael Mulryan, editors. *The Archaeology of Late Antique ‘Paganism.’* Boston: Leiden, 2011.

Lawler, Steph. *Identity: Sociological Perspectives*. Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2008.

Lawrence, Bruce and Aisha Karim, editors. *On Violence: A Reader*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2007.

Layton, Richard. *Didymus the Blind and His Circle in Late-Antique Alexandria: Virtue and Narrative in Biblical Scholarship*. Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2004.

Leahy, Anthony. “Death by Fire in Ancient Egypt.” *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 27 (1984): 199-206.

Leakey, Richard and Roger Lewin. *Origins Reconsidered: In Search of What Makes Us Human*. NY: Doubleday, 1992.

Lefebvre, Henri. *The Production of Space*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1991.

Lefkowitz, Mary. "Some Ancient Advocates of Greek Cultural Dependency." In Coleman, *Greeks*, 237-54.

Leffler, Yvonne. *Horror as Pleasure: The Aesthetics of Horror Fiction.* Translated by Sara Death. Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 2000.

Leppeley, Claude. “The Use of Secularized Latin Pagan Culture by Christians.” In Gwynn, *Diversity*, 477-92.

Leopold, Anita. “Syncretism and the Interaction of Modes of Religiosity: A Formative Perspective on Gnostic-Christian Movements in Late Antiquity.” In *Theorizing Religions Past: Archaeology, History and Cognition*, edited by Harvey Whitehouse and Luther Martin, 105-21. NY: Altamira Press, 2004.

Lesses, Rebecca. “Exe(o)rcising Power: Women as Sorceresses, Exorcists, and Demonesses in Babylonian Jewish Society of Late Antiquity.” *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 69 (2001): 343-75.

Lett, James. *Science, Reason and Anthropology: The Principals of Rational Inquiry*. NY: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 1997.

Levinson, Joshua. “Enchanting Rabbis: Contest Narratives between Rabbis and Magicians in Late Antiquity.” *The Jewish Quarterly Review* 100 (2010): 54–94.

Lewis, Naphtali. *Life in Roman Egypt*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983.

Lewis, Michael, Jeannette Haviland-Jones, and Lisa Feldman Barrett, editors. *Handbook of Emotions*. NY: The Guilford Press, 2008.

Leyerle, Blake. “Landscape as Cartography in Early Christian Pilgrimage Narratives.” *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 64 (1996): 119-43.

Leys, Ruth. *From Guilt to Shame: Auschwitz and After*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007.

Lichtheim, Miriam. “Didactic Literature.” In Loprieno, *History*, 243-62.

-----. *Late Egyptian Wisdom Literature in the International Context. A Study of Demotic Instructions.* Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1983.

-----. *Maat in Egyptian Autobiographies and Related Studies.* Vandenhoeck: Universitätsverlag Freiburg Schweiz, 1992.

Lieberman, Saul. “Roman Legal Institutions in Early Rabbinics and in the Acta Martyrum.” *The Jewish Quarterly Review* 35 (1944): 1-57.

Lieberson, Stanley, Arnold Silverman. “The Precipitants and Underlying Conditions of Race Riots.” *American Sociological Review* 30 (1965): 887-98.

Lieu, Judith. *Christian Identity in the Jewish and Graeco-Roman World.* NY: Oxford University Press, 2004.

Lightfoot, J. L. *The Sibylline Oracles: With Introduction, Translation, and Commentary on the First and Second Books*. NY: Oxford University Press, 2007.

Lilla, Salvatore. *Clement of Alexandria: A Study in Christian Platonism and Gnosticism*. NY: Oxford University Press, 1971.

Lim, Richard. “Christianization, Secularization, and the Transformation of Public Life.” In Rousseau, *Companion*, 497-511.

-----. *Public Disputation, Power, and Social Order in Late Antiquity.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995).

Lindsay, Jack. *Men and Gods on the Roman Nile*. NY: Barnes & Noble, Inc., 1968.

-----. *Leisure and Pleasure in Roman Egypt*. NY: Barnes & Noble, Inc., 1965.

Lindstrøm, Torill Christine. "The Animals of the Arena: How and Why Could Their Destruction and Death Be Endured and Enjoyed?" *World Archaeology* 42 (2010): 310–23.

Lintott, Andrew. *Violence in Republican Rome.* 1968. Reprint, NY: Oxford University Press, 1999.

Lippold, Adolf. *Theodosius der Grosse und seine Zeit*. Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1968.

Litonjua, M. D. “Religious Zealotry and Political Violence in Christianity and Islam.” *International Review of Modern Sociology* 35 (2009): 307-31.

Lloyd, G. E. R. *Magic, Reason and Experience: Studies in the Origin and Development of Greek Science*. NY: Cambridge University Press, 1979.

-----. *The Revolutions of Wisdom: Studies in the Claims and Practice of Ancient Greek Science*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987.

Loman, Janni. “The *Letter of Barnabas* in Early Second-Century Egypt.” In Hilhorst, *Wisdom*, 247-66.

Long, A. G., editor. “Subtexts, Connections and Open Opposition.” In *Plato and the Stoics*. 106-27. NY: Cambridge University Press, 2013.

Longrigg, James. *Greek Rational Medicine: Philosophy and Medicine from Alcmaeon to the Alexandrians*. NY: Routledge, 1993.

Lonsdale, S. H. “Attitudes towards Animals in Ancient Greece.” *Greece and Rome* 26 (1979): 146-59.

Loprieno, Antonio. *Ancient Egyptian: A Linguistic Introduction*. NY: Cambridge University Press, 1995.

-----, editor. *Ancient Egyptian Literature: History and Forms.* NY: E. J. Brill, 1996.

-----. "Defining Egyptian Literature: Ancient Texts and Modern Theories." In Loprieno, *History,* 39-58.

Lorton, David. "The Theology of Cult Statues in Ancient Egypt." In *Born in Heaven, Made on Earth: The Making of the Cult Image in the Ancient Near East,* edited by Michael Dick, 123-210. Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 1999.

-----. "The Treatment of Criminals in Ancient Egypt: Through the New Kingdom." *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 20 (1977): 2-64.

Louth, Andrew. "St. Athanasius and the Greek *Life of Antony*." *Journal of Theological Studies* 39 (1988): 504-509.

Lovecraft, H. P. *Supernatural Horror in Literature.* 1945. Repr., New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1973.

Loveday, Alexander. "The Acts of the Apostles as an Apologetic Text." In Edwards, *Apologetics,* 15-44.

Lucarelli, Rita. "Demonology during the Late Pharaonic and Greco-Roman Periods in Egypt." *Journal of Ancient Near Eastern Religions* 11 (2011): 109-25.

-----. "Towards a Comparative Approach to Demonology in Antiquity: The Case of Ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia." *Archiv für Religionsgeschichte* 14 (2013): 11-25;

Luck, G. *Ancient Pathways and Hidden Pursuits: Religion, Morals and Magic in the Ancient World*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999.

-----. *Arcana Mundi: Magic and the Occult in the Greek and Roman Worlds*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985.

Luckhurst, Roger. "The Mummy's Curse: A Study in Rumour." *Critical Quarterly* 52 (2010): 6-22.

-----. *The Mummy's Curse: The True History of a Dark Fantasy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012.

Luhrmann, T. M. "How Do You Learn to Know That It is God Who Speaks." In *Learning Religion: Anthropological Approaches*, edited by David Berliner and Ramon Serró, 83-102. NY: Berghahn Books, 2007.

-----. *Persuasions of the Witch's Craft: Ritual Magic in Contemporary England.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989.

Luijendijk, Annemarie. *Greetings in the Lord: Early Christians and the Oxyrhynchus Papyri*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008.

-----. “Papyri from the Great Persecution: Roman and Christian Perspectives.” *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 16 (2008): 341-69.

Luiselli, Maria Michela. "Personal Piety in Ancient Egypt." *Religion Compass* 8 (2014): 105-16.

Martin, Luther. “Secrecy in Hellenistic Religious Communities.” In Kippenberg, *Secrecy*, 117-21.

Lyman, Rebecca. “The Politics of Passing: Justin Martyr’s Conversion as a Problem of Hellenization.’” In *Conversion in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages: Seeing and Believing*, edited by Kenneth Mills and Anthony Grafton, 36-60. Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2002.

Mabry, Amanda and Monique Turner. "Arousal and Aggressive Content, Theory and Psychology of." In Eastin, 39-42.

MacMullen, Ramsay. *Christianity and Paganism in the Fourth to Eight Centuries.* New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997.

-----. *Christianizing the Roman Empire (A.D. 100-400).* New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984.

-----. *Feelings in History, Ancient and Modern*. New Haven, CT: Regina Books, 2003.

-----. *The Second Church Popular Christianity A.D. 200-400.* Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2009.

MacRae, George. “The Thunder: Perfect Mind VI,2.” In Robinson 295-96.

Madensen, Tamara and John Eck. “Crowd-Related Crime: An Environmental Criminological Perspective.” In *Preventing Crowd Violence*, edited by Tamara Madensen and Johannes Knutsson, 115-38. London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2011.

Magnussen, Svein and Tore Helstrup. *Everyday Memory*. Hove: Psychology Press, 2007.

Maguire, Henry. *Earth and Ocean: The Terrestrial World in Early Byzantine Art.* University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1987.

Marger, Martin. *Race and Ethnic Relations: American and Global Perspectives.* Stamford: Wadsworth, 2000.

Melchior, Aislinn. “Caesar in Vietnam: Did Roman Soldiers Suffer from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder?” *Greece & Rome* 58 (2011): 209-23.

Milikowsky, Chaim. “Justus of Tiberius and the Synchronistic Chronology of Israel.” In *Studies in Josephus and the Varieties of Ancient Judaism*, edited by Shaye J. D. Cohen and Joshua J. Schwartz, 103-26. Boston: Brill, 2007.

Malley, William. *Hellenism and Christianity: The Conflict between Hellenic and Christian Wisdom in the* Contra Galilaeos *of Julian the apostate and the* Contra Julianum *of St. Cyril of Alexandria.* Rome: Università Gregoriana Editrice, 1978.

Manniche, L. *Sexual Life in Ancient Egypt.* NY: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1987.

Marinides, Nicholas. “Religious Toleration in the *Apophthegmata patrum*.” *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 20 (2012): 235-68.

Markstrom, Carol. “Religious Involvement and Adolescent Psychosocial Development.” *Journal of Adolescence* 22 (1999): 205-21.

Markus, R. A. “How on Earth Could Places Become Holy?: Origins of the Christian Idea of Holy Places.” *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 2 (1994): 257-71.

-----. “The Sacred and the Secular: From Augustine to Gregory the Great.” *The Journal of Theological Studies* 36 (1985): 84-96.

-----. *Saeculum: History and Society in the Theology of St. Augustine.* NY: Cambridge University Press, 1970.

-----. “The Secular in Late Antiquity,” in Rebillard, 353-61.

Marsh, Abigail. “Empathy and Compassion: A Cognitive Neuroscience Perspective.” In *Empathy: From Bench to Bedside*, edited by Jean Decety, 191-206. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2012.

Marsh, John, Rodolfo Mendoza-Denton, and Jeremy Smith, editors. *Are We Born Racist? New Insights from Neuroscience and Positive Psychology*. Boston: Beacon Press, 2010.

Martin, Dale. *Inventing Superstition: From the Hippocratics to the Christians*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004.

Martin, Luther H. “Secrecy in Hellenistic Religious Communities.” In Kippenberg, *Secrecy*,101-22.

Martin, Matthew, Katie Neary Dunleavy and Carrie Kennedy-Lightsey. “The Instrumental Use of Verbally Aggressive Messages.” In *Arguments, Agression, and Conflict: New Directions in Theory and Research,* edited by Theodore Avtgis and Andrew Rancer, 400-16. NY: Routledge 2010.

Maspero, Jean. “Horapollon et la Fin du Paganism égyptien.” *Bulletin de l'Instituite Francaise d'Archeologie Orientale* 11 (1914): 163-95.

Mathiesen, Erica. *Christian Women in the Greek Papyri of Egypt to 400 CE*. Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols Publishers, 2014.

Mattingly, David. *Imperialism, Power, and Identity: Experiencing the Roman Empire*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011.

Mauss, Marcel. *A General Theory of Magic*. Boston: Routledge and K. Paul, 1972.

Mayer, Emanuel. *The Ancient Middle Classes*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012.

Mayer, Wendy. “Medicine in Transition: Christian Adaptation in the Later Fourth-Century East.” In *Shifting Genres in Late Antiquity*, edited by Geoffrey Greatrix, Hugh Elton, and Lucas McMahon, 11-27. Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2014.

Mayerson, Philip. “Anti-Black Sentiment in the "‘Vitae Patrum,’" *The Harvard Theological Review* 71 (1978): 304-11.

Mazur, Zeke. “Having Sex with the One: Erotic Mysticism in Plotinus and the Problem of Metaphor.” In *Late Antique Episemology: Other Ways to Truth*, edited by Panayiota Vassilopoulou and Stephen Clark, 67-84. NY: Palgrave MacMillan, 2009.

McBride, Daniel. “The Egyptian-Gnostic View of Death.” In *Death and Taxes in the Ancient Near East*, edited by Sara Orel, 87-128. Lewiston, NY: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1992.

McCallum, Cecilia. “Consuming Pity: The Production of Death among the Cashinahua,” *Cultural Anthropology* 14 (1999): 443-71.

McCauley, Clark. “When Screen Violence Is Not Attractive.” In *Why We Watch: The Attractions of Violent Entertainment*. Edited by Jeffrey Goldstein. NY: Oxford University Press, 1998. 144-62.

McCauley, Robert. “Ritual, Memory, and Emotion: Comparing Two Cognitive Hypotheses.” In *Religion in Mind: Cognitive Perspectives on Religious Belief, Ritual, and Experience*, edited by Jensine Andresen, 115-40. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.

McCracken, George E. “Introduction.” In *Arnobius of Sicca: The Case against the Pagans*. 3-27. Westinster, Maryland The Newman Press, 1949.

McCready, Wayne. “Pilgrimage, Place, and Meaning Making by Jews in Greco-Roman Egypt.” In *Travel and Religion in Antiquity*, edited by Philip Harland, 69-82. Waterloo, Ont.: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2011.

McDermott, William. “The Ape in Roman Literature.” *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association* 67 (1936): 148-67.

McDonald, Sister Mary Francis. “General Introduction.” *Lactantius – The Divine Institutes*. *Books I-VII.* ix-xxv. Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1964.

McElduff, Siobhán. *Roman Theories of Translation: Surpassing the Source.* NY: Routledge, 2013.

McFee, Graham. “Empathy: Interpersonal vs Artistic?” In *Empathy: Philosophical and Psychological Perspectives*, edited by Amy Coplan and Peter Goldie, 185-210. NY: Oxford University Press, 2011.

McGehee, Michael. “Why Tatian Never "Apologized" To The Greeks.” *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 1 (1993): 143-58.

McGing, Gary. “Bandits, Real and Imagined, in Greco-Roman Egypt.” *American Society of Papyrologists* 35 (1964): 159-83.

McGowan, Andrew. “Eating People: Accusations of Cannibalism against Christians in the Second Century.” *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 2 (1994):413-42.

McGuckin, John. “Martyr Devotion in the Alexandrian School: Origen to Athanasius.” In *Martyrs and Maryrologies*, edited by Diana Wood, 35-46. Cambridge: Blackwell Publishers, 1993.

-----. *St. Cyril of Alexandria the Christological Controversy: Its History, Theology, and Texts.* NY: E. J. Brill, 1994.

McInerney, Jeremy. *A Companion to Ethnicity in the Ancient Mediterranean*. Malden, MA: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 2014.

McKenzie, Judith. *The Art and Archaeology of Alexandria and Egypt, c. 300 B.C. – A. D. 700.* New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007.

McKenzie, Judith, Sheila Gibson, and A. T. Reyes. “Reconstructing the Serapeum in Alexandria from the Archaeological Evidence.” *The Journal of Roman Studies* 94, (2004): 73-121.

McLynn, Neil. "Seeing and Believing: Aspects of Conversion from Antoninus Pius to Louis the Pious." In *Conversion in Late Antiquity and The Early Middle Ages: Seeing and Believing*, edited by Kenneth Mills and Anthony Grafton, 224-70. NY: University of Rochester Press 2003.

Meeks, Dimitri and Christine Favard-Meeks. *Daily Life of the Egyptian Gods*. Translated by G. M. Goshgarian. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996.

Meeks, Wayne. *The Origins of Christian Morality: The First Two Centuries*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993.

Meijering, E. P. "Introduction." In *Athanasius: Contra Gentes, Introduction, Translation and Commentary.* 1-5. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1984.

Meijering, E. P. *Orthodoxy and Platonism in Athanasius: Synthesis or Antithesis?* Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1968.

Meinking, Kristina. "Eusebius and Lactantius: Rhetoric, Philosophy, and Christian Theology." In Johnson, *Eusebius*, 325-50.

Mendels, D. *Memory in Jewish, Pagan and Christian Societies of the Graeco-Roman World*. NY: T & T Clark, 2004.

-----. "How was Antiquity Treated in Societies with a Hellenistic Heritage? And Why Did the Rabbis Avoid Writing History?" In *Antiquity in Antiquity: Jewish and Christian Pasts in the Greco-Roman World*, edited by Gregg Gardner and Kevin Osterloh, 131-51. Ottersweier: Tubingen, 2008.

-----. "The Polemical Character of Manetho's *Aegyptiacai*." In *Purposes of History: Studies in Greek Historiography from the 4th to the 2nd Centuries B.C.*, edited by H. Verdin, G. Schepens and E. de Keyser, 91-110. Lovanii: Orientaliste, 1990.

Marger, Martin. *Race and Ethnic Relations: American and Global Perspectives.* Stamford: Wadsworth, 2000.

Merriam, Carol, "Sulpicia and the Art of Literary Allusion: [Tibullus] 3.13." 158-59. *Women Poets in Ancient Greece and Rome*, edited by Ellen Greene, 158-68. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2005.

Messer, Chris. "The Tulsa Race Riot of 1921: Toward an Integrative Theory of Collective Violence." *Journal of Social History* 44 (2011): 1217-32.

Meyer, Ben and E. P. Sanders, editors. *Jewish and Christian Self-Definition.* Vol. 1-3. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980.

Meyer, Eric. "'Marvel at the Intelligence of Unthinking Creatures!': Contemplative Animals in Gregory of Nazianzus and Evagrius of Pontus." In Deane-Drummond, 198-208.

Meyer, Marvin, Richard Smith and Neal Kelsey, editors. *Ancient Christian Magic: Coptic Texts of Ritual Power*. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1994.

Meyer, Marvin and Paul Mirecki, editors. *Ancient Magic and Ritual Power*. NY: Brill, 1995.

Mezey, Gillian and Michael King, editors. *Male Victims of Sexual Assault*. NY: Oxford University Press, 1992.

-----. “Preface,” in Mezey, v-vi.

Middleton, Paul. *Radical Martyrdom and Cosmic Conflict in Early Christianity.* NY: T & T Clark, 2006.

Mikhail, Maged. “An Orientation to the Sources and Study of Early Islamic Egypt (641-868).” *History Compass* 8 (2010): 929-50.

Milde, Henk. “Going out into the Day.’ Ancient Egyptian Beliefs and Practices Concerning Death and Immortality.” In *Hidden Futures: Death and Immortality in Ancient Egypt, Anatolia, the Classical, Biblical and Arabic-Islamic World*, edited by Jan Maarten Bremer, Theo van den Hout and Rudolph Peters, 15-36. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1994.

Miles, Marget. "Burnt Temples in the Landscape of the Past." *Valuing the Past in the Greco-Roman World: Proceedings from the Penn-Leiden Colloquia on Ancient Values VII*, edited by James Ker and Christoph Pieper, 111-45. Boston: Brill, 2014.

Miller, Patricia Cox. *Biography in Late Antiquity: A Quest for the Holy Man*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983.

-----. *Dreams in Late Antiquity: Studies in the Imagination of a Culture*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994.

-----. “Is There a Harlot in This Text? Hagiography and the Grotesque.” In *The Cultural Turn in Late Ancient Studies: Gender, Asceticism, and Historiography*, edited by Dale Martin and Patricia Cox Martin, 86-102. Durham: Duke University Press, 2005.

-----. “Jerome's Centaur: A Hyper-Icon of the Desert,” *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 4 (1996): 209-233.

-----. “Strategies of Representation in Collective Biography: Constructing the Subject as Holy.” In *Greek Biography and Panegyric in Late Antiquity*, edited by Thomas Hägg and Philip Rousseau, 209-54. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000.

Milne, J. G. *A History of Egypt under Roman Rule*. London: Methuen & Co, 1924.

-----. “Greek and Roman Tourists in Egypt.” *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 3 (1916): 76-80.

Mirecki, Paul and Marvin Meyer, editors. *Magic and Ritual in the Ancient World*. Leiden: Brill, 2002.

Mitchell, Stephen and Peter van Nuffelen, editors. *One God: Monotheism between Pagans and Christians in Late Antiquity.* Leuven: Peeters, 2010.

Mohammed, Abbas. “The Nomadic and the Sedentary: Polar Complementaries: Not Polar Opposites.” In *The Desert and the Sown: Nomads in the Wider Society*, edited by Cynthia Nelson, 97-112. Berkeley: University of California, 1973.

Momigliano, A., editor. *The Conflict Between Paganism and Christianity in the Fourth Century.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1963.

-----. *On Pagans, Jews, and Christians.* Middletown, CN: Wesleyan University Press.

Monneret de Villard, Ugo. *La Nubia romana.* Roma: Instituto per l’Oriente, 1941.

Montague, Holly. “From *Interlude in Arcady* to *Daphnis and Chloe*: Two Thousand Years of Erotic Fantasy.” In Tatum, 391-404.

Montserrat, Dominic. “‘Carrying on the Work of the Earlier Firm’: Doctors, Medicine and Christianity in the *Thaumata* of Sophronius of Jerusalem.” In *Health in Antiquity*, edited by Helen King, 230-42. NY: Routledge, 2005.

-----. “Pilgrimage to the Shrine of SS Cyrus and John at Menouthis in Late Antiquity.” In Frankfurter, *Pilgrimage*, 257-80.

-----. *Sex and Society in Graeco-Roman Egypt*. NY: Kegan Paul International, 1996.

Morales, Helen. “The Torturer’s Apprentice: Parrhasius and the Limits of Art.” In *Art and Text in Roman Culture*, edited by Jaś Elsner, 182-209. NY: Cambridge University Press, 1996.

Moreira, Isabel. *Heaven’s Purge: Purgatory in Late Antiquity*. NY: Oxford University Press, 2010.

Morenz, Siegfried. *Egyptian Religion*. Translated by Ann Keep. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1973.

Morgan, J.R. "Heliodorus An Ethiopian Story." In Reardon, 349-53.

-----. "Make-Believe and Make Believe: The Fictionality of the Greek Novels." In *Lies and Fiction in the Ancient World*, edited by Christopher Gill and T. P. Wiseman, 175-229. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1993.

Morgan, Mogg. "'Bride of the Nile' An Orientalist Myth about Egyptian Culture?" Wordpress. October 12, 2014. Accessed February 22, 2016. https://mandoxegypt.wordpress.com/2014/10/12/bride-of-the-nile-an-orientalist-myth-about-egyptian-culture/.

Morgan, Robin. *The Demon Lover: On the Sexuality of Terrorism*. NY: Norton, 1989.

Mortley, Raoul. "The Past in Clement of Alexandria." In Meyer, *Jewish*, Vol. 1, 186-200.

Moss, Candida. *Ancient Christian Martyrdom: Diverse Practices, Theologies, and Traditions.* New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2012.

Moss, Candida. "Miraculous Events in Early Christian Stories about Martyrs." In *Credible, Incredible*, edited by Tobias Nicklas and Janet Spittler, 283-301. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013.

-----. *The Myth of Persecution: How Early Christians Invented a Story of Martyrdom*. NY: HarperCollins Publishers, 2013.

Moussa, Mark. "Abba Moses of Abydos." M.A. thesis, Catholic University of America, 1998.

Moyer, Ian. *Egypt and the Limits of Hellenism*. NY: Cambridge University Press, 2011.

-----. "Herodotus and an Egyptian Mirage: The Genealogies of the Theban Priests." *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 122 (2002): 70-90.

Mukhopadhyay, Carol, Rosemary Henze, and Yolanda Moses, editors. *How Real is Race? A Sourcebook on Race, Culture, and Biology*. Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Education, 2007.

Mueller, J. R. and G. A. Robbins. "Vision of Ezra." In Charlesworth, Vol. 1, 581-86

Muhlestein, Kerry. "Execration Ritual." *UCLA Encyclopedia of Egyptology*. Los Angeles: University of California, 2008

Mulryan, Michael. "'Paganism' in Late Antiquity: Regional Studies and Material Culture." In Lavan, *Archaeology*, 41-88.

Munro, Irmtraut. "The Evolution of the Book of the Dead." In *Journey through the Afterlife: Ancient Egyptian Book of the Dead*, edited by John Taylor, 54-79. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010.

Munro-Hay, Stewart. *Aksum: An African Civilisation of Late Antiquity*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1991.

Murray, M. C. "The Art of the Early Church." *Month-London-Review of Christian Thought and World Affairs* 30 (1997): 388-91.

Mussies, Gerard. "The Interpretatio Judaica of Thot-Hermes." *Studies in Egyptian Religion*, edited by M. Heerma van Voss, Dl. J. Hoens, G. Mussies, D. van der Plas, and H. te Velde, 89-120. Leiden: E. J. Brill 1982.

Musurillo, H. A. "Introduction." In *The Acts of the Christian Martyrs*. xi-lxxiii. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972.

Myerowitz, Molly. "The Domestication of Desire: Ovid's *Parva Tabella* and the Theater of Love." In *Pornography and Represenation in Greece and Rome*, edited by Amy Richlin, 131-57. NY: Oxford University Press, 1992.

Mythbusters. "Water Stun Gun." Aired September 17, 2008, on Discovery.

Nadeau, J. Y. "Ethiopians." *The Classical Quarterly* 20 (1970): 339-49.

Näser, Claudia. "Equipping and Stripping the Dead: A Case Study on the Procurement, Compilation, Arrangement, and Fragmentation of Grave Inventories in New Kingdom Thebes." In *The Oxford Handbook of the Archaeology of Death and Burial*, edited by Sarah Tarlow and Liv Nilsson Stutz, 643-64. NY: Oxford University Press, 2013.

Nasrallah, Laura. *Christian Responses to Roman Art and Architecture: The Second-Century Church amid the Spaces of Empire*. NY: Cambridge University Press, 2010.

-----. "The Embarassment of Blood: Early Christians and Others on Sacrifice, War, and Rational Worship." In Knust, 142-66.

Neiderland, W. G. "The Survivor Syndrome: Further Observations and Dimensions." *Journal of the American Psychological Association* 29 (1981): 413-25.

Neis, Rachel. "Eyeing Idols: Rabbinic Viewing Practices in Late Antiquity." *Jewish Quarterly Review* 102 (2012): 533-60.

Nerey, Jerome. “Miracles, in Other Words: Social Science Perspectives on Healings.” In Cavadini, 19-56.

Nethercut, Jason. “Ennius and the Revaluation of Traditional Historiography in Lucretius’ *De Rerum Natura*.” In *Valuing the Past in the Greco-Roman World: Proceedings from the Penn-Leiden Colloquia on Ancient Values VII*, edited by James Ker and Christoph Pieper, 435-64. Boston: Brill, 2014.

Nilsson, M. P. *Geschichte der griechischen Religion*. München: Beck, 1955.

Newmahr, Staci. *Playing on the Edge: Sadomasochism, Risk, and Intimacy.* Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2011.

Nicholson, Oliver. “Preparation for Martyrdom in the Early Church.” In Twomey, 61-90.

de Nie, Giselle. “History and Miracle: Gregory of Tours's Use of Metaphor.” In *The World of Gregory of Tours*, edited by Kathleen Mitchell and Ian Wood, 261-80. Leiden: Brill, 2002.

Nigosian, Solomon. *Magic and Divination in the Old Testament.* Portland: Sussex Academic Press, 2008.

Nimis, Stephen. “Egypt in Greco-Roman History and Fiction.” *Alif: Journal of Comparative Poetics* 24 (2004): 34-67.

Nobbs, Alanna. “Phileas, Bishop of Thmuis.” In *Egyptian Culture and Society: Studies in Honour of Naguib Kanawati*. Vol 2. edited by Alexandra Woods, Ann McFarlane, and Susanne Binder, 93-98. Cairo: Conseil Suprême des Antiquités de l’Égypte, 2010.

Nock, Arthur Darby. *Conversion: The Old and the New in Religion from Alexander the Great to Augustine of Hippo*. London: Oxford University Press, 1961.

Noegel, Scott, Joel Walker, and Brannon Wheeler, editors. *Prayer, Magic, and the Stars in the Ancient and Late Antique World*. University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2003.

North, John. “Pagan Ritual and Monotheism.” In Mitchell, 34-52.

Nugent, Andrew. “Black Demons in the Desert.” *American Benedictine Review* 49 (1998): 209-21.

Ochoa, George. *Deformed and Destructive Beings: The Purpose of Horror Films*. Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2011.

Ochs, Donovan. *Consolatory Rhetoric: Grief, Symbol and Ritual in the Greco-Roman Era*. Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1993.

O'Cleirigh, Padraig. "Symbol and Science in Early Christian *Gnosis*." In *Hellenization Revisited: Shaping a Christian Response within the Greco-Roman World*. Edited by Wendy Helleman. NY: University Press of America, 1994: 409-428.

O'Connel, Elisabeth. "Transforming Monumental Landscapes in Late Antique Egypt: Monastic Dwellings in Legal Documents from Western Thebes." *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 15 (2007): 239–73.

O'Connor, David and David P. Silverman, editors. *Ancient Egyptian Kingship.* NY: E.J. Brill, 1995.

Ogden, Daniel. *Greek and Roman Necromancy.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001.

-----. *Magic, Witchcraft, and the Ghosts in the Greek and Roman Worlds: A Sourcebook.* NY: Oxford University Press, 2002.

Ogilvie, R. M. *The Library of Lactantius.* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978.

Ohayon, M. M., R. G. Priest, M. Caulet, and C. Guilleminault. "Hypnagogic and Hypnopompic Hallucinations: Pathological Phenomena?" *The British Journal of Psychiatry* 169 (1996): 459-67.

Oliver, W. H. "The Catechetical School in Alexandria." *Verbum et Ecclesia* 36 (2015): 1-14.

Oppenheimer, Aharon. "The Jews in the Roman World." In *The Sculptural Environment of the Roman Near East: Reflections on Culture, Ideology, and Power*, edited by Yaron Eliav, Elise Friedland, and Sharon Herbert, 51-68. Leuven: Peeters, 2008.

Orlandi, Tito. "The Library of the Monastery of Saint Shenute at Atripe." In Egberts, 211-32.

-----. "Uno scritto di Teofilo di Allesandria sulla distruzione del Serapeum?" *La Parola de Passato* 23 (1968): 295-304.

Osborn, Eric. "Clement of Alexandria: A Review of Research, 1958-1982." *Second Century* 3 (1983): 223-25.

Osborn, Eric. "The Apologists." In *The Early Christian World*. Vol. 1. Edited by Philip Esler, 525-51. NY: Routledge.

Otto, Rudolph. *The Idea of the Holy*. 1923. Repr., London: Humphrey Milford, 2001.

Otto, Walter. *Priester und Tempel im Hellenistischen Ägypten.* NY: Arno Press, 1975.

Oulton, John. "General Introduction." In *Alexandrian Christianity.* Vol. 2. 171-79. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1954.

Ousterhout, Robert G. *The Blessings of Pilgrimage*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1990.

Palaima, Thomas. "When War is Performed, What Do Soldiers and Veterans Want to Hear and See and Why?" In *Combat Trauma and the Ancient Greeks*, edited by Peter Meineck and David Konstan, 261-86. NY: Palgrave MacMillan, 2014.

Panayotakis, Costas. "Baptism and Crucifixion on the Mimic Stage." *Mnemosyne* 50 (1997): 302-19.

Panayotakis, Selios, Maaike Zimmerman, and Wytse Keulen, editors. *The Ancient Novel and Beyond.* Boston: Brill, 2003.

Papaconstantinou, Arietta. "The Cult of Saints: A Haven of Continuity in a Changing World?" in Bagnall, *Byzantine*, 350-67.

-----. editor. *The Multilingual Experience in Egypt, from the Ptolemies to the 'Abbasids*. Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2010.

Papadoyannakis, Yannis. "Instruction by Question and Answer: The Case of Late Antique and Byzantine Erotapokriseis." In Johnson, *Greek*, 91-106

Parker, Holt. "The Observed of All Observers Spectacle, Applause, and Cultural Poetics in the Roman Theater Audience." In *The Art of Ancient Spectacle*, edited by Bettina Ann Bergmann and Christine Kondoleon, 163-93. Washington D.C.: National Gallery of Art, 1999.

Parker, S. Thomas. "Peasants, Pastoralists, and 'Pax Romana': A Different View." *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 261 (1987): 35-51.

Parkinson, R. B. "'Homosexual' Desire and Middle Kingdom Literature." *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 81 (1995): 57-76.

Patlagean, E. *Pauvreté Économique et Pauvreté Sociale à Byzance: 4e–7e Siècles*. Paris: Mouton, 1977.

Peachin, Michael, editor. *The Oxford Handbook of Social Relations in the Roman World.* NY: Oxford University Press, 2011.

Pearce, Sara. *The Land of the Body: Studies in Philo's Representation of Egypt.* Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007.

Pearson, Birger. "Earliest Christianity in Egypt: Further Observations." In *The World of Early Egyptian Christianity: Language, Literature, and Social Context*, edited by James Goehring and Janet Timbie, 97-112. Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2007.

Penella, Robert. *Greek Philosophers and Sophists in the Fourth Century A. D.: Studies in Eunapius of Sardis.* Leeds: F. Cairns, 1990.

Perkins, Judith. "An Ancient 'Passing' Novel: Heliodorus' *Aithiopika.*" *Arethusa* 32 (1999): 197-214.

Perkins, Judith. *The Suffering Self: Pain and Narrative Representation in the Early Christian Era*. NY: Routledge, 1995.

Petropoulou, Maria-Zoe. *Animal Sacrifice in Ancient Greek Religion, Judaism, and Christianity, 100 BC-AD 200.* NY: Oxford University Press, 2008.

Phillipson, David. *Ancient Ethiopia: Aksum: Its Antecedents and Successors.* London: British Museum Press, 1998.

Pierce, R. H. "A Blemmy by Any Other Name…: A Study in Greek Ethnography." In Barnard, 226-37.

Pietersman, Albert, Susan Comstock and Harold Attridge. "Introduction?" In *The Apocalypse of Elijah: Based on P. Chester Beatty 2018: Coptic Text*, edited by Albert Pietersma, Susan Comstock, and Harold Attridge., 11-20. Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1981.

Pinch, Geraldine. *Magic in Ancient Egypt*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1995.

Plass, Paul. *The Game of Death in Ancient Rome: Arena Sport and Political Suicide.* Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1995.

Plotkin, Mark. *Shaman's Apprentice: An Ethnobotanist Searches for New Medicines in the Amazon Rain Forest.* NY: Viking, 1993.

Pohl, Walter. "Introduction: Strategies of Distinction." In *Strategies of Distinction: The Construction of Ethnic Communities, 300-800,* edited by Walter Pohl and Helmut Reimitz, 1-16. Boston: Brill, 1998.

Polański, Tomasz. *Christian Art in Oriental Literatures: Greek, Syriac and Coptic Sources from the 4th to the 7th Century*. Grazer Beitrāge: Zeitschrift für Klassische Altertumswissenschaft, 2013.

Portier-Young, Anathea. “Jewish Apocalyptic Literature as Resistance Literature.” In Collins, *Oxford*, 145-62.

Potter, David, editor. *A Companion to the Roman Empire*. Maldon, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2006.

Potter, David. “Entertainers in the Roman Empire.” In Potter, *Life*, 280-350.

-----. “Introduction.” In Potter, *Life*, 1-18.

-----. “Performance, Power, and Justice in the High Empire.” In *Roman Theater and Society: E. Togo Salmon Papers I*, edited by William Slater, 129-60. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1996.

-----. *Prophecy and History in the Crisis of the Roman Empire: A Historical Commentary on the Thirteenth Sibylline Oracle*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990.

-----. “Spectacle.” In Potter, *Companion*, 385-408.

Potter, David and D. J. Mattingly, editors. *Life, Death, and Entertainment in the Roman Empire.* Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2010.

Post, Robert. “Hate Speech.” In *Extreme Speech and Democracy*, edited by I. Hare and J. Weinstein, 123-38. NY: Oxford University Press, 2009.

Preus, Anthony. “Greek Philosophy in Egypt: From Solon to the Arab Conquest.” In Coleman, *Greeks*, 155-74.

Price, Simon. “Latin Christian Apologetics: Minucius Felix, Tertullian and Cyprian.” In Edwards, *Apologetics*, 105-29.

Price, Simon. *Rituals and Power: The Roman Imperial Cult in Asia Minor*. NY: Cambridge University Press, 1984.

Prinz, Jesse. “Is Empathy Necessary or Morality?” In *Empathy: Philosophical and Psychological Perspectives*, edited by Amy Coplan and Peter Goldie, 211-29. NY: Oxford University Press, 2011

Pritchard, James. editor. *The Ancient Near East: An Anthology of Texts and Pictures*. Princeton University Press, 1958.

Prus, Robert and Scott Grills. *The Deviant Mystique: Involvements, Realities and Regulations.* Westport, Connecticut: Praeger, 2003.

Punter, David. *The Literature of Terror: A History of Gothic Fictions from 1795 to the Present Day*. NY: Longman, 1980.

Purdy, Laura. “What We Shouldn’t Be Learning from the Greeks.” In Coleman, *Greeks*, 291-310.

Pyysiäinen, Illka. "Holy Book: A Treasury of the Incomprehensible." *Numen* 46 (1999): 269-90.

-----. *Magic, Miracles, and Religion: A Scientist’s Perspective*. NY: Altamira Press, 2004.

-----. “Religion and the Counter-Intuitive.” In *Current Approaches in the Cognitive Science of Religion*, edited by Ilkka Pyysiäinen and Veikko Anttonen, 110-23. NY: Continuum, 2002.

Quaegebeur, Jan. “De La Préhistoire de L’écriture Copte.” *Orientalia Lovaniensia Periodica* 13 (1982): 125-36.

De Quincey, Thomas. “On Murder Considered as One of the Fine Arts.” In *On Murder*, edited by Robert Morrison, 8-30. NY: Oxford University Press, 2006.

Rambo, Lewis and Charles Farhadian, editors. *The Oxford Handbook of Religious Conversion*. NY: Oxford University Press, 2014.

Ramelli, Ilaria. “Valuing Antiquity in Antiquity by Means of Allegoresis.” In *Valuing the Past in the Greco-Roman World: Proceedings from the Penn-Leiden Colloquia on Ancient Values VII*, edited by James Ker and Christoph Pieper, 485-507. Boston: Brill, 2014.

Rankin, David. *From Clement to Origen: The Social and Historical Context of the Church Fathers.* Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2006.

Rathbone, D. *Economic Rationalism and Rural Society in Third-century A.D. Egypt*. NY: Cambridge University Press, 1991.

Rathbone, June. *Anatomy of Masochism*. NY: Plenum Publishers, 2001.

Raucci, Stacie. *Elegiac Eyes: Vision in Roman Love Elegy*. Washington, D.C.: Peter Lang, 2011.

Reardon, B. P., editor. *Collected Ancient Greek Novels*. LA: University of California Press, 1989.

-----. “*Chaereas and Callirhoe.*” In Reardon, 17-21.

Rebillard, Éric, Claire Sotinel. “Introduction,” in Rebillard, 3-14.

-----. editors. “Introduction.” In *Les frontières du profane dans l’antiquité tardive.* Rome: École francaise e Rome, 2010.

Redford, Donald, editor. *The Ancient Gods Speak: A Guide to Egyptian Religion*. NY: Oxford University Press, 2002.

Redford, Susan. *The Harem Conspiracy: The Murder of Ramesses III*. DeKalb, Illinois: Northern Illinois University Press, 2002.

Regnault, Lucien. *Les pères du désert a travers leur apophtegmes*. Sablé-Sur-Sarthe: Abboye Saint-Pierre de Solesmes, 1987.

Reicher, Stephen. "From Crisis to Opportunity: New Crowd Psychology and Public Order Policing Principles." In *Preventing Crowd Violence*, edited by Tamara Madensen and Johannes Knutsson, 7-24. London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2011.

Reimer, Andy. "Vitual Prison Breaks: Non-Escape Narratives and the Definition of 'Magic.'" In Klutz, 125-39.

Remus, Harold. *Pagan-Christian Conflict over Miracle in the Second Century*. Cambridge, MA: Philadelphia Patristic Foundation, 1983.

Reymond, E. A. E. and J. W. B. Barns, editors. *Four Martyrdoms from the Pierpont Morgan Coptic Codices*. NY: Oxford University Press, 1973.

Reynolds, L. D. and N. G. Wilson. *Scribes and Scholars: A Guide to the Transmission of Greek and Latin Literature*. NY: Oxford University Press, 2013.

Reynolds, R. W. "The Adultery Mime." *The Classical Quarterly* 40 (1946): 77-84.

Richardson, James. "The Active vs. Passive Convert: Paradigm Conflict in Conversion/Recruitment Research." *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 24 (1985): 163-79.

Richardson, James, Joel Best and David Bromley, editors. *The Satanism Scare*. NY: A. de Gruyter, 1991.

Rickman, G. *The Corn Supply of Ancient Rome*. NY: Oxford University Press, 1980.

Richter, Daniel. "Plutarch on Isis and Osiris: Text, Cult, and Cultural Appropriation." *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 131 (2001): 191-216.

Riggs, Christina. *The Beautiful Burial in Roman Egypt*. NY: Oxford University Press, 2005.

-----, editor. *The Oxford Handbook of Roman Egypt.* NY: Oxford University Press, 2012.

Rist, J. M. “Hypatia.” *Phoenix* 19 (1965): 214-25.

-----. *Plotinus: The Road to Reality*. NY: Cambridge University Press, 1977.

Ritner, Robert. “Book of the Dead 125 ‘The Negative Confession.’” In Simpson, 267-68.

-----. *The Mechanics of Ancient Egyptian Magical Practice*. Chicago: Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 1993.

-----. “O. Gardiner 363: A Spell Against Night Terrors.” *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt* 27 (1990): 25-41.

-----. “The Religious, Social and Legal Parameters of Traditional Egyptian Magic.” In Meyer, *Ancient Magic*, 43-62.

-----. “The Romance of Setna Khaemuas and the Mummies (Setna I).” In Simpson, 453-54.

Rives, J. “Human Sacrifice among Pagans and Christians,” *The Journal of Roman Studies* 85 (1995): 65-85.

-----. “The Decree of Decius and the Religion of Empire.” *The Journal of Roman Studies* 89 (1999): 135-54.

Rizzi, Marco, editor. *Hadrian and the Christians*. NY: De Gruyter, 2010.

Robinson, Daniel. *Wild Beasts and Idle Humours: The Insanity Defense from Antiquity to the Present*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996.

Roberts, Colin. *Manuscript, Society, and Belief in Early Christian Egypt*. London: Oxford University Press, 1979.

Robinson, James, editor. *The Nag Hammadi Library in English*. San Francisco: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1988.

Robson, J. E. “Bestiality and Bestial Rape in Greek Myth.” In *Rape in Antiquity*, edited by Susan Deacy and Karen Peirce, 65-96. London: The Classical Press of Wales, 1997.

Rodziewicz, Elzbieta. *Bone and Ivory Carvings from Alexandria French Excavations 1992-2004*. Le Caire: Institut Francais d'archéologie orientale, 2007.

-----. “Remains of a Chryselephantine Statue in Alexandria.” *Bulletin de la Société Archéologique d’Alexandrie* 44 (1991): 119–30.

Rogers, Rick. *Theophilus of Antioch: The Life and Thought of a Second-century Bishop*. Lanham, Md.: Lexington Books, 2000.

Roisman, Joseph. "Rhetoric, Manliness and Contest." In *A Companion to Greek Rhetoric*, edited by Ian Worthington, 393-410. Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2007.

Römer, Thomas. "Competing Magicians in Exodus 7-9: Interpreting Magic in the Priestly Theology." In Klutz, 12-22.

Rosati, Gianpier. "*Latrator Anubis*: Alien Divinities in Augustan Rome, and how to Tame Mnsters through Aetiology." In *Paradox and the Marvellous in Augustan Literature and Culture*, edited by Philip Hardie, 268-78. NY: Oxford University Press, 2009.

Roueché, Charlotte. "Acclamations in the Later Roman Empire: New Evidence from Aphrodisias." *The Journal of Roman Studies* 74 (1984): 181-99.

Rousseau, Philip, editor. *A Companion to Late Antiquity.* Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012.

-----. *Pachomius: The Making of a Community in Fourth-Century Egypt*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985.

Rowlandson, Jane. *Landowners and Tenants in Roman Egypt: The Social Relations of Agriculture in the Oxyrhynchite Nome.* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996.

Rowlandson, Jane and Andrew Harker. "Roman Alexandria from the Perspective of the Papyri," in Hirst 79-112.

Roy, Olivier. *Globalized Islam: The Search for a New Ummah.* NY: Columbia University Press, 2004.

Rozin, Paul, Jonathan Haidt and Clark McCauley. "Disgust." In Lewis, *Handbook*, 757-76.

Rubenson, Samuel. "Philosophy and Simplicity: The Problem of Classical Education in Early Christian Biography." In *Greek Biography and Panegyric in Late Antiquity*, edited by Thomas Hägg and Philip Rousseau, 110-39. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000.

-----. *The Letters of St. Antony: Origenist Theology, Monastic Tradition and the Making of a Saint*. Lund: Lund University Press, 1990.

Ruffini, Giovanni. "Late Antique Pagan Networks from Athens to the Thebaid." In Harris, *Alexandria*, 243-49.

Russell, Norman, translator. *The Lives of the Desert Fathers: The "Historia monachorum in aegypto."* CS 34. Kalamazoo, Michigan: Cistercian Publications, 1981.

-----. *Theophilus of Alexandria.* NY: Routledge, 2007.

Rutherford, Ian. "Island of the Extremity: Space, Language, and Power in the Pilgrimage Traditions of Philae." In Frankfurter, *Pilgrimage*, 229-56.

Rutherford, Ian. "Travel and Pilgrimage." In Riggs, *Oxford*, 701-16.

Rutledge, Steven. "The Roman Destruction of Sacred Sites." *Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte* 56 (2007): 179-95.

Ryholt, Kim. *The Carlsberg Papyri 10 Narrative Literature from the Tebtunis Temple Library*. Copenhagen: University of Copenhagen Museum Tusculanum Press, 2012.

De Sade, Marquis. "An Essay on Novels." In *The Crimes of Love: Heroic and Tragic Tales, Preceded by an Essay on Novels,* edited and translated by David Coward, 3-20. NY: Oxford University Press, 2005.

Sacks, Kenneth. "The Meaning of Eunapius' History." *History and Theory* 25 (1986): 52-67.

El-Saghir, Mohammed, Jean-Claude Golvin, Michel Reddé, El-Sayed Hegazy, and Guy Wagner. *Le Camp Romain De Louqsor.* Cairo: Publications de l'Institut Francais d'Archéologie Orientale, 1986.

Said, Edward. *Orientalism*. NY: Pantheon Books, 1978.

Said, Edward. "Shattered Myths." In *Orientalism: A Reader*, edited by A. L. Macfie, 89-103. NY: New York University Press, 2000.

Sagan, Carl, Ann Druyan, *The Demon-haunted World: Science as a Candle in the Dark*. NY: Random House, 1995.

Saliba, George. *Islamic Science and the Making of the European Renaissance*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2007.

Salisbury, Joyce E. *The Blood of Martyrs: Unintended Consequences of Ancient Violence.* NY: Routledge, 2004.

Salzman, Michele. "Rethinking Pagan-Christian Violence." In Drake, *Violence,* 265-286.

-----. "'Superstitio' in the "Codex Theodosianus" and the Persecution of Pagans." *Vigiliae Christianae* 41 (1987): 172-88.

Samons, Loren. *Empire of the Owl: Athenian Imperial Finance.* Stuttgart: Steiner, 2000

Sanders, Jack. "Conversions in Early Christianity." In *Handbook of Early Christianity: Social Science Approaches,* edited by Antony Blasi, and Jean Duhaime Paul-André Turcotte, 619-42. NY: Altamira Press, 2002.

Sanders, Seth. "Old Light on Moses' Shining Face." *Vetus Testamentum* 70 (2002): 400-06.

Sandwell, Isabella. *Religious Identity in Late Antiquity: Greeks, Jews and Christians in Antioch.* NY: Cambridge University Press, 2007.

SanPietro, Irene. "Jerome's De Viris Illustribus and the Beginnings of a Christian Curriculum." *Society for Classical Studies.* 147th Annual Meeting. January 6-9, 2016.

Saracho, Olivia N. and Bernard Spodek. *Contemporary Perspectives on Play in Early Childhood Education*. Greenwich, CN: Information Age Pub., 2003.

de Sardan, Jean-Pierre Olivier. *Epistemology, Fieldwork and Anthropology*. Translated by Antoinete Tidjani Alou. NY: Palgrave MacMillan, 2015.

Sarefield, Daniel. "Bookburning in the Christian Roman Empire: Transforming a Pagan Rite of Purification." In Drake, *Violence,* 287-96.

Sartre, Jean-Paul. *L'existentialisme est un humanisme.* New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007.

Sartre, Maurice. "The Nature of Syrian Hellenism in the Late Roman and Early Byzantine Periods." In *The Sculptural Environment of the Roman Near East: Reflections on Culture, Ideology, and Power*, edited by Yaron Eliav, Elise Friedland, and Sharon Herbert, 25-50. Leuven: Peeters, 2008.

Sauneron, Serge. *The Priests of Ancient Egypt* (Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 2000.

Scarry, Elaine. *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World*. NY: Oxford University Press, 1985.

Schäfer, Peter. *Judeophobia: Attitudes toward the Jews in the Ancient World*. City: Harvard University Press, 2009.

Schaff, Phillip editor. *Eusebius Pamphilius: Church History, Life of Constantine, Oration in Praise of Constantine.* Grand Rapids, MI: Christian Classics Ethereal Library, 1890.

-----, editor. *Socrates Scholasticus*. Grand Rapids, MI: Christian Classics Ethereal Library, 1893.

Schechter, Harold. *Savage Pastimes: A Cultural History of Violent Entertainment*. NY: St. Martin's Press, 2005.

Schmidt, Brian. *Israel's Beneficent Dead: Ancestor Cult and Necromancy in Ancient Israelite Religion and Tradition.* Winona Lake, Ind.: Eirauns, 1994.

Schoedel, William. "Introduction." In *Athenagoras: Legatio and De Resurrectione*. ix-xxxvi. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972.

-----. "Introduction." In Robinson, 260-262.

Schor, Adam. *Theodoret's People: Social Networks and Religious Conflict in Late Roman Syria.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011.

Schott, Jeremy. "'Living Like a Christian, but Playing the Greek': Accounts of Apostasy and Conversion in Porphyry and Eusebius." *Journal of Late Antiquity* 1 (2008): 258-77.

Schulz, William, editor. *The Phenomenon of Torture: Readings and Commentary.* Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007.

Schrödinger, Erwin. "Die Gegenwärtigen Situation in der Quantenmechanik." *Die Naturwissenschaften* 23 (1935): 807–12.

Schroeder, Caroline. *Monastic Bodies: Discipline and Salvation in Shenoute of Atripe*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007.

Schwabe, Lars and Oliver T. Wolf. "Learning under Stress Impairs Memory Formation." *Neurobiology of Learning and Memory* 93 (2010): 183–88.

Schwartz, Jacques. "La fin du Sérapeum d'Alexandrié." In *Essays in Honor of C. Bradford Welles.* Edited by C. Bradford Welles, 98-111. New Haven: American Society of Payrologists, 1966.

Schwartz, Seth. *Imperialism and Jewish Society, 200 B.C.E. to 640 C.E.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001.

-----. "The Rabbi in Aphrodite's Bath: Palestinian Society and Jewish Identity in the High Roman Empire." In Goldhill, *Being*, 335-61.

Scott, Ian. “The Divine Wanderer: Travel and Divinization in Late Antiquity.” In *Travel and Religion in Antiquity*, edited by Philip Harland, 101-22. Waterloo, Ont.: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2011.

Scott, James. *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985.

Scott-Moncrieff, Philip. *Paganism and Christianity in Egypt.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1913.

Scullion, Scott. “‘Pilgrimage’ and Greek Religion: Sacred and Secular in the Pagan *Polis*.” In *Pilgrimage in Graeco-Roman & Early Christian Antiquity: Seeing the Gods*, edited by Jaś Elsner and Ian Rutherford, 111-30. NY: Oxford University Press, 2005.

Seckel, Emil, Wilhelm Schubart, and Woldemar Uxkull-Gyllenband. *Der Gnomon des Idios Logos*. Seckel, Emil, Wilhelm Schubart, and Woldemar Uxkull-Gyllenband. Milano: Cisalpino-Goliardica, 1973.

Segal, Robert, editor. *The Blackwell Companion to the Study of Religion*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2006.

-----. “Myth.” In Segal, 337-56.

Selden, D. “How the Ethiopian Changed His Skin.” *Classical Antiquity* 32 (2013): 322-77.

Shapiro, H. A. “The Invention of Persia in Classical Athens.” In Eliav-Feldon, 32-56.

Shaw, Brent. “Bandits in the Roman Empire.” *Past & Present* 105 (1984): 3-52.

-----. “Body/Power/Identity: Passions of the Martyrs.” *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 4 (1996): 269-312.

-----. *Sacred Violence: African Christians and Sectarian Hatred in the Age of Augustine*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011.

Shaw, Ian. “Introduction: Chronologies and Cultural Change in Egypt.” In *The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt*, edited by Ian Shaw, 1-16. NY: Oxford University Press, 2000.

Shay, Jonathan. *Achilles in Vietnam: Combat Trauma and* the *Undoing of Character*. NY: Maxwell Macmillan International, 1994.

Sheridan, Mark. *From the Nile to the Rhone and Beyond: Studies in Early Monastic Literature and Scriptural Interpretation*. Roma: Pontificio Ateneo Sant'Anselmo, 2012.

Shermer, Michael. “Review: Believing in Belief.” *Science* 311 (2006): 471-72.

Shinnie, Peter. *Meroe: A Civilization of the Sudan*. NY: F. A. Praeger, 1967.

Shorrock, Robert. *The Myth of Paganism: Nonnus, Dionysus and the World of Late Antiquity*. London: Bristol Classical Press, 2011.

Shupe, Anson and Susan Darnell. *Agents of Discord: Deprograming, Pseudo-Science and the American Anticult Movement*. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2006.

Siebers, Tobin. *Disability Theory*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 2008.

Siker, Jeffrey. “Abraham in Graeco-Roman Paganism.” *Journal for the Study of Judaism* 8 (1987): 188-208.

Silverman, David. “The Threat-Formula and Biographical Text in the Tomb of Hezi at Saqqara.” *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt* 37 (2000): 1-13.

Simmel, George. In *Soziologie. Untersuchungen über die Formen der Vergesellschaftung*. Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot, 1908.

Simmons, Michael. *Arnobius of Sicca: Religious Conflict and Competition in the Age of Diocletian*. NY: Oxford University Press, 1995.

-----. *Universal Salvation in Late Antiquity: Porphyry of Tyre and the Pagan-Christian Debate*. NY: Oxford University Press, 2015.

Simpson, William, editor. *The Literature of Ancient Egypt*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003.

Siniossoglou, Niketas. *Plato and Theodoret: The Christian Appropriation of Platonic Philosophy and the Hellenic Intellectual Resistance*. NY: Cambridge University Press, 2008.

Sipos, Thomas. *Horror Film Aesthetics: Creating the Visual Language of Fear*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers, 2010.

Sizgorich, Thomas. *Violence and Belief in Late Antiquity: Militant Devotion in Christianity and Islam*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009.

Slocum-Bradley, Nikki. *Promoting Conflict or Peace through Identity*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008.

Sluiter, I. and Ralph Mark Rosen. *Free Speech in Classical Antiquity*. Boston: Brill, 2004.

Smallwood, E. Mary. "The Legislation of Hadrian and Antoninus Pius against Circumcision." *Latomus* 18 (1959): 334-47.

Smelik, K. A. and E. A. Hemelrijk. "'Who Knows Not What Monsters Demented Egypt Worships?' Opinions on Egyptian Animal Worship in Antiquity as Part of the Ancient Conception of Egypt." In *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt*, vol. 17, edited by H. Temporini and W. Haase, 1852-2000. Berlin: DeGruyter, 1984.

Smith, Andrew. *Roman Palmyra: Identity, Community, and State Formation*. NY: Oxford University Press, 2013.

Smith, Eliot and Diane Mackie. "Intergroup Emotions." In Lewis, *Handbook*, 428-39.

Smith, Gary. *Standard Deviations: Flawed Assumptions, Tortured Data, and Other Ways to Lie with Statistics*. NY: Overlook Duckworth, 2014.

Smith, Graeme. *A Short History of Secularism*. NY: I. B. Tauris, 2008.

Smith, H. "Aspects of the Preservation and Transmission of Indigenous Religious Traditions in Akhmim and its Environs during the Graeco-Roman Period." In Egberts, 233-48.

Smith, Jonathan Z. *Drudgery Divine: On the Comparison of Early Christianities and the Religions of Late Antiquity*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990.

-----. "Trading Places." In Meyer, *Ancient Magic*, 13-28.

-----. "What a Difference a Difference Makes." In *"To See Ourselves As Others See Us: Christians, Jews, 'Others' in Late Antiquity*, edited by Jacob Neusner, Ernest Frerichs and Caroline McCracken-Flesher, 3-48. Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1985.

Smith, Morton. *Jesus the Magician*. NY: Harper and Row, 1978.

Snowden, Frank. "Ancient Views of Nubia and the Nubians," *Expedition* 35 (1993): 40-50.

-----. "Attitudes towards Blacks in the Greek and Roman World: Misinterpretations of the Evidence." In *Africa and Africans in Antiquity*, edited by Edwin Yamauchi, 246-75. East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2001.

-----. *Blacks in Antiquity: Ethiopians in the Greco-Roman Experience*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970.

-----. “Ethiopians and the Isiac Worship.” *L'Antiquité Classique* 25 (1956): 112-16.

Snyder, H. Gregory. *Teachers and Texts in the Ancient World: Philosophers, Jews and Christians*. NY: Routledge, 2000.

Solomon, Robert. “The Philosophy of Emotions.” In Lewis, *Handbook*, 3-16.

Sorial, Sarah. "Hate Speech and Distorted Communication: Rethinking the Limits of Incitement." *Law and Philosophy* 34 (2015): 299–324.

Sousa, Rogério. *The Heart of Wisdom: Studies on the Heart Amulet in Ancient Egypt*. Oxford: Archaeopress, 2011.

Spanoudakis, Konstantinos. *Nonnus of Panopolis in Context: Poetry and Cultural Milieu in Late Antiquity with a Section on Nonnus and the Modern World*. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2014.

Sperber, Dan. “La pensée symbolique est-elle pré-rationnelle?’ In *La function symbolique*: *Essais d'anthropologie réunis*, edited by M. Izard, P. Smith, 17-42. Paris: Gallimard, 1979.

Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. “Can the Subaltern Speak?” In *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, edited by Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg, 271-313. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988.

von Staden, Heinrich. “Galen’s Alexandria.” In Harris, *Alexandria*, 179-216.

Stahl, A. and P. Tourame. “From Teratology to Mythology: Ancient Legends.” *Archives de Pediatrie* 17 (2010): 1716-24.

Stahl, Johannes. "Physically Deformed and Disabled People." In Peachin, 715-34.

Stallybrass, Peter and Allon White. *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression*. London: Cambridge University Press, 1986.

Stampfl, Barry. “Parsing the Unspeakable in the Context of Trauma.” In *Contemporary Approaches in Literary Trauma Theory*, edited by Michelle Balaev, 15-41. NY: Palgrave MacMillan, 2014.

Stancliffe, Clare. *St. Martin and His Hagiographer: History and Miracle in Sulpicius Severus.* NY: Oxford University Press, 1984.

Stark, Rodney and William Bainbridge. “Networks of Faith: Interpersonal Bonds and Recruitment to Cults and Sects.” *The American Journal of Sociology* 85 (1980): 1376-95.

-----. *The Rise of Christianity: A Sociologist Reconsiders History.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996.

Steiner, Deborah Tarn. *Images in Mind: Statues in Archaic and Classical Greek Literature and Thought.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001.

Stephens, Susan A. “Who Read Ancient Novels?” In Tatum, 405-18.

Stewart, Columba. “Imageless Prayer in Evagrius Ponticus.” *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 9 (2001): 173-204.

Stewart, Kristin and Matthew Eastin, "Aggression and Affect." In Eastin, 17-21.

Stewart, Pamela and Andrew Strathern. *Violence: Theory and Ethnography*. NY: Continuum, 2002.

Stirling, Lea. *The Learned Collector: Mythological Statuettes and Classical Taste in Late Antique Gaul.* Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2005.

Stoller, Paul, Cheryl Olkes. *In Sorcery's Shadow: A Memoir of Apprenticeship among the Songhay of Niger*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987.

Stroumsa, Guy G. “From Esotericism to Mysticism in Early Christianity.” In Kippenberg, *Secrecy*,289-310.

Strubbe, J. H. M. "'Cursed Be He that Moves My Bones.'" In Faraone, *Magika*, 33-59.

Struck, Peter. *Birth of the Symbol: Ancient Readers at the Limits of their Texts.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004.

von Stuckrad, Kocku. “Jewish and Christian Astrology in Late Antiquity.” *Numen* 47 (2000): 1-40.

Sullivan, Shannon and Nancy Tuana, editors. *Race and Epistemologies of Ignorance*. Albany: State University of NY Press, 2007.

Swain, Simon. “Defending Hellenism: Philostratus, *In Honour of Apollonius*.” In Edwards, *Apologetics*, 157-96.

Swartz, Michael. "Divination and Its Discontents; Finding and Questioning Meaning in Ancient and Medieval Judaism." In Noegel, 155-66.

Tacoma, L. E. *Fragile Hierarchies. The Urban Elites of Third-century Roman Egypt.* Leiden: Brill Academic Publishers, 2006.

Tait, W. John. “Demotic Literature: Forms and Genres.” In *Ancient Egyptian Literature: History and Forms.* NY: E. J. Brill, 1996): 175-90.

-----. “Theban Magic. In *Hundred-Gated Thebes: Acts of a Colloquium on Thebes and the Theban Area in the Graeco-Roman Period*, edited by S. P. Vleeming, 169-82. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1995.

Tallet, Gaëlle. “Oracles.” In Riggs, *Oxford*, 398-418.

Tambiah, Stanley. *Magic, Science, Religion, and the Scope of Rationality*. NY: Cambridge University Press, 1989.

Tanner, Ralph. *Violence and Religion: Cross-cultural Opinions and Consequences*. New Dehli: Concept Publishing Company, 2007.

Tatum, James, editor. *The Search for the Ancient Novel*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994.

Taves, Ann. “Non-ordinary Powers: Charisma, Special Affordances and the Study of Religion.” In *Mental Culture: Classical Social Theory and the Cognitive Science of Religion*, edited by Dimitris Xygalatas and William McCorckle, Jr., 80-97. Durham: Acumen Publishing Limited, 2013.

Taylor, John, editor. *Journey through the Afterlife: Ancient Egyptian Book of the Dead*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010.

Te Velde, Herman. “A Few Remarks upon the Religious Significance of Animals in Ancient Egypt.” *Numen* 27 (1980): 76-82.

-----. “Looking at the Condemning Heart of 1 John 3.18-20 through the Eyes of an Ancient Egyptian.” In Hilhorst, *Wisdom*, 217-26.

-----. “Human Sacrifice in Ancient Egypt.” In *The Strange World of Human Sacrifice*, edited by Jan Bremmer, 127-35. Dudley, MA: Peeters, 2007.

-----. *Seth, God of Confusion.* Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1967.

Thériault, Carolyn. “The Literary Ghosts of Pharaonic Egypt.” In *Death and Taxes in the Ancient Near East*, edited by Sara Orel. Lewiston, 193-212. NY: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1992.

Thomas, Thelma. *Late Antique Egyptian Funerary Sculpture: Images for this World and the Next.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000.

Thompson, L. A. *Romans and Blacks*. Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1989.

Thorngate, Warren, Robyn Dawes, and Margaret Foddy. *Judging Merit*. NY: Psychology Press, 2009.

Thomas, W. I., Dorothy Swaine Thomas. *The Child in America: Behavior Problems and Programs*. NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 1928.

Timbie, Janet. "A Liturgical Procession in the Desert of Apa Shenoute." In Frankfurter, *Pilgrimage*, 415-41.

Tinh, V. Tran Tam. *Isis Lactans: Corpus des Monuments Greco-Romains d'Isis Allaitant Harpocrate.* Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1973.

-----. "Sarapis and Isis." In Meyer, *Jewish*, Vol. 3, 101-17.

Tite, Philip L. "Review of *Violence and the New Testament*." *The Journal of Theological Studies* 58 (2007): 260-63.

Tobin, Vincent. "Mytho-Theology in Ancient Egypt." *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt* 25 (1988): 169-83.

Tolan, Patrick. "Understanding Violence." In *The Cambridge Handbook of Violent Behavior and Aggression*, edited by Daniel Flannery, Alexander Vazsonyi, and Irwin Waldman, 5-18. NY: Cambridge University Press, 2009.

Toner, J. P. *Leisure and Ancient Rome*. Cambridge, MA: Polity Press, 1995.

Toner, Jerry. *Roman Disasters*. Cambridge, MA: Polity Press, 2013.

-----. *Popular Culture in Ancient Rome*. Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2009.

-----. "Trends in the Study of Roman Spectacle and Sport." In Christesen, 451-62.

Toohey, Patrick. "Madness in the *Digest*." In *Mental Disorders in the Classical World*, edited by W. V. Harris, 441-60. Boston: Brill, 2013.

Torhoudt, Albert. *Een Onbekend Gnostisch Systeem in Plutarchus De Iside et Osiride.* Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1942.

Torlone, Zara Martirosova. "Writing Arenas: Roman Authors and Their Games." In Christesen, 412-21.

Török, László. "Between Egypt and Meroitic Nubia: The Southern Frontier Region." In Riggs, *Oxford*, 749-62.

Tovar, Sofia. "Linguistic Identity in Graeco-Roman Egypt." In Papaconstantinou, 17-43.

-----. "Violence in the Process of Arrest and Imprisonment in Late Antique Egypt." In Drake, *Violence*, 103-12.

Townsend, Philippa. “Bonds of Flesh and Blood: Porphyry, Animal Sacrifice and Empire.” In Knust, 214-34.

Treadgold, Warren. “The Diplomatic Career and Historical Work of Olympiodorus of Thebes,” *The International History Review* 26 (2004): 709-33.

Trigger, Bruce. *History and Settlement in Lower Nubia*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1965.

Tritle, Lawrence. “’Ravished Minds’ in the Ancient World.” In *Combat Trauma and the Ancient Greeks*, edited by Peter Meineck and David Konstan, 87-104. NY: Palgrave MacMillan, 2014.

Trombley, Frank R. *Hellenic Religion and Christianization c. 370-529.* Vol 2. NY: E. J. Brill, 1993.

Tropper, Amram. “The Fate of Jewish Historiography after the Bible: A New Interpretation.” *History and Theory* 43 (2004): 179-97.

Trzcionka, Silke. *Magic and the Supernatural in Fourth-Century Syria*. NY: Routledge 2007.

Turner, Victor. “Dramatic Ritual/Ritual Drama: Performative and Reflexive Anthropology.” In *A Crack in the Mirror: Reflexive Perspectives in Anthropology.*edited by Jay Ruby, 83-91. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1982.

Turner, Victor and Edith Turner. *Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture: Anthropological Perspectives*. NY: Columbia University Press, 1978.

Twomey, D. Vincent and Mark Humphries. *The Great Persecution: The Proceedings of the Fifth Patristic Conference, Maynooth, 2003*. Portland, OR: Four Courts Press, 2009.

Tyldesley, Joyce. *Judgement of the Pharaoh: Crime and Punishment in Ancient Egypt*. London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2000.

Uebel, Michael. "Psychoanlysis and the Question of Violence: From Masochism to Shame." *American Imago* 69 (2012): 473-505.

Uljas, Sam. “A Fragment of the Life of Moses of Abydos in the British Library.” *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 179 (2011): 117-22.

Unwin, Tim. “A Waste of Space? Towards a Critique of the Social Production of Space…” *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 25 (2000): 11-29.

Uzdavinys, Algis. “Animation of Status in Ancient Civilizations and Neoplatonism.” In *Late Antique Epistemology: Other Ways to Truth*, edited by Panayiota Vassilopoulou and Stephen Clark, 118-40. NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009.

Urbainczyk, Theresa. *Socrates of Constantinople: Historian of Church and State.* Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997.

-----. *Theodoret of Cyrrhus: The Bishop and Holy Man.* Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2002.

Valantasis, Richard. “Constructions of Power in Asceticism.” *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 63 (1995): 775-821.

-----, editor. *Religions of Late Antiquity in Practice*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000.

Van Bladel, Kevin. *The Arabic Hermes: From Pagan Sage to Prophet of Science.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.

Van Dam, Raymond. *Becoming Christian: The Conversion of Roman Cappadocia.* Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003.

-----. *Leadership and Community in Late Antique Gaul*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985.

van den Hoek, Annewies. *Clement of Alexandria and His Use of Philo in the Stromateis: An Early Christian Reshaping of a Jewish Model*. NY: E.J. Brill, 1988.

-----. “How Alexandrian was Clement of Alexandria? Reflections on Clement and His Alexandrian Background.” *Heythrop Journal* 31 (1990): 179-94.

Van den Ven, P, editor. “Introduction.” In *La Legende de S. Spyriden eveque de Trimithonte*. 1-156. Louvain: Bibliotheqe du Museon, 1953.

van der Horst, P.W., translator. *Charemon Egyptian Priest and Stoic Philosopher: The Fragments.* Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1984.

-----. “The Secret Hieroglyphs in Classical Literature.” In *Actus: Studies in Honour of H. L. W. Nelson*, edited by J. denBoeft and A. H. M. Kessels, 115-24. Utrecht: Instituut voor Klassieke Talen, 1982.

-----. “The Way of Life of the Egyptian Priests.” In *Studies in Egyptian Religion*, edited by M. Heerma van Voss, Dl. J. Hoens, G. Mussies, D. van der Plas, and H. te Velde, 61-71. Leiden: E. J. Brill 1982.

Vanderlip, V. F. *The Four Greek Hymns of Isidorus and the Cult of Isis.* Toronto: A.M. Hakkert, 1972.

Van der Vliet, Jacques. "Bringing Home the Homeless: Landscape and History in Egyptian Hagiography." *Church History and Religious Culture* 86 (2006): 39-55.

Van Dijk, Jacobus. "Early Christian Apocrypha and the Secret Books of Ancient Egypt." In Hilhorst, *Wisdom*, 419-28.

Van Dijk, J. "Retainer Sacrifice In Egypt and Nubia." In *The Strange World of Human Sacrifice*, edited by Jan Bremmer, 135-56. Dudley, MA: Peeters, 2007.

Vandorpe, Katelijn. "Identity." In Riggs, *Oxford*, 260-76.

van Henten, Jan Willem and Friedrich Avemarie. *Martyrdom and Noble Death: Selected Texts from Graeco-Roman, Jewish and Christian Martyrdom*. New York: Routledge, 2002.

Van Minnen, Peter. "Saving History? Egyptian Hagiography in its Space and Time." *Church History and Religious Culture* 86 (2006): 57-91.

Varisco, Daniel. *Reading Orientalism: Said and the Unsaid*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2007.

Veilleux Armand. "Monasticism and Gnosis in Egypt." In *The Roots of Egyptian Monasticism*, edited by Birger A Pearson and James E. Goehring, 271-306. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986.

Veilleux, Armand, editor. *Pachomian Koinonia.* Vol. 1-2. Kalamazoo MI: Cistercian Publications, Inc., 1981.

Venit, Marjorie Susan. *Monumental Tombs of Ancient Alexandria: The Theatre of the Dead.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.

Verner, Miroslav. *Temple of the World: Sanctuaries, Cults, and Mysteries of Ancient Egypt.* NY: The American University of Cairo Press, 2013.

Versluys, M. J. *Aegyptiaca Romana: Scenes of the Nilotic and the Roman Views of Egypt.* Leiden: Brill, 2002.

Versnel, H. S. "Beyond Cursing: The Appeal to Justice in Judicial Prayers." In Faraone, *Magika* 60-106.

-----. "The Poetics of the Magical Charm: An Essay on the Power of Words." In Mirecki, 105-58.

Veyne, Paul. *Did the Greeks Believe in Their Myths? An Essay on the Constitutive Imagination*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1988.

Visser, Irene. "Trauma and Power in Postcolonial Literary Studies." In *Contemporary Approaches in Literary Trauma Theory*, edited by Michelle Balaev, 106-29. NY: Palgrave MacMillan, 2014.

Vivian, Tim. "Introduction." In *Histories of the Monks of Upper Egypt and The Life of Onnophrius*. 17-71. Piscataway, New Jersey: 2009.

-----. *St. Peter of Alexandria: Bishop and Martyr*. Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Fortress Press, 1988.

von Harnack, Adolf. *The Mission and Expansion of Christianity in the First Three Centuries*. Translated by James Moffatt. NY: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1972.

Vos, R. L. *The Apis Embalming Ritual: P. Vindor 3873*. Leuven: Peeters, 1993.

Waddell, W. G. "Introduction." *Manetho*. vi-xxviii. 1940. Reprint, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1964.

Wagner, Michael. "Scientific Realism and Plotinus' Metaphysic of Nature." *Neoplatonism and Contemporary Thought*. Vol. 1. Edited by R. Baine Harris, 13-72. Albany: State University of NY, 2002.

Waldron, Jeremy. *The Harm in Hate Speech*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009.

Wallace, S. *Taxation in Egypt from Augustus to Diocletian*. NY: Greenwood Press, 1969.

Walter, Tony. "The New Public Mourning." In *Handbook of Bereavement Research and Practice: Advances in Theory and Intervention*, edited by Margaret Stroebe, Robert Hansson, Henk Schut, and Wolfgang Stroebe, 241-62. Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association, 2008.

Waltman, Michael and John Haas. *The Communication of Hate*. NY: Peter Lang Publishing, 2011.

Walzer, Richard. *Galen on Jews and Christians*. London: Oxford University Press, 1949.

Ward, Benedicta. "Introduction." In *The Lives of the Desert Fathers: The Historia Monachorum in Aegypto*. Translated by Norman Russell, 1-46. Oxford: Cistercian Publications, 1980.

-----. “Monks and Miracles.” In Cavadini, 127-38.

Watson, Ray and Paul Yip. “How Many Were There When It Mattered? Estimating the Sizes of Crowds.” *Significance* 8 (2011): 104-107.

Watts, Edward. *City and School in Late Antique Athens and Alexandria*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006.

-----. “The Murder of Hypatia: Acceptable or Unacceptable Violence?” In Drake, *Violence*, 333-42.

-----. *Riot in Alexandria: Tradition and Group Dynamics in Late Antique Pagan and Christian Communities.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010.

-----. “*Winning the Intracommunal Dialogues: Zacharias Scholasticus’* Life of Severus.” *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 13 (2005): 437–64.

Watts, W. J.. “Race Prejudice in the Satires of Juvenal.” *Acta Classica* 19 (1976): 83-104.

Webb, Ruth. *Demons and Dancers: Performance in Late Antiquity*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008.

-----. “Rhetoric and the Novel: Sex, Lies and Sophistic.” In *A Companion to Greek Rhetoric*, edited by Ian Worthington, 526-41. Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2007.

Weber, Max. *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization*. Translated by A. M. Henderson and Talcott Parsons. NY: The Free Press, 1947.

Webster, Jane. “Necessary Comparisons: A Post-Colonial Approach to Religious Syncretism in the Roman Provinces.” *World Archaeology* 28 (1997): 324-38.

Weingarten, Hermann. *Der Ursprung des Mönchtums im nachconstantinischen Zeitalter*. Gotha: FA Perthes, 1877.

Weingarten, Susan. *The Saint's Saints: Hagiography and Geography in Jerome*. Boston: Brill, 2005.

Weisbrod, Bernd. “Religious Languages of Violence. Some Reflections on the Reading of Extremes.” In *Cultures of Violence: Interpersonal Violence in Historical Perspective*, edited by Stuart Carroll, 64-78. NY: Pallgrave MacMillan, 2007.

Weiss, M. “The Pattern of the ‘Execration Texts’ in the Prophetic Literature.” *Israel Exploration Journal* 19 (1969): 150-57.

Welles, C. Bradford. “The Garden of Ptolemagrius at Panopolis.” *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association* 77 (1946): 192-206.

Wellhausen, Julius. *Reste Arabischen Heidentums: Gessammelt Und Erläutert.* Berlin: De Gruter & Company, 1927.

Wellman, James and Kyoko Tokuno. “Is Religious Violence Inevitable?” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 43 (2004): 291-96.

Wen, Leana S. and Joshua M. Sharfstein. “Unrest in Baltimore: The Role of Public Health.” *The Journal of the American Medical Association* 313 (2015): 2425-26.

Wente, Edward, translator. *Letters from Ancient Egypt*. Edited by Edmund Meltzer. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1990.

Wessel, Klaus. *Coptic Art*. NY: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1965.

Wessinger, Catherine. "Apocalypse and Violence." In Collins, *Oxford*, 422-40.

West, Martin. “The Way of a Maid with a Moke: P. Oxy. 4762.” *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 175 (2010): 33-40.

West, Martin L. *The Orphic Poems*. NY: Clarendon Press, 1983.

-----. “Towards Monotheism.” In Athanassiadi, *Pagan*, 21-40.

Westerfeld, Jennifer. “Christian Perspectives on Pharaonic Religion: The Representation of Paganism in Coptic Literature.” *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt* 40 (2003): 5-12.

White, Hayden. “The Question of Narrative in Contemporary Historical Theory.” *History and Theory* 23 (1984), 1-33.

Whitmarsh, Tim, editor. “Class.” In *The Cambridge Companion to The Greek and Roman Novel*. 72-90. NY: Cambridge University Press, 2008.

Whittaker, Molly, editor. “Introduction.” In *Oratio ad Graecos and Fragments*. ix-xxii. Oxford, Clarendon, 1982.

Wiedemann, Thomas. *Emperors and Gladiators*. NY: Routledge, 1992.

Wiedeman, Thomas. *Greek and Roman Slavery*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1981.

Wilburn, Andrew. *Materia Magica: The Archaeology of Magic in Roman Egypt, Cyprus and Spain*. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2012.

Wilken, Robert. “Pagan Criticsm of Christianity: Greek Religion and Christian Faith.” In *Early Christian Literature and the Classical Intellectual Tradition: In Honorem Robert M. Grant*, edited by William Schoedel and Robert Wilken, 117-34. Paris: Éditions Beauchesne, 1979.

Williams, D. H. “Necessary Alliance or Polemical Portrayal? Tracing the Historical Alignment of Arians and Pagans in the Later Fourth Century.” In *Papers Presented at the Twelfth International Conference on Patristic Studies*, edited by Elizabeth Livingston, 178-94. Louvain: Peeters, 1997.

Willems, Harco. “Crime, Cult and Capital Punishment (Mo'alla Inscription 8).” *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 76 (1990): 27-54.

Wimbush, Vincent. “Ascetic Behavior and Color-ful Language: Stories about Ethiopian Moses.” In *Discursive Formations, Ascetic Piety and the Interpretation of Early Christian Literature.* Vol. 2. Edited by Vincent Wimbush, 81-94. Atlanta, Georgia: Scholars Press, 1992.

Winkler, John. “Achilles Tatius Leucippe and Clitophon.” In Reardon, 170-75.

Winlock, H. E. and W. E. Crum, *The Monastery of Epiphanius at Thebes.* NY: Metropolitan Museum of NY, 1926.

Wipszycka, Ewa. “Le Nationalisme a-t-il existé dans l’Égypte byzantine?” *Journal of Juristic Papyrology* 22 (1992): 83–128.

Wipszyka, Ewa. “The Institutional Church.” In Bagnall, *Byzantine*, 331-49.

Wiseman, T. P. “Lying Historians: Seven Types of Mendacity.” In *Lies and Fiction in the Ancient World*, edited by Christopher Gill and T. P. Wiseman, 122-46. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1993.

Wisnewski, J. Jeremy and R. D. Emerick. *The Ethics of Torture*. New York: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2009.

Wisse, H. "Language Mysticism in the Nag Hammadi Cryptography," *Enchoria* 9 (1979): 101-20.

Wistrand, Magnus. *Entertainment and Violence in Ancient Rome: The Attitudes of Roman Writers of the First Century A.D.* Göteburg, Sweden: Acta Universitatis Gothoburgensis, 1992.

Witt, R.E. *Isis in the Ancient World*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1971.

Wood, John Carter. “Conceptualizing Cultures of Violence and Cultural Change.” In *Cultures of Violence: Interpersonal Violence in Historical Perspective*, edited by Stuart Carroll, 79-98. NY: Palgrave MacMillan, 2007.

Woods, David. “The Origin of the Cult of St. George.” In Twomey, 141-58.

Woolf, Greg. *Becoming Roman: The Origins of Provincial Civilization in Gaul*. NY: Cambridge University Press, 1998.

Worobec, Christine. *Possessed: Women, Witches, and Demons in Imperial Russia*. DeKalb, Ill.: Northern Illinois University Press, 2001.

Wortham, John. *The Genesis of British Egyptology 1549-1906*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1971.

Wortley, John. “Introduction.” In *The Book of the Elders: Sayings of the Desert Fathers: The Systematic Collection*. ix-xxi. Trappist, Kentucky: Cistercian Publications, 2012.

-----. “The Origins of Christian Veneration of Body-Parts.” *Revue de l'histoire des religions* 223 (2006): 5-28.

-----. "Translator's Note." In *The Spritual Meadow*. ix-xx. Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1992.

Yadin, Azzan. “Rabban Gamliel, Aphrodite's Bath, and the Question of Pagan Monotheism.” *Jewish Quarterly Review* 96 (2006): 149-79.

Yamauchi, Edwin, ed., *Africa and Africans in Antiquity*. East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2001.

Yarden, Leon. *The Spoils of Jerusalem on the Arch of Titus: A Re-Investigation.* Stockholm: Svenska Institutet, 1991.

Yates, Frances. *Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964.

-----. *The Art of Memory*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966.

Yatromanolakis, Dimitrios and Panagiotis Roilos. “Provisionally Structured Ideas on a Heuristically Defined Concept: Toward a Ritual Poetics.” In *Greek Rituals Poetics*, edited by Dimitrios Yatromanolakis and Panagiotis Roilos, 3-36. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004.

Yellin, Janice. “Nubian Religion.” In *Ancient Nubia: African Kingdoms on the Nile*, eds. Marjorie Fisher, Peter Lacovara, Salima Ikram and Sue D’Auria, 125-44. NY: The American University in Cairo Press, 2012.

Young, Frances. “Greek Apologists of the Second Century.” In Edwards, *Apologetics*, 81-104.

Youtie, Herbert. “Questions to a Christian Oracle.” *Zeitschrift für Papyrolgie und Epigraphik* 18 (1975): 253-57.

-----. “ὑπογραφεύς: The Social Impact of Illiteracy in Graeco-Roman Egypt.” *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 17 (1975): 201-21.

Zachman, Randall. “The Meaning of Biblical Miracles in Light of the Modern Quest for Truth.” In Cavadini, 1-18

Zaleski, John. “Religion and Roman Spectacle.” In Christesen, 590-602.

Zakrzewska, Ewa. “Masterplots and Martyrs: Narrative Techniques in Bohairic Hagiography.” In *Narratives of Egypt and the Ancient Near East: Literary and Linguistic Approaches*, edited by Frederik Hagen, John Johnston, Wendy Monkhouse, Kathryn Piquette, John Tait, and Martin Worthington, 499-524. Walpole, MA: Peeters Publishers and Department of Oriental Studies, 2001.

Zandee, Jan. *Death as an Enemy According to Ancient Egyptian Conceptions*. NY: Arno Press, 1977.

Zecher, Jonathan. "Anthony's Vision of Death?: Athanasius of Alexandria, Palladius of Helenopolis, and Egyptian Mortuary Religion." *Journal of Late Antiquity* 7 (2014): 159-76.

Zellentin, Holger. “The End of Jewish Egypt: Artpanus and the Second Exodus.” In *Antiquity in Antiquity: Jewish and Christian Pasts in the Greco-Roman World*, edited by Gregg Gardner and Kevin Osterloh, 27-73. Ottersweier: Tubingen, 2008.

Zimmermann, Friederich. *Die ägyptische Religion nach der Darstellung der Kirchenschriftsteller und die ägyptischen Denkmäler*. Paderborn, F. Schöningh, 1912 .

Zivie-Coche, Christiane. “Pharoanic Egypt.” In *Gods and Men in Egypt: 3000 B.C.E. to 395 C.E.* Translated by David Lorton, 1-197. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2002.

-----. *Sphinx: History of Monument*. Translated by David Lorton. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2002.