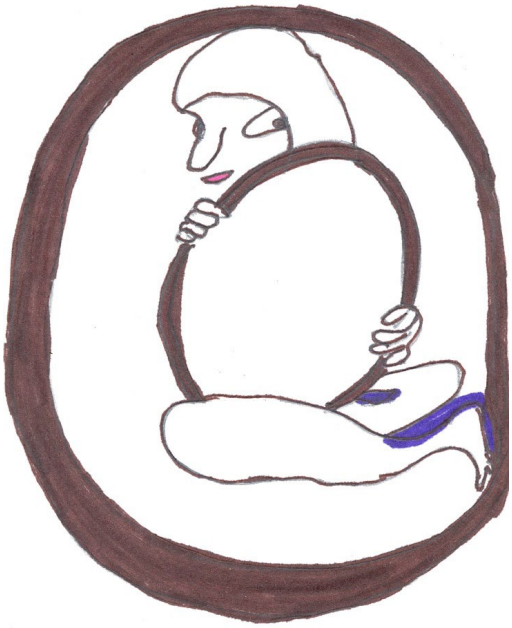
RTReview.org

SCRIPTABLE

A Bispectral Review of Recent Books



Robert Tenor, editor
12-15-2022

New Series Number 105

EDITORIAL

Scriptable is an irregular review of what was once called the belles-lettres, where we essay upon a wide assortment of current books and articles with an eye open for "the beautiful jumble of discordant congruencies" derived from the authors and titles under discussion. We cast a wide academic net through the social sciences and humanities, with a strong orientation toward current events, social theory, religious and cultural studies.

With this number we move away from simple reportage of current scholarship to something more ambitious. The body of each issue includes editorial essays examining themes inspired by the works under consideration. The sum of our reviews are carefully pruned excerpts from the books themselves so as to preview the style and technicality of the text itself.
Our purpose is to inform and entertain. Through the review essays we hope to visit new and timeworn places through unsettled ideas in currency newly minted. Perhaps to see the outlandish as intimate and to show up the familiar as stranger than before thought.
Each issue should surprise.

Contents: The Cultural Paradox of Circular Notions

A Cultural History of the Soul: Europe and North America from 1870 to the Present by Kocku von Stuckrad [Columbia University Press, 9780231200363]

The soul, which dominated many intellectual debates at the beginning of the twentieth century, has virtually disappeared from the sciences and the humanities. Yet it is everywhere in popular culture—from holistic therapies and new spiritual practices to literature and film to ecological and political ideologies. Ignored by scholars, it is hiding in plain sight in a plethora of religious, psychological, environmental, and scientific movements.

This book uncovers the history of the concept of the soul in twentieth-century Europe and North America. Beginning in fin de siècle Germany, Kocku von Stuckrad examines a fascination spanning philosophy, the sciences, the arts, and the study of religion, as well as occultism and spiritualism, against the backdrop of the emergence of experimental psychology. He then explores how and why the United States witnessed a flowering of ideas about the soul in popular culture and spirituality in the latter half of the century.

Von Stuckrad examines an astonishingly wide range of figures and movements—ranging from Ernest Renan, Martin Buber, and Carl Gustav Jung to the Esalen Institute, deep ecology, and revivals of shamanism, animism, and paganism to Rachel Carson, Ursula K. Le Guin, and the Harry Potter franchise. Revealing how the soul remains central to a culture that is only seemingly secular, this book casts new light on the place of spirituality, religion, and metaphysics in Europe and North America today.

CONTENTS

The Crisis of the Soul in the Twentieth Century

This book began with an observation: if you want to know what psychology today has to say about the "soul," you will soon be disappointed. Many psychological dictionaries do not even include an entry on the soul. This is true of the well-regarded Oxford Dictionary of Psychology, for instance.

The American Psychological Association's online resources also seem to make do without a concept of the soul. One hundred years ago, things were very different. The soul was a key term in learned debates across disciplines in Europe, from psychology and philosophy to the natural sciences, medicine, art and literature, and even politics.

Over against this "forgotten soul" in psychology, a second observation is also striking: in contemporary European and North American culture—and elsewhere too, as a result of global entanglements—the soul is enjoying a considerable boom. How can we explain this discrepancy? What happened to the soul in the twentieth century? When did psychology lose its soul, as it were? And why is there such a great interest in the soul outside the universities? This leads to another important question: Can a historical analysis of these processes help us to better understand the intersections of science, philosophy, spirituality, art, and politics today? I think so, and this book is an exploration of the dynamics underlying this question.

In order to see the relevance of these developments, we need to have a closer look at the role that the concept of the soul has played in cultural debates since the nineteenth century, and how this arrangement has changed over the course of time. Where do we see continuities and discontinuities? What did the concept of the soul have to offer twentieth-century societies in their changing dispositions? What other concepts was it linked to, which gave new meanings to the soul or preserved old meanings in new vessels? In A Cultural History of the Soul, I attempt to provide answers to these questions. What I am doing here is not a history of psychology. There are plenty such histories, many of them excellent. My book is a cultural history, which means I am locating and analyzing the soul in very different places—from literature and poetry to the sciences and the humanities, from spiritual practices to political documents. It is exactly this confluence of cultural locations, the mutual dependency of these systems, that creates meaning for large sections of many societies today. Put differently, it is in processes of societal negotiation that cultural knowledge about the soul is organized and established. The results of such processes are orders of knowledge that provide many people with direction, and often even with blueprints for action. These orders are always in flux, but they also reveal a certain persistence that historical analysis can identify.

Talking of orders of knowledge does not mean that we have to decide which claims about the soul are "true" or how we should properly define the soul. I use "orders of knowledge" in the way the term has been established in cultural studies and the sociology of knowledge, namely, as a description and a reconstruction of that which groups and societies in a given context conceive of and accept as knowledge. The term has an important function in discourse research as well, and reference is often made to Michel Foucault, who was interested in the "genealogy" of our stores of knowledge and who provided important contributions to their cultural "archaeology." By looking at very diverse—yet influential—historical contributions to societal discussions, I reconstruct the genealogies of today's orders of knowledge about the soul. I describe how changing historical contexts have given meaning to the concept of the soul. In other words, what is at stake here are the ways in which shared knowledge about the soul was legitimized or delegitimized, stabilized or modified, and how it was entangled with other stores of knowledge.

Hence this book is not only a cultural history; it is also a discursive history of the soul. Since the use of the term discourse has become so common as to lose some of its meaning, let me briefly explain how I use the term in this book. For me, an "open" definition of discourse is very helpful for instance, in the way Franz X. Eder has suggested: discourses are practices "that systematically organize and regulate statements about a certain theme; by doing so, discourses determine the conditions of possibility of what (in a social group at a certain period of time) can be thought and said." Consequently, discourse analysis looks not only at the textual and linguistic dimensions of a topic, but also at the practices that support or change orders of knowledge. This includes

institutions. For instance, if a new discipline called "psychology" is established at universities, this represents a societal manifestation (or "reification," from the Latin for "becoming a thing") of a certain order of knowledge; conversely, the existence of such a subject of study legitimizes and further stabilizes this very order of knowledge. The same is true for the creation of associations and organizations, for the publication of popular books and journals, and for juridical and political decisions.

Discourse researchers sometimes call these institutional vehicles of discourse "dispositioes." Dispositives constitute the "infrastructure" that carries a discourse and helps to spread it. Dispositives can change discourses simply by existing—examples would include the United Nations as a new global organization, the Internet as a new technology, or even algorithms, which currently constitute a dispositive with a lot of power over "the conditions of possibility of what (in a social group at a certain period of time) can be thought and said," as Eder's definition of discourse has it.

Thus meanings of and knowledge about the soul emerge from highly diverse sources and contributions to societal discussions. In these conversations, the term soul never arrives on its own. The simple term soul has no meaning in and of itself. As is the case with all discourses, the concept of the soul gains its specific meaning only in combination with other terms. For instance, if soul is combined with cosmos and conceptualized as the world soul, or if it is linked to concepts such as life, breath, or mind, such an arrangement changes the order of knowledge that gives meaning to the concept of the soul. Discourse researchers call this a "discursive knot": discursive knots combine or entangle several discourse strands (i.e., individual concepts such as soul or life), resulting in a discursive arrangement that generates meaning only through the entanglement of its individual strands.

What I am doing in this book is actually quite simple: I look at a large number of historical sources and analyze the respective discursive knots that generate meaning around the concept of the soul. I have not limited my selection of sources to specific genres; rather, everything that has the potential to influence shared social opinions is a candidate for discourse analysis. This procedure of putting relevant data together is what Michel Foucault calls "grouping." In The Archaeology of Knowledge, he notes that this analytical method frees us from associations and connotations that are often taken for granted, subsequently enabling us "to describe other unities, but this time by means of a group of controlled decisions. Providing one defines the conditions clearly, it might be legitimate to constitute, on the basis of correctly described relations, discursive groups that are not arbitrary, and yet remain invisible."

In combination with textual or other historical documents, I also look at the respective dispositives that support and spread the ideas under consideration. The popular work of a Nobel laureate in physics or a best-selling novel have more discursive impact (^nd hence "power") than some other sources; the establishment of a university discipline, as well as of associations ^nd academies, is an institutionalization of stores of knowledge that in turn influence discourses.

Reiner Keller, a sociologist of knowledge, once said in a discussion that discourse analysis is manual labor. This is certainly true. The amount of material one could use to reconstruct a discourse is huge, and the decisions about which discursive formations one wants to study in depth (Foucault's "controlled decisions") are very much dependent on the concrete needs of the respective study as well as on scholarly preferences. Hence, there can be no such thing as the discursive history of the soul (or of any other term). The present book is just one of many possible cultural histories of the soul in the twentieth century. I do not claim that my analysis is comprehensive—n01 least because this study does not cover all possible aspects of the

theme. As the modern concept of the soul originates from Euro-American histories, I address contributions (often with very different terms and meanings) from outside this cultural location only if they are directly entangled with Euro-American discourses on the soul, mainly through processes of colonialism and globalization.

The first part of **A Cultural History of the Soul** focuses mainly on Europe, where major developments took place between the rise of Romanticism and the end of World War II, creating a discursive arrangement that is still operative today, despite a number of changes, which I address in my analysis. Within Europe, much of my data comes from German-speaking countries and from the United Kingdom; discourse communities in Austria, Switzerland, Germany, and the United Kingdom have been crucial in the formation of the orders of knowledge this book engages. While I also include some material from France, southern Europe, and the Netherlands, the intellectual contexts of these countries are not the main focus of my study; the same is true for Scandinavia and central and eastern Europe. I invite colleagues with the respective expertise to compare my account with data from those areas and thus to paint a more nuanced historical picture. In the second part of the book, the focus shifts to the United States of America, because it was in this context that discourses on the soul experienced their most important adaptations and transformations after World War II. I should also say that, for pragmatic reasons, I have excluded the whole field of music, as the discursive history of "soul" in music would require a book of its own (not to mention expertise I do not have); and finally, while I include quite a bit of literature and poetry in my analysis, I touch upon the arts only when there is a direct link to my line of argument.

Hence it should be clear that although I cover a broad range of data and topics, my analysis is still limited in scope. Nevertheless, despite these caveats about the nature of my approach, I am convinced that the knowledge arrangements I have reconstructed here—the groupings and new unities—are representative of influential cultural developments in Europe and North America. They demonstrate how the concept of the soul was instrumental in the negotiation of key ideas about the human position in the world, about the link between material and spiritual dimensions of reality, and about the evolution of human and plantary life. 'they also show that scientific and nonscientific ideas and practices have strongly influenced and enriched each other. What we see at work here is a discourse community that has created meanings around the term soul through the interplay of various cultural productions. In A Cultural History of the Soul, I reconstruct some of the main lines of this discursive formation.

To reveal the various discourse strands in the sources I introduce, I sometimes have to include longer quotations. I do not want to assert a certain discursive arrangement without sufficient evidence, but rather to reconstruct it from the sources. Readers can then make up their own minds about the continuities and discontinuities in the cultural and discursive history of the soul in the twentieth century. In the first chapter, I introduce the basic components of what would become the strands constituting the discourse on the soul in the twentieth century. For instance, in order to understand the close link between the two discourse strands of "soul" and "animism" in my analysis, it is important to know that the soul had animistic connotations in ancient Greek philosophy, and that these connotations have influenced our understanding of the soul up to the present day. Readers who are already familiar with—or simply less interested in—this historical context may wish to begin with the second chapter.

The patterns this reconstruction and regrouping help to uncover are even more significant for contemporary culture than I had expected at the beginning of my research. At first glance, it is perhaps not self-evident why we should be interested in a history of the term soul. But once we see how intricately ideas of the soul are woven together with concepts such as consciousness, evolution, nature, matter, energy, art, and cognition, things start to look quite different. This reconstruction

becomes even more interesting when we extend our analysis to allegedly "secular" contexts—to areas that have done away with old-fashioned "religion" but are still interested in metaphysical and ethical questions that integrate the human being into larger frameworks, even cosmic ones. This is why I am particularly interested in those discourses that emerge from entanglements of "secular scientific" and "spiritual-metaphysical" contributions, rather than in discourses on the soul that have formed in more traditionally "religious" locations—mainly in Christian theology.' Indeed, it is precisely the ability of discourses on the soul to playfully bridge "religious" and "secular" points of view that makes the cultural and discursive history of the soul from the Romantic period until today so fascinating.

My main argument is that analyzing the soul in its discursive arrangement with other concepts enhances our understanding of the place and the function of the metaphysical in human thought and action in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. One implication of such an approach is that this book is not only about the soul; it is also a contribution to the discursive history of nature, science, consciousness, politics, spirituality, ecology, religion, and philosophy. Put differently, this book is about discursive arrangements that transmit knowledge about the soul; my grouping of discourse strands into historical arrangements of knowledge allows me to reconstruct the data in a way that showcases the enormous influence of these ideas and cultural practices. Sometimes I give names to (specific forms of) these arrangements, such as the "Orphic web" I use as a blueprint to analyze continuities and changes. Moreover, grouping discourse strands allows me to identify a "discourse on the soul" even where the term soul has been replaced by related terms, such as consciousness, psyche, or life force. The orders of knowledge are still intact, even if the terms in the arrangements change.

Therefore, readers who are specifically interested in my take on what the soul "really" is, or how we should conceptualize it, may be disappointed. But readers who are interested in how our understanding of the soul has been shaped by philosophy, science, the arts, politics, spirituality, and religion between 1870 and today will, I hope, find some inspiration in the following chapters.

The soul continues to be part of a complex arrangement of knowledge. In the end, maybe it is not the soul that is in crisis. Maybe our academic and cultural perception simply needs to catch up. <>

– tion (cf. papers of Vanderbeke, Gencarelli, McGovern, and Kasper in this volume).

The volume provides analyses of concepts that are at the center of a particular scientific paradigm, where their introduction has led to theoretical innovations, such as Faraday's concept of 'induction' in Balzac's novels (cf. Murphy in this volume), the concept of 'indeterminacy' in Heisenberg and Musil texts (cf. Plotnitsky in this volume), the concept of "interference" in physics and in Brecht's theatrical poetics (cf. Mairhofer in this volume), the physical concept of possible worlds (cf. Vanderbeke in this volume) in cosmology and quantum theory compared to the transformation of the concept in the science fiction genre.

A particular practical benefit of the analysis of scientific conceptualizations lies in a close reading of scientific language that explores adequate ways of communicating abstract concepts. Desiderata in the natural sciences are science communication and ethics. It is also important for future research that scientists learn more about the general semantic flexibility of scientific terms and mathematical models. The interpretation of abstract quantities and mathematical objects is important not only in quantum theory, but also plays a crucial role for the development of basic concepts in all areas of physics. Linguistic and literary analysis can help to discover the richness of meaning of scientific terms beyond their usual, often quite formal definitions.

Physical knowledge is tied to language. Although applied mathematics is a formal tool and experiments are performed through practical methods, the formulation of ideas and concepts

requires language as well as publications and communication with colleagues and the public. Scientific writing is characterized by standards that are imparted in the educational process (Gross 1990, 2002). Some of these norms will be examined from a historical linguistic (cf. Thielmann in this volume) as well as from narratological (cf. Heydenreich in this volume) and metaphorological perspectives (cf. Kompa in this volume). As early as the seventeenth century, a clear, reduced style was demanded so that the universal validity of empirical results would not be compromised by subjective narrative styles. Nevertheless, dramatic historical changes in writing styles can be observed: While in the early modern period there were still aesthetically shaped texts (e.g. Kepler, Somnium 1609) and Galileo still used the form of a dialogue that weighs pros and cons (Dialogo 1632, Discorsi 1638) (cf. Özelt in this volume), today, in the journal Physical Review Letters the expert article has become strictly reduced to four pages of formalized argumentation. In this thematic focus, the typical character of the scientific language will be examined in accordance with Winfried Thielmann's study on the technical language of physics as a conceptual instrument (Thielmann 1999). In addition to technical scientific language, it is important for the cultural dissemination of knowledge to take into account the popular language and textbook language of physics: Driven by the interest in appropriately presenting to the public not only its results but also the genesis of research processes, and in addition to present a coherent order of a research area in flux, a separate interest-driven specialist text genre emerged which, as a second-order reflection process, made use of other, often rhetorical, means than the (reducing) specialist article. While easily understandable publications remain marginal in the specialist discipline, they often represent a central source for literary and cultural studies dealing with scientific topics in the general public (Leane 2007; Gwozdz 2016). Despite the important function that these publications have for the dissemination of physical knowledge to the public, there are neither overview studies of the historical development of this genre, nor systematic discussions of the methods of representing physical knowledge or of the specifie media-related strategies of communicating scientific knowledge that are used in these types of text. A desideratum is to examine based on a rhetoric of science (Bazerman 2000; Prelli 1989), which tropes, genre patterns and narratives are used to describe the research process in its cultural context, and which writing strategies are used to help theories to achieve broad resonance and social or scientific-political relevance.

The volume has three sections focusing on (i) the epistemic functions of narration and metaphor in science, (ii) the transfer of concepts between physics and philosophy of physics to literature and history of ideas, and (iii) the aestheticization and literarization of physics.

Nikola Kompa's paper "Insight by Metaphor – the Epistemic Role of Metaphor in Science" takes as a starting point conceptual metaphor theory and investigates the epistemic functions of metaphors as modes of thought. The question arises, why do some metaphors seem to be more successful than others for epistemic pursuits? Kompa proposes criteria for scientifically successful metaphors and claims that metaphors have heuristic, exploratory or explanatory values in scientific discourse. Epistemic metaphor search is purpose-driven: Kompa reviews Ludwig Fleck's theory of thought style and shows how metaphors can aquire heuristic functions by inducing processes of pattern recognition or by leading to inference drawing processes and guiding research. With reference to Evelyn Fox Keller's investigations, Kompa highlights the exploratory functions of metaphor and she examines Darwin's theory of evolution to discuss the explanatory function of metaphors. Kompa underlines that the understanding of how metaphors operate in scientific discourse depends on epistemic positions and on metaphysical background theories.

Aura Heydenreich's chapters aim at illuminating the epistemic value of narrativity in Einstein's theory of relativity. The paper reconstructs both Einstein's scientific modeling process and its narrative strategies for the development of the theory of special relativity. Besides considering the argumentative and descriptive discourse levels, the paper scrutinizes the epistemic functions of

narrative strategies and thereby discusses key issues of a here proposed narratology of science. Which would be basic categories of science narratology? How can concepts be transferred from the classic narratology to the narratology of science in order to explore the epistemic functions of narrativity in science? What is the epistemic function of the writing/telling instance as a narrator, as a principle of form-organization in a scientific treatise? Can one elaborate on techniques of internal and external focalization not only in literary texts, but also in Einstein's thought experiments, which are employed as narrative strategies for the demonstration of the relativity of simultaneity? How can one (re-)define concepts of post-classical narratology like eventfulness, experientiality and tellability when adressing scientific discourses? Heydenreich's second chapter focuses on Einstein's same treatise on the theory of special relativity from a different perspective: it aims at analyzing the semiological foundations of the here proposed process of interformation. The paper thus correlates Einstein's fundamental treatise on the special relativity theory with his metatheoretical paper "Physics and Reality." Giovanni Vignale states, as a physicist, that it is not in the power of physical science to explain reality "as it is," or as it is "empirically perceptible." Vignale shows that it lies in the tradition of physical investigation to discard a great deal of observable information that is not considered to be relevant in order to grasp the essential picture. Physical sciences can make reality understandable, sometimes predictable, through modeling practices and empirically adequate narratives. Vignale proposes the thesis that physics is a kind of mythopoesis by elaborating on a provocative assertion: Although truth and fiction are generally supposed to be mutually exclusive, Vignale states that the binary opposition between truth and fiction is itself fictitious. Vignale draws here on the epistemology of myth as a cultural practice of shaping and understanding the world. He also shows that the principles of mythopoesis are not unrestrained. On the contrary, both discourses have to respect strong internal constraints, as for example the constraints of mathematical language in physics or those of aesthetic composition, symmetry and consistency in literature.

The next section of the book focuses on problems of concept formation in physics and the search for an adequate scientifical terminology from the perspective of linguistics and physical chemistry.

Winfried Thielmann's paper "Concept Formation in Physics from a Linguist's Perspective" investigates the asymmetries between theoretical innovation and the lack of a correlative lexical innovation in theoretical processes of concept formation in physics. The focus lies on the concepts of the "body" of "speed" and "force." Thielmann analyses the successive transformations to which these concepts were subjected in the physics of Galileo and Newton and how they shaped the later development of modern physics. The starting point for Thielmann's considerations is Konrad Ehlich's model of the gnoseological function of language to represent and communicate knowledge (Ehlich 2007). Thielmann shows exemplarily that there is a large discrepancy between the empirical everyday understanding of the word and the way in which the concept of "force" was mathematically formalized and physically conceptualized. Galileo was the first to propose a form of concept formation based on "idealization" or "abstraction" that allowed deductive conclusions in which one no longer needed to take into account the diversity of individual empirical phenomena. As a result, the differences between natural objects and human artifacts were eliminated for experimental purposes. The abstract concept of the "physical body" symbolizes the extinction of this difference. The result is that artefacts are now used as operational concepts to describe laws of nature. The problem Thielmann points out is that this conceptual development was not accompanied by a terminological language innovation in physics. Although the concept of the body is used in physics as an operational concept, it still connotes much of everyday semantics. In Thielmann's view, this suggests proximity to reality, vividness. Newton built on this concept of the body as an artefact and formed "operational concepts of the second degree," "mass" and "force." However, this decisive conceptual shift, which is not reflected linguistically and terminologically, leads to the fact

that in modern physics purely operational concepts are ontologized in an unjustified way. A famous example of this is the controversy surrounding wave-particle dualism.

As a chemist, Jay Labinger examines in his essay the question of the impact of his engagement with literature on his scientific thinking and his work in the natural sciences. Or – to put it another way – what is the significance of language in scientific practice? Labinger's thesis is that scientific language, too, is characterized by the use of metaphor, and semantic ambiguities. The task of natural scientists would not be to purge language of this – in the sense of Francis Bacon or the ideal of the Royal Society –, but rather to consciously handle it virtuosically. Labinger deals with this issue in an exemplary case study on the problem of representation in scientific discourse. Using the example of molecular orbitals in chemistry and physics, Labinger refers to the controversy about the adequacy of representation, whereby formal-mathematical, linguistic, and graphic-visual media are available as modeling options: on the one hand the representation of the valence bond, on the other the representation of the molecular orbital. None of these visual representations are perfect reproductions of all the subtleties of the mathematical formalism. They set different accents in representation depending on which aspects of mathematical formalism need to be emphasized: reactivity or the possibility of localizing or specifying electron density. Labinger compares this process of transfer, in which mathematical precision must be dispensed with in favor of concise visual representation, with the process of literary translation. Labinger shows that the question of adequacy must by no means be answered dogmatically, but depends to a large extent on the context, target and addressee. The awareness of the semantic flexibility of scientific language is extremely important – according to Labinger – for adequate contextualization in the mediation of knowledge content.

The next section of the book deals with transfers of concepts between physics and philosophy of physics to literature and the history of ideas. Kieran Murphy's essay "Induction after Electromagnetism: Faraday, Einstein, Bachelard, and Balzac" is dedicated to Faraday's concept of electromagnetic induction and shows how this concept has shaped not only Einstein's scientific theories, but also literary and philosophical discourses, such as the works of Honoré de Balzac, Edgar Allan Poe and Gaston Bachelard. Against the background of Friedrich Steinle's studies on the history of physics, Murphy points out that Faraday's method for discovering electromagnetic induction was that of exploratory experimentation. Faraday did not use the experiments to verify already conceived theories, but rather employed open-ended epistemic experimental methods and used their results to re-conceptualize existing theories. Finally, Murphy deals with Faraday's induction as an illustration of what Gaston Bachelard described in his historical epistemology as an "epistemological break." For Bachelard, Faraday's theory was one of the prime examples of the demonstration of radical breaks or discontinuities in the development of scientific theories based on "dynamic intuitions" or "cognitive induction."

Arkady Plotnitsky investigates the revisions of the concepts of causality, probability and complementarity in the light of the new epistemological problems posed by quantum theory. Plotnitsky also explores the transformations that these concepts have undergone as a response to Kant's philosophy in the nineteenth century in texts by Friedrich Hölderlin, Heinrich von Kleist and Percy Bysshe Shelley. The question arises, of how these conceptual revisions can possibly be paralleled. One starting point that would be worth considering is that Hume's and Kant's philosophies are part of the epistemic genealogy of both Romantic thinking and the philosophical Copenhagen interpretation of quantum mechanics. Plotnitsky regards Robert Musil's Man Without Qualities as the literary field that negotiates these controversial epistemic positions.

Stephan Mühr's paper "The Horizon of the Horizon: On the Physical History of Gadamer's Fusion of Horizons" claims that Gadamer's conception of 'Horizontverschmelzung' relies on a longstanding

tradition of travelling optical concepts between disciplines, that have been successively adopted and readapted as figures of thought across disciplinary boundaries. Mühr traces the transformation history of these optical figures at the interface between physics and hermeneutics from Galileo to Chladenius ("skopos," "point of view," "vantage voint") and to Gadamer ("horizon"). Mühr states that in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the new emerging paradigm of empirical sciences that is correlated with the development of new optical technologies also involves a reevaluation of the abilities of human senses and the capability of language to describe the new world revealed through optical technologies. Citing Hans Blumenberg, Mühr states that the correspondences between the new reality revealed through the telescope and the Copernican reconceptualization of the cosmological view of the world was not only a matter of empirical observation. As shown in the special case of Galileo Galilei's Sidereus nuncius, in order to establish evidentia highly abstract processes of thought where required that had to be equated with persuasive rhetorical demonstrations. In the course of these argumentations, visual and optical concepts acquired epistemic connotations and were slowly transformed – through blending processes – into figures of thought.

Lukas Mairhofer proposes the concept of "Interference as a Methodological Metaphor" for the description of interrelations of different fields of knowledge in interdisciplinary interactions. Mairhofer first gives an overview of the experimental phenomenon of interference in the processes of quantum measurement and contextualizes these historically by relating them to the philosophical discussions between Heisenberg, Bohr and Einstein on the ontological and epistemological implications of these measurements. Heisenberg, Bohr and Einstein often used thought-experiments to expound their arguments. Mairhofer argues that Bertolt Brecht uses thought experiments relying on quantum theoretical concepts and functionalizes these for the aesthetics of epic theater. Mairhofer also discusses the use of the concept of interference in Science and Technology Studies by Karen Barad, and possible parallels between the new proposed concept of interference and Fauconnier's and Turner's blending theory.

The third book section focuses the processes of aestheticization and literarization of physical theories, models and concepts. Bernadette Malinowski's study on "Literary Epistemology: Daniele Del Giudice's Novel Atlante occidentale" follows Lyotard's proposal to see contemporary science as an enterprise that requires the imperceptible reliance on scientific technologies. But then new questions arise at the nexus between the scientific representation of knowledge and the epistemological conceptualization of reality. The core question here concerns the empirical adequacy of the scientifically created image. Problems arise, as stated and reflected in Del Giudice's Atlante occidentale, on the possibilities of perception, on adequate representations and on interpretations of scientific objects investigated at CERN. Malinowski's study investigates the epistemological functions of literature by showing an intertwining between two experiments performed by the two protagonists of the novel, which can be read as physical and poetological experiments. The novel reflects on the technological premises and aesthetic practices that mediate the generation of scientific images. Read as such, the novel reveals and negotiates the boundaries and the interconnections between scientific investigations and aesthetic experiences. Malinowski's study examines the levels of both the narrative discourse as well as the action and analyzes the epistemological functions of literature.

Angela Gencarelli's study "The 'Poetic Element' of Science: Particle Physics and the Fantastic in Irmtraud Morgner's Novella The Rope" discusses the montage techniques of Morgner's novella, which functionalizes particle physics discourse excerpts and mingles them up with literary textual materials in a blending pocedure that creates an intertwined aesthetics of the phantastic prose. Morgner's novella undermines Tzvetan Todorov's conception of the fantastic as a narrative structure by incorporating citations of scientific texts. At the same time, it engages with the problems of

perceptibility, representation and interpretation of scientific results that arise in the experimental practices of particle physics due to the fact that particles as such are hardly identifiable by the human eye, except by their tracks in bubble chambers. Gencarelli's investigation focuses on the reconceptualization of the fantastic in the novella, as an imaginary modeling practice for the exploration and investigation of reality. As such the real and the imaginary are not dichotomously isolated from one another but rather engage with one another; they become the interconnected poles of a tense relation of mutual interrogations.

Dirk Vanderbeke's paper critically investigates the techniques of literarization of quantum physics concepts in various discourse types: literary fantasy by J. R. R. Tolkien, so-called quantum fiction by Vana Bonta, Terry Pratchett and Ian Stewart, and didactic and popularizing texts, which rely on fantastic literary techniques to explain physics, such as George Gamov's The Adventures of Mr Tompkins. Vanderbeke investigates the imaginative techniques employed for the textual construction of counterintuitive worlds, which may adopt the vocabulary of quantum physics but mostly use it metaphorically. Their function seems to be to suggest incomprehensibility in order to avoid other plausible explanations for the narrative construction of possible worlds. More than that, they often rely on rather sophisticated technologies, but simple mechanisms that do not require quantum physics. In these cases, the texts do not engage with the theoretical, operative concepts of physics and do not exploit their epistemological potential. Vanderbeke contrasts these techniques of narrativization with those in Tom Stoppard's Arcadia, Thomas Pynchon's Gravity's Rainbow and Umberto Eco's The Island of the Day Before and shows how physics concepts can be employed either to create unidirectional closed narratives or, on the other hand, open literary texts with divergent interpretations. Here quantum phenomena are not employed as explanatory models that close the possible modes of interpretation, but rather for their potential for open exploratory questing.

Maximilian Bergengruen's contribution is devoted to the dialogical form of the dramatic genre and here the reference to physics is made on a completely different level. Bergengruen is interested in the contribution of physics as a technique in the context of the practice of baroque theater performances. This is analysed by means of two dramas by Gryphius: Catharina of Georgia (1657) and Carolus Stuardus (1663). Gryphius' era predates the differentiation of scientific disciplines, so that physico-theological and natural-philosophical contexts play an important role. Bergengruen offers a comparative analysis of how the figure of thought of "the imitation of Christ" is textually configured in the two dramas. At this point, the performative theatrical practice of the time is confronted with a dilemma: Although ghosts and ghost appearances are allowed in drama and staging techniques, they are theologically forbidden. Bergengruen proceeds on the basis of the technical staging instructions given by Gryphius, whereby the appearance of ghosts and visions is legitimized in performance practice. The technical-theatrical implementation of the deus ex machina machinery reinterprets Gryphius' ghostly phenomena: they are no longer demonic ghosts (Luther), but divine spirits. In this respect, Bergengruen works on the drama of the baroque era with an interesting connection between the mediation of metaphysical ideas and their theatrical representation through the most sophisticated stage technology of the time. These are supported by optical instruments and baroque illusion techniques, which the theater uses widely. An epoch's theatrical staging of metaphysical ideas thus goes hand in hand with its experimental practices of optics and mechanics, Bergengruen concludes.

Clemens Zelt's analysis offers an interesting insight into the epistemic function of the genre of philosophical dialogue in science in its sociohistorical context. Within the culture of the Weimar Republic, the philosophical dialogue played an important discourse-integrative function between politics, literature and physics. zelt investigates the historicity of the aesthetic, philosophic and scientific debates of the Weimar Republic and their cultural practices. Their forms of argumentation

often resort to the scholarly dialogues of the Renaissance, namely Galileo Galilei's Dialogue Concerning the Two Chief World Systems, Ptolemaic and Copernican (1632), as a paradigmatic example of the genre. Since its constitutive characteristic is a change of perspective, which can convey an experience of evidence, it is suited in an exemplary way to the cultural mediation of new worldviews. Inspired by this, Einstein also formulates the controversy with the so-called critics of the general theory of relativity according to the Galilean model in his Dialogue about Objections to the Theory of Relativity (1918). zelt focuses on the transfer of these discoursive forms and their epistemic functions in Brecht's conception of the theater of the scientific age and in Döblin's novel cycle Amazonas, and discusses the aesthetic, ethical and socio-political implications associated with it.

Lutz Kasper reflects on another aspect of the interrelations between physics and literature: science education. Can narrative forms and techniques provide access to the process of physics research and enquiry? Can they enhance the process of reflection on the cultural significance of natural sciences? What about reflection on the epistemic role of language and metaphors in the process of research or in teaching and learning science? What about the semantic reinterpretation of concepts due to different historical contexts? What about reflections on the historical contexts of the development of models and theories, or on different, competing perspectives on the same scientific phenomenon? These goals could be achieved by 'unpacking the stories hidden behind the formal condensations.' The goal would be to increase the metaconceptual awareness of students through reflections on real scientific debates. Kasper gives here an historical example of competing answers proposed by Émilie de Châtelet, Voltaire and Euler on the problem of "The Nature of Light, Heat and Fire" posed by the Paris Academy in 1737.

The physicist and poet Ignatius McGovern, takes up the work of William Rowan Hamilton, the Irish mathematician and poet, whose credo was that his mathematical researches on quaternions is an offspring of the interrelations between geometry, algebra, metaphysics and poetry. Quaternions are a number system introduced by Hamilton in order to extend the class of complex numbers. In the twentieth century it was this mathematics that was introduced by Erwin Schrödinger for the Hamilton formulation of wave mechanics in quantum physics. McGovern reflects on this complex genealogy poetically, in his own collection of sonnets A Mystic Dream of 4, which is devoted on the one hand to William Rowan Hamilton and his friend William Wordsworth, and on the other hand to number theory. The collection of poems explores for example the value of "4" as a mathematic and aesthetico-poietic principle for the making of sonnets. <>

Gary Snyder: Collected Poems by Gary Snyder edited by Jack Shoemaker and Anthony Hunt [Library of America, 9781598537215]

The first collected edition of an essential, Pulitzer Prize-winning Beat poet, the indispensable voice whose deep ecological vision and Buddhist spirituality grows more relevant with each passing decade

Gary Snyder is one of America's indispensable poets, the "Thoreau of the Beat Generation" and our "laureate of Deep Ecology." Now, for the first time, all of Snyder's poetry is gathered in a single, authoritative Library of America volume.

Here are all of Snyder's published books of poetry spanning a career of almost seventy years. Early collections such as ***Riprap and Cold Mountain Poems***, ***Myths & Texts***, and ***The Back Country*** reflect his hardscrabble rural upbringing in the Pacific Northwest; his life as a logger, fire-lookout, freighter crewman, carpenter, and trail-blazer; his lifelong interest in Native American oral literatures; and his pioneering studies of Zen Buddhism.

In ***Turtle Island*** and ***Axe Handles***—the former a winner of the Pulitzer Prize in 1975 and the latter the American Book Award in 1984—he explores countercultural alternatives to environmental and spiritual decline and envisioning new forms of harmony with nature.

His epic ***Mountains and Rivers Without End***, a poem four decades in the making and regarded by many as his masterwork, is followed by ***Danger on Peaks,*** and the intimate, preternaturally candid late lyrics of ***This Present Moment***, which meditate on his life as a father, husband, friend, neighbor, and homesteader in the foothills of California's Sierra Nevada, where he has lived since 1971.

The volume concludes with a generous selection, made by Snyder himself, of previously uncollected poems from little magazines and broadsides; translations from East Asian literatures; and drafts and fragments never before published. Also included are explanatory notes, a detailed chronology of Snyder's life, and an essay on textual selection.

Author and editors

Born on May 8, 1930, in San Francisco, Gary Snyder grew up in the rural Pacific Northwest. He graduated from Reed College in 1951 with degrees in anthropology and literature, and later studied Japanese and Chinese civilization at Berkeley, returning there to teach in the English Department. After participating in the San Francisco revival, the beginning of the beat poetry movement, Snyder went to Japan in 1955 where he stayed for eighteen months, living in a Zen monastery. He has lived and written and worked in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada since 1969.

Jack Shoemaker is Founding Editor of Counterpoint Press, publishing the works of Wendell Berry, M.F.K. Fisher, Evan S. Connell, Robert Aitken, Ruth Prawer Jhabvala, and James Salter, among many others. He has worked with Snyder for over 50 years.

Anthony Hunt is the author of Genesis, Structure, and Meaning in Gary Snyder's Mountains and Rivers Without End(2004). Now retired as professor of English at the University of Puerto Rico–Mayagüez, and a former Fulbright scholar and Peace Corps worker, he lives in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Reviews

"The book is a total treasure and catalogue of a life that clearly has been a work of art itself."—Lion's Roar Magazine

"The non-profit Library of America just published a handsome volume of Snyder's collected poems. It contains every one of his books as well as numerous works which appeared in magazines, journals and obscure publications … The thing that makes this collection special is he was involved in the project and added commentaries on some of his work." —Dayton Daily News

Amazon notes:

A life well lived is one that a person is able to do what they love, what they are best at, which allows them to be happy, to make others happy, and makes a difference in the world. That is just my theory, but it seems something to strive for, though society seems to frown on it. Gary Snyder has been living his best life for over 90 years, seventy of those years writing poetry, essays, or just

putting words on paper for any reason he wants to. The Library of America has collected almost all of Mr. Snyder's works in one volume, Gary Snyder Collected Poems (Library of America #351), edited by Anthony Hunt and Jack Shoemaker.

Starting with poems written in the forests that he worked either logging of as fire spotted in the national parks, Mr. Snyder began writing about the trees, the land, the men who traveled it and the feelings it gave him. The influence of the Beats was predominant in his early works, until his return to school and his fascination with Asian art and poetry began. Soon he was translating many Zen poets, offering those to western readers for the first time, along with more poems about his travels in Japan, and on the Pacific where he worked as a sailor on many a tramp freighter. Included are works like Turtle Island, which won a Pulitzer, Axe Handles which won the National Book Award, and his epic poem in both length and time it took to writer Mountains and Rivers Without End which was created and formed over four decades.

The poems tell of men, women nature, love, life, and his children growing. Essays are included, pieces about his family, his life, and his love of nature and conservancy. Some poems are short, some are long, but the imagery is usually powerful. As with anything some of the works have not dated well, attitudes change, maturity sets in, but most seem fresh and as new as when they were written. The notes section is very informative, and comprehensive with an full publishing history for many of the poems, that is fascinating to read. Some of the works have never before been published, so that is also a treat.

Recommended for poetry fans, fans of the beats, of nature, Zen, and good poems. Library of America always makes beautiful collections and this one is no exception. A great addition to any reader's library.

True to form, the Library of America's Collected Poems issue of Gary Snyder's work begins with his first book Riprap and concludes with his most recent work This Present Moment. The book also includes almost sixty uncollected poems -- a mixture of very early Snyder poems, outtakes from over the years, and translations of various ancient Asian poets, among others. I am also pleased to see a more extensive chronology at the end that outlines Snyder's eventful life. A very comprehensive collection that serves its purpose and shows us again why Snyder will rank as one of America's most important 20th-21st century poets and thinkers. <>

THE SUPERHUMANITIES: HISTORICAL PRECEDENTS, MORAL OBJECTIONS, NEW REALITIES by Jeffrey J. Kripal [University of Chicago Press, 9780226820248]

A bold challenge to rethink the humanities as intimately connected to the superhuman and to "decolonize reality itself."

What would happen if we reimagined the humanities as the superhumanities? If we acknowledged and celebrated the undercurrent of the fantastic within our humanistic disciplines, entirely new cultural worlds and meanings would become possible. That is Jeffrey J. Kripal's vision for the future—to revive the suppressed dimension of the superhumanities, which consists of rare but real altered states of knowledge that have driven the creative processes of many of our most revered authors, artists, and activists. In Kripal's telling, the history of the humanities is filled with precognitive dreams, evolving superhumans, and doubled selves. The basic idea of the superhuman, for Kripal, is at the core of who and what the human species has tried to become over millennia and around the planet.

After diagnosing the basic malaise of the humanities—that the truth must be depressing—Kripal shows how it can all be done differently. He argues that we have to decolonize reality itself if we are going to take human diversity seriously. Toward this pluralist end, he engages psychoanalytic, Black critical, feminist, postcolonial, queer, and ecocritical theory. He works through objections to the superhumanities while also recognizing the new realities represented by the contemporary sciences. In doing so, he tries to move beyond naysaying practices of critique toward a future that can embrace those critiques within a more holistic view—a view that recognizes the human being as both a social-political animal as well as an evolved cosmic species that understands and experiences itself as something super.

CONTENTS

Teaching the Superman

> In the ordinariness of each of us there had to be a place of rest, of relief. I didn't yet grasp the implications of this except that [Clark Kent as] Superman seemed to highlight that common condition because in him the extremes were so much greater. . . . The sharp contrast between the self as nonentity and the self as all- powerful seemed to suggest a secret, private, but universal experience. ALVIN SCHWARTZ, "The Real Secret of Superman's Identity"

By vocation or calling, I am a teacher. More specifically, I teach people how to think about what we have come to call religion. I teach people to think about religion comparatively— that is, across cultures and times, with no particular religion privileged above the others. I teach people to think about religion critically— that is, with all the tools of the modern university, including the humanities, the social sciences, and the natural sciences. I teach people to think about religion historically— that is, with a clear understanding that every religious form was created by humans at some point in space and time for specific and local reasons that privileged some and marginalized others.

But that is not all. And that is not enough. I have long insisted on something special or something left over that none of these ways and days can quite capture or explain. I have long insisted on the strange, the fantastic, the misbehaving or rogue aspects of religious experience that interact not only with other people but with the physical environment, with the material cosmos. And so I also teach people to think about religion experientially and, perhaps most controversially, empirically. With such adverbs, I mean to argue that religious ideas and symbolic expressions might sometimes function, rarely but really, as imaginative cultural translations of actual human encounters with consciousness and the cosmos, including aspects that no scientific mode of knowing can touch for one simple but profound reason: because they are not things or objects to touch, much less measure and manipulate.

Go ahead. Try. Some people, with the right mix of education and secularism, can manage some approximation of the comparative, critical, and historical parts. Some people, with the right extraordinary life events, will be able to imagine the experiential or empirical part. But almost no one can put them together. It is as if our cultures will not allow us, as if they are protecting their own fragile natures through some kind of refusal to look too closely, some distraction from the essence of things, some immunological response cloaked as a belief, an argument, an ego, a set of values, whatever.

Because I have written about how mystical or paranormal experiences are basically signs or signals from outside this matrix of history, belief, ego, and culture, young intellectuals often come to me wanting to study some pretty weird things. Actually, what they most want to do is study only these things. They want to become Professors of the Paranormal.

I don't let them do that. To explain why, I tell a little pop- cultural parable that is, like all such parables, culturally specific and gendered. I do the polite thing, which is the right thing. I apologize for that cultural and gendered limitation, and then I tell them the story anyway. It seems to help more often than not, so I keep telling it. It goes like this.

"I know you want to be Superman," I tell them. "I know that there is an X factor behind your desire to give your life to years of graduate study that may not result in the paying job or professional career for which you now want to work so hard. Ordinary people don't do that. It makes no sense. Unless, of course, something has happened to you, unless you know that the world is not what it seems to be, unless you know that you are not what you seem to be. I am guessing that this has already happened to you. I am guessing that you know that, deep down, you are Superman.

"But here's the thing. No one will hire Superman. Superman never gets a job. If you come here to study with us, we will privately affirm and even help you cultivate the Superman, but we will also insist that you learn to be Clark Kent. Only Clark gets a job. You can't just be Superman. You have to put on your glasses and pretend to be someone else. You have to learn things you may not want to learn, whose utility and value you will only see later, maybe much later. You have to go to the Daily Planet every day and write this and that little thing.

"Consider this particular graduate school your phone booth, that magical place in those silly older comics where Clark Kent turns into Superman and Superman turns back into Clark Kent. We're like that. The secret of this kind of higher education is not about being one or the other. The secret is in the phone booth. The secret is learning how to be both, but also when to be which." That, in a pop-cultural nutshell, is the message of this book. It is a bit more complicated than that, of course. It gets weirder. Way weirder.

Sometimes, for example, this "teaching the Superman" gets more literal, gets real, becomes a matter of life and death.

It was November 2018. I had invited one of my advanced PhD students to a private symposium at the Esalen Institute in Big Sur, California, on "Evolution and Deification." I asked him to tell the group a story that he had told me before and that I had written about in my own work as the story of "James."

James grew up in a fundamentalist Christian family in West Texas. He was pulled from "Satan's public school system" so that he could be indoctrinated into absolute truths like creationism and the literal truth of the Bible. He also experienced excruciating guilt around his emerging sexuality. By the time he was a teenager, James was severely conflicted, emotionally tortured, really. He had, in fact, become suicidal.

One night, his parents were out. James decided that he would use the opportunity to kill himself—blow his head off with his dad's pistol in the gun safe, which was left unlocked that night. That would end it all.

But that didn't happen. Instead, James found himself falling into a kind of mild trance while he drove around town and, in his own words, "Ouija drove" to the local Barnes & Noble, a business and a building that he had never entered before, since he was not allowed to visit such a "worldly" place. Still, that is where he drove, or his car drove, or something drove.

James got out of the car and walked into the bookstore, still very much in an altered state. His body zigzagged through the bookstacks, with real direction and real force, as if it somehow knew where it was going. He certainly didn't. James, in fact, felt disconnected from himself, "dissociated" most would probably say today, as if that that somehow explains anything at all.

Suddenly, he just stopped. He found himself at a section inexplicably marked "Philosophy." He had no idea what the word meant. Then it happened. A book fell off the shelf and landed at his feet. It was as if the thing jumped right then, for him no less. When the book hit the floor, James suddenly came back to himself. He reached down and picked it up. The book had a strange title: Thus Spoke Zarathustra. Well, at least he could understand two of the words (they sounded biblical). He looked up. A young beautiful blonde teenager in a very short black dress was snapping his photo and giggling at the other end of the book aisle. She ran away, never to be seen by him again.

James decided to buy the book that seemed to have sought him out and take it home, perhaps even read a little of it before he ended his miserable life. So he bought it and drove home, now in a "normal" state (if you can call the intention to kill yourself normal). James sat at home, with the book on one thigh and his dad's Colt pistol on the other. He read Nietzsche's famous prologue, where the mountain hermit Zarathustra announces the death of God and the coming of the Superman (Übermensch).

Was it the teaching of the Superman? Or how Nietzsche taught it, transmitted it to the ready reader through his uncanny words that night? In any case, this book turned out to be "the antidote to a lifetime of poison I hadn't known I was drinking," as James put it to me much later. He walked outside into a rainstorm. "I stared up at the stars between the clouds and laughed. A divine laughter, an ecstatic laughter while the rain poured down. It was the greatest moment I had ever experienced. When my sides ached and the rain abated, I walked back inside, dried off and read the rest of the book."

Perhaps it was significant that it was storming outside, and that James could see the stars between the clouds. It was also storming and lightning in the book he was reading, after all, and Nietzsche's prose is filled with dancing divine stars and nonhuman laughter. In any case, James had been changed by the book, by the author, by Zarathustra, by something. He put his father's gun away. Friedrich Nietzsche and his Superman had saved a young man's life a century into the author's future and an ocean and continent apart.

James would go on to engage in a full study of Nietzsche's body of work in college. He would write a dissertation on occult superhumans in the twentieth century within esoteric communities and movements that were inspired by Nietzsche's most famous book. But that is not the end of the story. Stories, after all, result in other stories, particularly when they are told to the right people at the right time. The "Evolution and Deification" symposium was such a people and such a time.

What happened after James told his story to this group of people was almost as remarkable as the story itself. Richard Baker, the American Zen teacher, was in the room as one of the invited participants. Richard Baker Roshi engaged James as a Zen teacher would. He worked with him, right

there and then. He told James that what he had experienced that night in those special pages and in the laughter of the lightning, thunder, and rain was an early realization of the nature of mind itself. It was an early enlightenment experience, a satori, to use the Japanese word. Richard encouraged James to continue working with the awakening, to see it as a beginning and not an ending, an introduction and not a conclusion.

I have heard a lot of stories, many of them strange beyond strange. But James's story hit me in a particularly powerful way. I believe that this story and my subsequent interactions with James as both his teacher and his student continued to shape me, my reading, and, eventually, this book. Actually, I think this story (all of it) is how I wrote this book— or, better, how it wrote me. <>

THE SECULAR PARADOX: ON THE RELIGIOSITY OF THE NOT RELIGIOUS by Joseph Blankholm [New York University Press, 9781479809509]

Living in a culture saturated with Christian language and ideas, America's nonbelievers struggle to define themselves on their own terms. They face the difficult choice of avoiding religion completely or embracing parts of religion and living with contradictions. In The Secular Paradox, Joseph Blankholm explores what it feels like to be secular and live with this ambivalence. Relying on several years of ethnographic research among secular activists and organized nonbelievers in the United States, the volume shows how secular people are both absolutely not religious and part of a religion-like secular tradition.

THE SECULAR PARADOX focuses heavily on nonbelievers who don't fit easily within secularism because they are the ones who tell its story best. The challenges faced by people of color, women, and those who have left non-Christian religions shed light on what secularism is and how it works by revealing its limits and contradictions. Placing them front and center unveils a new landscape of American religion and offers a view into what American secularism is becoming.

Review

"By far the best work done on secular movements and secularism. Blankholm's impressive scope of data and his attention to diversity based on ethnicity, gender, and apostates from non-Christian traditions make this a unique and exceptional contribution to the field." —DARREN SHERKAT, Southern Illinois University

"Masterfully illustrates how the organized secular movement in the US is constantly being negotiated." — RYAN CRAGUN, The University of Tampa

"Simultaneously, an incisive examination of American secularity's paradoxical relationship to `religion,' its constitutive other, and an expansive ethnography of how secular people live with and in that paradox. Blankholm brilliantly attends to secularity not simply as a space of absence—religion's remainder—but as a set of ethical, epistemological, and affective commitments —a tradition.... A remarkable book and essential reading for those interested in debates about secularism and religion in the United States and beyond." — MAYANTHI FERNANDO, University of California, Santa Cruz

CONTENTS

This book focuses almost entirely on nonbeliever organizations with a national presence, many of which have local chapters throughout the United States. Though some of these groups have existed for many decades, several were formed in the past few years, and new groups appear all the time. The largest groups include the Center for Inquiry, the American Humanist Association, the Secular Student Alliance, the Freedom From Religion Foundation, American Atheists, the Secular Coalition for America, the Ethical Culture movement, the Unitarian Universalist Humanist Association, and the Society for Humanistic Judaism. Smaller organizations include Black Nonbelievers, Hispanic American Freethinkers, Foundation Beyond Belief, Secular Woman, and Ex-Muslims of North America.

All these groups have different organizational structures and aims. While some are more interested in forming communities, others focus entirely on activism and advocacy. The Center for Inquiry, for instance, is an umbrella organization that includes the Council for Secular Humanism, the Richard Dawkins Foundation for Reason and Science, and the Committee for Skeptical Inquiry, each of which has a different mission and constituency. The American Ethical Union is a less centralized organization that unites the more than twenty independent Ethical Culture societies throughout the United States. The Freedom From Religion Foundation (FFRF) has a range of programs that it runs from its offices in Madison, Wisconsin, though with the help of its large team of lawyers, it primarily provides legal support for nonbelievers. FFRF has more than twenty local chapters, but the leaders in Madison emphasized to me that the local groups began at the grassroots level, and the national organization has no formal role in their governance. This hands-off approach is typical of groups that have a strong aversion to religion because they seek to avoid structures they consider authoritarian or dogmatic. Despite these differences among national groups, many organized nonbelievers I met are members of multiple communities in their local area and affiliate with several national organizations. The landscape of organized nonbelief reflects a combination of strategic pragmatism and strong beliefs about the appropriate attitude toward religion.

This book focuses specifically on organized nonbelievers for reasons that also have a lot to do with pragmatism and intellectual commitment. When I first began to consider what an anthropology of atheism or secularism would look like, it was 2009, and I was a graduate student at Columbia University. My initial attempts to study secular people were inclusive and nearly aimless. Living in New York City and being at a university, I was so surrounded by secular people that a man who is now a close friend came out to me as Christian after meeting me several times and sharing a few drinks. The challenge of studying secular people soon became clear: Who counts, and how do I study them in a systematic, empirically rigorous way? My own identity provided little help in structuring the break between self and other ostensibly required for anthropological inquiry. Despite what strangers think when they meet that most ridiculous of doctors, a doctor of religion, I am a secular person in more senses than one. Thus, at the start of my research, my challenge was twofold: How do I identify secular people, and how do I alienate myself sufficiently enough to make what I am an object of study?

To tackle the first challenge, I made the practical decision to look for the most committed secular people I could find. Many of these were involved with secular groups, but some were not. Soon I realized there was an entire world of organized secularism that had been continuously active for

more than a century. Through a scholar's eyes, the groups I encountered looked strangely religious despite their opposition to religion. My confusion cemented my focus on secular people who join communities because they posed a problem I became obsessed with figuring out. As it turns out, secular people who form groups are doing things that seriously challenge many of the big ideas about religion that we in American culture inherit. I knew I was onto something fascinating, and I had to pursue it.

My decision to focus on nonbelievers who organize themselves was practical in two ways. I could delimit who counts for the purposes of my study, and I could pursue the strangeness of the secular-religious until I managed to make sense of it. Though this book hardly answers all of the important questions relating to secular people, it relies on my research and the research of others, including many recent studies, in order to provide a vocabulary and framework for understanding who secular people are and why being secular can feel so weird at times.

The problem of how to deal with my own secular identity might seem more challenging, but this book's thesis is an argument for why it is not. Inasmuch as the secular is not what it appears to be and inasmuch as it is shot through with its ostensible other, it provides the loose thread of its own undoing to anyone willing to pull it. Its history and genealogy lead into a disorienting hall of mirrors. These seemingly infinite reflections are a condition of being secular, so documenting that condition performs the work of self-estrangement that is so important to social scientific inquiry. I hope those who read this book can share with me the numerous odd epiphanies that I have experienced while conducting years of research among secular people. Indeed, I have discovered what I have to come to call, only half in jest, my subterranean religion. Whether we are secular is entirely a matter of dispute—and that conflict is at the heart of being secular.

A Generative Tension within Secularism

There is a surprising variety of names for secular people. This variety stems from nonbelievers' ambivalence toward religion, which is their desire to both reject it and preserve something like it. Affirmative labels like "humanist" can emphasize the beliefs, practices, and ways of belonging that nonbelievers share with one another. Negative labels like "atheist" can emphasize the bad parts of religion that they seek to avoid. The work of affirming what nonbelievers share and emphasizing what they deny is the generative tension that secularism carries within its semantic and conceptual sediment. Secular ambivalence structures what it means to be secular.

Most secular people I spoke with strike a balance that works for them. They reject the things that seem too religious, and they embrace the religion-like things they find important and useful, though sometimes ignoring their uncanny religiosity. This same tension exists within atheism, which is both an old Christian term for heresy and, since the late eighteenth century, a name for the beliefs of nonbelievers. Because secular people face a choice between rejecting religion and embracing something like it, they often disagree about where to draw the line between secular and religious. Those who dissent from the existing options found new groups, invent new labels, and create new ways of being secular. Secular people's ambivalence toward religion is highly productive, and tracing its effects is crucial for understanding what it means to be secular in the United States today.

Sometimes secular people negotiate their antagonistic drives consciously, either as individuals or in conversation with one another. At other times their reactions are visceral and not up for debate. Nonbelievers develop particular ways of thinking, speaking, and being secular by deciding, consciously or unconsciously, which things are too religious and need to be avoided. This in turn shapes the structures and activities of the groups they form. The numerous ways in which secular and religious can be distinct, overlapping, or analogous become points of contention and delimit the boundaries that separate one way of being a nonbeliever from another. Successfully avoiding religion, or even just the wrong kind of religion, requires ongoing reflection on what religion is and how

much its pollution sullies the secular. Everyone I spoke with described how, over time, what they reject has changed, sometimes toward a purer secular and sometimes toward the hybridity of secular religion. To be secular means to struggle, in ways big and small, with being not religious. None of the people I met during my fieldwork—and no secular people in the rest of my life—have resolved this ambivalence. Declaring it resolved by calling secular people "religious" or "not religious" is an error because it pays no heed to secular people's effort to avoid religion while also embracing it. That ongoing labor indexes their need to avoid religion's pollution but also its permanent proximity.

Whether secular people feel the need to reject religion and the extent to which they do depends on what the^ think religion is. These definitions remain mostly implicit, though the speech and behavior of secular people provide plenty of clues about the kind of religion they see themselves embracing or rejecting. For instance, many nonbelievers hold a belief-centered understanding of religion, so for them, being an atheist means not being religious because being religious means believing in God. Behaviors that can be religious or quasi-religious, such as meditation or yoga, can become taboo for the atheist with a belief-centered approach that relies on a broad conception of religion because affirmation of the supernatural can pollute religious practices and ways of belonging by association.

On the other hand, a belief-centered approach with a narrow conception of religion can allow engagement with religious practices and institutions because the^ can be separated from beliefs and thus purified of religious error. Nontheistic religious humanists, for instance, disaggregate belief from other aspects of religiosity, embracing religious behavior and belonging without exposing themselves to religious pollution. Others, like secular humanists, also negate religious belief, but they purify religious behavior and belonging through the work of analogy and abstraction. They avoid religious language even when their institutions or practices resemble religious equivalents. Instead of clergy, they have Secular Celebrants; instead of orthodoxy, they have eupraxsophy. Some nonbelievers avoid anything that resembles religious belief, behavior, or belonging—including groups for nonbelievers. Because the work of being secular always depends on what religion means, it takes place at the intersection of two shifting terrains: the things people think and do and the labels that describe them. To really understand what it means to be secular requires navigating both terrains at once, the possibility of which is good evidence that they are not entirely separate.

Defining and delimiting religion is vital work for people who identify strongly as secular, who engage in secular activism, and who shape their identities in face-to-face communities with other nonbelievers. Because being secular is so important to them, they negotiate their ambivalence toward religion more often and more thoroughly than people with weaker secular identities do. This book examines very secular people closely to observe the effects of secularism's ambivalence on their speech, their feelings, their bodily habits, their institutional structures, and their legal strategies. Though I focus specifically on nonbelievers who join groups, all secular people, even those who have no interest in joining a nonbeliever community, struggle with secularism's ambivalence and face decisions about what things are too religious. This is the condition of being secular. Thus, while this book focuses on organized nonbelievers and secular activists, it can provide insight into what it means to be secular in a more general sense in the United States today.

Others who have studied secular people have noticed a similar ambivalence and have struggled to name it. I aim to make a big deal of it because it explains so much and because the causes and effects of this structuring ambivalence have come into increasingly better view with the help a growing body of social scientific and historical research. I argue that being secular is inherently paradoxical; its internal tension defines it. In one of the earliest and best studies of nonbelievers, the sociologist Colin Campbell observed at two extremes the "abolitionists" and the "substitutionists, who seek to abolish or replace religion, respectively. Campbell recognizes that these are not the only ways to be

secular but rather the poles of a kind of spectrum. He also observes a fuzzy boundary between the substitutionists who want to replace religion and the traditionally religious.

More recently, sociologists including Jesse Smith, Stephen LeDrew, and Jacqui Frost have studied how nonbelievers emphasize what they share with one another and how they model their communities, at least in part, on religious equivalents. These substitutionists, in Campbell's terms, want to focus on what they affirm rather than what they negate. The Sunday Assembly, a group founded in London in early 2013, and the Oasis Network, founded in Houston in 2012, are examples of affirmative movements that have grown rapidly in the United States since I completed the bulk of my field research. Though these movements aim to build something new on their own terms, a bigger view of organized secularism shows how they fit snugly within its history. If they continue to grow and have staying power, they will represent the latest generation of secular people to organize themselves around their shared beliefs and values, echoing earlier movements like Ethical Culture in the nineteenth century and humanism in the twentieth.

Scholars have identified a similar binary within atheism. Philosopher Antony Flew has described "negative" and "positive" atheism as two ways in which the "a-" can negate "theism." For Smith and for other philosophers such as George H. Smith and Michael Martin who have built on his work, negative atheism is a lack or absence of belief in God. Positive atheism is more than a mere absence; it is an active disavowal. Smith also uses the terms "implicit" and "explicit" to capture this distinction, and a number of social scientists have used the terms "passive" and "active" secularism to describe a similar division between those who are merely indifferent to religion and those who affirm a secular worldview and take on a secular identity. Sociologist and theologian Stephen Bullivant observes an "ambiguity" in atheism, by which he means something more like confusion. His is less a bifurcation and more an entire range of ways in which atheism negates or even affirms. Atheism can negatively target the supernatural, gods, religion, or monotheism, or as for Smith and Martin, it can signal a mere absence of avowed belief. Bullivant's positive atheism can describe a belief system that is atheistic as a consequence rather than its raison d'etre, such as existentialist atheism, Soviet scientific atheism, or Ayn Rand's objectivism.

Certain worldviews are more atheistic than others, both in their ontologies and in their historical associations. French historian of atheism Georges Minois has paid close attention to the positive that atheism contains, while also observing what it negates: "Atheism is not merely an attitude of refusal, rejection, or indifference, defined only by its relationship to religion. It is also positive, constructive, and autonomous. Contrary, once again, to the assumptions of religious historians of atheism, the atheist is not merely one who does not believe. Atheists believe—not in God—but in man, in matter, and in reason." The ambiguity that Minois identifies in the history of atheism I encounter as productive ambivalence among secular people in the United States today. Understanding secularism requires that we understand what secular people negate and what they affirm—as well as the tension between.

Misfits of the Secular Paradox

Few secular people can simply reject religion and live in religion's remainder. Their need to affirm what they believe to be true and share in that truth with like-minded others leads secular people to gather together—if not always in nonbeliever communities, then in cities and neighborhoods where they feel at home. The secularism they affirm, however, is not one-size-fits-all. Many secular people—especially people of color—feel out of place in most nonbeliever communities in the United States. Particular ways of being secular arise from myriad small decisions about what parts of culture are too religious and what parts can be affirmed. If a secular community has a culture, whose culture is it?

Over drinks at a bar in Detroit, an ex-Muslim man told me about his double bind: "There's no way to separate Arabic and Islamic culture. There's nothing left. There's no Arabic culture. There's Islamic culture. What's left? The desert?" The man, who was born in the United Arab Emirates, was only half joking. In American secularism, he sees little that resembles his birth culture, so being secular means rejecting much if not a11 of it. A Latino humanist who used to be a Pentecostal youth minister described the same problem in different terms when speaking to me and a white leader of a local nonbeliever community in Los Angeles: "Religion is a culture as much as being Mexican is. We have to include a lot of culture when we reach out to the Latin community... White culture is a culture. I respect you and believe what you believe, but this [secular community] isn't my culture. It doesn't feel homey." Being secular requires them to negate too much—"What's left?"—and American secular culture has mostly failed to replace it.

Many women I spoke with have also felt excluded from the culture of organized secularism. In its distrust of emotion, in its confidence that critical thinking can produce ethical outcomes, and in its pattern of supporting men who have sexually harassed and assaulted women, organized secularism in the United States has disappointed many women who are ardently secular. In the backhanded words of one woman, reflecting on why more women are not involved in nonbeliever groups, "Many activist women may prefer to give their support to feminist organizations." Another woman, describing the founding of a prominent nonbeliever organization in the United States, said that she and her cofounders "would not have done so" if they "weren't feminists." For her, there is a strong connection between her secularism and her feminism: "We wanted to keep religion out of laws affecting women and social policy." While some women have tried to reform organized secularism, others have given up on it, founding their own groups that work in parallel or shifting their focus to other causes and making their secular identities secondary or tertiary rather than primary.

Though secularism negates and affirms, it affirms the culture of white men more easily than the cultures of women and people of color. As one Chinese American woman who left the secular movement told me, "I'm an atheist, and my family worships our ancestors. I don't have a problem with that, but these secular people do." The stories of women and people of color are woven throughout every chapter of this book in order to demonstrate that secularism is a racializing and gendering formation that struggles to contain those who are not cisgendered white men. In the double movement of negating religion and affirming what secular people share, some lives mis-fit. At the same time, these misfits are creating new ways of being secular in which their lives can become legible. They are pioneering some of the most interesting forms of secular religiosity in the United States today, and their stories show not only who and what misfits the secular but how and why. They also represent the horizons of what secularism is becoming.

Each chapter of this book examines a different aspect of religion: belief, community, ritual, conversion, and tradition. Because secular people struggle to simply remove all these religion-like elements from their lives, they affirm them in part or entirely, sometimes uncritically but more often quite carefully and not without reservations. In the chapters on belief and tradition, this book shows that the avowedly secular people I met and interviewed share many strongly held beliefs about reality and the best way to know it. They also share many of the same values, and they largely agree on the terms of their internal debates, if not the conclusions. I found that these fundamentally shared beliefs cut across differences of race and gender and define secular people at least as much as what they refuse. In carefully exploring secular people's ambivalence toward religion, this book thus excavates an epistemological and ontological tradition that binds secular people in religion-like ways that cannot be acknowledged as religious in any simple terms. Their ambiguous religiosity provides ways to think through and beyond outmoded conceptions of religion that have reached their breaking point. Americas Christian inheritance—its concepts and its vocabulary—can only capture the lives of secular people as a paradox with mis-fitting remainders. Through an immanent,

affectionate critique, I explain why and provide a map for navigating a new and emerging American religious landscape. <>

Occult Imperium: Arturo Reghini, Roman Traditionalism, and the Anti-Modern Reaction in Fascist Italy by Christian Giudice [Oxford Studies in Western Esotericism, Oxford University Press, 9780197610244]

Christian Giudice's **Occult Imperium** explores Italian national forms of Occultism, chiefly analyzing Arturo Reghini (1878-1946), his copious writings, and Roman Traditionalism. Trained as a mathematician at the prestigious University of Pisa, Reghini was one of the three giants of occult and esoteric thought in Italy, alongside his colleagues Julius Evola (1898-1974) and Giulian Kremmerz (1861-1930). Using Reghini's articles, books, and letters, as a guide, Giudice explores the interaction between occultism, Traditionalism, and different facets of modernity in early-twentieth-century Italy.

The book takes into consideration many factors particular to the Italian peninsula: the ties with avant-garde movements such as the Florentine *Scapigliatura* and Futurism, the occult vogues typical to Italy, the rise to power of Benito Mussolini and Fascism, and, lastly, the power of the Holy See over different expressions of spirituality. **Occult Imperium** explores the convergence of new forms of spirituality in early twentieth-century Italy.

Review

"With this outstanding volume, Christian Giudice is offering us the first academic monograph ever dedicated to Arturo Reghini and his milieu. Erudite, wide-ranging and yet eminently readable, the present study illuminates the cultural and political roots of fin-de-siècle and early twentieth-century Occultism in Italy, up to and including the Fascist era. By retracing Reghini's intricate intellectual and Masonic journeys, Giudice gives us a penetrating analysis of the entanglements of occult spirituality, (neo)pagan Roman Traditionalism and an anti-modern political stance typical of the then cultural avant-garde, in an Italy grappling with the seemingly unstoppable onslaught of modernity, nationalism, and war." -- Jean-Pierre Brach, Directeur d'études, École Pratique des Hautes Études, Sorbonne

"*Occult Imperium* covers the life and work of Arturo Reghini, Italian esotericist, translator of René Guénon, and author of the original "Pagan Imperialism" of 1914, a work that inspired the title, and much of the content, of Julius Evola's Pagan Imperialism of 1928. **Occult Imperium** is recommended for all who have an interest in the history of Traditionalism, Guénon, and Evola, and also because it introduces us to the little-known Italian esoteric milieu from before the First World War to the Fascist period, a milieu that both echoes and differs from the better-known French esoteric milieu of the same period." -- Mark Sedgwick, author of Against the Modern World: Traditionalism and the Secret Intellectual History of the Twentieth Century

"With this outstanding volume, Christian Giudice is offering us the first academic monograph ever dedicated to Arturo Reghini and his milieu. Erudite, wide-ranging and yet eminently readable, the present study illuminates the cultural and political roots of fin-de-siècle and early twentieth-century Occultism in Italy, up to and including the Fascist era. By retracing Reghini's intricate intellectual and

Masonic journeys, Giudice gives us a penetrating analysis of the entanglements of occult spirituality, (neo)pagan Roman Traditionalism and an anti-modern political stance typical of the then cultural avant-garde, in an Italy grappling with the seemingly unstoppable onslaught of modernity, nationalism, and war." -- Jean-Pierre Brach, Directeur d'études, École Pratique des Hautes Études, Sorbonne

"**OCCULT IMPERIUM** covers the life and work of Arturo Reghini, Italian esotericist, translator of René Guénon, and author of the original Pagan Imperialism" of 1914, a work that inspired the title, and much of the content, of Julius Evola's *Pagan Imperialism* of 1928. *Occult Imperium* is recommended for all who have an interest in the history of Traditionalism, Guénon, and Evola, and also because it introduces us to the little-known Italian esoteric milieu from before the First World War to the Fascist period, a milieu that both echoes and differs from the better-known French esoteric milieu of the same period." -- Mark Sedgwick, author of *Against the Modern World: Traditionalism and the Secret Intellectual History of the Twentieth Century.*

CONTENTS

In Chapter 1, the core questions of my book were enunciated and, for convenience, will be posed once more here: How and why did Arturo Reghini react so vehemently to the modern, and what can the analysis of his writings offer to the ongoing debate regarding the intricate relationship between occultism and modernity?

Like many Italian occultists of his age, Reghini had an upper-class background and naturally saw himself as a step (or two) above the teeming and malleable masses. Having grown up with the ideals of the Risorgimento, Reghini saw a world where heroes, above-average human beings, had succeeded in accomplishing what was for many decades thought to be impossible: the reunification of all Italian territories under one rule. Thus, characters such as Garibaldi and Mazzini must have influenced young Reghini's mind significantly, so much so that, in "Imperialismo Pagano; he included them in the list of greats who had helped keep the Italic-Pythagorean Tradition alive through uncertain times. This elitist attitude of separating the collective from the individual was probably the first of Reghini's displays of reaction against what he perceived as the pernicious tendencies of the modern. Since many pages have passed from when I first asked the core questions that I have endeavored to answer in this work, I think it will be useful for the reader to recall Reghini's, and the Schola's in general, reaction toward the seemingly unstoppable malaise of modernity.

The first aspects, which would have definitely influenced both Armentano and Reghini in their longing for the past glories of ancient Rome and the tout-court rejection of the customs and cultural manifestations of the day, can already be found, as written earlier, in the Risorgimento period. The exaltation of Rome could be witnessed not only in the discourses of the great politicians of the day, such as Cavour or King Vittorio Emanuele, but also in the arts and literature of the day: in Chapter 2, I gave De Amicis's Cuore and Manzoni's Promessi Sposi as examples of best-selling novels peppered with Risorgimento ideals such as the love for one's country and the rise of the three core values of the day, admirably summarized by Alberto Mario. Banti in the combination of love/honor/virtue (amore/onore/virtu), sacrifice (sacrifici^), and kinship (parentela). A list of war heroes was provided to the youth like Reghini, growing up in post -Risorgimento Italy: Garibaldi, the man capable of triumphing in any feat; Mazzini, who baptized Rome as the imperishable eternal city; and other minor figures such as Ippolito Nievo, who had called Rome the Gordian knot of the Italians' destinies.

Another idea that was readily available for young people of Reghini's generation was the role played by Freemasonry: many readers of Reghini, including biographer Natale di Luca, have asked themselves why Reghini and the Schola wished to transmit the teaching of a supposedly age-old tradition through often short-lived and chaotic Masonic manifestations, such as the Rito Felsitic Italiano. The answer, in my opinion, lies in the exaggerated role that Freemasonry attributed to itself in the unification of Italy, which has by now been discredited by scholars of Italian history and Freemasonry alike. In Reghini's days, and in the post-unification years, though, the allure of Italian Freemasonry was still very much alive, and that is why we see Reghini joining the I Rigeneratori lodge of Palermo as early as 1902. As we have seen, Garibaldi had been assigned an Honorary Grand Master title by the Italian Grand Orient (GOI), and many politicians, who were active in the years leading up to and after the reunification of Italy, were members of a Masonic lodge. To Reghini, belonging to a secret society meant being able to discuss everyday issues with his peers, while learning esoteric secrets that could help him advance spiritually: this is why he was so shocked and appalled by GOI's decision to open its ranks to the bourgeoisie. Masonic orders were supposed to be the training ground of the elite, in Reghini's possibly outdated view, not a place to meet up and exchange calling cards with members of lower classes. Another aspect of Risorgimento Freemasonry, which no doubt Reghini approved of, was its strong anticlerical stance against the temporal power of the Papacy in Rome. As we have seen, this would be a nonnegotiable aspect of Reghini's personality, which he no doubt picked up from the post-Risorgimento cultural heritage.

Another inclination that Reghini, maybe subconsciously, adopted from post-Risorgimento culture was his fascination with the occult. If we are to believe Parise, who first published Reghini's biographical sketch, Reghini had helped found the first Theosophical Lodge in 1897, which would have made him nineteen at the time, and travelling from Florence to Rome for that purpose. Such an early predisposition toward the occult sciences was shared by many others that he would start frequenting in the cultural cafes of Florence at the turn of the century, and it appears that, back at the beginning of the twentieth century, occultism was possibly more widespread and less problematic than it is today. Many of Reghini's friends were, to varying degrees, interested in the occult: from Theosophists Giovanni Amendola and Augusto Agabiti, to foreign residents in Florence such as Alexey Dodsworth, Theodor Daubler, and Annie Besant, to the Masonic contingent composed, among others, by Moretto Mori and Amerigo Bianchini. The diversity of the youngsters belonging to the blossoming avant-garde movements meant that Reghini was also active in other circles and rubbed shoulders both with the Idealists of the Leonardo, Giuseppe Papini and Giuseppe Prezzolini, and with Filippo Tommaso Marinetti and the members of the Futurist movement. Reghini also contributed to Leonardo in its brief occult, post-Nietzschean period, in which Papini seemed willing to try any avenue possible in order to elevate his everyday being to a higher status (perhaps influenced by the theory of the Ubermensch). Reghini was a central figure within the Florentine Theosophical movement, when he worked as the director of the Theosophical library, and through his short stay within the Society, he managed to develop an interest for Eastern traditions, which the other members of the Schola never did. This is possibly the reason why, in later years, he would get on so well with Rene Guen^n, who, as we have seen, had abandoned all hope for a spiritual revival of the West. Ideas predominant within the Theosophical milieu would end up intriguing Reghini for the rest of his life, even after he had severed all ties and gone on to study under Armentano's tutelage: to name but two, Reghini would always be interested in the concept of the Hindu cycles of time, the Yugas, and the mythical subterranean city of Agarthi, hidden beneath the mountains of Tibet, and ruled by the mysterious King of the World. Another aspect of Theosophical activity in Italy, though, would be of paramount importance to Reghini's development: Decio Calvari's decision to focus on more autochthone manifestations of the secret wisdom, which immediately excited Reghini because of the possibility of linking his love for ancient Italy and his passion for occultism.

This Theosophical beginning of Reghini's pursuit for a Roman Tradition has been overlooked by all previous scholars and must not be underestimated.

In Chapter 4 we have another series of clues that point toward Reghini's rejection of modernity, that are to be found especially within his Masonic misadventures. Reghini had joined the Michele di Lando (later rebaptized Lucifero) lodge in 1904, but he had been outraged by the new direction all lodges under GOI were moving toward: the democratization of Freemasonry, though the lowering of the fees had been the first episode to cause annoyance within Reghini's circle of friends. This had rapidly been followed by a reduction in the ritualistic aspect of GOI, which was primarily the reason Reghini had joined Freemasonry in the first place. When the head of GOI, Ettore Ferrari, had argued in favor of a greater involvement of Freemasons in Italy's public life, Reghini developed a lifelong disgust for GOI and its progressive initiatives. When, in 1906, Ferrari had added a commitment toward the world order and a willingness to fight for the democratic principle in the social and political sphere, Reghini abandoned the lodge. Luckily for him, just before leaving the Lucifero lodge, he had met Armentano and had immediately begun to study under his tutorage. If we were to summarize Armentano's teachings to Reghini, we could condense them in two key points: first, that a Pythagorean Tradition was passed down through the ages from master to disciple since the days in which Pythagoras taught his followers in ancient Kroton. Second, that such a Tradition was intimately bound to a form of Freemasonry that predated the Enlightenment and, therefore, could be brought back to its pristine state by eliminating all the profane and misinformed changes that had been made since the advent of modern times. In Armentano, Reghini had found a great ally in his war against the modern world: one of his most popular maxims had been that progress was equivalent to nonbeing, and that where order was, progress could not be. Hailing from an aristocratic Italian family, which had made its fortunes in Brazil, Reghini found in Armentano a mentor, a friend, and a fellow anti-modernist. As the Pythagoreans before him, Armentano taught that it was impossible to disconnect the various planes of a man’s existence. According to him, the magical could not be disjoined from the political, the intellectual from the practical. It is clear, then, that Armentano and Reghini were in diametrical opposition against the process of progress and democratization that the modern world was beginning to manifest in 1910s Italy. The two were in favor of the eternal, the fixed, the orderly, while the modern world offered a maelstrom of protean changes in social, economic, and spiritual issues. The pair's attempt at taking over the Rito Felicific Italiano failed quickly: according to Reghini, it was due to the incompetence of the third head of the lodge, Eduardo Frosini. It might just be that to manifest what the Schola taught in a mundane environment such as a Masonic order in 1910s Italy was an endeavor doomed to failure.

The fifth chapter is possibly the most significant, when it comes to finding examples of Reghini's many reactions against the modern world, and also the most rewarding when looking for the reasons for such vitriolic retorts. The analysis of "Imperialismo Pagano" brings all of Reghini's grievances to surface, and none of his enemies are spared. To him, the nationalists were too imbued with Catholic propaganda, and the masses had no appeal. At the same time, a small group of intellectuals possessed a patriotic, pagan, elitist, and anticlerical sentiment, and this minute coterie rallied around Reghini and Armentano: Reghini was rumored to be the invisible head of the Florentine Futurists, the other members of the Schola Italica had happily accepted Reghini's role as their official spokesperson, and a good part of the Florentine cultural milieu shared Reghini's pagan, elitist, and imperialist political outlook. While small in number, the people for whom Reghini wrote "Imperialismo" were a vocal and influential aspect of the Italian prewar cultural scene. Reghini's publication was critiqued by the many who did not share his vast culture and knowledge of ancient Greek and Roman literature and customs. And the anti-Christian character of the article was denounced by members of GOI and his ex-Theosophist friends. The arguments contained in "Imperialismo" can be grouped in three distinct sections, for convenience: the first includes the overarching narrative, which includes Vergil, Dante, Bruno, Campanella, Garibaldi, and Mazzini as its

main actors, of the transmission of an Italic-Pythagorean, imperial, pagan, antidemocratic, and anti-modern Tradition, which Reghini represented and that "Imperialismo Pagano" sought to present to the public on the eve of the Great War; the second cluster of arguments relates to the anticlerical aspect of the Schola's teachings: not only did Reghini blame Christianity for the fall of the Roman Empire, but he also found that, behind any historical crisis of Italian imperial power, the culprit was the Catholic Church, which Reghini famously described as a "Semitic cult"; the third, more hidden cluster of ideas, is the - rallying call for the creation of an intellectual elite that could divert the disastrous direction Italy was going in, by influencing the political climate of the day, through both political and magical means. The performance of rites to influence the events in Italian politics was something that Reghini continued to implement right until his break with Evola in 1929, and much of the practical work of the Ur Group was dedicated to this effort. "Imperialismo Pagano" could then be seen as a call to action, in order for Armentano and Reghini to see who was really ready to usher in a new age for Italy by any means possible, and it is reflected in the war correspondence between the two, ending with Reghini's statement that because of their work Austria had perished.

The themes of Chapter 6 and 7 may be considered together, as both sections deal with the more practical manifestations of Roman Traditionalist ideas. The three main events to influence the movement in the 1920s were without a doubt (1) Mussolini's rise to power, which so enflamed the hearts of the Roman Traditionalist milieu, with its imperial trappings and reference to ancient Rome and its grandeur; (2) a first, brusque awakening in 1925 with the regime's approval of the Bodrero bill, which effectively outlawed secret societies and dealt a huge blow to the dream of recreating a Masonic vehicle for Roman Traditionalist ideas, and which contributed to the voluntary exile of many of the core members of the Schola, including Armentano; and finally, (3) the tangible experience of occult practices of the Ur Group, in which groups or chains of initiates worked secretly to steer Mussolini's ideas toward the neo-Pagan stance shared by the members of this secret coterie. The concept of social occult modernism coined by Roger Griffin was used to express two key elements that preoccupied both the members of the Schola and the newly installed Fascist regime: the conviction of the decadence of the days they were living in, on the one hand, and a prophetic confidence in a renewal of ancient customs, which would benefit Italy as a whole, on the other. Victor Turner's idea of the individual abandoning society to form a smaller communitas was also explored in correspondence of the Schola and of the first group of Fascists: both were deeply disillusioned by what they saw as a decadent age of ever-increasing mechanization, alienation of the individual, and erosion of social values. Both the Schola and the early Fascist regime argued for the creation of a new man, who would incarnate ancient ideals and who could bring forth a new, brighter future, or what Conservative Revolutionary Arthur Moller van den Bruck would call a reconnection forward. Although the thrill of having found in Mussolini a kindred spirit who had to share their same views on the Italic Tradition only lasted for approximately four or five years, the Schola's enthusiasm and Reghini's literary output both witnessed a significant boost. With the ban on Masonic organizations, Reghini realized that the ally they had sought in Mussolini had turned his back on them, and his Concordat with the Vatican, which granted the Pope temporal power again, after an absence from the political scene which lasted sixty years, smashed any dream of a new pagan Rome that was left. We are reminded once again of de Turris's conclusions that, if the National-Socialist regime did have occult roots, to be found in the volkisch and Ariosophist movements, the Fascist government never allowed occult expressions to thrive, from Mussolini's rise to power in 1923, until his downfall in 1945. The fact that some occultists attempted to favor his political endeavors through the use of magical rites can be seen as one minor expression of adherence to Mussolini's ideals of the foundation of the Third Rome, but the Duce himself did certainly not imagine his Rome to be influenced by Reghini's intellectual elite: he already had his Fascist elite, which ruled the country with an iron fist.

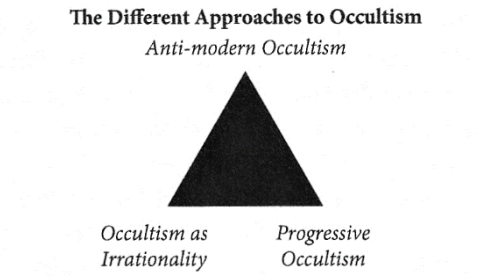
The previous chapter, covering the years spanning from 1930 to Reghini's death in 1946, shows two major themes running parallel: the first one is Reghini's idea that something could still be gained from Mussolini's regime, and that the declaration of the Catholic creed as the official religion of the country did not seem to bother him too much. In 1933 he became a card-carrying member of the Partito and he wrote on the virtues and symbolism of Fascism's main symbol, the lictores fasces. Such enthusiasm, though, would steadily wane throughout the 1930s, and by the start of the war, Reghini's preoccupations became more practical in nature. With little or no money, abandoned by his closest friends, who possibly lived under circumstances as bad as his, Reghini spent the last years of his life far away from his beloved Rome. The second major theme, which he developed especially in his Dei Numeri Pitagorici, was an even more intricate exploration of the Pythagorean Tradition that Armentano had initiated him to: right up to two years prior to his death, Reghini worked on his magnum opus and continued to practice the Pythagorean techniques, which would eventually allow him to experience palingenesis. Even in the most desperate of times, Reghini never lost the enthusiasm for the Italic-Pythagoean Tradition, which he did not see as remote and static, but as the only lens to see the world through: throughout the bombings, the Nazi raids of his house, poverty, and illness, Reghini saw the world as a perfect reflection of the Pythagorean monad, inspiring Camilla Partengo to write to Armentano, once Reghini had passed, about how "he was the example of that spiritual calm that belongs to he who lives in a higher plane and does not fear anything"

Throughout this book, I have provided a unique and novel approach that has demonstrated the existence of a manifestation of the occult, which defies both extreme characterizations as described earlier and creates a significantly important bridge. As to the ideas of the first group of social scientists, the anti-modern stance adopted by Reghini and the Roman Traditionalists is clearly anti-Positivist, against any idea of linear progress and to a certain extent irrational in that they do not seek to link science and spirituality in a novel, modern fashion. Nevertheless, entertaining the idea that anti-modern occult circles paved the way for the rise of Fascism is ludicrous. The Fascist entourage never viewed occult circles with favor, and the ban on secret societies in 1925 and the Concordat with the Vatican in 1929 went against all Reghini represented. His correspondences with Rene Guenon, Amedeo Armentano, and other Traditionalists and his published books and articles have provided innumerable examples of Reghini's anti-modern, pro-Masonic, and anti-Christian dispositions. If one of the two parties had ever been eager to jump on one's bandwagon, it was the Roman Traditionalists, and certainly not Mussolini, whose affection toward the idea of imperial Rome was of a propagandistic nature, not a spiritual one. The differences with the conclusions reached by authors to cite only the most prominent scholars, like Alex Owen, Corinna Treitel, and Marco Pasi, who are involved in the contemporary debate on the intersection between occultism and modernity, could not be more evident, as we will see in the following paragraph. The aforementioned authors have all dealt with Mitteleuropean and Northern European countries, and it is my opinion that because they have dealt with a different kind of modernity, to put it with Eisenstadt, than the one that manifested in southern European countries, the results are necessarily very different.

In this book I have argued that, far from what can be surmised from the most recent scholarship in the field, the interaction between occultism and modernity was hardly always a progressive, Positivist hub in which occult circles stood at the forefront of social emancipation. Indeed, my main argument has been that there were, and still are, occult milieus that were reactionary, nonprogressive, anti-Positivist, antidemocratic: in a word, anti-modern. By using Eisenstadt's theory of multiple modernities, I have argued that if a rose-tinted version of progressive occultism was a reality in more northern European countries, where the process of modernization had started sooner and had produced more encouraging results, the same could not be said about countries in southern Europe, and especially Italy, which at the turn of the century was lagging behind most other European countries in both scientific fields and the humanities. However, it is clear by now that

occultism does not equate to irrationality, as the Frankfurt School, but even more recent and better-informed scholars such as James Webb, have posited. While the idea of progressive occultism has been researched and argued with success by scholars such as Treitel and Owen, it is my opinion that the simplistic approach to the field of occultism seen as the embodiment of the irrational may be finally discarded and its idea considered passe and absolutely inaccurate.

By using Reghini's writings and those of other Traditionalists of the early part of the twentieth century as empirical material, I have defended the idea of the existence of a different expression of occultism, which I have termed antimodern occultism, and given multiple examples in order to bolster my main theoretical framework The most significant result of my research is that of having pinpointed a more obscure, oft-neglected facet of occultism in modern society, which almost forms the point of a triangle, it being equidistant from Adorno's theory of occult irrationality and that of modern scholars' progressive occultism. Indeed, this neglected facet has yet to be researched in depth, and it does not limit itself to the Schola Italics or Italy.



If we were to do away with the idea of occultism as irrationality altogether, as I suggest, a line would be formed, with manifestations such as Reghini's Schola Italics, on the one hand, and more progressive examples of occult manifestations such as the Theosophical Society, on the other. This dark side of occultism at the turn of the century had been previously ignored, and the many publications on fin de siecle occultism had all endeavored to show how in line with the major tropes of modernity the Occult Revival actually was. This had created a disproportionate imbalance, which I can only believe was pursued in order to create a sanitized version of the occult, which would make it acceptable for academic interdisciplinary studies in the future: by doing so, though, the academics who have highlighted the positive (or Positivist?) aspects of the occult, while sweeping what didn't fit with their theories under the proverbial rug, ended up providing a disservice to anyone interested in the whole story. As I mentioned many times in the course of this book, anti-modern occultism was not only represented by Reghini's Schola Italics. We find examples of it everywhere in Europe: in France, with Alexandre Saint-Yves d'Alveydre and his idea of an occult synarchy as the perfect form of government; in Austria, with Guido von List and Lanz von Liebenfels, and the tenets of Ariosophy; in Switzerland, France, England, and Italy, with the Traditonalist School shaped by Rend Guenon and developed in different directions by Julius Evola, Frithjof Schuon, Martin Lings, and others, with their fierce critique of modernity, materialism, progressivism, psychologism, scientism, empiricism, agnosticism, and atheism.

Anti-modern occultism is certainly a challenging topic, and its relationship with modernity raises many issues, some of which I have tackled in this work: research on this facet on occultism, when compared to the more "socially acceptable" esoteric manifestations covered by previous scholars, who have investigated the intersection between the occult and the modern, has been sorely lacking.

It is my hope that this work, and the handful of others dedicated to anti-modern occultism, will inspire other scholars to readdress the balance. <>

Hermetic Philosophy and Creative Alchemy: The Emerald Tablet, the Corpus Hermeticum, and the Journey Through the Seven Spheres by Marlene Seven Bremner [Inner Traditions, 9781644112885]

- Examines the foundational texts and principles of Hermeticism and alchemy, showing how they offer a foundation for a psycho-spiritual creative practice
- Takes the reader on a Hermetic journey through each of the seven traditional planets, offering meditative discourses that speak directly to the intuitive soul
- Provides examples from traditional alchemical art and the author's own intricate esoteric paintings

Drawing on ancient Egyptian and Greek cosmogonies and essential Hermetic texts, such as the Corpus Hermeticum, the Emerald Tablet (Tabula Smaragdina), and the Nag Hammadi codices, Marlene Seven Bremner offers a detailed understanding of Hermetic philosophy and the art of alchemy as a foundation for a psycho-spiritual creative practice. Offering examples from traditional alchemical art and her own intricate esoteric paintings, Bremner examines the foundational principles of Hermeticism and alchemy and shows how these traditions are a direct means for accessing higher consciousness and true self-knowledge, or gnosis, as well as a way to extract the essence of one's own creative gifts.

The author takes the reader on a Hermetic journey through each of the seven traditional planets--Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, the Sun, Venus, Mercury, and the Moon--exploring their mythological, philosophical, alchemical, Qabalistic, magical, astrological, and energetic natures and offering meditative discourses that reach past the rational mind to speak directly to the intuitive soul. She relates the seven planets to the esoteric anatomy of the human body, specifically the seven chakras, and shows how the planets can offer understanding and experience of archetypal energies and patterns in the body, in one's life, and in the creative process.

A profound synthesis of magical and occult teachings as well as an initiation into the alchemical opus, this book reveals how to integrate and apply Hermetic and alchemical principles to awaken inner knowing, liberate the imagination, and live a mystical, creative, and truly inspired life.

Review

"This life-changing book will take you on an amazing, enlightening, soul-filled journey into the wisdom and profound insights of Hermeticism, alchemy, and the occult arts. It gracefully reveals universal truths, cosmic secrets, and hidden mysteries through the author's immense knowledge on the subject matter as well as her own brilliant creative process. I highly recommend this book to all those who would like to spark their own healing process and spiritual awakening." — *PHILIP M. BERK, author of Mountain's Stillness, River's Wisdom and A Single Flower: Medi*

"Marlene Seven Bremner has blessed contemporary readers with a comprehensive book on the history and practice of Hermeticism. Well-researched and approached from the experience of the creative process itself, **Hermetic Philosophy and Creative Alchemy** offers valuable insight into the transmutative path of the Great Work. As an artist and true daughter of Hermes,

the author adeptly shows us why Hermeticism is referred to as the Royal Art. An absolutely pleasurable and edifying read." — *WILLIAM KIESEL, author of Magic Circles in the Grimoire Tradition*

"Bremner guides us on a transformative journey of the energetics of change that bridges ancient wisdom with new scholarship. She illuminates the alchemical arts brilliantly and unforgettably, both textually and visually. Her complex paintings reveal her vision and unfold their meaning only upon the reader's resonant, meditative gaze. This book invites us to enter into the cauldron of our mystical transformation and awaken our creative forces." — *LESLIE KORN, PH.D., MPH, author of Rhythms of Recovery: Trauma, Nature, and the Body*

"**HERMETIC PHILOSOPHY AND CREATIVE ALCHEMY** is an important and necessary work, especially for anyone involved in art and art making who wishes to use their making as a spiritual practice. Alchemy is an art; in fact, it has been called 'the Art' of arts in that all creation, according to alchemical theory, flows from the same principles. Implied in this is that any art practice may be used in the alchemical work of making change. In *Hermetic Philosophy and Creative Alchemy*, firmly grounded in primary texts and enriched through her own practice, Bremner provides a remarkably varied and thorough foundation in Hermetic philosophy, cosmology, and practice with leads for deeper study. With this foundation established, Bremner then sets before us another rich feast in her word-portraits of each of the planetary spheres--each portrait an incredible array of myth, poetry, science, philosophy, and magic. Understanding these spheres is critical, as they are the stages of 'the old, old path' of the soul's journey to the One. *Hermetic Philosophy and Creative Alchemy* provides the maps and tools for this journey. It is all here. The only thing missing is you." — *BRIAN COTNOIR, author of Alchemy: The Poetry of Matter and Practical Alchemy: A Guide to the Great W*

CONTENTS

Notes
Bibliography
Index

The aim of this present work is to illuminate in a small way the origins, development, and general philosophy, theology, and mysticism of Hermeticism and the art of alchemy, in order that a solid foundation may be laid. Special attention is given to alchemy as a psycho-spiritual art of engagement with life, involving the Soul, Mind, and Body, or in other words, Consciousness, Thought, and Matter. Emphasis is placed on the value of self-initiation and the cultivation of a direct relationship with the Divine, and full immersion into the Hermetic mysteries. Where I may lack in scholarly and technical training, I make up for in personal experience of Hermetic truths through creative discipline, devotion, personal revelation, and over twenty years of intensive study, practice, and experimentation in the occult. In addition to this, my own experience of uniting art and alchemy has greatly informed my views in this work. It is my conviction that this union empowers the initiate to trust their own intuition and creative capabilities for personal and global transformation.

It is not the intention of this book to be a comprehensive and solitary source for Hermetic philosophy, nor do I proclaim to be anything more than a seeker who has been inspired (called by Spirit) to put my experience and understanding into written form, in the hopes that others may thereby benefit in their own quest. The aim of this book is to introduce the reader to the Hermetic teachings and associated subjects of alchemy, astrology, philosophy, and magic that have served as a means for self-initiation from the most ancient times to the present day, and to set these forth as meditative discourses that penetrate beyond the rational mind to the intuitive soul. As a means to help the reader integrate and conceptualize what has been historically called the perennial philosophy (philosophic perennis), comparative analysis is offered between various cultures and their mythologies, mystic and religious traditions, and sacred texts to reveal the common threads that link them through time and space. However, the primary focus of this work remains Hermetic and seeks to present the core of Hermetic teachings as they've developed through the ages in a way that is both scholarly and initiatory.

By following the teachings of Hermes, the initiate may open the mind and attune to its inherent divinity, partaking of its immortal essence and coming to know "God," or that ultimate and eternal presence within. This is not so much a discovery of something new, but rather more like uncovering what has been there all along, spoken of as an awakening from a drunken sleep or stupor, as in the "poemandres" (CH 1.27): "O ye people, earthborn folk, ye who have given yourselves to drunkenness, and sleep, and ignorance, be sober now, cease from your surfeit, cease to be glamoured by irrational sleep!"" The numinous quality of such an experience can verge on surreality and awaken a mystical, vibrant participation with life.

In alchemy, this awakening process is called "the Great Work" (magnum opus), and it certainly is no small endeavor. Between the personal and collective traumas that we carry and the deep conditioning that we undergo by our families and cultures, we may be deeply enmeshed in a materialist and alienated conception of the world that resists fundamentally the notion that communion with the infinite mind of God is even possible. Yet just as the earth forms a rough stone, that the river may later smooth it into a peaceful and harmonious shape, experiencing the trauma of life softens and shapes the soul. In this way we are prepared through the ordeals of life to approach the ineffable truth of who and what we are, and what our purpose is. By reconciling the opposing principles within us, facing our own inner dragons, and purifying our consciousness, we awaken to a much greater Self, in tune with our individual passion and purpose, and empowered to create a life that is beneficial to others and ourselves. Underlying the cosmogonies, theologies, philosophies, and theurgical practices of Hermeticism is the fundamental truth that we are creating the world through our imagination and thoughts each and every day.

Definitions: Hermetic, Hermetism, And Hermeticism

Before we can properly describe the origins of the Hermetic tradition, let us first clarify the terms to be used throughout this work. In surveying works pertaining to the Hermetic tradition, one encounters the words Hermetism and Hermeticism, which may seem interchangeable; however they bear differing and specific meanings. According to Antoine Faivre in his essay "Renaissance Hermeticism and the Concept of Western Esotericism," the difference can be attributed to the god Hermes himself, from whose name both Hermetism and Hermeticism derive.

Hermetism, as Faivre explains, relates to the ancient Greco-Egyptian god Hermes Trismegistus, an extension of the even more ancient Egyptian god Thoth. It encompasses the body of theological and philosophical writings and teachings attributed to Hermes Trismegistus, specifically a body of work cumulatively referred to as the Hermetica. Hermeticism, on the other hand, relates to the Greek Hermes, also known as Mercurius, the psychopomp and messenger between humans and the gods that facilitates the transmutations of alchemy. Thus the terms Hermetic science and Hermeticism sometimes refer specifically to alchemy; however Hermeticism has also come to encompass Hermetism, astrology, Qabalah, Christian Theosophy, occultism, and magic. This book is primarily written from within the multifaceted gem that is called Hermeticism, with frequent references to its origins in the tradition of Hermetism.

There are some who would do away with the popular term Hermeticism altogether. Wouter J. Hanegraaff asserts that Hermeticism derives from faulty conclusions drawn by Frances A. Yates in the 1960s about the Hermetic writings and the so-named Hermetic tradition that developed in the late Middle Ages. He is in agreement on using Hermetism to describe the religio-philosophical writings of the Hermetica. However, according to Hanegraaff, despite there being some important works of occult science—the astrological, theurgical, and alchemical writings—attributed to Hermes Trismegistus, many were not, and hence it isn't appropriate to label them Hermeticism. For simplicity, however, we will use the term Hermeticism to refer to the broad scope of Hermetic occultism, and Hermetism when referring specifically to the theological works of the Hermetica.

The word Hermetic is used in a number of ways, all of which say something about the nature of Hermes himself Hermetic is used to describe subjects of an abstruse, occult, esoteric, or mysterious nature, and also applies specifically to the teachings of Hermes. A Hermetic seal is used when something needs to be airtight and protected from external influence, an important aspect of operative laboratory alchemy, and a powerful metaphor for internal alchemy. A person living a Hermetic life is someone that is adapted to reclusiveness and solitude, study and contemplation. All of these meanings are important within the context of Hermetic and alchemical studies, for the mysteries transmitted through Hermes and the path to gnosis, the knowledge of the Soul, are best approached in a Hermetic way, with devotion, study, contemplation, sufficient solitude, and in a way that protects the process from external influence that might corrupt it.

The Path Ahead

This book is arranged into three parts, each one building on the last. In part I we will answer the question of what exactly Hermeticism is and why it matters to us today, particularly if we are in any way involved in the occult arts, and even more so for those of us who want to live spiritually oriented and creative lives, in tune with the cosmos and awakened to our innermost potential. To begin with, a brief overview is given of the various ancient texts that make up the Hermetica, including the Corpus Hermeticum and the Emerald Tablet, which are fundamental to an understanding of the tradition. Throughout the book, passages from these profound teachings of Hermes will be drawn upon to show the ways in which they initiate us into gnosis and liberate the imagination. Then we will follow the arc of Hermeticism's development, from its distant past up to

the current day, finishing up with a look at the three branches of Hermeticism: astrology, theurgy, and alchemy.

Part II provides a look at the Hermetic story of creation and ordering of the cosmos, and how this relates to alchemical philosophy. This is a system for understanding the relationship between consciousness and matter, between the individual soul and the cosmos, and between the Creator and the created. Alchemical theory is fundamental to any true understanding of alchemy, whether one is practicing in a laboratory, or as a spiritual and creative process.

Finally, in part III, we will take a journey with the wandering stars, those seven inner planets of the solar system whose archetypes are alive within each and every one of us. The purpose of this voyage is to saturate the mind with planetary myths and correspondence that will speak to the unconscious and catalyze inner transformation. Each of the seven planets has its own set of indispensable lessons to impart to those of us on the path of self-initiation, and they are the key to unlocking the seven chakras for the liberation of creative potential. As these pages are written in an initiatory manner, the reader will interpret them based on their own personal level of initiation, and any ideas that spark the inspiration and ignite that inner alchemical fire should be investigated further, with intuition as your guide. These chapters should be digested slowly, with plenty of space taken for personal reflection and integration in Body, Mind, and Soul.

May these teachings be an inspiration and a light to you on your path, as they continue to be on mine, stoking the flames of transformation; liberating your imagination to create a mystical and expansive life; and instilling in you a deep appreciation for the teachings of Hermes and all that they have to offer humanity at this crucial time in our evolution. In the words of Virgil, sic itur ad astra, "thus one goes to the stars."

***

This book has endeavored to provide a historical foundation for the Hermetic teachings, and to extract their essence through a philosophical system that serves as a means of deepening one's personal relationship with the Divine. I have attempted to present, as clearly as possible, the Hermetic cosmogony and the journey of the soul from its involution into matter through its evolution to gnosis. Further, throughout this work I have introduced the basis for Creative Alchemy, the aim of which is the liberation of the imagination and the realization of one's fullest creative potential. A fundamental understanding of alchemy's underlying philosophies as well as a thorough comprehension of the planets and their correspondences is the foundation of this practice.

For those who find themselves on a Hermetic path of self-initiation, or perhaps just curious about the subject, this book is a resource and a guide, but by no means is it the final word on these matters. One must immerse oneself in both practical creative work and devout study of contemporary and traditional sources, as well as form a personal understanding of the material. In particular, reading the theological and philosophical Hermetica is essential, for they are in themselves an initiation into gnosis. As concerns the technical Hermetica and arcane alchemical texts, there is much to be gained in their reading even if understanding is evasive, for in between the lines of obscurity the truth will be revealed in time. Yet it is not enough to remain in the mental realm. We must also engage emotionally and physically in order to integrate these teachings and begin the work of transmuting planetary energies into their most exalted and noble forms. Like the trinity of Body, Mind, and Soul, we are tasked with the integration of feeling, thought, and action, a union that will elevate us as individuals and form a bridge between our internal healing and its externalization, by which we share our unique gifts with the world.

At the core of the Hermetic teachings is the idea that all of life is part of one, seamless field of creation, ever-changing and yet eternal. In the solitary work of self-realization, we must not lose

sight of our obligation to the betterment of all life, which is to say consciousness itself. Our individual contribution will be entirely unique, and through continually purifying and refining the content of our bodies, minds, and souls, we can aspire to endow our gifts with authenticity and a spiritual potency that will be of great benefit not only to ourselves, but to others as well.

Do not be mistaken that there is an end to this work, nor let yourself be deceived into believing in an ultimate perfection; it is a life-long process, and yet there are moments of triumph over the vices and corruptions that have enslaved us, and even more moments of failure. With the victories come great powers, and great responsibility. The only perfection that can be attained exists in this moment, in its unbroken completion. While we strive for perfection in our alchemical work, we come to know that true perfection lies in how clearly we can relate to the All-That-Is, which exists in eternal perfection. We each have our seasons of light and dark, and mustn't be discouraged when all of our hard work seems to be for nought. Rather, what happens through a devoted practice of Hermeticism and Creative Alchemy is that we develop resilience to the hardships of life and a deeply fixed faith in our eternal and true Self. This is the true lapis philosophorum, the elixir of life, equivalent to Hermetic gnosis, and the means by which you may perform the most sublime transmutations in your life.

Is it possible to create the philosopher's stone through one's very own creative process, without the use of any laboratory equipment? In my next book, I will rely on the foundational understanding of Hermeticism's roots developed here to explore a practical approach to the art of Creative Alchemy. Hopefully, after our immersive journey through the planetary spheres, we have begun to see how these energies relate to the creative process as well as to our personal stories and experiences in life; inspiring the imagination and opening up the possibility of that Hermetic ideal of deenergizing the seven rulers to reach the eighth sphere of creative freedom. In that book, we will look at how artists throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries attempted to liberate the imagination from societal constraints; how they sought to reestablish the subjective as a valid lens with which to view reality; and how the role of the unconscious in art came into focus and found its efflorescence in Surrealism. During this sojourn we will see how alchemy infused itself into the minds of these artists and found expression both metaphorically and practically. From here we will take an immersive journey through the magnum opus, the "Great Work," exploring the four stages of the nigredo, albedo, citrinitas, and rubedowhich we have touched on in this book—and applying these to the creative process in a way that results in both inner and outer transmutation.

While engaging with the alchemical opus, this first book can be referred to as a reference when seeking deeper insight into the planetary archetypes that you are working with in your own process of transmutation, as well as to the fundamental philosophy underlying the alchemical opus. After ascending the Hermetic tree from its roots and into its vastly sprawling branches, and after traveling from the boundless abyss to making the journey through the seven spheres, your mind has been saturated with the teachings of Hermes and the multivalent qualities of the spheres. As you begin to recognize the ways in which these energies are working through your life, finding your own personal myth within theirs, you will begin to unlock their secret powers that reside in the chakras. This experience will help to inform you as you embark on the magnum opus to not only liberate your imagination, but to purify, through the processes of alchemy, the seven essential layers of your being so that your authenticity and unique gifts shine through in whatever you create.

In my own life, uniting the Hermetic path with art has been a richly rewarding experience, instilling within me an unwavering trust in my creative process, as well as the ups and downs of life. It was the means by which I made it through the long, dark night of the soul, precipitated by a terrifying encounter with the prima materia. This was a near-death experience and simultaneous kundalini awakening that left me shattered and searching desperately for solid ground. All of my usual methods

of self-regulating seemed to exacerbate my separation and fear. Incidentally, it was at this time that my journey with oil painting and my alchemical initiation began. I learned that I could transmute my pain through visual symbols, and by uniting art and alchemy, I was able to reassemble myself after a complete psychological dismemberment and separation of soul and spirit. Thus commenced many years of gazing into the alchemical retort in my "lab"—my studio—and a slow digestion of the secret matter I had retrieved from the abyss. I understood that every painting was an alchemical process, and I treated the canvas like an empty retort in which I placed the material to be rectified or transmuted. When I wasn't painting, I was reading everything I could get my hands on about Hermeticism—alchemy, magic, astrology, Qabalah, and tarot; as well as mythology, meditation, and psychology. Hermeticism seemed to be the key that unlocked all of the spiritual traditions and brought them to union.

My practice of Hermeticism and alchemy has led to a deeply intentional existence from which my creative expression has blossomed in ways I never could have foreseen when I started out. On this magical-alchemical path the separation between subjective and objective reality dissolves, allowing for a continual dialogue between the inner and outer experience. This work has taught me the art of listening, so that in every instance the unconscious voice may be heard; to look into the ineffable face of the mystery and extract the essence of an idea, and then to bring it into form. Dreams, subtle impressions, signs from nature, and subliminal messages become part of a rich tapestry to gaze upon in self-reflection, and from which to draw upon for subject matter. When combined with planetary magic and mythology, this can lead to some unexpected, surreal, and revelatory results. <>

THE PRAGUE CIRCLE: FRANZ KAFKA, EGON ERWIN KISCH, MAX BROD, FRANZ WERFEL AND PAUL KORNFELD AND THEIR LEGACIES by Stephen James Shearier [Academica Press, 9781680537765]

A group of mostly Jewish German-speaking writers, the Prague Circle included some of the most significant figures in modern Western literature. Its core members, Franz Kafka, Max Brod, Franz Werfel, Paul Kornfeld, and Egon Erwin Kisch, are renowned for their seminal dramas, lyric poetry, novels, short stories, and essays on aesthetics. The writers of the Prague Circle were bound together not by a common perspective or a particular ideology, but by shared experiences and interests. From their vantage point in the Bohemian capital during the early decades of the twentieth century, they witnessed first-hand the collapse of the familiar and predictable, if not entirely comfortable, monarchical old order and the ascent of an anxious and uncertain modern era that led inexorably to fascism, militarization, and war. In order to deal with their new challenges, they considered strategies as diverse and oppositional as the members of the Prague Circle themselves. Their responses were shaped to various degrees by Catholicism, Zionism, expressionism, activism, anti-activism, international solidarity with the working class, and transcendence. Stephen Shearier explores how these authors aligned themselves on the spectrum of the Activism Debate, which preceded the much studied Expressionist Debate by a generation. This study examines the critical reception of these influential literary figures to determine how their legacies have been shaped.

CONTENTS

While the works of Franz Kafka and Franz Werfel have for generations been literary treasures for audiences throughout the world, these writers have been considered by most readers as having stood outside and independent of their time. Traditionally they have been treated by literary critics sui generis, that is, as autonomous, i.e. isolated from any context. It has not been taken into account, for example, that Kafka and Werfel along with their fellow Prague writers Egon Erwin Kisch, Paul Kornfeld, and Max Brod were for a number of years in close personal and professional contact with one another, that their cross-germinating works were a collective response to a specific historically-determined, troubled milieu and that they were members of a large seminal group of writers known as the Prague Circle.

While for decades works by members of the Prague Circle have enjoyed wide success, their popularity has been by no means constant. Paul Kornfeld, for example, was acclaimed by his contemporary critics and general audiences alike as the best dramatist of his generation, only subsequently to fall into nearly total obscurity. In the 1940s and 1950s Franz Werfel achieved extraordinary success in the U.S. but is virtually forgotten today both here and in German-speaking countries. While for nearly a century Kafka has been recognized in the West for his subtle and genial exposure of the ubiquitous oppressive social apparatus, he was considered anathema in the East.

Is this phenomenon of waxing and waning popularity simply the result of mutable literary tastes or does it perhaps have something to do with the serendipitous circumstances of professional and popular reception? The argument posited here is that artistic value is by no means

intrinsic but rather the cumulative time-dependent result of unpredictable forces. Grounded on the premises that 1) the writers of the Prague Circle were indelibly influenced by the particular set of sociological, political and cultural conditions extant in the milieu located chronologically and aesthetically between Impressionism and Expressionism and that 2) the "meaning" of art is created in large part through its reception, which in turn is the product of particular historical contexts and the concomitant matrices of their respective variables, this examination attempts to demonstrate how our understanding of the works by the Prague Circle has been mediated by their historical reception.

Since it is assumed along with Deleuze and Guattari that the relationship between a work and its interpretation is not necessarily informed by the relationship between signifier and signified, but is rather an infinite series of ruptures, of "deterritorializations,"1 the objective of this investigation is to determine the ways in which changing perspectives in the reception of the Prague Circle over time and across national boundaries reflect the relativity of literary aesthetic value judgments. It is not my desire to weigh in on the debate around aesthetic merit, i.e. as to whether said merit is intrinsic or

determined by variables such as market value, or specific time and place, etc. It will become obvious, however, that the reception of works by the writers of the Prague Circle over the course of the last 100 years has had a substantial, undeniable influence on the viability of these writers for both scholarly and lay audiences in the 21st century.

While the intention of this study is to be demonstrative, illustrative, the attempt has been made to ascertain the sociological and political effects on the critical and popular reception of the works by the Prague Circle in German- and English-speaking countries from the time of their publication through the first decades of the 21th century. To be clear: due to the inexorably growing and ever-changing academic landscape, this study could never aspire to be comprehensive and exhaustive.

Opposed to psychological interpretations dominant in Germany and France,2 and to the 'text immanent' approach employed by the New Critics prevalent in the U.S. since the 1950s,3 this study is conceived as a reading of readings. Based on Jauss' notion of 'Rezeptionsästhetik,'4 it proceeds to establish a 'history of reception.' Structurally it is designed to determine the various ways in which the members of the Prague Circle responded to extant conditions during the production of their works and to evaluate the extent to which our understanding of these works has been mediated by their reception over time.

In order to demonstrate how meaning is not merely a function of a literary work's representation of the "real world" in a literary work, but is created moreover by readers (general audience and professional critics alike) in their respective historical and cultural contexts, reception will be traced through various epochs in both the German-speaking world and in the USA. The production of meaning will be considered furthermore in the context of what I refer to as the Activism Debate.

While observing similarities as well as differences with respect, e.g., to their epistemological method, their ontology, their teleology/ theology, and their positions regarding the polemics of activism, this study concludes that the writers of the Prague Circle, who were zealously engaged in both the theoretical treatment and practice of perception, were strongly influenced by the then-current philosophical method of phenomenology, cultivated in particular at the Charles University in Prague.

Quintessentially Expressionist, that is, characteristic of the artistic movement engendered by phenomenology, many of the works created by the Prague Circle were deliberately opened to infinite possibilities for interpretation. As such they require ever contemporary, that is, constantly updated interpretation as well as the utmost rigor in historical exegesis for their valorization.

It will be shown that through the multiplicity of possible meanings they have offered in their works the writers of the Prague Circle not only present an iconoclastic alternative to hegemonic methods of interpretation, but in their act of aesthetic liberation offer an irrefutable gesture of generosity.

The collective efforts by the Prague Circle manifest a distinctive tension brought on by the decline of Impressionism and the rise of Expressionism. The coincidence of the moribund Habsburg Empire and Berlin's emerging vitality was reflected by sometimes stark contradictions within the work of the Prague Circle, which on the one hand attempts desperately to salvage the old regime and on the other hand pushes ineluctably towards aesthetic pluralism and modernity. This modernist aspect of the Prague Circle (and the polyvalence of meaning it presents) lends itself readily to the dynamic made possible by reception theory. <>

Time and Presence in Art: Moments of Encounter (200–1600 CE) edited by Armin Bergmeier and Andrew Griebeler [Sense, Matter, and Medium, De Gruyter, 9783110720693]

This volume explores the relationship between temporality and presence in medieval artworks from the third to the sixteenth centuries. It is the first extensive treatment of the interconnections between medieval artworks' varied presences and their ever-shifting places in time. The volume begins with reflections on the study of temporality and presence in medieval and early modern art history. A second section presents case studies delving into the different ways medieval artworks once created and transformed their original viewers' experience of the present. These range from late antique Constantinople, early Islamic Jerusalem and medieval Italy, to early modern Venice and the Low Countries. A final section explores how medieval artworks remain powerful and relevant today. This section includes case studies on reconstructing presence in medieval art through embodied experience of pilgrimage, art historical research and museum education. In doing so, the volume provides a first dialog between museum educators and art historians on the presence of medieval artifacts. It includes contributions by Hans Belting, Keith Moxey, Rika Burnham and others.

CONTENTS

Index

'What Then is Time?' Present and Presence by Armin Bergmeier and Andrew Griebeler

An Introduction

Made in Abbasid Egypt between the mid-eighth and mid-ninth centuries, a tapestry icon currently in the Cleveland Museum of Art is today but a fragment. Now 53.3 ^ 80.7 centimeters but perhaps once twice as long, the slit-and-dovetailed woven tapestry panel shows two haloed Evangelists grasping books. They appear within bold crimson roundels against a lighter yellow background, adorned with a repeating pattern of medallions with floral crosses inside and between them. Triangles inscribed with stepped ribbons and botanical motifs zigzag in the dark outer borders. At the broken upper edge of the panel, scrolling vegetation fills a circular border enclosing a vivid red ground. Within its partial center, we see the bejeweled leg, arm, and crimson pillow of a throne while the white sleeve of its former occupant rests above it.

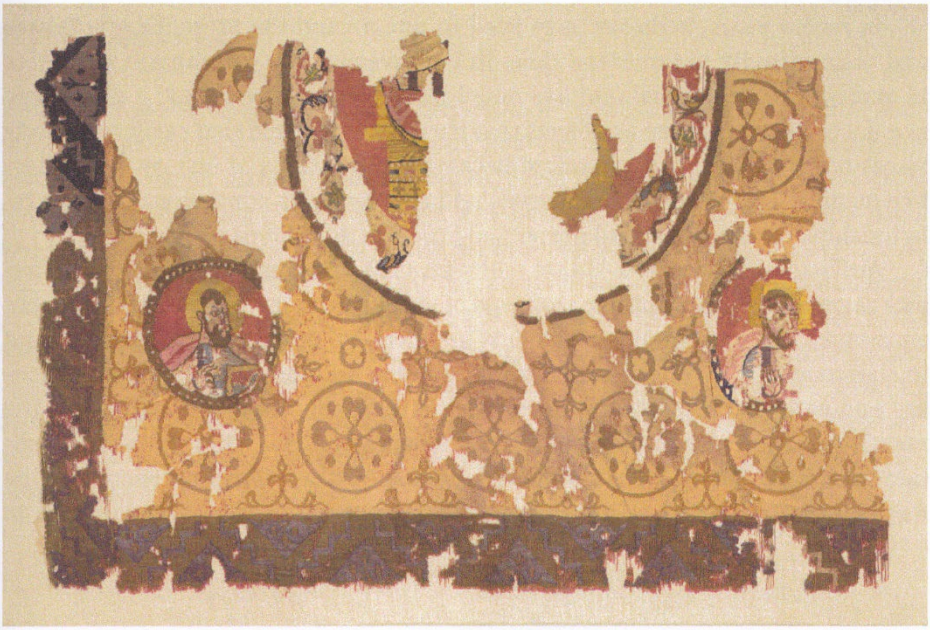


Fig. 0.1: Fragmentary textile icon with Christ in Glory (?) with Evangelists, slit-and dovetailed-tapestry weave, wool, Egypt, 750–850 CE, Cleveland Museum of Art. Purchase from the J. H. Wade Fund 1952.256. (https://www.clevelandart.org/art/1952.256.

The empty space that now opens within the central motif closes our access to the past, but at the same time, it actively invites viewers to fill it in. While artifacts appear to promise entry to what seems to be the past, they also withhold it. They thus become sites for present-day projections about what once was visible but is now lost. We can surmise that the large central roundel once portrayed Christ enthroned between the four celestial beings, a widespread visual mode for rendering a divine apparition.

This object was made in Egypt during the time of the Abbasid Caliphate ruling from Baghdad. More broadly, the textile panel is a product of the "Middle Ages." While we acknowledge that the Middle Ages are a construct of the discourses and institutions of the modern age, we are also aware of the necessity to differentiate and not obscure the particularities of time and place. An object, image, or building from a distant past or culture was made for different circumstances, uses, and audiences. Its makers had different conceptions of its relationship to their present — what is, to us, the past. This

situatedness in time is one of the two core concepts this volume aims to address. The second is the ability of artifacts to continuously exert their aesthetic presence in ever new present moments.

In recent years, scholars have tried to understand the presence of artifacts and their capacity to transcend time. In her investigation of temporal aesthetics in ancient art, Zainab Bahrani has noted that ancient images "had a diachronic presence; they were seen as objects that transcend time and that carry or embody traces of time itself. They therefore became foci of rituals of history and collective memory, of reinscriptions, burials and recoveries, in continuous dialogic relationships between past and present and present into the past."

Artifacts offer access to distant moments in the past and the future while forever remaining tied to multiple moments of encounter in the present. Today potent encounters can happen in museums, in architectural spaces, on pilgrimages, and in classrooms. This volume explores the presence and the temporality of premodern and early modern artifacts in relation to those moments of encounter in the now. Present and presence are not just etymologically linked; they mutually constitute each other. They derive their power from each other. When we encounter the fragmentary tapestry panel in the Cleveland Art Museum, whether it is on display, in storage, or even online, we recognize a trace of the past and its differences. We imagine the tapestry panel's past presence in and through its variable presences in our own moment in time. We might also ask ourselves if this tapestry was meant to depict a present state or if it anticipated a future situation. In part 1 of this introduction, Armin Bergmeier argues that it was, in fact, a desire to depict a present situation and not a future apparition at the End of Days that motivated this and similar images in the early medieval period. In the second part, Andrew Griebeler unpacks the various approaches scholars have taken to study the presence of artifacts. Following the introduction, the contributions in this volume address both of these interconnected questions of the present time and an artifact's presence: first, how medieval and early modern societies conceived of and pictured their present; and second, how artifacts exerted their presence on beholders, thereby embodying ever new iterations of present "realities" from the distant past until today.

Scope and Overview

The contributions in this volume consider an artifact's presence in terms of its temporality. Time, the present in particular, is a frame for the horizon of conscious experience, as is so clearly articulated in Augustine's thoughts on time. The contributions here focus on case studies drawn from what we might call the long Middle Ages in western Eurasia from the "end" of antiquity to the beginning of the early modern era. Over the past three decades, scholarship has increasingly come to terms with the limitations and exclusions in conventional histories of medieval art. As museums and the academy continue to address these historical legacies, the Middle Ages remain essential to the critical reassessment of our current thinking on objects and images. Regarding works purely as "objects" for "our" gaze, even conserving and displaying them, can reenact the violence of iconoclasm, colonialism, and secularization by denying them their proper audience, context, ontology, meaning, and use. The consideration of medieval conceptions of the varying presences and presents of objects and images in this volume can therefore help to reveal some of these modern misconceptions. Medieval concepts of presence and the present in artworks can further inspire a broader rethinking of the nature of artistic production and aesthetic response today. The contributions in this volume address the interrelatedness between the time depicted or perceived in an artwork and the production of presence. They investigate both the (present) temporality of the objects and their beholders' conceptions of time. The volume includes authors who not only follow academic approaches in the strict sense but also focus on real experiences inside and outside of museums today.

The contributions in **TIME AND PRESENCE IN ART: MOMENTS OF ENCOUNTER** together take broad views and interdisciplinary approaches to the topic, including art historical, historical, museological, and educational studies, which combine traditional academic scholarship with practice-oriented approaches. The volume opens with the section "Temporality, Presence, and Writing Art History" that introduces the topics of time and presence in art historical research. While Keith Moxey's work exemplifies the malleability of time in a transcultural perspective, Hans Belting looks back on his own work and on the wider historiography of presence-related scholarship in an interview with Armin Bergmeier. Papers in the second section, "Time and Presence in the Middle Ages," focus on the ways medieval images represent and frame concepts of time, addressing how images picture the present at the moment of inception or thereafter. The contributions in the sections "Encountering Past Presents" and "Experiencing Presence in Museum Education" further explore the presence of artifacts in the past and today.

The contributions in the second section, "Time and Presence in the Middle Ages," engage with visual expressions of temporal consciousness and representations of timekeeping. Heba Mostafa discusses the temporality of the Dome of the Rock. The concerns motivating the erection of the building have long been debated. Mostafa shows that early Islamic people used it in order to establish a link between the site and expectations around the eschatological future. Sarah Griffin shows how the fourteenth-century visionary Opicinus de Canistris inscribed his present within an innovative and idiosyncratic mapping of cosmic and divine time scales. Simone Westermann investigates how developments in clockmaking and debates about the nature of time in the fourteenth century inform a depiction of Genesis in the Paduan Baptistery, which was then adapted to also serve as a funerary monument. Matthew Champion examines how different artworks made in the fifteenth-century Low Countries created a plurality of overlapping and even dissonant presents. These explorations together show how past image makers created multiple presents. An awareness of these processes further allows us to reconsider how we instantiate a multitude of present temporalities in our work.

The volume's third and fourth sections look at how art historical and museological approaches address how people in the past and today experience the presence of artworks. The contributions in "Encountering Past Presents" explore the links between presence and time in the past. Stefan Hanb's contribution on modes of visualizing the battle of Lepanto shows how Venetians bent time and used artworks anachronically, actualizing older paintings (such as by Jacopo Tintoretto) and merging images of the biblical past with the historical present (as in Paolo Veronese's Allegory of the Battle of Lepanto). Benjamin Anderson discusses the state of melancholy that derives from the realization of the separation of the past from the present. He explores the affective nature of "uncanny encounters" resulting from the overlap of distinct temporalities. Anderson further demonstrates how medieval Byzantine and modern Western texts use prophecies in order to link present and future. Prophecies provide information about the future, but they derive it exclusively from events and signs observed in the present, thereby linking these two temporalities. Tanja Hinterholz spotlights the connection between movement and aesthetic experience. She shows that the physical position and movement of a visitor to Matted Giovannetti's frescoed chapels in the papal palace at Avignon is vital for understanding its unique spatial and temporal orientations and for approaching its various painted presences. Ivan Foletti describes his Migrating Art Historians project, examining how the physical demands and experiences of pilgrimage transform the contemporary art historian's understanding of medieval monuments built for pilgrims.

This exploration of immersive research practices forms the transition to the last section, "Experiencing Presence in Museum Education," which examines our encounter with artifacts and their presence in modern museums. The contributions mobilize strategies and methods from museum education in order to illustrate how presence is generated during the encounter of beholders and artworks. Nathaniel Prottas's article examines scholarship from the field of museum

education to argue for its special ability to help visitors experience the presence of artifacts. Rika Burnham demonstrates her method of dialogical teaching in the museum through a reenactment of an encounter between museum goers and Piero dells Francesca's painting of the Crucifixion in the Frick Collection. The volume concludes with a discussion between Burnham and Prottas about the values, challenges, and the potential for a dialogical approach to museum education. The conversation also addresses broader questions of how art objects, whose moment of inception has long passed, can retain their relevance and presence for us today. We hope that, along with the other contributions in this volume, the transcript of Burnham and Prottas's discussion at the conference in Leipzig opens the topic up to a wider audience and a broad spectrum of future academic and nonacademic engagements. <>

Søren Kierkegaard: Discourses and Writings on Spirituality Introduced and Translated by Christopher B. Barnett [Classics of Western Spirituality. Paulist Press, 9780809106486]

Søren Kierkegaard (1813-1855) is primarily known as a philosopher, although much of his authorship was explicitly dedicated to spiritual growth, or "upbuilding." This volume redresses this situation. Included are some of Kierkegaard most important spiritual writings, ranging from his early "upbuilding discourses," which gently encourage the reader to consider a life lived in and for God, to his late broadsides against the Danish state church, which shock in their condemnation of bourgeois Christianity. In between are a variety of pieces in which he develops his spiritual insights and methods. His discourses on the lilies in the field and the birds of the air treat the natural world as an image of the human being's spiritual condition. His analysis of the human self in The Sickness unto Death uses abstract philosophical language in order to make a spiritual point—namely, that happiness stems from the self's willingness to find "rest" in God. In every case, Kierkegaard establishes himself as one of the key figures in modern Christian spirituality.

Christopher Barnett is an associate professor in the Department of Theology and Religious Studies at Villanova University and the author of many writings on Kierkegaard. He holds a DPhil from the University of Oxford.

CONTENTS

The great Austrian philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889-1951) once remarked to a friend, "Kierkegaard was by far the most profound thinker of the last century. Kierkegaard was a saint." Just what Wittgenstein meant by this statement is unclear. After all, there is not a direct correlation between intellectual accomplishment and holiness. We do not say a thinker is excellent on account of holiness, nor do we understand holiness as a guarantee of intellectual excellence. When the two do seem to coincide—as in the case of a Thomas Aquinas or an Edith Stein—we may very well appreciate the concurrence. And yet, Thomas's Summa Theol^gica remains widely read today not due to the saint's religious virtue but, rather, to his philosophical and theological insight.

How, then, should Wittgenstein's claim about Kierkegaard be taken? Perhaps the juxtaposition of "thinker" and "saint" is instructive enough, for, as this volume will demonstrate, Kierkegaard was a thinker deeply concerned with the problem of being a saint—that is to say, with the problem of holiness.

What is holiness? Is holiness possible for human beings? If so, what are its characteristics? What implications does it have for one's social life? Both in his published and unpublished writings, these are questions to which Kierkegaard directly and indirectly returned. Moreover, he dedicated a significant portion of his authorship to fostering holiness, though, as will be seen, he preferred the term upbuilding. Thus it appears that Wittgenstein actually gets to the heart of the matter: Kierkegaard's holiness, however it be construed, cannot be separated from his willingness to think about and think through holiness.

The purpose of this volume is to acquaint readers with this fundamental aspect of Kierkegaard's thought. Included here are some of Kierkegaard's most important spiritual writings, ranging from his early "upbuilding discourses;' which gently encourage the reader to consider a life lived in and for God, to his late broadsides against the Danish state church, which shock in their condemnation of bourgeois Christianity. In between are a variety of pieces that see Kierkegaard develop his spiritual insights and methods. His discourses on the lilies of the field and the birds of the air are lyrical parables that treat the natural world as an image of the human being's spiritual condition. His analysis of the human self in The Sickness unto Death uses philosophical language in order to make a spiritual point—namely, that happiness stems from the self's willingness to find "rest" in God. In every case, Kierkegaard establishes himself as one of the key figures in modern Christian spirituality.

***

KIERKEGAARD'S PLACE IN THE HISTORY OF CHRISTIAN SPIRITUALITY

Spirituality has been defined as the pursuit of "life integration" by way of a process of "self-transcendence toward the ultimate value one perceives." Thus particular doctrines underlie every spirituality—for they articulate the "ultimate value" in question—but spirituality itself is not a mere

set of doctrines or rules. Rather, it involves the existential application of such principles, whether they concern "the Transcendent, the flourishing of humanity, or some other value."

With this in mind, "Christian spirituality" refers to that spirituality whose "horizon of ultimate value is the triune God revealed in Jesus Christ and communicated through his Holy Spirit, and the project of self-transcendence is the living of the paschal mystery within the context of the church community." The person concerned with Christian spirituality, then, will have certain presuppositions about who God is. Her task, however, will not be to elucidate and to expand on those presuppositions—as it is in theology—but to relate them to who she is and to what she wants in life. On this understanding, Christianity is always already more than a cognitive assent or an interior "feeling." It is a mode de vie, which involves political, sexual, social, and spiritual matrices.

As a thinker, Kierkegaard has often been labeled as an "existentialist" or, more forcefully, as the "father of existentialism." As Robert Solomon explains, "It is generally acknowledged that if existentialism is a `movement at all, Kierkegaard is its prime mover" Existentialism can be defined as a way of philosophizing that stresses the importance of the human subject, not only as a thinker, but also as a concrete, acting individual confronted by a variety of problems—for example, the experience of freedom in a world that often seems hostile, even absurd. But this is, doubtless, an extensive definition, and, as Simon Blackburn notes, "existentialism" is not so much a unified philosophy as a "loose title for various philosophies that emphasize certain common themes." Thus existentialist themes crop up in writers of various stripes, from the ontological ruminations of Martin Heidegger to the probing of meaninglessness by Jean-Paul Sartre. In other cases, what seems to be "existentialism" may not be that at all. Thomas Merton once observed that the differences between existentialism and mysticism are not always clear-cut, for both focus "on the ineluctable fact of death, on man's need for authenticity, and on a kind of spiritual liberation" Similarly, James Collins argues that existentialism cannot be reduced to a modern phenomenon, given that it has "striking parallels" in thinkers such as Augustine of Hippo and Blaise Pascal. With this in mind, it is worth adding that Collins does not view Kierkegaard as an existentialist per se but instead as one who, along with Friedrich Nietzsche and Edmund Husserl, strongly "contributed to the current of thought from which existentialism stems."

Identifying Kierkegaard with "existentialism." then, is hardly a straightforward matter. It may be that the very themes that Kierkegaard bequeathed to existentialism are better understood in light of Christian spirituality, since a number of Kierkegaard's most cherished ideas and motifs follow the "contours of Christian spirituality." Lawrence S. Cunningham and Keith J. Egan maintain that "any authentic Christian spirituality" must possess each of these general features: (1) an emphasis on Christianity as a "way of life." rather than "an abstract philosophy or a code of beliefs"; (2) a thematization of the Christian way of life as discipleship, understood, in particular, as the following of Jesus Christ; (3) a recognition that discipleship is not purely an individual matter, but also entails interpersonal involvement; (4) a stress on the reception of the Eucharist; (5) a sensitivity to the role of the Holy Spirit in the life of discipleship; and (6) an openness to the world, rather than a longing for a "shield from the exigent realities around us" Kierkegaard's authorship displays each of these qualities. The upbuilding writings, in particular, might be taken as manifestly spiritual. And yet, even Kierkegaard's more philosophical works, many of which are seen as existentialism's loci classici, either highlight or, at least, hint at the contours of Christian spirituality. Hence, rather than portion out a "philosophical" and a "religious" Kierkegaard, it is better to view his authorship as a whole, which, at any juncture, is capable of moving from irony to upbuilding.

Whatever the case, the persistence of spiritual themes in Kierkegaard's authorship raises the question, Where do they come from? In other words, if thinkers such as Kant and Hegel form the background of Kierkegaard's philosophical output, who are the key sources behind Kierkegaard's

spiritual writings? Answering this question will not only better situate Kierkegaard in the history of Christian spirituality, but, eventually, will also bring his own contribution to Christian spirituality into sharper relief.

***

In closing, it seems appropriate (if also ironic) to register Kierkegaard's disdain for the kind of material presented here. He writes in an 1848 journal entry,

> What I have to say may not be taught; by being taught it turns into something entirely different. What I need is a man who does not gesticulate with his arms up in a pulpit or with his fingers upon a podium, but a person who gesticulates with his entire personal existence [Existents], with the willingness in every danger to will to express in action precisely what he teaches.... Precisely this is the profound untruth in all modern teaching, that there is no notion at all of how thought is influenced by the fact that the one presenting it does not dare to express it in action, that in this very way the flower of the thought or the heart of the thought vanishes and the power of the thought disappears.

Scholars often ascribe such complaints to Kierkegaard's opposition to the Hegelian system and its concomitant model of philosophy as objective science—an interpretation that is not without merit. And yet, to prioritize this reading is to suggest that Kierkegaard is best defined by what he is against rather than what he is for. It is to treat him as a detractor rather than as an advocate.

Gradually, however, the notion that Kierkegaard is a mere voice of existentialist angst and protest is fading. Since the 1980s, increasing attention has been paid to Kierkegaard's category of ogbyggelse, and there has been a resurgence of interest in Kierkegaard's mystical-cum-Pietist sources and their influence on his thinking. To say the least, then, Kierkegaard's connection to and treatment of Christian spirituality is a live issue in the scholarly world, and the upshot is a fuller understanding of the Dane's work.

I hope this book will contribute to this ongoing development, demonstrating that Kierkegaard wants to provoke existential transformation and to foster Christian holiness. Moreover, in devising and effecting such a project, Kierkegaard finds himself not at the margins of Western thought but, rather, as part of an intellectual tradition that stretches back to antiquity, finds its full flowering in the Christian era, and remains prominent to this day. This is the tradition of spiritual writing, and it boasts some of the most important thinkers in Western history, from Plato and Augustine to Meister Eckhart and Teresa of Avila. To the extent that this volume encourages one to situate Kierkegaard among their kind, it will have met its aim. <>

Figures of Possibility: Aesthetic Experience, Mysticism, and the Play of the Senses by Niklaus Largier [Cultural Memory in the Present, Stanford University Press, 9781503631045]

From medieval contemplation to the early modern cosmopoetic imagination, to the invention of aesthetic experience, to nineteenth-century decadent literature, and to early-twentieth century essayistic forms of writing and film, Niklaus Largier shows that mystical practices have been reinvented across the centuries, generating a notion of possibility with unexpected critical potential. Arguing for a new understanding of mystical experience, Largier foregrounds the ways in which devotion builds on experimental practices of figuration in order to shape perception, emotions, and thoughts anew. Largier illuminates how devotional practices are invested in the creation of

possibilities, and this investment has been a key element in a wide range of experimental engagements in literature and art from the seventeenth to the twentieth century, and most recently in forms of "new materialism." Read as a history of the senses and emotions, the book argues that mystical and devotional practices have long been invested in the modulating and reconfiguring of sensation, affects, and thoughts. Read as a book about practices of figuration, it questions ordinary protocols of interpretation in the humanities, and the priority given to a hermeneutic understanding of texts and cultural artifacts.

Review

"This is a truly original work, grounded in wonderfully wide and deep learning. It is also a profound reflection on the ethical life and the role figuration might play within it. There is nothing like it that I know of, nor could anyone without Largier's range of learning and depth of thought have written it." -- Amy Hollywood — *author of Acute Melancholia and Other Essays*

"**FIGURES OF POSSIBILITY** is a singular achievement, both as a work of breathtaking scholarship and as a new and exciting theory of aesthetic experience. The writing is exceptionally clear; the prose is passionate, beautiful, and compelling. Largier turns rigorous scholarship on medieval and early modern mysticism into a new approach to reading literature and aesthetic experience." -- Eric Santner — *author of Untying Things Together*

CONTENTS

This book originated with the observation that, against common characterizations, modern literary and philosophical engagements with earlier mystical traditions rarely foreground moments of belief, esoteric knowledge, or an extraordinary experience of the divine. Instead, the fascination driving these engagements—from the decadent writer Joris-Karl Huysmans to the composer John Cage and the artist Dan Flavin, from Ralph Waldo Emerson to Georg Lukas and Robert Musil, from Wassily Kandinsky to Georges Bataille, Simone Weil, Paul Celan, Clarice Lispector, and Gilles Deleuze—responds to the style and the ways in which mystics made use of figures and practices of figuration. They did so, surprisingly, both in drawing attention to figures as rhetorical devices that form and transform our perception and in accentuating that the figural itself reflects the ungraspable character of the worlds of which we are a part. The mystical texts fascinate because they emphasize the fundamentally figural shapes of these worlds and their resistance to gestures of understanding. And they fascinate with the practices of figuration that they use to modulate our senses and the ways we inhabit these worlds. In doing so, the mystics draw attention away from the affiliation of figuration with metaphorical meaning and allegory. Instead, the mystics insist on the disruptive force of figures and their effects and on the invention of styles that speak the unspeakable. In their use of the example of the apostle Paul's words, "It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me," the stakes are made clear. According to the interpretation of this exemplary point of reference in the Christian

mystical tradition and its emphasis on figure and form, the proposition is not to be taken as metaphor, as the fulfillment of a norm, or as a subjective commitment to imitation. Instead, it is understood in the sense that, through a radical dispossession, the divine cosmopoetic "matrix" (Jacob Bohme) in its concrete and dramatic incarnation has literally turned into the form of Paul's life.

I look at this not in terms of "belief" or of "religion" but of a radically negative, iconoclastic anthropology and theology, which foregrounds the convergence of figure, sensation, and imagination. Building on Paul's emphasis on dispossession and the "foolishness" of love, this has been recast, more recently, in Clarice Lispector's Passion according to G. H., where the loss of self to the "spasmic moments of the world" speaks through the mirroring eyes of a dying cockroach. I argue that in such concrete, deeply material, and often expansive dramatizations of the role of the figural and its relation to the production of meaning, these mystical moments resonate with what modernity calls aesthetic experience and experimentation. They do so in privileging the figural against the hermeneutic, the representational, and the figurative that Gilles Deleuze, to Lake another example, reaching back to Paul Cezanne, has portrayed in his book on Francis Bacon.

To be sure, all the so-called mystical texts also produce rich archives of meaning, of scriptural hermeneutics, and of allegorical reading. They insist at each stage, however, on the fact that grace, freedom, beauty, and ecstatic absorption are not experienced through the mediation of a self in the sphere of normative orders of knowledge or allegory. As the texts show, rather than argue, these moments come about in a dramatic exposure to and a participation in the formative figures that underlie, precede, bracket, and complicate all production of meaning. Paradoxically, in this view, the figural is not opposed to the literal. Instead, it is the (hyper-)literal in its expressivity and multiplicity, perceived in the form of what I call a figural realism or a radical figuralism that moves at the limits of discourse. Thus, the mystics also challenge established modes of distinguishing the real and the imaginary, the literal and the symbolic, the material and the spiritual, the self and the other. In fact, in their notion and use of figuration the mystics—and I count Clarice Lispector drawing attention to the abject beauty of the eyes of the cockroach among them—foreground the

concretely particular in its changing, often dissonant forms and effects, insisting on the force it carries and on its resistance to modes of abstraction and understanding. The seventeenth-century cobbler Jacob Bohme, to whom I return in Chapter 6, explicitly draws attention to this. Building on the medieval traditions I discuss in Chapters 3 to 5—and inspiring Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, William Blake, and Friedrich Schelling with his writings—Bbhme asks his readers to return to the figural, to the world of concrete forms in their emergence and in their effects as they move through us and as they resist capture in finite modes of being, understanding, and knowing. Instead, the emergence of figures and the metamorphoses of forms that unfold through and beyond us are, in his eyes, the place of a participation in the material and spiritual "imagination" that our worlds in their concrete expression happen to be. Partaking sensually, affectively, and intellectually, not representing or understanding in terms of meaning, knowledge, or subjective experience, is at the core of his thinking and of a practice of renunciation that makes the distinction of materialism and idealism obsolete.

What figuration draws attention to is the fact that everything, each sensation, each affect, and each thought, can be seen as not a thing or a moment of representation but a concrete instance of participation, an expression in which we partake underneath the determined modes of meaning, understanding, or being, thus abandoning those very determinations and rejoining, in the words of Alfred North Whitehead, "the passing flux of immediate things."' The mystics, radical formalists in this regard, reach down into the dark abyss of figural expression, attending to it, drawing on it, mobilizing it in its dissonances and consonances, abandoning themselves to it, and playing with it

against the attachments that make up our worlds. Looking at it from a different angle, they can be seen as foregrounding both the exposure to and the absorption into forms and effects that run up against the hermeneutic and metaphysical grasp of a11 knowledge—without being able to leave it behind entirely. In rearticulating this grasp in ever-richer variations of sublime allegorization and wild conceptualization, in engaging its sedimentations critically only to abandon them in the return to forms and figures, they dramatize perception and the production of meaning and create different spaces of living.

It is this emphasis on the figural that I take as the starting point in this book, insisting on the dramatic tension it establishes in relation to understanding and abstraction, hermeneutics and metaphysics—and foregrounding the realms of sensual, affective, and intellectual play this dramatization creates. The chapters that follow explore this provocative notion of the figural in mystical texts and in the literary and philosophical engagements with them. They examine the ways in which figures—sounds and words, images and things as they are used and perceived in what we often call spiritual exercises—have been taken as the rhetorical devices that support the range of possibilities and the styles of partaking, as well as sensual, aesthetic, and ethical transformations. Along these lines, practices of figuration relentlessly reinvent and reconfigure the realms of sensation, affect, imagination, and thought. In reconstructing the genealogy of these practices, I argue—against the assumption that mysticism necessarily implies a notion of "immediate experience," "pure presence," or "subjective feeling"—that "figure" and "figuration" must be seen as key terms. They allow us to think through and with the rhetoric of the mystics, their resonances in modern thought and literature, and their significance for a specific understanding of possibility in medieval and modernist contexts—and, most recently, in critical race theory and poetry with the work of Nathaniel Mackey, Fred Moten, and J. Kameron Carter.

This notion of figure, I argue throughout the book, allows us to conceive of possibility in a different way. It is to be seen as a form of virtuality that permeates the "real" in the very experience of figural effects and in the practices of figuration that undo seemingly stable, gendered, racialized, and other normative orders. Thus, figural practices challenge and suspend perspectives that focus on the possible in ontological or epistemological terms, locating it in determined forms of being or knowing.

The Austrian modernist writer Robert Musil—to whom I return in Chapter 7—draws attention to this notion of figure and figuration when he adopts rhetorical elements from a medieval mystical tradition in his novel The Man without Qualities. In a famous passage he introduces the protagonist as a "man without qualities," an expression he borrows from the medieval philosopher and mystic Meister Eckhart. Shortly thereafter, he talks of the protagonist, still without a name, as a person with a "sense of possibility." Strikingly, Musil deploys a notion of possibility that does not derive from an understanding of possibilities as potentialities (an apple seed that will turn into a tree), as virtual realities (that supplement and transform the real), or as forms of utopian or messianic reconciliation. Instead, he sees possibilities—in conversation with mystical texts and with the scientific interest in perception around 1900—as emerging from a "sense" that is open to the slight, even slightest, modifications of sedimented orders of perception. In his writings, both literary and essayistic, Musil points to the fact that such modifications emerge in interactions with figures that have effects on the malleable shape of ourselves and our worlds. According to him, this malleable shape of humans—he speaks of "human formlessness" and of the plasticity of man—comes into view in encounters with what will be called "figures" in this book. To put it bluntly, according to Musil, in our encounters with the world we do not just see and feel things in either an immediate or a mediated way; instead, the things and environments come to us as figures and textures of figures, as shapes that assert themselves in acting on us, and as artifacts that materially embody our history—something that the German word Wirklichkeit, derived from wirken, "to be effective," reflects in its opposition to the ontological and epistemological frame that the term "reality" suggests. In acting as figures, these

textures and shapes at first neither mean nor mediate anything that could be determined. Instead, Musil's "man without qualities" is the one who, in his or her lack of determining qualities, has a "sense" for the figural encounters—and for the sphere of possibilities they make emerge before they turn into sedimented orders of signification and meaning.

According to Musil, human shapes and their changes can be seen—and studied in literature, particularly in the essay and the novel—as a result of figural effects and practices of figuration that give a specific life, a specific historical form to the soul as it partakes in the world. What Musil draws attention to—also in his engagement with contemporary science,

psychology, and philosophy is the observation that a film, a house we see, a handshake, the atmospheric conditions we enter, always function not just as a neutral environment but as a figural setting, a form that acts on us, that we can explore in its effects, and that we can play with in ways of attending to it. Most important, his observations suggest that the figural effects, styles of encounter, and affordances modulate and animate our senses, our affects, and, more generally, our perception in ways that precede our understanding and our conceptual grasp of a world.

Figures and figural arrangements—a row of houses, a car accident, a view along a street, a first touch of two hands—do not just communicate some feeling or meaning that can be known. They do not just create an atmosphere that can be felt and understood. Instead, figures produce effects and differential intensities that precede and resist all mimetic assimilation in sensation, affect, imagination, and thought. Figure refers to what strikes us and makes us part of it. Mimetic assimilation, however, refers to the series of similes, analogies, and concepts that respond to this moment of striking. Think of the sound of a bird. It strikes us as we are sitting there, disrupting our world and making us part of something else. Only then it takes shape as a "song" in sensual, affective, and cognitive forms, each of them at first nothing else than a mode of resemblance that, in fitting a pattern or Gestalt, structures our recognition: a melodic sound, a pleasant feeling, a name for a bird and for the feeling that arises. These are what I call mimetic assimilations in the deployment of a world of meaning. Thus, to take an example from Musil's novel, the handshake in a scene where Ulrich, the "man without qualities," meets his cousin Diotima for the first time triggers a broad range of sensations, feelings, and thoughts. Indeed, the handshake quickly translates into the imaginary world of comparisons and similes that allow him and the narrator to picture and understand movements and constellations of sensations, affects, and thoughts that follow. Taken in itself, however, the figure and its effect, the moments of differential intensity, precede and underlie the production of similes, evoking the realization that the assimilation in sensation, affect, and meaning can never exhaust it. This is what makes the handshake not only a meaningful thing or an event but also a figure that, in acting on Ulrich, puts the entire world and its history in a state of both absorption and suspension: absorption in the figural effects that simultaneously express and disrupt a world, suspension in the possibilities of assimilation that come to nest in the historically shaped textures of it. Similarly, Marcel Proust writes of the effects of a "good book." It is, he insists, "something special, something unforeseeable, and is made up not of the sum of all previous masterpieces but of something which the most thorough assimilation ... would not enable" us "to discover."

Beyond the series of assimilations, that is, the chains of similitude and comparison they unlock, figures produce moments of disruption, which, in their force, are nothing else than the very act, the sheer fact of participation in their effects. Figures do not evoke only chains of similes and analogies; forms of assimilation and understanding; or the exploration of possible feelings, sensations, and thought. Underneath all this, the figural effects take possession and give shape to what we are before we know or guess what they might mean, breaking with the real and turning the seemingly determined historical moment into an open space of possibility. In disrupting the textures of meaning, their movements break with the known and the knowable orders of the world and open

the perspective that—in Musil's simple words, which are also the words of the "fools" who speak up against the normative orders—it might all be otherwise or "just as well."

Musil's "sense of possibility" is the sense that lets itself be moved by this very disruption. It is the sense that sits on the threshold of the disruption by a figural effect and that unlocks a pull into a world of similes, comparisons, and analogies, which then provide us with meaning. At the same time, it is the sense that, in the recognition that neither the similes nor the conceptual abstractions ever fully grasp the figure, pulls us back into the figural realm and opens a path into a world of endless experimentation. This threshold is the space from which possibilities, according to Musil, emerge.

Similes, analogies, and concepts tend to eclipse the figures and their effects. The former give shape to the worlds we inhabit, worlds woven tightly from and within them. However, this process never fully succeeds, since the very weave of similes and concepts is always being undone by the figural effects. Thus, in his first exploration of what "a man" with the "sense of possibility" is, Musil leaves us with nothing else than a series of comparisons that leads to the conclusion that such "possibilists are said to inhabit a more delicate medium, a hazy medium of mist, fantasy, daydreams, and the subjunctive mood." A person with this sense, he writes, "wants the forest, as it were, and the others the trees, and forest is hard to define, while trees represent so many cords of wood of definable quality."

This and similar passages in Musil's novel—and in his thoughts about the form of the essay—inspire the way in which I use the term "figure" here, following his interest in perception and its modifications, and in the tension between the figural effects and mimetic assimilation. Many of the scenes and chapters in The Man without Qualities form experimental arrangements that study the effects of figures and figural constellations and the movements of affect, sensation, imagination, and thought they produce. While the very notion of figure is indeed abstract, the term refers in each instance to something that is concrete. In all his writings Musil draws attention to the concreteness of figural moments, their shaping force, their assimilative and disrupting effects on the life of the soul. It is the concrete thing, the concrete and inconspicuous event, the figural constellation that affects and moves and that only then turns into a series of similes, an object of meaning, an allegory, and a thought. Thus, inspired by my reading of Musil, I use the notion of figure as a name for things and moments in their concreteness as they emerge in their formative ways. I use it not in view of a "hidden meaning" but as referring to the forceful moments that give shape to perception and that enter into a tension with the worlds of signification. Figure refers, to say it simply, to the forms in movement that resist all discourse and that shape us as they shape everything else.

The figural stands on a threshold. It constitutes the ground of all assimilation in sensation, affect, and imagination and the basis of all conceptual abstraction; however, it is not a sphere of first or noumenal experience or a sphere of excessive presence but nothing else than a moment of disruption in which we participate in striking effects. On this threshold figures always affirm a world and disrupt it. They make possibilities emerge in the textures of the real when they draw our attention to the concrete moments and to the fact that in their formative function these moments break with the determined order of meaning and make us part of another world. In this, they open a tension between figure and simile, between partaking and assimilation, that will be at the core of this book.

No doubt, figures always produce series of moments of sensual and affective assimilation and mimetic repetition—all the resonances and affective traces that fill our imagination and become part of an expansive phenomenology of ourselves. The handshake I just mentioned, at the center of one of the key encounters in Musil's The Man without Qualities, produces a new world full of sensual, affective, and cognitive possibilities. However, none of these possibilities are immediately known or meaningful; even if a "meaning" of the handshake will be determined at some point in the future, this

does not subsist in its meaningless force in the moment when it is introduced. The very assimilation produced by the handshake, the sphere of sensual and affective attunement, the resonances, and the surplus of possible meanings it evokes break open the known texture of the world. This break brings to our attention that—beyond the modes of assimilation—the very effect of the figure, the participation it draws us into, is never exhausted. It always makes us partake in a world we do not understand, in a world that strikes, resists, and reverberates.

Erich Auerbach's essay "Figura," written during his exile in Istanbul, forms a surprising corollary to this notion of figuration. As I argue in Chapter 2, Auerbach develops his thoughts in correspondence with his earlier work and his reading of Dante, particularly his interest in the moments of what he perceives as the "strikingly concrete" in Dante's poetry. In Auerbach's return to the use of figura in classical rhetoric, in Lucretius, and in the theology of the church fathers he foregrounds the "plastic" aspect of figures. He emphasizes, like Musil, the fact that figures shape perception before we enter the realm of meaning, spiritualizing interpretation, and allegorical reading. Before we ask questions about meaning and signification, figures strike us and shape our perception. They do so, according to Auerbach's reading of the early Christian theologian Tertullian, in the form of an "energetic realism," drawing us, once again, into the threshold underneath the assimilation that occurs in analogical imagination and affect and before all acts of abstraction. As Auerbach argues in his reading of classical authors, rhetorical treatises, and early Christian theology, figura always establishes a tension within our "tendencies" to let the realm of meaning take over, to allegorize, or to conceptualize. Against these tendencies, the figural marks a point of resistance where we are "struck," where constellations between such moments of being "struck" emerge, and where experience opens toward the strikingly concrete and its asymmetry before it is captured in meaning and thought. It is an asymmetry that does not "mean" or refer to anything or disclose some hidden immediacy or presence. "Asymmetry," when I use the term here, names the fact that the figural, seen as what has a striking effect on us, can never be fully absorbed into assimilation. In drawing attention to the concrete, it claims a fullness that can be acknowledged only in gestures of disassimilation, dispossession, and disaffiliation. The figural is the particular and concrete that strike us and that cannot be known—not because of a limit on the parts of the faculties of perception and thought, though, but because of the excessive force that asserts itself in the figure itself.

Thus, in both Musil's and Auerbach's understanding of figure, its disrupting and shaping effect produces a moment of suspense that we call possibility, the indeterminacy that is there in its asymmetrical fullness, the indeterminacy of the concrete that has not yet been grasped in forms of meanings or concepts. It is this observation that brings Auerbach's notion of figure and its emphasis on the concrete in conversation not only with Mush's experimental modernism but also with a long tradition of medieval and early modern mystical thought. While I focus on some aspects of the history of Christian mysticism in this book, similar observations could probably be made—and have been made—about other mystical traditions that address the challenges of the imposition of meaning. They appear in a11 forms of radical iconoclasm, negative theology, and the choice of silence. Faced with the ungraspable and unnamable divine, the medieval Christian mystical traditions, which form the object of Chapters 3 and 4 of this book, explicitly raise the question of the function of practices of figuration in light of the unsayable, of the undoing of language, and of images. In many instances, the mystical texts thematize figures and figuration not in terms of their allegorical meaning and conceptual function, not in their role of representing the divine symbolically, but in their effective force, which underlies—in the contemplative practices that we call mystical—exercises of shaping sensation, affects, and cognition. They ascribe this force of the figural not only to the symbolic orders that mediate between the creature and the divine but also to each moment in the hierarchical design of such orders. Comparable in this gesture to the role of figure in Auerbach and Musil, manuals, theories, and narratives of mystical practice use figures and figuration, often words and images they employ in prayer and contemplation, as devices that subvert discursive and cognitive

orders—Musil's "sense of reality"—break with them from within in concrete and striking experience, and produce experimental settings for the possibilities of an endless reweaving of perception. In short, through the undoing of sedimented old ways of seeing and the production of new figural arrangements, the world is thus made to appear and to be seen otherwise.

In focusing on the rich archive of medieval contemplative practices that I lay out in Chapters 3 and 4, I ask the reader to follow into this rather unfamiliar territory of texts that have so often exercised a fascinating force on modern readers, provoking returns to these traditions of contemplative practice from Romanticism to recent forms of new materialist thought and critical race theory. What I foreground in my presentation of the texts, however, is not something that can be cast in terms of "religious experience" or a different Weltbild, be it Romantic, idealist, or materialist. Instead, it is the investment of this medieval archive of texts in the very practices of figuration and in addressing questions of how to conceive of possibilities to reweave the perception of the world and the ways of inhabiting it. Thus, I do not identify mystical traditions in terms of supposed claims for an immediate experience of the world, of beauty, or of the divine but of their character as exercises of figuration that problematize all orders of perception and naming. In doing so, I foreground the reduction to the figural—in traditional terms, ascetic theology—over and against the amplification of experience in models of strategic layering of perception, affect, and thought—the symbolic theology, which I will hopefully treat in another volume on wonder and praise.

As I argue throughout this book, our attempt to conceptualize contemplative practices and their reliance on figuration in terms of an opposition between transcendence and immanence, or the infinite and finitude, is both unavoidable and wrong. What I will show is that the moments of drawing attention to figures and a specific use of and experimentation with language and media make such conceptual distinctions collapse. While the reading and contemplation of the Holy Scriptures, and the practices of prayer that build on these readings, seem to establish separate orders of this world and another world, of the human and the divine, they actually return to variations on the theme of the fullness of the worlds in which humans partake. In the notion of partaking the distinction between here and there, earth and heaven, collapses not in an imagined unity or a notion of immanence but in the irreducibly concrete creaturely multiplicity that the figures evoke.

In this collapse—in the eyes of medieval mystics the convergence of the particular and the divine—figural concreteness often turns into what modernity since the eighteenth-century calls aesthetic experience. While this might, once again, look like the introduction of a perspective of transcendence in a "quasi-religious" form of aesthetic pleasure from the point of view of post-Enlightenment discursive orders, it is in fact the opposite. I thus speak, instead of transcendence, of a moment of irreducible marginality and asymmetry that the figures produce. The notion of immanence cannot do justice to this moment either. What the focus on figuration asks for, once we acknowledge the threshold position of the figural, is not a "belief" in the existence of another realm, the transcendence of the divine, the disinterested pleasure of beauty in a judgment, or of either an experiential or conceptual truth. Nor can the asymmetry of the figural—its disruptive force that underlies and resists all mimetic assimilation and conceptual grasp—be translated into ideals of humanity, compassion, tolerance, solidarity, identification, healing, otherness, difference, and understanding, that is, of a projected and imposed erasure of the concrete in a well-meaning spirit of sameness. Instead, the asymmetry, the recognition, or maybe better, the acknowledgment of the failure of meaning and concept in the disruptive encounter with the figural effects of worlds and words has no other place and time than the practice where the figure finds the space to resist and where it thus challenges the order of nature and culture alike. In the concreteness of the figure, the finite is thus realized while it makes all forms of assimilation collapse, giving way to the infinite.

It is in this acknowledgment of the asymmetry of the figural, too, that we grasp an ethical moment. To be sure, there is nothing normative in figural disruption, in terms of either an ethical "good," aesthetic "beauty," or ideal "humanity." Instead, the very practice of the acknowledgment of the figure is the place of the asymmetry, the articulation of the suppressed concrete that cannot be deployed in abstracted positions. It lets the space at the margins of our worlds open toward suspended possibilities in gestures of affirmation: the magnanimity of the reader in the perception of the strikingly concrete in Auerbach's idea of a specific will to interpretation; the contemplative mode of looking at a hill, cows, and trees in Musil's novel; the stone and the wood of the pulpit that, seen as figures, make all sermons superfluous according to Meister Eckhart; or the intervention of the slave songs at the beginning of his essays in W. E. B. Du Bois's The Souls of Black Folk. All these instances articulate the utter asymmetry of the figural, the marginal and disrupting position of the absorption into the concrete, and the ethical shape of submission that perception takes in the acknowledgment of the figure and the participation in its effects, devoid of all generalizations. I thus speak of acknowledgment rather than recognition. While the latter emphasizes a cognitive aspect, the former affirms an existential and temporal act, a renunciation and reformation of the will that undermine the stability of knowing subjects. In theological terms, marking the asymmetry of figural effects as supernatural gifts, we might speak of a transition from an order of nature to an order of grace here; in philosophical terms, marking the limits of knowledge, of the excess of the given in its concreteness. In both instances, we encounter the constitutive threshold again: Figure stands for the concretely real, always marginal moment that underlies and simultaneously resists mimetic assimilation and conceptual abstraction, that is, the tools of imposition and power. With some of the mystics we might thus affirm that, while it can be everything, this marginal moment is nothing—and thus, thinking with Musil, the mystics will always be "immoralists" in the eyes of normative positions.

Following a line of thought that has been deployed in Christian theologies and in the mysticism of late antiquity and the Middle Ages in terms of theosis, theopoiesis, and divinization, I am referring to notions of participation or partaking to characterize the specific mode of the acknowledgment of the figural. At its core lies a transition from mimetic assimilation in sensation, affect, imagination, and conceptual thought to modes of participation that always have a practical shape. The figural, thought of in this way, is the creaturely world as it resists both mimetic assimilation and conceptual grasp, calling thus for a different and always new form of acknowledgment beyond the trajectories of sameness and otherness. It is the world without content and determination that disrupts speech from within and makes us part of it.

This notion of figure and figuration as partaking, the multiple tensions and suspensions figuration produces, and the possibilities it opens are the matter of this book. It operates on three levels that often cannot be separated. "Figure" is a term that applies to the experience of perception in its movement from the striking and disruptive moment through forms of assimilation in sensation and affect, "before" it enters the sphere of meaning and conceptualization. "Figure" is a term that enables us to think of a continuity between perception, the material world in its extension, and the media that modify the shapes and movements of perception. In this sense, as shown in the texts of the mystics, figures support practices of expansion, intermingling, dramatization, and absorption in a wide range of delicate and excessive forms of pleasure and terror, reminiscence and anticipation. "Figure" is, finally, also a term that allows us to conceive of practices of experimentation with the shapes of perception, the modes of participation, and of exposure to the world that—maybe in the mode of a speculative surrealism and supernaturalism—produce possibilities in a state of suspense, undermine the spheres of meaning and concept, and displace what Musil calls the "sense of reality."

These possibilities are neither within the real nor utterly opposed to it. They also do not form a sphere of a unique or different experience. Instead, they are everywhere. The notion of figuration allows us—in what we might call a reductio ad figuram—to see possibilities as critical modifications

of sedimented forms of knowledge, habits, and meaning, in other words, of the ontological and epistemological orders that shape and colonize worlds and peoples. These modifications, not channeled primarily through the deployment of discursive formats, are deviations and convulsions that nest within the worlds and the words whenever we return from the spheres of assimilation, meaning, and concept to the resistance and asymmetry of figures. In Chapters 3 and 4 I try to show the richness of medieval engagements with this use of figures, following the variations through the production of mystical tropes, first in their exercises of reweaving perception, then in their forms of exemplary imitation. Moving through this archive of texts allows us to see how these tropes, in returning to the most provocative one, the ungraspable divine, address the challenges of figuration and establish a range of paradigmatic forms of sensual, affective, and conceptual assimilation—however, undermining these paradigms time and again in their return to the threshold function of the figural. Most provocatively, they present us with multiple ways of designing practices and reinventing the circulation of sensation, affect, and thought that only the close reading of this rich archive can offer.

As I show based on these readings, this never means that we must end with a stable opposition between the figural and the worlds of assimilation, meaning, and concept. "Nesting," in my use of the term, refers to the fact that figuration inhabits and undergirds all sensation, imagination, and production of meaning and that what the practices of figuration ask for is the acknowledgment not of its opposition to it but, again, of the very asymmetry that is at stake here. This happens also in the movements of turning moments of meaning and conceptualization against themselves, making them into figures where we first think of them as signs. This, I argue here, has been at the core of a practice of contemplation and prayer in mystical traditions often characterized as the marginal, embodied, experiential, and somewhat subversive side of the history of medieval Christianity and dogmatic belief. As noted earlier, this is also one aspect that has made mysticism an object of fascination and engagement throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In drawing attention to the figural and the fact that it can never be fully assimilated, however, my focus is on more than a set of practices that emphasize experience instead of dogma, belief, and conceptual grasp. As I argue, the notion of the figural forces us to think along a perspective of the concrete and creaturely that, in its irreducible asymmetry, like the divine and indeed mirroring it, can never be owned or understood. Thus, I use figure here not only as a concept but also as a heuristic tool, often just an image, that allows delineation of a sphere where the "soul"—to use this seemingly archaic term that comprehends all aspects of the life of all things--is intimately woven into the textures of the world and entirely part of it, denaturalizing it and opening it to the "otherwise." It is this notion of figure—and the detours through Musil and Auerbach—that has helped me understand some of the fundamental stakes of the mystical theologies I have been working on. And it is the observation that figure cannot be conceived of without the multiple paradigms of assimilation that has made me understand that we always must return to this archive of texts and their history to grasp the very tensions that are at stake.

This book comprises eight parts. I start with an introductory meditation on the notion of figure in Chapter i, focusing on a few characteristic moments where the disruptive force of figures and the outline of a radical figuralism come into view. In Chapter 2 I turn to a discussion of Erich Auerbach's attention to the concrete, his work on figura, and his engagement with the understanding of history as a continuous modification of our minds that he finds in the thought of Giambattista Vico. This is the background for the exploration of the role of practices of figuration in forms of reweaving perception and the imitation of examples at stake in medieval theories and practices of prayer, contemplation, and aesthetic experience in Chapters 3 and 4. Chapters 5, 6, and 7 focus on questions of how such practices have been framed and controlled between the fifteenth and eighteenth centuries; how they have been recast in early modern times; and how they reemerged in some forms of modernist thought and literature. In Chapter 8, the book concludes with the return

to a figure that crosses the centuries, the holy fool, in my eyes the very figura of figuration as an agent of intervention. Not surprisingly, it is this image of the "fool" that returns also in Musil's text when he speaks of the "man without qualities."

In drawing attention to the practices of figuration, medieval Christian texts on prayer and the experience of the divine play a key role in this book. As I argue, these texts are, above all, invested in practices of shaping and reshaping sensation, emotions, and thought. At the center of this we encounter not an expression of belief, or a cognitive act of distinction between the human and the divine, or even a theory of analogy, but an investment in practices that transform and transfigure the ways of perception and of inhabiting the world. Thus, building on essays I have published in earlier versions, Chapters 3 and 4 focus on traditions of spiritual exercises that are meant to produce this transformation. Many of these practices foreground a tension between figuration, forms of assimilation, and hermeneutics, arguing for a critical focus that privileges the plastic side of perception against the imposition of meaning. At the same time, they establish and explore the tensions between the figure and the forms of assimilation that precede all hermeneutics and the empire of meaning. In all instances, we are asked to move from the meaning of a text, usually a text from the Scriptures, to an exemplary moment of mimetic assimilation—scenes from the lives of saints, for example—and to the figural threshold that can be grasped fully neither in understanding nor in the exemplary imitation itself.

In producing this movement and in rearticulating a radical negative theology, figures mark a point of suspension and dispossession where the world takes shape "otherwise." Particular moments play a role in this production of suspension and inform the contemplative practices that are at the center of my study. My main interest in identifying these moments along a line that leads from late antiquity to modern times lies neither with the characterization of specific authors nor of a conceptual framework or a definition of "mystical thought" or a universal "mystical experience" but with specific techniques, movements, and procedures that are foregrounded in the contemplative practices around the relations between figure and mimesis; the focus on reinventing sensation; the gestures of prayer; aspects of dramatization and exemplarity; visualization and imagination; the topics of the abject and disfiguration; enumeration and meditation; surrender, experiment, rapture, and delay. In focusing on these aspects of contemplative practice and their theological implications, I identify not a shared and thus idealized mystical experience or a form of belief but specific axes around which medieval contemplative practices and exercises are organized. As I show, in each instance and along each of these axes, the tension between the figural and the forms of assimilation is being evoked and complicated in a phenomenology of rhetorical effects.

In each instance the asymmetry of the figure is also being evoked in these practices that long for an experience of the world in light of the divine, beauty, and love. Articulated in moments of unity or utter ecstatic absorption, none of these forms of experience can ever be grasped or known. They give a name, however, to the asymmetrical character of the figural, the challenge of a differential intensity that disrupts the world, that suspends ontology, and that emerges in the concrete, thus negating a11 abstraction and all powers of subjection. In theological terms, once again, we are asked to think here of the gift of grace and of transfiguration or metamorphosis; in philosophical terms, of the excess of the concrete; in rhetorical terms, of the absorption into the figure on the thresholds of assimilation. The medieval texts that I present in Chapters 3 and 4 are, in each instance, variations on the exercises that engage these aspects of the practice of figuration.

In Chapters 5, 6, and —not following a strict chronological path—I identify moments and instances where these practices of participation, assimilation, and transfiguration have been discussed and reframed: first from the late Middle Ages to the Baroque, then in some of the modern voices that engage the positions that are at stake here. As I show, the discussions around the adoption of

mystical tropes repeatedly answer to specific historical conditions, and they articulate new forms of conceiving of the figural challenge. Thus, among others, Jacob Bohme's cosmopoetics, Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten's and Johann Gottfried Herder's notion of aesthetic experience, Joris-Karl Huysmans's space of decadent pleasure, Robert Musil's sense of possibility, Musil's and Georg Lukacs's thoughts about the form of the essay, and Bela Balazs's notion of a new visibility of the world in silent film come into view. What also come into view are the multiple ways of framing and controlling the extravagance of figural thought and the enthusiasm it engenders, and, finally, in Chapter 8, the very foolishness that characterizes the radical abandonment to the power of figures and the ethics of asymmetry it entails—including the foolishness of this very book. It establishes, as will become clearer, a strong opposition between figurality and hermeneutic engagement only to acknowledge that hermeneutics, the arts of reading and interpretation that connect flesh, history, and spirit, are always at stake here and that the figural emerges where hermeneutic engagements realize their own finite limit position, abandoning themselves to practices of assimilation at first, to the absorbing asymmetry of the figural worlds of possibilities at last.

While I concede that specific historical shifts could be considered here, I reflect on these only in oblique ways. Thus, I refer not to historical lines of continuity or reception. Instead, after laying out what I see as a basic notion of figure and a history of medieval types of engagement with the figural in Chapters 1 to 4, in Chapter 5 I focus on a series of moments of framing the figural practices and the tensions they articulate in transitions from medieval to modern times. I argue that in the late Middle Ages and in the early modern era we move from a complex phenomenology of rhetorical effects, meant to contain practices of figuration in medieval contexts of spiritual exercises, to a framework of hermeneutic authorization and a control of "free spirits"; to a semiotics of the demonic and divine and a neutralization of inspired speech in Luther's critique of figural practices; and an entirely naturalized clarification of rational principles of discernment in Kant's elaborations of the conditions of the possibility of knowledge and his critique of "enthusiasm."

However, in Chapter 6 I draw attention to three moments of a countercurrent to these frames of control, the "monadological transcription" of the figural in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries that resists some aspects of this very framing. I argue that in Bohme's emphasis on the cosmopoetic imagination, in his theory of the signature of things, as well as in Baumgarten's and Herder's notion of aesthetic experience, particularly in the emphasis on the "ground of the soul" and on "touch," we encounter a new monadological understanding of the figural. It takes the figure as monad, building on the idea that the entire world is folded into each moment of concrete encounter and that perception unfolds in specific forms of partaking that rearticulate the tensions between figure, assimilation, and understanding. I present the early modern notion of the emblem as the characteristic form of expression of this very tension in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. And I argue that in the constellation of an abstract notion, the figural image, and the expository language of assimilation—that is, the emblem in its exemplary shape—the figural, the assimilative, and the conceptual are held in a state of suspension. The form of the emblem—opposed to all subordination to metaphysical and to naturalizing conditions of possibility of knowledge—has kept its fascinating allure, returning at moments that we call Romantic, decadent, or expressionist in their diverse shapes.

Chapter 7 follows this line of inquiry further, focusing on four instances where modernism and its precursors rearticulate these tensions—my eclectic selection of these moments largely ignores the Romantic movements, which, in their attempts to think figuration anew in correlation with both an individual and a cosmopoetic imagination, would merit a separate book that moves from what I am tempted to call the reduction to the figural to the dreams of a sublime and delirious symbolic amplification. With Huysmans we turn in Chapter 7 to the so-called decadent pleasure "against nature"; with Georges Bataille to mysticism at the "limits of the possible"; with Musil and Lukács to

the form of the essay, its return to mystical tropes, and its figural investment in the play of possibility on the thresholds of figure, simile, and concept; with Balazs, finally, to the figural gestures of silent film and the new visibility of the world.

In these modern instances, I am tempted to speak of transformations of the emblematic tension. What the Baroque emblem foregrounds as an irreducible constellation of concept, figure, and assimilation is now more straightforwardly and explicitly conceived of in terms of experiments: the experiment with rhetorical devices and moments of intensity in Huysmans; the limit function of the erotic excess and the mystical in Bataille; the art of the essay in Lukacs and Musil; and the new practice of seeing in Balazs. In each instance, a set of gestures enacts the experimental character of addressing the correlations of figures, thoughts, and the play of sensation and affect. In each instance, the notion of possibility is correlated with a set of expressive gestures anchored in what has been called spiritual exercises since late antiquity, creating thus, in these moments of radical modernity, a deep resonance between modernist concerns and medieval practices of prayer and contemplation.

These gestures, as I acknowledge in Chapter 8 in dialogue with more recent critical interventions by Michel Foucault and Judith Butler, are indeed gestures of a foolish exercise that transfigures the real into a place of the possible beyond its subordination to the imposition of discourse and naturalizing perspectives. It is a foolish expression of dispossession that delves into the space of possibility beyond and within the world as we know it—and that, in the best of all cases, attempts to give back to the concrete all its divine powers.

As I mentioned earlier, parts of Chapters 3, 4, 5, and 7 have been published previously in different versions. However, while preserving the richness and detail of the medieval and early modern textual archive most modern readers might not be familiar with, I have structured the presentation and analysis of these materials here along new lines. The picture of contemplative techniques that emerges is not set up in terms of particular forms of experience, theories, authors, or historical paradigm shifts but practices that are organized around mystical tropes and, more important, the specific stakes that are foregrounded in particular moments and texts. Thus, the chapters trace different aspects of the engagement with figure and figuration, foregrounding a shared interest in exploring a basic tension: the disrupting force of the figure in its concreteness, the divine contemplative depth and terror, the experimental play with it, and the forms of assimilation that the texts explore. In this tension a "sense of possibility" emerges as a sense of the concrete that creates a conversation between medieval and modernist attempts to reweave the forms of perception and of partaking beyond all naturalist temptations. <>

Between Celan and Heidegger by Pablo Oyarzun, translated by D.J.S. Cross, Forward by Rodolphe Gasché [SUNY series, Literature…in Theory, State Univ of New York Press, 9781438488370]

The relevance of Martin Heidegger's thinking to Paul Celan's poetry is well known. **Between Celan and Heidegger** proposes that, while the relation between them is undeniable, it is also marked by irreducible discord. Pablo Oyarzun begins with a deconstruction of Celan's *Todtnauberg*, written after the poet visited Heidegger in his Schwarzwald cabin. The poem stands as a milestone, not only in the complex relationship between the two men but also in the state of poetry and philosophy in late modernity, in the aftermath of the Holocaust. Discussion then turns to *The Meridian*, Celan's acceptance speech for the prestigious Büchner Prize for German language literature. Other issues are insistently addressed—place, art, language, pain, existence, and the

Heideggerian notion of dialogue—as Oyarzun revisits several essential poems from Celan's oeuvre. A rare translation of Oyarzun's work into English, *Between Celan and Heidegger* affirms the uniqueness of Celan's poetry in confrontation both with Heidegger's discourse on *Dichtung* (a poetic saying centered in the idea of gathering) and with Western philosophical notions of art, *techne*, mimesis, *poiesis*, language, and thinking more broadly.

Review

"Celan's poetry has certainly attracted considerable attention from literary critics, philologists, and poetologists, but remarkable in his case is the consistent attention his work has drawn from philosophers and philosophically sophisticated literary critics. With this, the question arises: what is it in Celan's writings that challenges philosophical thought? Among its many accomplishments, Oyarzun's study not only engages the philosophers' accounts of the poetry in question . . . but also enquires into what motivates this philosophical interest in the first place. In short, it is an inquiry into the stakes of the philosophical encounter with poetry." -- from the Foreword by Rodolphe Gasché

CONTENTS

Prologue

I am going to recall things that are all too well known. When Paul Celan read some of his poems in Freiburg im Breisgau on 24 July 1967, Martin Heidegger was in the audience. The next day, they met in the cabin at Todtnauberg, that unadorned refuge annexed to the smooth slope of a hill in the Black Forest to which the philosopher would withdraw in order to immerse himself in his pensive craft—"knit at the secretsticking"—sustained in the rhythm of modest daily labors and walks.

What was said? What happened between the two? Almost from the very moment it occurred, this meeting has incited innumerable commentaries and attempts at interpretation. The more they have intensified, the more famous the entirely decisive significance of Celan's work has become for poetry's situation and for the relations between poetry and philosophy in the epoch of late modernity, and the more complex consideration of Heidegger's thought has become for the situation of philosophy and for its relations to poetry and art within that same horizon. Without having to cave to the temptation of seeing in the meeting "a quasi-mythical episode of our epoch," as Alain Badiou calls it (Manifesto, 86), due to the vexing resonance that the allusion to the "mythical" might have precisely in this context (among which numbers, above all, the formulation "myth of the twentieth century" that Alfred Rosenberg uses to characterize Nazism), it cannot be omitted that this meeting is pregnant with signs.

What happened between the two? I asked. Many hypotheses have been ventured with respect to this meeting, the relation between Heidegger and Celan, and the poem—the remarkable poem "Todtnauberg"—that would seem to cipher their relation like a dense abbreviation, along with

equally many wagers on the "word / to come" (Celan, Collected Later Poetry, 257) onto which the poet's cordial hope opens. It seems entirely vain to me—vain for me at least—to venture a conjecture with even a minimal aim of verisimilitude concerning this meeting and the other issues intertwined with it. To mention only one issue, I would have no other recourse than drawing up a story in which to make room for my conjecture and, perhaps, supporting this story with the several hints that patience might track in Celan's so densely sedimented writing. Unable to do so, I have limited myself to something else: I have sought to insist upon the "between," to interrogate it assiduously, to weigh it and plumb its depths. This book is not an exercise in fiction but, rather, an attempt to construct that "between" on the basis of its impossibility. For that very reason, I should confess beforehand that I have lost hope of doing justice to the "between"; the book has had to remain necessarily open at its extremities.

Upon entering into the cabin, Celan signed the visitor log that the thinker kept: "Into the cabin logbook, with a view toward the Brunnenstern, with hope of a coming word in the heart." On Maundy Thursday in 1970, Celan and Heidegger met again on the occasion of a reading before a small group. The philosopher proposed taking a walk with the poet in the summer of the same year. On 20 April, once again in Paris, Celan walked toward Pont Mirabeau, which neighbored his room, and threw himself into the Seine with no witnesses; a fisherman found his body seven miles away on the first of May.

***

From 'The Idiom of the Poem: A Foreword by Rodolphe Gasche'

… **Between Celan and Heidegger** is an assiduous effort to resist all interpretations and readings of Celan tempted to locate and fix his work and thought in a stable place. From what we have seen so far, the Celanian conception of place—the topos of his study of topoi—is that of a "between." It comes as no surprise, therefore, if Oyarzun also confesses that he does "not feel inclined" to validate Derrida's "Jewish theory of the poem" (**Between Celan and Heidegger,** 102). Oyarzun resists opposing to a German theory of the poem and its place, such as Heidegger's, and by extension also to a Greek paradigm an other determined paradigm—more precisely, a paradigm of the Other construed along the predictable and conventional lines of the divide between Greek and Jewish thought. Needless to say, rather than situating Celan's work in one direction or the other, however plausible, Oyarzun wishes in this case as well to endure the "between" of both alternatives. However, more is at stake, and in conclusion ^ wish to highlight another outstanding concern of the book that, I believe, makes Oyarzun's contribution a singular one.

It is certainly not by accident that the concern in question is broached in the central chapter devoted to "Language." Throughout this chapter, Oyarzun argues that the Celanian poem seeks to extricate itself from "the occidental mimetic tradition," to uproot itself from "the metaphorical regime of occidental language" (**Between Celan and Heidegger,** 54), and to leave the Heideggerian—that is, the Western—conception of the absolute interiority of language behind. What has been said so far regarding the nonrepresentational nature of the language of Celan's poems must suffice here. By contrast, the dense and intense pages of chapter 4, in which this departure from the tradition's mimetic conception of poetry is shown to be intertwined with a reconsideration of the function of image and metaphor, would require careful attention. In brief, Oyarzun submits here that "the form and dominant format of poetry in the occidental tradition" (54) are decided in Celanian poetry by the litter's treatment of the image or metaphor. As a movement of transportation and thus of reaching beyond, he argues, metaphor "is the condition under which, in the circle of occidental languages, the possibility of the relation to the other has been established, predefining that relation as communication" (54-55). However, when Celan claims that, in the poem, the images are "what is

perceived and is to be perceived once and always again once, and only here and now," the poem becomes "the place where all tropes and metaphors want to be carried ad absurdum" (Celan, Meridian, 39b). Thus practiced, though they remain repeatable, the images and metaphors of language are also "only here and now" (39b) in the poem—that is, in the singular in all its uniqueness—and are therefore subtracted from their universal availability in the arsenal or "garden of rhetoric" (Oyarzun, **Between Celan and Heidegger**, 54). In short, uprooted and destroyed, the metaphor's general citability and its power of taking one beyond oneself toward the Other, which is the very condition of the occidental understanding of language as communication and of the peculiar clarity that it possesses, are renounced to the benefit of thinking and practicing what Celan calls "the mystery of the encounter" (Celan, Meridian, 34b), an encounter that, qua ainigma, seems to be shrouded in extreme obscurity. In other words, intent on securing a relation to the Other in all his, her, or its singularity, Celan's poetry undoes the occidental mode of relating to the Other that, as a meta-phoric transportation, has a universality under which all differences are subsumed in the brightest of lights, which as such is a light that, by forcing the Other into its brightness without shelter, paradoxically stifles all encounter.

The "dialogue" between Heidegger and Celan, if it is a "dialogue," is marked by a resistance on Celan's part to Heidegger's "absolute postulation of the 'interiority'" of language (Oyarzun, **Between Celan and Heidegger**, 129n3) and its speaking through both thinking and poetizing. As we have seen, it is to this interiority, on the basis of which and through which we are, that Celan responds by interjecting: "But the poem does speak!"—not poetry as such but, rather, the individual poem as an inauguration of an address to the Other in advance of language's anteriority. Now, Oyarzun's point is that, with this statement, Celan breaks with "the Greco-Germanic matrix of dialogue" that Heidegger developed through his interpretations of Holderlin and, by extension, with the Western matrix of dialogue, and this break occurs in view of "a different possibility of dialogue" (96-97). However, this possibility is not hastily to be associated with any determinate non-Western position, including—as we have seen—the Jewish paradigm. In the book's final chapter, titled "Dialogue" in the same way as the opening chapter, Oyarzun stresses not only that "the political is a principal key for all Celanian poetry" but also that "political" here is to be taken "in the highest and most radical sense" (95). The stakes of his reading of Celan thus become explicit: its aim is to rethink the nature of dialogue, which Heidegger's interpretation of Holderlin has shaped into the constructive principle of community, as one that instead differs from its Greco-Germanic matrix and, in view of a non-Western conception of the dia-logical, has place for a plurality of logoi.

Again, the point is not that Celanian poetry has effectively broken with the occidental philosophical and rhetorical tradition regarding language, dialogue, and community and already speaks from another space, the space of the Other, as if this space could be definitively located. On the contrary, it is a u-topic, improbable, impossible, if not "absurd" space that is not to be confounded with any other so-called space and that can only be reached, without being reached once and for all, through or by way of a traversal of the Western paradigm that it suspends but does not therefore destroy. Celan's poetry goes the way of the Western tradition to free itself from it and thus perhaps to be able to take a step in the direction of what is other, an operation that occurs exclusively in, or as, the suspended "between."

By resisting the brilliance of so many astute readings and interpretations of Celanian poetry and thought, Oyarzun resists not only what he terms "the regime of eloquence," that is, "the occidental law of language," but also the light that prevails in it, "a light, a certain light, a law of light that forces clarity: Lichtzwang' (**Between Celan and Heidegger**, 57). In this foreword, I have been concerned with the alleged obscurity of Celanian poetry and the question concerning what sort of obscurity it is. From what we have seen, this poetry is a challenge to lightduress, to compulsive clarity, which also means that it is a challenge not to universality as such but, rather, to a certain

form of the universal. Inevitably, such a challenge would necessarily seem to give in to obscurity. Yet, when Oyarzun avers that, in the face of forced clarity, "one must also affirm another mode of light [... ,] the light of utopia, of the absurd place" (59), it is not a light intent on illuminating the particular at the expense of the universal. For the philosopher whose eyes are inescapably oriented toward the universal, Celanian poetry represents an extraordinary challenge. In order to be capable of thinking how, in the dated and thus individualized poem, that which is "perceived once" is "always again once" what it is "only here and now" (Celan, Meridian, 39b), one must think a repeatability of the singular constitutive of its equally singular otherness and its reaching toward and addressing the Other—a repeatability that, at the same time, provides the obscurity of the singular outreach with another kind of clarity and, by extension, another kind of universality for which there is no model. Although no determinate model for such universality can be found in any of the existent forms of the nonoccidental, thought and the poem must traverse the occidental in order to be able to take a step, perhaps, in the direction of this u-topic place. <>

Consciousness and Quantum Mechanics edited by Shan Gao [Philosophy of Mind, Oxford University Press, 9780197501665]

Consciousness and quantum mechanics are two great mysteries of our time--and recently scholars have postulated a deeper connection between them. Exploring this possible connection can be fruitful: an analysis of the conscious mind and psychophysical connection can be indispensable in understanding quantum mechanics and solving the notorious measurement problem, and there is also likely some kind of intimate connection between quantum mechanics--the most fundamental theory of the physical world--and our efforts to explain, naturalistically, the phenomenon of consciousness.

The seventeen newly written chapters in this volume are divided into three sections: Consciousness and the Wave Function Collapse, Consciousness in Quantum Theories, and Quantum Approaches to Consciousness. This is the first volume to provide a comprehensive review and thorough analysis of intriguing conjectures about the connection between consciousness and quantum mechanics. Written by leading experts in physics, philosophy, and cognitive science, **Consciousness and Quantum Mechanics** will be of value to students and researchers working on the foundations of quantum mechanics and the philosophy of mind.

Consciousness and quantum mechanics are two mysteries in our times. It has been conjectured that a deep connection between them may exist. The connection is bidirectional. On the one hand, an analysis of the conscious mind and psychophysical connection seems indispensable in understanding quantum mechanics and solving the notorious measurement problem (Gao, 2019).1 Indeed, as Harvey Brown once emphasized, "The issue of psycho- physical parallelism is at the heart of the problem of measurement in quantum mechanics" (Brown, 1996). On the other hand, it seems that in the end quantum mechanics the most fundamental theory of the physical world, will be relevant to understanding consciousness and even solving the mind-body problem when assuming a naturalist view, even though we are not quite there yet (Atmanspacher, 2019). Therefore, a careful and thorough examination of possible connections between consciousness and quantum mechanics is not only necessary but also even pressing i order to unravel these two mysteries.

This book is the first volume that provides a comprehensive review and thorough analysis of intriguing conjectures about the connection between consciousness and quantum mechanics. It contains seventeen original chap- ters that are written by leading experts in this research field. This book is accessible to graduate students in physics and philosophy of mind. It will be of value to students and researchers in physics with an interest in the meaning of quantum mechanics, as well as to philosophers working on the foundations of quantum mechanics and philosophy of mind.

This book is organized into three parts in order to facilitate reading, although a few chapters do fit into more than one part. Echoing the possible bidirectional connections between consciousness and quantum mechanics, the first two parts are about the possible roles of consciousness in quantum theories. The first part is about the specific consciousness-collapse conjecture, and the second part is about other possible roles of consciousness in quantum theories, and the third part is about the possible roles of quantum mechanics in understanding consciousness.

A more detailed introduction of the three parts of this book is as follows. The first part investigates the relationship between consciousness and the collapse of the wave function. If consciousness really collapses the wave function, then this will provide both a solution to the measurement problem and a potential role for consciousness in the physical world. This well-known consciousness-collapse conjecture has a long history, but it is often dismissed as a very speculative and imprecise idea. Recently, there has been exciting new progress on developing the idea and making it more precise. One main reason is that theories that give precise and mathematically defined conditions for the presence or absence of consciousness have been developed, such as Tononi's (2008) integrated

information theory, in which consciousness is quantified with a mathematical measure of integrated information.

In Chapter 1, David Chalmers and Kelvin McQueen give a comprehensive introduction to the consciousness-collapse idea and answer the usual objections to the idea. Moreover, they put forward a way of making the consciousness-collapse idea precise by exploring and evaluating dynamic principles governing how consciousness collapses the wave function. Two models are proposed. The first one is a simple consciousness- collapse model on which consciousness is entirely superposition-resistant. This model is subject to a conclusive objection arising from the quantum Zeno effect. The second model combines integrated information theory with Pearle's continuous-collapse theory, and it is not subject to the objection. The prospects of empirically testing these models and potential philosophical objections to them are also discussed. The authors conclude that the consciousness-collapse idea is a research program worth exploring.

In Chapter 2, Elias Okon and Miguel Ángel Sebastián introduce a consciousness-collapse model called the subjective-objective collapse model, evaluate the virtues of the model, and answer some possible objections and challenges related to it, such as the multiple realizability of conscious states. This model consists of an objective collapse scheme, where the collapse operator is associated with consciousness as a physical property or with a physical property that correlates with consciousness. Like Chalmers and McQueen's models, the advantage of this model is that consciousness is incorporated into quantum mechanics in a well-defined way, both mathematically and conceptually, and in a way that is fully compatible with the truth of physicalism if consciousness is physical.

In Chapter 3, J. Acacio de Barros and Carlos Montemayor investigate the role of consciousness in the consciousness-collapse quantum theories. According to them, the observer in quantum mechanics is an access con- scious observer, rather than a phenomenally conscious observer, because measurements are not entirely determined by merely appearance properties of experiences, but rather by concrete interventions in an environment by a rational agent with specific goals that have unique theoretical meaning. Moreover, they argue that an access-consciousness version of panpsychism, which they call "panintentionalism," suffices, and it is better equipped to account for the role of consciousness involved in these theories than the standard one, based on phenomenal consciousness.

In objective collapse theories of quantum mechanics, the collapse of the wave function is not caused by consciousness. However, the conscious perceptions may also put constraints on these theories. In Chapter 4, Adrian Kent analyzes the perception constraints on mass-dependent collapse models. According to the previous analysis of Bassi et al., the parameters of these models consistent with known experiments imply that when a person observes a superposition of a few photons a collapse would happen in her eye within the normal perception time of 100 ms, and thus these models are consistent with our conscious perceptions. Kent notes a key problem of this analysis: the relevant processes are assumed to happen in a vacuum, rather than in cytoplasm. Moreover, he argues that when considering the existence of cytoplasm, these collapse models with parameters consistent with known experiments may not satisfy the perception constraints.

The second part of this book is about other possible roles of consciousness in quantum theories. In Chapter 5, Philip Goff argues that the reality of consciousness puts a constraint on the ontology of quantum mechanics. According to wave function monism, a popular interpretation of the ontology of quantum mechanics, fundamental physical reality consists of a complex-valued field in a high-dimensional space. Goff analyzes the question of whether the reality of consciousness can be accounted for by wave function monism. After criticizing the existing attempts to close the wave function/three-dimensional objects explanatory gap, he argues, based on an analysis of the grounding relationship, that the wave function monist has no way to account for consciousness, at least on the

assumption that she can't account for three-dimensional objects. Goff's argument does not assume either a materialist or a non-materialist view of consciousness.

In Chapter 6, Peter J. Lewis argues that the word "experience" should not appear as a primitive in the formulation of quantum theory, just as Bell argues that the word "measurement" should not so appear. The psychophysical connection is not something that philosophers and physicists can posit at their convenience; neuroscience constrains the connections between brain structures and experience, whether or not the latter is reducible to the former. But he cautions that, while it is relatively easy to tell whether a use of "measurement" in a discussion of quantum mechanics is good or bad, it is not so easy to tell whether a use of "experience" is good or bad.

In Chapter 7, Jenann Ismael addresses a more general question than the other papers in the volume. The paper is not addressed to the connection between consciousness and quantum mechanics specifically, but to the broader question of whether physics should steer clear of the mind completely. Ismael makes a case that discussion of the mind is both legitimate and essential (as she says: "Physics doesn't stop at the surface of the skin"), but that one can do it while excluding the aspects of mentality that give rise to the mind-body problem. If consciousness has no functional or causal role of its own in the physical world, then physics will not know the difference between the conscious state and its physical basis, and thus consciousness is irrelevant to physics and we need not worry about the mind-body problem in physics. If consciousness itself has a causal role in the physical world as in the consciousness-collapse theories that treat it as a physical primitive, it will indeed become something that matters to physics. But then it also becomes something that is characterizable in terms of its physical role, effectively providing a solution to the Hard part of the mind-body problem.

In Chapter 8, Shan Gao defends his new mentalistic formulation of the measurement problem and argues that it is more appropriate than Maudlin's original formulation. Moreover, he argues that the solutions to the measurement problem need to care about the minds of observers, e.g., they need to assume a certain form of psychophysical connection, and their validity depends on our scientific and philosophical understandings of the conscious mind.

In Chapter 9, Paul Skokowski examines the role of human belief within an Everett no-collapse version of quantum mechanics. He considers the claim that an observer of a measurement resulting in a superposition ends up being deceived about her own perceptual beliefs. Skokowski argues that, upon examination of the neural vehicles that comprise the belief eigenstates of the observer, and the intentional contents of these states, the observer will not, in fact, have the deceptive belief claimed by this interpretation of quantum mechanics.

In Chapter 10, Michael Silberstein and W. M. Stuckey offer a new realist psi-epistemic, principle-based account of quantum mechanics and a neutral monist account of experience. Recent gedanken experiments and theorems in quantum mechanics, such as new iterations on Wigner's friend and delayed choice, have led many people to claim that quantum mechanics is not compatible with determinate and intersubjectively consistent experience (what some call absoluteness of observed events). They show that jettisoning wavefunction realism in favor of a principle-based account and conceiving of consciousness as qualia in favor of neutral monism, allows one to uphold the absoluteness of observed events, deflate the hard problem of consciousness, and deflate the measurement problem, all without giving up free will (i.e., no superdeterminism), locality, or the completeness of quantum mechanics. Their account requires no invocation of relative states (e.g., outcomes being relative to branches, conscious observers, etc.) and requires no "hybrid models" such as claims about "subjective collapse." They provide a take on quantum mechanics that yields a single world wherein all the observers (conscious or otherwise) agree about determinate and definite outcomes.

In Chapter 11, Michel Bitbol argues that phenomenology provides a possible way of understanding quantum mechanics and consciousness and further solving the measurement problem and the mind-body problem. According to phenomenology, a philosophical discipline that favors a first- person approach of any ontological and epistemological issues, conscious- ness is neither something nor a property of something, but the flux of the self-splitting of what there is into subjective existence and its objective targets, and physical systems and processes are nothing more than objects of consciousness. This supports the neo-Bohrian approaches to quantum mechanics such as QBism and participatory realism, according to which the symbols of quantum mechanics are primarily used by agents to assign probabilistic weights to the outcomes of experiments so that such agents can make consistent bets, and the insuperable dependence of these symbols on our situation and experience indirectly reveals the nature of reality so that our knowledge of it can only be participatory rather than representational, predictive rather than descriptive.

In Chapter 12, Lucien Hardy investigates the possibility that when humans are used to decide the settings at each end in a Bell experiment, we might expect to see a violation of quantum mechanics in agreement with the relevant Bell inequality. He argues that this result is well motivated when assuming superdeterminism and mind–body dualism, and if it is confirmed, it will be tremendously significant for our understandings of quantum mechanics and consciousness. Moreover, he also discusses in detail how we can perform such a Bell experiment based on current technologies.

The third part of this book is about quantum approaches to consciousness. In Chapter 13, Roger Penrose argues that the human ability to achieve conscious understanding is a non-computational process, and this requires something beyond current physical theory, an effect of gravitation on quantum mechanics, in supplying a physical basis for "the collapse of the wave function," denoted by OR. OR events are what allow a firm classical reality to arise from a quantum reality having a somewhat weaker ontological status. When appropriately orchestrated, these "proto-conscious" OR events become genuine conscious processes according to the Orch-OR proposal. Moreover, from the principles of relativity theory, it can be deduced that OR, and therefore Orch-OR, can have a certain "retro-active" effect, which may explain how conscious decisions can act within a very small fraction of a second, in contradiction with a conclusion frequently made, on the basis of various experiments, that such acts must be necessarily unconscious. According to Penrose, this provides an explanation for some puzzling related effects found by Benjamin Libet in the 1970s.

In Chapter 14, Stuart Hameroff gives an up-to-date and comprehensive review of the Penrose-Hameroff "Orch OR" theory. The theory attributes consciousness to "orchestrated" quantum computations in microtubules inside brain neurons, which terminate by Penrose objective reduction (OR), a process in the fine scale structure of the universe that introduces phenomenal experience and non-computability. The theory suggests that microtubules (1) encode memory and process information, (2) orchestrate quantum vibrational superpositions (qubits) of pi electron resonance dipoles within tubulin that unify, entangle, and (3) evolve to meet Orch OR threshold for full, rich conscious experience, most likely (4) in dendrites and soma of cortical layer 5 pyramidal neurons, and (5) selection of microtubule states that regulate axonal firings and behavior, and (6) "retroactivity" inherent in OR and Orch OR can resolve issues in quantum mechanics, free will, and Libet's famous "backward time referral." Hameroff concludes that Orch OR has explanatory power, and is testable and falsifiable.

In Chapter 15, Basil J. Hiley and Paavo Pylkkänen propose that quantum theory implies a radically new notion of matter that has not been properly understood before David Bohm's groundbreaking work. Bohm proposed that the fundamental particles of physics (such as electrons) are not merely pushed around mechanically by classical forces but are also able to respond to information. Information is thus assumed to be an objective commodity that can exist independently of the

human mind and that actively guides or instructs physical processes. This notion of active information also applies in computational, biological and psychological phenomena, thus helping us to understand how the mental and physical sides of reality are related. It may even help us to understand the nature of conscious experience. The latter part of this chapter considers the deeper mathematical and physical background of quantum theory and suggests that we need to revise our basic assumptions about quantum objects, such as the role of the wave function.

In Chapter 16, William Seager argues that the goal of interpretation of a theory such as quantum mechanics is intelligibility, which aims to show how the world described by a theory can be made intuitively clear. He identifies three kinds of intelligibility: mundane, mathematical, and metaphysical, and notes that the mismatch between high mathematical intelligibility and low mundane intelligibility of quantum mechanics motivates the search for its interpretations, which attempt to provide metaphysical intelligibility. More- over, Seager considers several such interpretations and argues that Bohm's view, which puts mentality or some basic kind of proto-consciousness as the bearer of intrinsic information, as a fundamental feature of the world, may be the best way to provide a metaphysically intelligible basis for quantum mechanics.

In Chapter 17, Lee Smolin proposes an approach to the question of how consciousness fits into the physical world in the context of a relational and realist completion of quantum mechanics called the causal theory of views. In this theory, the "beables" are the information available at each event from its causal past, and a causal universe is composed of a set of partial views of itself. Smolin proposes that conscious perceptions are aspects of some views. Concretely speaking, only those views that are novel, in the sense that they are not duplicates of the view of any event in the event's own causal past, are the physical correlates of conscious experience, and to be conscious a view must also be maximal, in the sense of being the smallest composite not being part of a larger entangled state. This gives a restricted form of panpsychism defined by a physically based selection principle that selects which views have experiential aspects, and explains why consciousness always involves awareness of a bundled grouping of qualia that define a momentary self.

Notwithstanding these new insightful thoughts about possible deep connections between consciousness and quantum mechanics, maybe we are still far away from the final answer. But this is just the impetus to do the research. I really hope this book will inspire more researchers to join the search for the ultimate reality of the universe. <>

THE *CHRONOGRAPHIA* OF GEORGE THE SYNKELLOS AND THEOPHANES: THE ENDS OF TIME IN NINTH-CENTURY CONSTANTINOPLE by Jesse W. Torgerson [Series: Brill's Series on the Early Middle Ages, Brill, 9789004501690]

The ninth-century *Chronographia* of George the Synkellos and Theophanes is the most influential historical text ever written in medieval Constantinople. Yet modern historians have never explained its popularity and power. This interdisciplinary study draws on new manuscript evidence to finally animate the *Chronographia*'s promise to show attentive readers the present meaning of the past.

Begun by one of the Roman emperor's most trusted and powerful officials in order to justify a failed revolt, the project became a shockingly ambitious re-writing of time itself—a synthesis of contemporary history, philosophy, and religious practice into a politicized retelling of the human

story. Even through radical upheavals of the Byzantine political landscape, the *Chronographia*'s unique historical vision again and again compelled new readers to chase after the elusive Ends of Time.

CONTENTS

Scholars have looked to the *Chronographia* for a specific sort of historical truth: the sort of historical truth which can be placed onto a timeline. But making the pursuit of historical accuracy the aim and end of work on the *Chronographia* is merely to seek our own historically conditioned ends. While we may desire and indeed have a use for such data, our methodologies must acknowledge when our ends are not what the *Chronographia* (or any other text) set out to facilitate. My account of the *Chronographia* has not assessed its transmission of objective chronological data about events. The *Chronographia* was written to tell the truths of the past for its own present, not ours. It gives no indication that its ultimate goal was to establish the past as a series of ancient events that could be used as a guide for accurate time travel. Instead of promising objectively true historical data, the *Chronographia* promised to equip the reader to reap no small benefit (οὐ γὰρ μικρὰν ὠφέλιαν … καρποῦται). It offered readers an account of the past which would reliably or trustworthily convey how the present lay in relation to the living eschaton of the divine. In the end the *Chronographia* was written to explain, through a specific treatment of the past, a vision of the present which made a new present possible.

Though my account of the *Chronographia* has prioritized analysis over narrative, I have done so because it can be difficult to initially identify narrative strategies and purpose in works that are largely compilations of other sources. But indeed, there has been a story behind my analysis. In order to let the analysis stand on its own terms, I have largely refrained from explaining what I have discovered as a story. Nonetheless, here at the end I would sketch as clearly as I can the outlines of the plot.

In AD 808 George the Synkellos started writing the *Chronographia*. We do not know his story, or the story of what caused him to write. George might well have been an émigré to Constantinople from the educated Greek-speaking elites of Syria. While this is probable, we will not ever know if it is true. George might well have been suffering, while writing, from the physical abuse, financial ruin, and banishment from Constantinople inflicted upon those who played a role in the conspiracies against Nikephoros I, conspiracies uncovered and prosecuted from AD 806–808. While this is

probable, we still do not know. What we do know is that George was the *synkellos* to patriarch Tarasios (r. 784–806) and while this is as certain as anything we can know, we do not know exactly when during Tarasios' reign George served in his capacity as the imperial liaison in the patriarchate. We can, as I have in this book, recover what this bare information about the authorial persona would have signaled to readers in the early ninth century. But while that is essential for a historicized reading of his text, the little we can know about George is not the most interesting or certain thing to arise from a prolonged investigation into the *Chronographia*. The story about how the *Chronographia* came to be is not recoverable, though we can state that the *Chronographia* was given its impetus by our mysterious *synkellos* George—whoever he was and whatever he had done.

What about the *Chronographia* itself? The *Chronographia* was an incredibly ambitious project. It was explicitly written to supplant the *Chronicle* of Eusebius of Caesarea. Eusebius' *Chronicle* had served as the definitive reference work on historical time for nearly half a millennium, for at least four linguistic communities around the Mediterranean and the Black Sea: Greek, Latin, Syriac, and Armenian. But in the final decades of the eighth century, Eusebius' oeuvre had been charged with iconoclast sympathies. This was the opportunity for the *Chronographia*'s revisionism, the opportunity to supplant an ancient, internationally acclaimed record of human time with both a new conception of time and a new definition of the present.

The *Chronographia*'s new time was, at first glance, simply a repackaged old time. The *Chronographia* reaffirmed the older Alexandrian tabulation of world chronology which Eusebius' reckoning had supplanted: Julius Africanus and Annianos' calculation that there were 5,500 years between the Creation of the world and the Incarnation of the Christ. But the stakes were not *just* between two different ways of tallying years; the argument was not merely an antiquarian return. The *Chronographia*'s re-assertion of the Alexandrian tabulation of *anni mundi* provided a new understanding of the relationship between human chronology and the divine present. By bringing the philosophy of Aristotle and the astronomy of Ptolemy into conversation with the liturgical theology of the day, the *Chronographia* proposed a time that was philosophical, scientific, and theologically astute: the new historical time of the First-Created Day. By using a new time to craft a new era the *Chronographia* changed the definition of the present, and thus of the future.

The *Chronographia*'s new epoch for the present did not initiate the modern era with the Incarnation in AM 5500 but with the conquest of Judea by Pompey in AM 5434 (in 63 BC). This beginning defined the present age by Roman rule over Judea via the establishment of Herod as king in Jerusalem or, in its own terms, the era of the rule of a non-Jew over Judea. In other words, the *Chronographia* asserted that the present began when the age of Jewish rule ended and rule by the Romans began. It presented a new polity under the special favor of God in the terms which O. Irshai has connected to the "concept of the elect nation." To ensure that readers did not miss this point, the chronological division was made manifest in the structure of the codex: the *Chronographia* circulated in codices that bound George's account of the beginning of the present era—from AM 5434 (63 BC) to AM 5777 (AD 284)—with his continuator's completion of the account to AM 6305 (AD 813).

What was the story of the present? The *Chronographia*'s story turned the reigns of past Roman emperors into images, figures, or types. As no surprise either to Byzantinists in general, nor to scholars of the *Chronographia* in particular, the reign of the emperor Constantine I was paradigmatic. However, the *Chronographia* did not make the reign of Constantine I into a single type but into a multivalent image. As argued in chapter 5, in the longer narrative trajectory of the *Chronographia*, the portrait of Constantine I was joined to that of his son Constantius, and as such the pairing established a type of the pious emperor who was nonetheless deceived during his reign into promulgating bad policies (whether ecclesiastical or fiscal), and who then bequeathed those evils to the empire in the form of a successor implementing evil policies from the start and

then continuing them throughout their reign. This imperial type or figure—in the specific sense articulated by E. Auerbach—would be repeatedly fulfilled through later emperors including Heraclius and Constans II, Leo III and Constantine V, and Nikephoros I and Staurakios.

Constantine I also established the positive image for imperial power in the *Chronographia*: the image of a mixed-gender collaboration (chapter 6). Here Constantine's following of the divine injunction given to his mother Helena established a type that was fulfilled in the sharing of power between Theodosius II and Pulcheria, and Irene and Constantine VI. Though the type was compromised by greed (by Theodosius and Irene), the paradigmatic image was nonetheless clear.
The *Chronographia* presented a story of empire in which the ideal type of imperial power consisted in a man and a woman working in conjunction to stay the course of merciful and just rulership, a type unsurprisingly reminiscent of the theological image of Christ and the *Theotokos* Mother-of-God.

The *Chronographia* juxtaposed these positive and negative types of emperors. That is, imperial types could be contrasted between emperors, or within emperors' own reigns. In this manner the story of the *Chronographia* was created by using these types to explain how the present emperor, Nikephoros I, came to power and exactly why and how he was evil. Nikephoros came to power because of the destruction of the ideal mother-son type of Irene and Constantine VI. His evils made manifest the greed of all previous evil emperors. The final story the *Chronographia* had to tell used a coda to rearrange these types in a message to the new emperor Leo V: to support a fiscal policy of low taxation and ecclesiastical control over social services, and to listen to the empress (Theodosia) in matters of religious policy.

The story of the *Chronographia* is a story about a unique idea of political life communicated as a vision of an *oikumene* that could transcend the boundaries of empire. As we have seen, the *Chronographia* is too self-evidently complex, clever, and self-aware to fit into any simple dichotomous analytical categories we might use to try to categorize it: monastic vs. lay, ecclesiastical vs. political, male vs. female, Roman vs. non-Roman, and (as in chapter 8) even pro-icon vs. anti-icon. Its vision was of an *oikumene* incorporating diasporic Christian communities of Armenians and Syrians and protecting them from oppressive regimes. It told a story of the empire as a present and future community that was bound together with a shared understanding and experience of time. The story of the *Chronographia* was a story about truth, narrative, power, and belonging.

The Past Study

This study asked what the *Chronographia*'s formulation of the past tells us about its present, for "those who write history write the present." What does the *Chronographia* tell us about its present, about the years 808 through 815? I have argued that the *Chronographia*'s remaking of the present through its presentation of the past is significant not only for a history of its own age but for a history of ages after: the *Chronographia* would dominate historical writing in Greek for centuries after it was written. This made it necessary to address not only how this re-presentation of the past reshaped perceptions of the past, and how in doing so remade its present, but to address how the work's vision of the present became a lasting historical paradigm, a framework in the subsequent decades when it was actively edited, adapted, repurposed, and continued.

I began this study arguing that the *Chronographia*'s self-presentation as well as the history of its transmission oblige us to read it as a joint project shared between George the Synkellos and Theophanes (chapter 1). While the conclusion of this argument itself is not new to scholarship, what is entirely new is to avoid merely reapplying that point to asking (again) whether this means the *Chronicle* attributed to Theophanes should be *actually* attributed to George. Instead, I pursued a new question. Rather than asking who wrote the *Chronographia*, I asked how it was read. I turned to the manuscript evidence to formulate my answer, asking what the surviving manuscripts could tell us

about how the work's contemporary audience would have read it. From this evidence two paths diverged and I set out to travel both.

First, over the course of Part 1, I articulated a new approach to the *Chronographia* and its account of the past in the present by working through the implications of my redefinition of the work. That is, Part 1 started with a concrete example of how the section of the project attributed to George the Synkellos—known as the *Chronography*—defined the present age from the epoch, the starting point, of the conquest of Judea by the Romans. Further pressing implications of George's governing idea of the chronological project were addressed: how would George's authorial mask or *persona* be read by a contemporary reader (chapter 2); how would George's theory of time—the First-Created Day—communicate meaning to a ninth-century Constantinopolitan; and, how would that meaning direct readings of his account of the past (chapter 3)? I brought a study of George's office of *synkellos*, and of his understudied programmatic preface, to bear on the *Preface* of Theophanes. Though the *Preface* of Theophanes has been exhaustively debated, my approach meant re-reading it as a guide for a reader who encountered it when they were already part way through the work. Studied as a reading of George's project, the *Preface* became an invitation to contemporary readers to rethink not only past events, but the entire relationship of past to present (chapter 4). In articulating *how* the work's audience was invited to read the present in the past, this conclusion to Part 1 set up the eventual analysis of the ends for which this invitation was made (chapter 8).

Seeing how way led on to way, Part 2 then returned to the starting point and took up the second path. Taking up a different set of initial expectations from Part 1, I turned to the task of analyzing the *Chronographia*'s account of Roman history down to its present, starting with the beginning of its account of its own present age. I then performed an extended reading of the work's account of the Roman past on the basis of the second premise established by chapter 1: that the unique form of the *Chronographia* in the earliest surviving manuscript (*PG 1710*) is likely more similar to the original form of the work than the form in later surviving manuscripts (on which our critical editions and translations have depended). The difference is significant. If the text was written in year-by-year annual entries—as in later manuscripts—then our readings of the work must take annual entries as the core narrative structural unit. However, if the text was written in emperor-by-emperor narrative units—with annual notices serving as subdivisions therein—then the account of each emperor's reign can be read as a coherent portrait or image. Literary-minded scholars have long called our attention to the latter option: there are obvious and unmistakable narrative strategies in the arrangement, editorial comments, and re-phrasings of source material in the *Chronographia*'s accounts of individual emperors. To date this point had, however, only been proposed as a possibility for the narratives of three emperors: Constantine I, Justinian I, and Herakleios. By bringing the original layout of the text into this discussion I provided a means to ask the question of narrative strategy of the entire *Chronographia*. I duly found an obvious congruence between the conclusions of narratological readings of specific emperors' reigns, and the form of the entire *Chronographia* in the manuscript *PG 1710*, which is divided emperor-by-emperor.

On this basis I used chapters 5, 6, and 7 to identify not only coherent narrative structures within the reigns of specific emperors, but to define the shared narrative strategies which join together these imperial reigns. The clearest narrative strategy was typology. Tracking the use of typologies made it possible to identify rhetorical goals sustained throughout the entire *Chronographia*, and so to see the whole as much greater than the sum of the parts. Part 2 concluded by showing that patterns in the typological progression of portraits of emperors culminated in a juxtaposition of the reign of the Empress Irene (r. 780–802) with that of her successor Nikephoros I (r. 802–811). The previously-perplexing invective against Nikephoros I—who reigned at the time of the *Chronographia*'s inception—was found to present a carefully-crafted, long-anticipated image of Nikephoros as the fulfillment of Pharaoh and so the Antichrist of time's end.

Up to this point I had contextualized the *Chronographia*'s vision of the past within its present. The images in the *Chronographia*, its portraits of emperors, were thus not merely new readings of the past but a new vision of how the world *is* and how it *could be*: a different idea of the present which contained new possibilities for the future. An explanation of how all of this made meaning in the work's present remained. What were the ends to which its framing of time were, and could be, put?

My final two chapters responded to this question by considering the afterlife of the *Chronographia*. As such they built from the fact that soon after the invective against Nikephoros I was written it would have been rendered moot by the fact of the emperor's annihilation in battle against the Bulgar ruler Krum in AD 811. Chapter 8 thus argued that the entries which stand as the current ending were added within a few years of George the Synkellos' death in order to redirect the *Chronographia* to the new political contexts of the early reign of Leo V (ca. 815). This argument made it possible to sketch out the contours of the likely intellectual circle in which and for which the work was produced: a powerful group closely connected to Leo V who nonetheless expressed dissent to certain of Leo's policies through a claim to the legacy of the Empress Irene. Possessed of a coherent explanation for how this work achieved the status of a masterwork of chronographical genius, I then considered how its reception through the subsequent decades could help explain the exact form of the work that comes down to us. In chapter 9 I argued that the *Chronographia* was significantly edited once more during the regency and reign of the Empress Theodora (ca. 843–858). This editing brought the work into alignment with Theodora's own ideological program to rewrite the past to fit her present: the Triumph of Orthodoxy.

I have proved the ends of time in the *Chronographia* by combining the methods of textual criticism, manuscript studies, and literary analysis to demonstrate not merely *that* the *Chronographia* was composed and read as a unified whole, but *how* it was that this masterwork was a reaction to its initial present and an active agent in shaping perceptions of the past in at least two additional present moments. These adaptations of the work, these several ends, make it possible to see that the *Chronographia* achieved its power as the definitive historical paradigm of its age *because* its presentation of the past could be adapted anew. I have explained how this chronography worked in order to open up a window onto how early medieval Byzantines debated and communicated the relationship between past and present, and the ends to which they deployed that intellectual labor. This new window onto the past connects the composition of a chronography to political discourse and political action in Constantinople during the period the work was composed and repeatedly re-edited: from 808 into the mid-ninth century. In this way *The Ends of Time* not only rehabilitates modern study of the *Chronographia* but opens up multiple new directions for future research into its socio-political environment.

By following the evidence of the present in the *Chronographia*'s account of the past, this study found that the work transmitted a different sort of *correct* or *accurate* information than that which modern historians have tended to prize. Perhaps this is because we are now better primed to follow a text such as the *Chronographia* than we have been. In our era of the quoted tweet, shared post, and viral meme, we would seem more intuitively attuned to the idea of authorship and *auctoritas* as a fluid, communally constructed concept. We may well be better equipped to think through a historical compilation or a compendium of chronology now than in all the centuries since the printing press came to dominate the dissemination of written texts. The real historical value and significance of the *Chronographia* lies in its evidence of the present moments of the *Chronographia*'s initial writing by George the Synkellos and Theophanes (in 808–815), and then its re-writing (in ca. 843), inherent as they are in the form and content of the *Chronographia* transmitted to us today. As long as historians continue to look primarily for a literally true account—an objective history—in the pages of the *Chronographia*, we will miss much of its meaning. The meaning which the *Chronographia* communicated was non-literal, and non-explicit. The story at the close

of AM 6302 of the Parable of the *Keroullarios* and the emperor Nikephoros I, for instance, cannot have been included for the purpose of ensuring that future generations knew that the emperor once met with a wealthy candle-maker. It was composed to help readers understand what Nikephoros I *meant*. The verification of this meeting by modern historical critical methods will never happen. We can *never* know whether such an encounter took place; the literal meaning is lost in every way. But that was never what the *Chronographia* meant to convey. Its purpose was not to convey information about Nikephoros' agenda of a noonday in AD 810, but to convey the truth of the man within the truth of the world.

The Present Discourse

The aim of this study is to directly supplement the collective endeavor to re-write the story of ninth-century Constantinople. This remains a subtle process. Until the Macedonians, the historical works of the Roman Empire that do survive from this period seem most often to be articulating a minority report, a critique, more than apologia or myth-making at the service of the political *status quo*. This makes our surviving Byzantine histories troublesome candidates for providing us with direct evidence for concepts such as 'identity formation.' The *Chronographia* wrote history less in the service of identify formation than political critique. Thus, it is difficult to see how to contextualize the *Chronographia* with comparative historical projects, such as those undertaken under the Carolingians. The Carolingian coup engendered an entire reformulation of the past in order to explain why one powerful family of magnates should be sanctioned in taking power from a recognized kingly line. The answer to this question was the formation of an identity—the Franks—out of the elements of the "Roman, Christian, and Merovingian past" so strong that its heritage could be said to have created the very idea of Europe. The Carolingians' approach to the past seems rather more similar to what might be found under the tenth-century Macedonians, or amongst Charlemagne's ninth-century contemporaries the ʿAbbasids, whose overthrow of the ʿUmayyad dynasty necessitated a comprehensive reformulation of identities: political, religious, and ethnic. In other words, even when considering the Carolingian world or works from adjacent communities such as the *Liber Pontificalis* of Rome, of Ravenna, or even the *History* of Paul the Deacon, nevertheless the *Chronographia* and the historical culture of early ninth-century Constantinople appears—at least at present—to be more *sui generis* in its era than not.

Identity is not the only analytical category from which this study has intentionally abstained. Productive, wide-ranging studies of (primarily Latin) historical discourses have also considered these discourses under such categories as: resources and use; memory and remembrance; transmission and exchange; perception; and, community-formation. But it remains unclear which of these would be the most appropriate or productive for comparative analysis of and juxtaposition with the *Chronographia*. There is clearly much serious work yet to be done to establish the terms and the framework for such discourses. For instance, despite the obvious literariness of Constantinople, and of Byzantinists' predilection for working with original manuscripts, there is as yet no equivalent study to R. McKitterick's *The Carolingians and the Written Word*, and it is quite possible that there never will be. Given the vastly different survival rates for early medieval manuscripts from the Carolingian world and from the Byzantine world, scholars working comparatively will need nuance and creativity to set commensurate terms for comparative study. Readers of the present study could find evidence for calling the *Chronographia* both Roman and Constantinopolitan. The work can be read as proposing an identity both internal and external to the center of political power. It is both ecclesiastical and imperial. Even the single most common summary statement that scholars have made about the identity promoted by the *Chronographia*—that it is an iconophile work—is surely true, and yet it is also misleading. To take just one example, in R. J. Lilie's seminal article "Reality and Invention in Byzantine Historiography," the author discussed how Constantine V's birth was presented in the *Chronographia*. Lilie read the account through the lens of a "fervent advocate of the veneration of icons" seeking to denigrate Constantine V as "its most vehement adversary, a heretic,

whom the chronicler vilifies accordingly." And yet we have seen that reading the *Chronographia* as so characterized by an iconophile identity has caused even scholars such as Lilie to suppress the work's much greater vitriol for the iconophile emperor Nikephoros I. Furthermore, as we saw in chapter 8, reading the *Chronographia* through an iconophile identity causes one to miss the complexities that appeared in my close reading of the final entries covering AM 6303–6305 (our AD 810–813). This coda to the *Chronographia* teased out both a pro-icon position *against* the pro-icon emperor Nikephoros I, *and against* the dominant pro-icon faction in Constantinople (the Stoudite monks under Plato and Theodore of Stoudios). Adding to the complexity, when the entries for AM 6303–6305 were written a few years later, they did so in a way that reshaped that already-complex pro-icon position into an accommodation of the rule of the anti-icon emperor Leo V. Does the *Chronographia* promote an iconophile identity? Yes, but not exclusively. In short: little about the *Chronographia* easily accepts a label. Perhaps more importantly, labels seem little use in helping understand it and may yet directly obscure our vision.

This is not to say that there is no wider context for this Romano-Byzantine project. Framing the *Chronographia* through a descriptive method invites comparative and generalized observations, but along different lines. For instance, by following lines of communication it is possible to sketch the outlines of a textual community for the *Chronographia* which eschews any simplistic identification. The text's own terms to describe the forms which it communicated to and with its present world show us shared interests between the text and the implied readers of the narrative. For the *Chronographia* articulated a vision of a supra-political economy, or civilization: the Christian community and body of the οἰκουμένη. The *Chronographia*'s idea of the present οἰκουμένη was enlivened by an expansive reanimation of a chronological order emanating through time. This chronological order was centered in space in Constantinople, but it was seen as radiating out into all the world: to Armenia, to Persia, to Syria-Palestine under the ʿUmayyads, to the ʿAbbasids in Baghdad, to Italy under the Lombards, and to Francia and Rome under the Carolingians. Taking the *Chronographia* as a product of an entire intellectual milieu allows us to see the intended audience for the *Chronographia* superseding even the bounds of the Roman Empire.

This ecumenicity would seem to resonate with the fact that the *Chronographia* was constructed within an eschatological framework that operated within a shared web of meaning. Scholars have long connected the *Chronographia* with the region of Syria-Palestine but less emphatically with the deep tradition of Syriac historiography. Nevertheless, this larger conceptual connection now seems obvious given the rich apocalypticism embedded in that tradition. Furthermore, given the connections that have been established between the representation of the past in the *Chronographia* and the powerful Armenian networks of Constantinople, it will also be essential for future studies to set the work more directly in dialogue with the apocalyptic traditions of historical thought resonant in those communities. Future paths for this work will be able to move beyond the older framework of apocalypticism as instigated by and framed around the advent of Islam, and rather articulate the perspicacity and variety that J. Palmer has found in this progressive model for historical thought, from the quotidian to the policy-forming. Studying the apocalyptic through a range of genres reveals that the concept is not so much about the chronology of the end as the mentality of living with an ending. For we have found the progression of time not only embedded in the narrative of the *Chronographia* but in its multiple endings that tell of different ends for different times. That is, the *Chronographia* exemplifies both uses which L. di Tommaso distinguished in apocalyptic historical frameworks: an imperial or *insider* identity, and an oppressed, or *outsider* identity. Both of these are embedded in a work which moved its point of view from that of persecuted rebels against the emperor Nikephoros I to denizens of the palace under Leo V. This flexibility is what made an apocalyptic framework so appealing to a chronographer seeking to comment upon imperial power, directly in line with what P. Ubierna has pointed out concerning the "politicization" of the apocalypse in the Syriac apocalyptic tradition into the eighth century.

On the other hand, we might consider that the *Chronographia*'s explicitly apocalyptic concept of the historical eschaton coincides with its implicit constitution of its audience as a *people* within the framework of the "elect nation"—or to use the terms of the period, of God's Περιούσιος Λαός (Peculiar People). This resonates with certain aspects of Carolingian self-conception in the same period. A people joined together in their participation in and expectation of the revelation of truth and true time also connects to the implicitly apocalyptic practice of the liturgical thought and practice of the Eastern Mediterranean. If the historical apocalyptic is the grand end of all time, the liturgical practices which fulfill a constant practice of the end create a people synchronized in their sense and practice of the daily, weekly, and annual fulfillment of time. The liturgical paradigm has been shown to both form and critique the body politic.

Finally, this study has worked to ask what expectations for truth and accuracy did the *Chronographia* set for itself and its original audience, and how did those work. It has been "concerned less with the accuracy of the past thus fashioned" than it has been concerned with what the *Chronicle*'s "various types of engagement [with the past] can tell us about the wider intellectual and cultural framework within which they took place." In this way I have proposed new ways of thinking about the genre of early medieval chronography. By assessing the work on its own terms I found the *Chronographia* cannot be understood if it is thought of as a way of telling history, for it is a way of telling time. Not, however, telling time in the sense with which scholars have been concerned up to now, primarily considering time in terms of the relative accuracy of the work as a report on events. On these terms, the *Chronographia* is a distinctly inaccurate and untrustworthy historical source. But this is not the sort of time that our chroniclers were after. Our chroniclers wrote in pursuit of the ends of time, of finding the meaning of the past in and for the present.

My method has thus been to set aside analytical categories in favor of describing practices. For it is less through categories of analysis than through the description of practices, and through hypothesizing the habits that shaped those practices and the habits which those practices in turn formed, that we might propose descriptions of past humans. Practices of reading and writing transmitted ideas, formed perceptions, ordered memories, and thereby constituted a community around a particular way of remembering, talking about, or writing the past. There is yet much work to be done to uncover the varieties of ways in which the past was written and explained in Greek in the Early Middle Ages, the variety of groups who wrote and explained it, and the variety of ends which each pursued. For now we are still in the middle, deeply embedded in the ongoing process of unveiling the variety of the past.

An End for the Future

"Men in the middest make considerable imaginative investments in coherent patterns which, by the provision of an end, make possible a satisfying consonance with the origins and with the middle." Contrary to expectation, in positing an end that swallows all pasts an apocalyptic approach to the past relies on a recti-linear idea of time that actually permits of no ending. The end can neither be merely the next moment in a series of past moments, nor can it simply annihilate the past. The eschaton fulfills and re-integrates and completes all past times. As Frank Kermode famously put it, the unique chronos of the apocalyptic means that stories have "continually to be modified by reference to what is known." Such stories are "perpetually open to history, to reinterpretation." This present middle necessitates a continual re-understanding of the past under the ballooning fullness of a now when all times are present and yet in the shadow of the about-to-be. This present turns the *imminent* end into *immanent* ends, the perspicacious pervasive presence of all times at once.

Allegory, what I have discussed in this book as typology or *figural* thinking, is essential to this historical mode of thought for "the historical allegory is always having to be revised; time discredits

it." Allegorical thinking is what allows apocalypse to be "disconfirmed without being discredited … its extraordinary resilience." Indeed, as laid out in detail in the previous chapter it can "absorb changing interests, rival apocalypses," such as moving from the *end* that was the imperium of Nikephoros I to the *end* that was the new regime of Leo V and his resurrection of iconoclasm (so literally depicted in the *Chronographia* as the attempted resurrection of Constantine V from within his tomb within the church of the Holy Apostles). The sort of truth-making which accounts for the past in the present is not so much a discovery as a new creation.

I have re-framed the *Chronographia*'s idiosyncrasies in the context of its express theories of chronology, historical narrative, and participatory reading as *The Ends of Time*. I did so in order to allow something of the work's genius to be understood on its own terms. I hope that unveiling the creativity and intelligence invested in this indelibly Byzantine work might finally permit the *Chronographia* to stand in its rightful place as one of the most complex and carefully constructed historical works of the Middle Ages writ large. There is the sort of historical accuracy which is a reliable roadmap of events on a timeline. There is also the sort of historical accuracy which is the significance of events, or moments, in the grand scheme of things, for the present moment. We are now trained to privilege the former, and exercise utmost caution in expressing the latter. This hierarchy is reversed in the *Chronographia*. Both its authors looked to make sense of the past by explaining the past in present terms, and as we have seen they were explicit and unapologetic in their insistence on this point. The *Chronographia* was created in order to change how its readers perceived and understood their present, and to then explicitly invite readers to bring it even further into their own renewed present. And to do so in a fully literal sense: to actually complete what was missing (ἀναπληρῶσαι τὰ ἐλλείποντα).

My distinction between *now* and *then* is not meant to adjudicate difference but to identify *différance*. Consider that despite its acknowledged importance as a source for the history of the Eastern Mediterranean in the seventh to ninth centuries, the jointly authored ninth-century *Chronographia* of George the Synkellos and Theophanes has resisted comprehensive readings. This is the case for a number of reasons. Modern scholarship has long been of two minds about the work: on the one hand acknowledging its importance, while on the other insisting that the *Chronographia* is ultimately a collection of historical excerpts and anecdotes without a unified narrative or thematic vision. Thus, though the *Chronographia* is well-known far beyond the field of Byzantine studies, no scholar has yet treated the work as a literary whole, nor has a study yet utilized this 'universal chronicle' as a source on the milieu that produced it.

As a result we have neglected to marvel at and appreciate how the *Chronographia* presented its truth. This is a loss. We can yet learn something with present benefit from how Early Medieval accounts of the past such as the *Chronographia* explained the significance of past figures and events for their present. For when we look up into the night sky we call what we see space. But we might just as well call it time. I would suggest that chronographers saw the past as present similarly to how we accept that an astronomer looks at the ancient emanations of stars as present light, though they do not see those stars as they are in the present but only via emanations long past. Even the light of *proxima centauri* now hitting our stratosphere is over four years old. The stable North Star of today's sky is in fact light emitted in our own AD 1700. Astronomers study the traces of the stars' pasts as pasts that are now present. The astronomer and the chronographer both make sense of how past is present. How is it here, and what does it tell us about the universe, about ourselves now, about ourselves to come? Just as the light emitted by the North Star is in our past, that past is in our present. Neither is the present that past's final end: there are futures that are past, pasts already here, and pasts yet still to come.

This is not merely an analogy. As I have argued elsewhere, the sister-science to chronography is not history but astronomy. Or, as P. Varona has recently put it: the Byzantine chronographic tradition,

like the Hellenistic, was "halfway between astronomy and history." We have something to learn from the chronographers, and what we have to learn from them is not only scientifically important, it is politically urgent. History, our academic study of the past, no longer addresses itself to the synthesis of times. History, in formulating itself as an academic discipline, accepted a Newtonian supra-human time as an unquestioned given, as its chronological premise. Despite the emergence and acceptance of the general theory of relativity, History remained unconcerned with its Enlightenment-era idea of time. History has since silenced its ancient dialectic with students of time, and packed chronology away into the attic of antiquarian pursuits. Until recently.

Historians are now beginning to articulate the urgency with which humanity must devote itself to new chronologies. When S. Tanaka writes in favor of a *History without Chronology*, he advocates for a destruction of our reliance on Newtonian time and calls instead for a return to the sort of thinking about time and history in which (in the idioms of their own era) George the Synkellos and Theophanes engaged. Tanaka and others call on us all to recover "the multiple times and various temporalities that simultaneously operate in our worlds." The unique message of George and Theophanes' project, their chronography's grand but idiomatic synthesis of past and present, was for their own time, not ours. Their conclusions will not be ours, today. But that is not the point of my representations. I did not labor to translate this ninth-century work into the terminology of the twenty-first in order to resurrect it as a paradigm to follow literally, but as an allegorical type to be re-fulfilled. In the *Chronographia* I see creativity that is worthy of aspiration. The perspicacity therein, crossing every field of knowledge available, and the determination to construct a vision of the past in the present, is a perspicacity and a determination which we will need if we are ever to construct a new argument for who *we* could be. We can condemn the 'enlightened' colonizing ends which modern history writing long served, even as we deploy its narratives of universality to the work of greater justice. The present study offers the image of the *Chronographia* as a type to be used in this work. Even though its vision of a universalizing political community is in many devastating ways an antitype, in important aspects the *Chronographia* can serve as a prototype if its image inspires us to pursue anew the past in the present. Perhaps this study might inspire students of time to write new pasts, pasts different from those which currently predetermine the possibilities of meaning in and for our own times. Nevertheless, if the reader can find that this study has at least uncovered something previously unseen, or provoked a question previously unasked, then it has fulfilled its purpose. Its end was merely to inspire new beginnings. <>

Poetry, Bible, and Theology from Late Antiquity to the Middle Ages edited by Michele Cutino [Millennium-Studien / Millennium Studies, De Gruyter, 9783110687194]

This volume examines for the first time the most important methodological issues concerning Christian poetry – i.e. biblical and theological poetry in classical meters – from a diachronic perspective. Thus, it is possible to evaluate the doctrinal significance of these compositions and the role that they play in the development of Christian theological ideas and biblical exegesis.

This volume contains the proceedings of the International Symposium "Poetry, Bible and Theology from Late Antiquity to the Middle Ages" organized on 25– 27 January 2018 in Strasbourg by ERCAM, "ResearchTeam on Ancient and Medieval Christianity", belonging to UR 4377 of Catholic Theology and Religious Sciences of Strasbourg, in collaboration with several French institutions (IEA, "Institut d'Études Aug ustiniennes "-LEM,"Laboratoire d'études sur les monothéismes"-UMR 8584; ÉcoleNationale des Chartres; THAT Association Texts for the History of Late Antiquity"; CARRA

EA 3094- University of Strasbourg) and international Institutions (Facultad de Literatura Cristianay Clásica "San Justino" (FLCC) of Madrid; Universidad Complutense de Madrid). This conference was attended by the greatest specialists in late ancient and medieval poetry, involving a total of 33 papers, divided into three full days.

All methodological questions concerning Christian poetry– i. e. Christian, Greek and Latin, ancient and medieval, poetic texts, in classical metres– with biblical and theological content, were approached from a diachronic perspective which made it possible to evaluate the doctrinal significance and the role that these compositions play even in the development of Christian theological ideas and biblical exegesis. From a chronological point of view, we have taken into account the period from Late Antiquity to the Middle Ages, with particular attention to the adaptation of classical to their writing of the Bible in all its forms by Greek and Latin poets of Late Antiquity, and to the new forms of biblical poetry promoted in the West, from the Carolingian Renaissance to the 12th-13th centuries, when the Charters legitimized the use of poetry in the theological debate, and to the later polemics between scholastic theologians (such as Giovanni Dominici and Jean Gerson) and Christian "humanist" poets.Indeed, it can be noted that the use of poetic genres by Greek and Latin-speaking Christians begins much later (especially from the end of the 3rd century/ beginning of the 4th century) than the birth of Christian literary production in prose, which accompanies the very birth of this religion. This "delay" reveals a real difficulty for Christian culture: the creation of a code adapted to the expression of biblical contents, central in this religion, through the cultural tools of Greek and Latin literary production inverse. This difficulty is often reflected in declarations of radical incompatibility between the two areas of reflection of Sacred Scripture and poetry, which is the instrument of expression privileged by profane culture (just think of certain statements hostile to poetry by important authors, such as Jerome or Augustine, who will have a follow-up to the Middle Ages, as M. Zink Poésie et conversion au Moyen Âge, Paris 2003. has clearly shown). On the other hand, poetry is at the origin of attempts to integrate the style of biblical poetic texts, psalms, and classical literary forms (this is the path followed, for example, by the type of Responsorial Psalm, which will not be very successful. The solution that ultimately prevails over the others gives rise, using a remarkable expression of Herzog, to the third cycle of poems of Western literature, which flanksthe Homeric and Carolingian-Arthurian cycles: the cycle of biblical poetry in classical meters. This is a literary field of vital importance, which, after having encountered prejudices from a certain classicizing perspective, especially from the middle of the 20th century, has been established in the panorama of critical studies because of its chronological cross-cutting. Indeed, the "canons" of biblical poetry developed in Late Antiquity will dominate medieval schools and even those of the humanist era, finding also a favourable ground in the culture of the Reformation and Counter-Reformation, to enter definitively into crisis with the cultural renewal of the Enlightenment. This has also been established thanks to the interaction that the field has promoted between emerging cultures, biblical-Christian and Germanic, and Greek-Latin civilization in its expressive forms.

The symposium highlighted the socio-cultural importance of this transposition of scriptural content into poetic forms: in fact, according to various modalities and purposes, and in relation to different recipients and reference environments, this transposition aims, first of all, at the "vulgarization" of the biblical interpretation and theological speculation in favor of the rudes, i.e. people who are foreign to catechetical schools or to the ecclesiastical careers, but who belong to the cultured/educated elites of their time, through the expressive instrument privileged by them, that is, the production in verse. This is the reason why Christian literature inverse is of great interest in the in-depth evaluation even of the phenomenon of the Christianization of the ruling classes, especially from the fourth/fifth century. A literary genre such as the 'epic' or the 'biblical paraphrase' clearly shows the value of this cultural operation: the transposition principally into hexameters of the books of the Old Testament (mention the paraphrases of Genesis by Cyprian the Gaul, Claudius Marius

Victorius and Avitus) or of the New Testament (such as the Evangeliorum libri of Juvencus, the Carmen Paschaleof Sedulius, the Paraphrase of the John's Gospel of Nonnos of Panopolis and the Historia apostolorum of Arator) isnot reduced to a simple rhetorical exercise or a literary reading. As M. Roberts (Biblical Epic and Rhetorical Paraphrase in Late Antiquity, Liverpool 1985) and D. Nodes (Doctrine and Exegesis in Biblical Latin Poetry, Leeds 1993) have clearly shown, from different perspectives. Such transpositions into verse a re-reading of the biblical hypotext, an "update" of Scripture in relation to the requirements and expectations of the reference environment. So, this production associates scriptural interpretations and doctrinal commentaries with paraphrasing in verse, so that for this genre, we can also speak of a true biblical exegesis inverse, which is often accompanied by very precise theological objectives.

The study of Christian biblical poetry, therefore, requires a global and organic scientific approach, that is, an approach not limited to examining the formal questions related to the transposition into scriptural content, but also to showing how poetic form and exegetical-theological content support each other. On the other hand, there isa need for reflection on the very legitimacy of calling Christian poets true theologians. This is an issue that challenges even our notion of theology. Indeed, from the essay Gloria. Pour une esthétique théologique (ed.1962) by the theologian Hans Urs von Balthasar, anew attempt was made to recover, within the theology, the aesthetic dimension of theology, underlining how symbolic and metaphorical language can be a very effective instrument of theological language. This is an aspect that medieval theologians were already very familiar with: thus, since Carolingian times, Jean Scot Erigène (PL122,146 B-C) has brought the theology of poetry (theology veluti quaedam poetria) closer together through this particular use of language for teaching purposes.

CONTENTS

Abstracts

Part I: The Greek-Latin Biblical Epic in Late Antiquity

M. Roberts (Middletown), Narrative and Exegesis in Sedulius' Carmen paschale

In an important monograph from 2011 David Deerberg distinguishes Sedulius'poetic practice from that of his predecessor Juvencus: while the amplifications of the earlier poet operate at the horizontal level of the narrative, and are largely extrapolations on the biblical text, Sedulius introduces elements, "vertical" in Deerberg's terminology, primarily exegetical in nature, that disrupt the narrative continuity. In my paper I propose a different, complementary approach to Sedulius' text, laying the emphasis on the distinction between narrator and instructor. Building ona passage from Cicero's De oratore on historical narrative (2.15.62–63),I argue that exegesis is consistent with, and even necessary to, narrative. In my analysis of some passages from the Carmen paschale (2.94–96, 4.222–25, 4.255–57, 5.70–72, 5.77–78, 5.165–69, 5.177–81)I show that Sedulius' introduction of exegetical detail regularly conforms to Cicero's understanding of the historical narrative, which is expected to discuss causes, purposes, and motives for actions and events and the reasons for their outcomes. The Opus paschale provides a useful point of comparison in that it adopts the role of instructor rather than narrator, and with it characteristic lexical and syntactic markers, more often than the Carmen. Non-narrative exegesis is rare in the body of the Carmen outside the passage on the Lord's Prayer, though there are certainly cases where the roles of narrator and teacher are hard to distinguish (e.g., 2.168–71).

M. Cutino (Strasbourg), Fictions poétiques et vérités bibliques dans les paraphrases vétéro et néotestamentaires en vers. Questions méthodologiques

In this article we show how the theme of pagan literary on which we notice the most important programmatic affirmations about the legitimacy of inserting poetic fictions into the paraphrases of Ancient and New Testament, is the humanity's prehistory, like the initial condition and the decadence or subsequent progress. It is a theme that necessarily intersects the biblical narrative of man's loss of the Edenic condition because of original sin with that of the progressive degradation of humanity, and for this reason it is inserted by some poets into the biblical truth. Indeed, the poets find in this theme, so to speak, a "neutral" space to legitimately use the fictions of classical literature as examples of this dimension of fall and decadence, and to discuss the great questions of the history of humanity, those of progress or corruption of humanity, as Victorius most probably does in relation to the didactic, even scholastic destination of his Alethia, or to transmit theological considerations through understandable forms toa cultivated audience, uncomfortable with biblical exegesis,as the author of Laus Iohannis does.

These elements pose the fascinating problem of the context in which these compositions fit. It is interesting, in this regard, to note that theAlethia and theLaus were transmitted to usby the same manuscript, the Parisinus Latinus 7558 of the Carolingian period, alongside other compositions, such as the correspondence in verse between Ausone and Paulin of Nole, the poem that Paulin of Nole still addressed to Jovius inviting him to no longer dedicate himself to profane poetry, but to devote himself toa true Christian poetry, and a small poem called Epigramma Paulini: these are compositions all interested in the relationship between literature and in general classical culture and Christian novelty, which testifies to a learned – and ideologically oriented – choice on the part of the one who made this collection, a choice that deserves to be carefully studied.

Nicole Hecquet-Noti (Genève), L'auteur et son public. Les différentes lectures de l'épopée biblique selon Avit de Vienne

In the two prologues of his poem De spiritalis historiae gestis , Avitus of Vienne defines, as the target audience of his epic, his peers, the Christian literati of the Gallo-Roman aristocracy. He also specifies that his poem serves a double purpose: to transmit Christian teaching and to display its author's rhetorical mastery of the epic genre. He thus proceeds by inserting moral exegetical

comments into the various sections of his epic narrative, as has already been well appreciated. Our study focuses on the epic narrative itself to show how these two goals are constantly pursued. In the 5 books of the poem, we find two remarkable "mirror descriptions": the description of the Garden of Eden (1.188 – 298) and that of the Flood (4.425 – 540). These ekphraseis should be understood as a rhetorical amplification of the corresponding passages of Genesis (2,8 – 15 and 7,17 – 24); they also take as a model the epic descriptions of the locus amoenus and the storm. In the depiction of the Garden of Eden, Avitus firstly continues the tradition of the descriptions of exotic mirabilia , by the evocation of the Phoenix ^ a passage that combines allusions to Ovid (Met. 15,392 – 407) and Statius (Silv. 3,2) ^, and then he dialogues with the poetics of Claudian (Carm.min. 33 – 39) and the Anthologia Latina (519– 530), in shaping a short comparison between the beauty of the heavenly spring and crystal. At the same time, this description, like that of the flood, maps the new geography of the Christian world. It conveys a vision of the world that corresponds to the one we know from the cosmographies of this period, especially the Topographia Christiana (4.7) of Cosm as Indicopleustes and the Latin Expositio totius mundi et gentium.

S. Labarre (Le Mans), La réécriture des récits bibliques de guérison chez les poètes latins du IVe au Vie siècle

Latin Christian poetry of the IV-VI centuries draws largely its inspiration from the Bible. The miracles of healing effected by Christ or the Apostles have given rise to various rewritings, in order to defend the faith, to train the believers, or to make known the main orientations of the exegetical discourse. We have identified the different genres that produced them: biblical epics (Juvencus, Sedulius, Dracontius, Arator), didactic or apologetic poetry (Prudentius, Commodianus), hymns or epigrams (Prudentius, Rusticus Helpidius). But while poets sometimes introduce a form of theological commentary, they hardly take part in theologians' debates. They most often practice an allegorical exegesis and their main intention is to prove that the power of Christ is more than human. They use the expressive resources of poetry to make this divine nature visible, whether by epic dramatization, hymnic stylization, or conciseness oftituli (e. g. Miracula Christi).

L. Furbetta (Roma), Avit de Vienne et Dracontius en rapport. 'Chanter' et 'expliquer' la Bible entre formation scolaire et création poétique

In this paper we will try to present some reflections on the De sp iritalis historiae ges tis composed by Avitus of Vienne and on De laudibus Dei written by Dracontius, in order to analyze the poetic treatment of the same passages of the biblical narrative starting from the rhetorical strategies and processes, that the two poets set up in the structuring of narrative tableaux. Through the study of the loci similes and a deep analysis of Alc.Av. car m. 1.24 – 29 and car m. 3.213– 278 (these verses in particular compared with Drac. laud. 3.49 – 80) we will try to question the possibility of a 'relationship' between the two poems.

Br.Bureau (Lyon), L'autorité apostolique àtravers les discours de l'Historia Apostolica d'Arator

In his Historia Apostolica, Arator intends to give a commented poetic version of the Acts, but, for a modern reader, the poem is more a rewriting of the biblical text than an actual commentary.In this paper, we will discuss the way of rewriting the speeches of the two main characters Peter and Paul. Arator considerably changes the content of the speeches in order to 1- give an epic tone to the words of the apostles, 2- get rid of every detail that is not suitable for his purpose, 3- insert elements that could be of major interest for his 6th century Roman audience. Through quotations from the letters of Peter and Paul and insertions of elements coming from the Patristic tradition, the poet rebuild "his" apostles according to what he considers as the most important part of the apostolic message for his own time.

F.E. Consolino (L'Aquila), Severus (of Malaga?) and narrative construction. The healing of Bartimaeus (VIII.119 – 153)

This enquiry focuses on the way Severus constructs his account of a miracle that appears in two of the Synoptic Gospels, and that is also treated by Sedulius, namely the healing of the blind man Bartimaeus (8.119 – 153 – see the commentary on this section in Bischoff 1994, 82 – 86- , which is described in the Gospels of Mark (10.46 – 52) and Luke (18.35 – 43), and by Sedulius in carm. Pasch. 4, 210 – 221. This comparison between Severus and Sedulius is supplemented with a brief analysis of the same authors' accounts (Severus 9, 163 – 186 and Sedulius 4.251 – 270) of the part strictly related to the miraculous healing of the man born blind recounted in Jn 9. These two comparisons with Sedulius's treatments of the same episodes throw Severus's scarce propensity for reshaping the Gospel narrative for the purposes of theological or exegetic interpretation into sharp relief. All the same, in the course of his verse, Severus does not exempt himself entirely from providing explanations that he clearly believes will interest his readers. Paradoxically,the very admission of few exegetic excursus, on the part of Severus, reluctant as he is to stray too far in his poem from the letter of the Gospels, helps us to appreciate how, with Sedulius, exegesis had become a distinctive and inescapable trait of the Bibelepik.

R. Lestrade (Strasbourg), Usage des sources poétiques classiques et perspectives « théologiques » dans l'Heptateuchos de Cyprien le Gaulois (Ve s.)

The study, through a range of examples, of the reception of classical poetic sources in the Old Testament paraphrase known as the Heptateuchos shows a delicate craftsmanship which can be analyzed, as far as textual strategies are concerned, into four categories: epic amplification, moral characterization, pathetic emphasis, and mythical-epic analogies. Within a Christian reading of the Law, this layer of neoclassical ornamentation implies and enhances attitudes that draw from both psychological and theological motives: a divine and cosmic anthropomorphism, a valuation of the phenomenal world, and a valuation of pity. Last, a comparison is hinted between the Heptateuch Poet's stance toward biblicalhermeneutics and Varro's 'three theologies' theory as attacked by Augustine in book 6 of the The City of God.

D. De Gianni (Wuppertal), Four Variations on the Theme. "The Withered Fig Tree" (Mc 11.12 – 14;20–25; Mt 21.18 – 22) in Juvencus, Sedulius, Avitus of Vienne and Severus of Malaga(?)

This paper proposes a comparative analysis of the hexametrical rewritings of the evangelical account of Jesus cursing the fig tree (Matthew 21.18 – 22; Mark 11.12 – 14; 20 – 25) by Juvencus, Sedulius, Avitus of Vienne and Severus of Malaga (?). The comparison between the four pieces allows us to evaluate the different narrative strategies adopted by these authors, as well as the paraphrastic techinques and their "consonances" with previous classical poetry. The gap between the literal paraphrase by Juvencus, who rewrote the biblical text with few changes, and the work by Severus of Malaga (?), who was attentive to the exegetical and theological implications present in the hypotext, suggests reflections on the evolution of the literary genre of the poetic rewriting of the Bible. The different approaches to the biblical text by these authors reflect their cultural backgrounds and the instances of their audience. If the purpose of Juvencus is to spread the gospel in an acceptable poetic form, then the succeeding poets are motivated by exegetical intents, understandable in light of the theological and doctrinal debate, which is progressively growing in the Latin West.

F. Doroszewski (Warsaw),Dieu rejeté, Dieu triomphant. Réception des Bacchantes d'Euripide dans la Paraphrase de l'évangile de Saint Jean de Nonnos de Panopolis

The Bacchae of Euripides exercised an enormous impact on ancient literature. Christian literature was no exception, especially in the Alexandrian milieu where Philo had already introduced the Dionysian motifs into biblical exegesis. It was there that, starting at least with Clement of Alexandria,

the Bacchae was reinterpreted to express Christian beliefs. The Paraphrase of Saint John's Gospel written by Nonnus of Panopolis, a poet influenced by the Alexandrian intellectual circles, follows this exegetical tradition. Nonnus was well familiar with the Bacchae which is confirmed by the three books of Pentheid comprised of Dionysiaca 44^46, his other epic, as well as by numerous references to the play in the Paraphrase. The present paper demonstrates how the narrative of the Bacchae servesNonnus as an importantintertextin paraphrasing the episodes of the Mar riage of Cana (Book 2), of the Feast of Tabernacles (Book 7), and of Jesus' meeting with Martha and Mary in Bethania (Book 11). More specifically,the paper focuses on the symbolic role played by wine, the motif of sadness turning into ecstatic joy,and the opposition between the true and false wisdom.

A. Rotondo (Catania), Salut et prophéties messianiques dans le septième chant de la Paraphrase de Nonnos de Panopolis

In the seventh chapter of the Paraphrase of St. John's Gospel, Nonnus of Panopolis deals with the theme of disbelief through the controversy between Christ and the group of Jews/Pharisees about the interpretation of the messianic promises in the Scriptures and about Christ's messianity. The cause of the dispute, according to Nonnus, is the anger, aroused by envy, of Jews. Therefore, the poet represents the opposition through emotions (for example, anger). He uses emotions as markers to polarize non-believers and believers. All his exegetic work is founded on such polarization. Nonnus interprets Jn 7 emphasizing the dichometis , 'discord', as an outcome of the human ignorance in the face of divine wisdom. The Scriptures constantly reveal divine wisdom, but arrogance prevents human beings from recognizing it. The ground for challenge is the Book/Law with its prophecies about the Messianic advent.

S. Costanza (Messina), Voices, Hearing and Acoustic Epipahny in Nonnus' Paraphrase of St. John's Gospel

In his Paraphrase of St John's Gospel , Nonnus of Panopolis focuses on the appearance of the Lord as a perennial theophany,which also deals with acoustic signs revealing his divine presence. In the Graeco-Roman world, the spoken word corresponds to a fatal voice as kledon. According to a longdating tradition, Nonnus' epiphany reportsremark auditory signs of Christ revelation as Messiah, whose word is defined as Life-giving, as in 10.133 or releasing grief, as in 5.37. Miracles of Jesus are also enacted through his consoling Word. The voice of John, the true witness, is also prophetic. Under a key theological perspective, the Word of Christ shows God's nearness. Finally, Nonnus gives emphasis on auditory revelation as a privileged way to gain access to the divine. At this respect, he follows Greek epic tradition as well as mystical, gnostic or orphic, poetry.

Part II: Biblical Poetry and Theological Aims in other Poetic Genres between Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages

G. Agosti (Roma), La poésie biblique grecque en Egypte au IVe siècle. Enjeux littéraires et théologiques

The paper deals with the early phase of Biblical poetry in the Greek East. The new Christian poems preserved in a papyrus codex from the so-called Bodmer Library (a group of papyri coming from the areaof the city of Panopolis, Upper Egypt), has dramatically shown thatin Egypt verse paraphrases of Biblicalbooks were composed already in the middle of the fourth century. Their author had already attempted to give their answer to the challenge represented by a Christian poetry in classical language and metres. Before the few Biblical poems by Gregory of Nazianzus and the brief season of the fifth century Biblical epic (Nonnos, Eudocia, the Ps-Apollinaris), The Bodmer poet(s) show to be aware of the literary and theological issues involved by the paraphrastic genre. It is questionable whether this is a creative innovation, or the author(s) have been inspired by previous examples. The study of the environment where these poems have been composed (where Latin texts are known) could suggest that the author(s) were aware of the Latin experiments. On the other hand, an

analysis of Christian metric inscriptions from the first half of the 4th century points out that some aspects of 'biblical poetry' (namely the juxtaposition of Classical and Biblical expressions) were more common than admitted.

Lefteratou (Heidelberg), Deux chemins d'apprentissage. Le didactisme dans les Centons homériques

This article explores the didactic character of lines 1 – 70 of the first edition of the Homeric Centos. The didactic and ekphrastic potential of the story of the Genesis is treated in a twofold way: by the external narrator, who addresses the reader, and by the embedded one, Satan, who addresses Eve. These two narrators offer a contrasting, albeit similar stylistically ,description of paradise and of paradisalbliss, though their didactic intentions differ diametrically.The discreet narrator of the introit presents him/herself as a preacher responsible for revealing, but not for forcefully convincing his/her audience. Contrarily,Satan is depicted as the pushy sophist par excellence and his addressee, Eve, as an easy target. This disparity of didactic means and ends invites the reader/audience to ponder on the question of free will when it comes to the revelation of the Christian message.

R. Ricceri (Ghent), Two MetricalRewritings of the Greek Psalms. Pseudo-Apollinaris of Laodicea and Manuel Philes

This paper aims to provide a preliminary insight into the reception of the Psalms from the point of view of two Greek paraphrases. The first text I take into account is the so-called Metaphrasis Psalmorum, written in dactylic hexametres and dating to the fifth century. This text is anonymous, although traditionally attributed to Apollinaris of Laodicea (IV century). The latter is a rewriting of the Psalms in political verses (decapentasyllables) carried out by a well-known Byzantine poet, Manuel Philes (XIII-XIV century). A comparative analysis of the above-mentioned paraphrases can shed light on the appreciation of the Psalms in two different historical contexts. These two texts, whose investigation still lacks some philological work, share remarkable affinities, as they are both versified rewritings of the same literary source and they are both faithful to the original text. However, some major dissimilarities cannot be overlooked. On the one hand, the hexametric metaphrasis conveys some typical elements of late antique Christian poetry.It contributes to the establishment of a highbrow poetry with Christian content, which can benefit from the use of the Homeric metre and the Homeric language. On the other hand, Manuel Philes' Metaphrasis of the Psalms is situated in Later Byzantium and is grounded in a well-established, thousand-year-old tradition of Christian poetry. Moreover, itis connected with the characteristic Byzantine taste for (prose) rewritings. The texts resulting from the process of rewriting are profoundly influenced by the cultural role that they perform in their own historical context. The author of the Homeric Psalter strives to reshape the Psalms by means of an unmistakably epic language. Conversely, Manuel Philes is more cautious when dealing with the biblical text. He adopts the political verse as the main poetic mark of his paraphrase and slightly alters the source text, following the path of Byzantine rhetoricians and hagiographers.

Jesús F. Polo (Madrid), Descent and Ascent in the VIIIth Hymn of Synesius of Cirene

The aim of this paper is to study the 8th Hymn of Synesius of Cyrene. As it is well known, this hymn deals with Jesus' incarnation, descent into Tartarus and ascent to Heaven. Neoplatonism and Chaldean Oracles shape the background of the Hymn. But in its first part, the descent, it is possible to recognize some typical features of the heroic journey to the place of the dead. It is my intention to focus on Jesus journey to Tartarus comparing it with Odysseus journey in Hom. Od. 11 and with the one of Heracles in Bacchylides Victory-ode 5, in order to show how the previous Greek literary tradition could have influenced the first part of this Hymn.

M. Herrero de Jáuregui (Madrid), Gregory of Nazianzus' Hymn to Parthenie (II.1.2.1 – 214). Christianizing Greek Theogonies

Gregory of Nazianzus took classicalliterary genres as models to imitate, and at the same time, to innovate: in the long proem of his Hymn to Parthenie Gregory clearly follows rhetorical theory about hymns, combining different hymnic types in a single poem; also, since the poem deals with Christian account of creation, he explicitly takes Hesiod's Theogony as model to be surpassed. As in the rest of his poetic work, he manages to raise Christian poetry to the height of classical Greek models, and to explain Christian doctrines in a pleasant and elegant form.

J. Prudhomme (Strasbourg), Les personnages bibliques, héros d'une épopée chrétienne dans la poésie de Grégoire de Nazianze

The influence of the traditional epic on Gregory of Nazianzus' poetry is formally undeniable but Gregory's heroes are of a new kind, since they are biblical characters, whom he wants to turn into the heroes of a new, Christian epic.

These figures are at the centre of Gregory's biblical works, which resemble the paraphrase genre. How does the encounter between the traditional epic language and the biblical material take place? The analysis of some poems (I.1.16; I.1.20 – 23) testifies to the flexibility with which Gregory mixes the biblical heritage with the epic language, so that we can speak of "formal syncretism". However, the rewriting is not only ornamental: through the use of stylization, through the choice of active verbal formulas, striking images or personifications, Gregory focuses attention on biblical figures who become heroes performing exceptional feats and successfully fighting against the forces of evil. The Christian dimension of the new heroes is greatly enhanced, so that the figure of Jesus replaces the ancient pagan heroes, and the prophets become heralds of Christ. Finally, the poet Gregory himself is affected by this process of epic heroism: in his autobiographical poems (II.1.15; II.1.19), Gregory uses Old Testament figures as models to stage himself as a Christian hero, whose glory consists in defending the Trinity and enduring adversity.

D. Shanzer (Wien), Grave Matters: Love, Death,Resurrection, and Reception in the De Laudibus Dorini

This paper is best read as a diptych with D.R. Shanzer, "Resurrections before the Resurrection in the Imaginaire of Late Antiquity" forthcoming in The Biblical Annals (Lublin). The point of departure for both articles is the Anonymous Carmen de laudibus Domini's description of a sentimental miracle (situated in Gaul in the territory of the Aedui): the corpse of a dead wife woke up temporarily to welcome her loving husband's body (De Laudibus 7 – 35). Here it is demonstrated how anomalous details of the description of the burial (rock tomb , wrapped burial) suggest intertextuality with the Lazarus narrative in the Gospel of John mediated through Juvencus (with implications for the date of the Carmen de laudibus). The deceased woman's problematized ability to move her arms echoes an exegetic discussion about Lazarus' locomotion, despite his bound feet. This is to be found in texts such as Ambrose's funeral oration for Satyrus, in Nonnos' Gospel Paraphrase ,and Sermon 65 of Petrus Chrysologus. The discourse of being re-ensouled is also explored, from the philosophical to the erotic. Poets (Prudentius and Severus of Malaga) reacted differently to Lazarus' resurrection and the problem (for example) of his possible stench and how to soft-pedal or transform it into poetry.The paper then turns to the nature of the Gallic couple's marriage (white or not?) and the reception of the base Legende behind Gregory of Tours. The relationship between the Carmen de Laudibus , Tertullian's De Anima 51.6 – 8, is explored with the conclusion that Gregory didn't work from De Laudibus ,but from a (now lost) Vo rl age or Vo rlagen. The paper ends with some attempt to contextualize the double burial and marital continence in epigraphy (with very limited success), but showing that one word (deprehensa Carmen de

laudibus 30) teasingly alludes to what does or doesn't go on in the double grave as letto matrimoniale of a Christian couple.

G. Aragione (Strasbourg) – A. Arbo (Strasbourg), Un diner sur l'herbe. Proba et le pouvoir évocateurde la poésie

The description of the Last Supper proposed by the Christian poet Proba in her Virgilian Cento (v.580 – 599) deviates in many respects from the text of the Gospels. This article attempts to show that the reasons for such deviations must be sought above all in the stream of meaning that passes between the hypotext (the Aeneid), and the hypertext (the Cento). Proba did not compose her description with verses borrowed from the entire Virgilian corpus, but privileged specific nuclei of the Aeneid ,already used fora previous biblical episode: the fall of Adam and Eve. The Last Supper in Proba's poem appears thus, thanks to the hypotext, as a replica of the story of the transgressive meal of Eve and the serpent in the Garden of Eden and the symbol of Redemption after the Fall.

M. Crespo Losada (Madrid), Biblicalhypotexts in Prudentius' Contra Symmachum. Case study of C. Symm. II.95 – 96

The theology of creation found in the apologetical writings represented by Lactantius enables us to discover that the nature of an eternal god creator is explained by the inspired or revealed news rendered by Scripture in Proverbs 8.22 – 29. Several passages by Lactantius (Ins titutiones divinae) show that the procedure of presenting notions specific to the Christian deus verus, revealed by faith, is –even in the context of a dialogue with polytheistic paganism– a discursive device which could also have been employed by Prudentius in his disputation with Symmac hus. Generically alluding the deus verus in C. Symm. 1.325 – 327, as well as stating His eternal, creative nature in C. Symm. 2.95 – 96 can be explained because there is a conscious lexical unspecificity overlaying the specificity of the sola fides, according to which there is no question of an eternal, creator God out of the implicit reality of the Son of the Father, the ab aetern o begotten Word, who, without leaving the bosom of the Father, participates in the creation of the world, as shown by the presence of Proverbs 8.22 – 29 in the poetry of Prudentius.

P. De Navascués (Madrid), O crucifer bone lucisator (Prudence, cath. 3.1). Doctrine ancienne en termes nouveaux

The Hymnus ante cibum (Prudentius, Cath. 3), with a refined metric pattern -as used by Ausoniusand containing differents neologisms, was addressed to Prudentius' elite group of Christians. The beginning of the first stanza –O crucifer bone lucisator– leads to the most important issue to us all: the Christological meaning of food. As noted in prior authors (Irenaeus, apocryphal litterature, Maximus, Gregorius Illiberitanus) to Prudentius, Crucifer ,the one who bears the cross, should be understood in light of the traditional equivalence: cross-plaugh (crux-aratrum). According to this, since the very beginning of History, Christ, crucifer and lucisator ,shows up, as the one and the same sower (sator), who bears the plaugh (crux), nourishing the mankind with food from the land and the Light of the Spirit. Thereby Cato's bonus agricola has become Prudentius' crucifer bonus.

A. Leflaëc (Strasbourg), Figures bibliques et idéal familial de la consécration à Dieu. Le protreptique de l'Ad Cytherium (Carm. 24) de Paulin de Nole

Around 400 Paulinus of Nola writes a long versified letter (Carmen 24) to his friend Cytherius who has chosen the priestly life for his son. The poet sends him a series of exhortations in order to prepare Cytherius' son as well as possible for the priesthood. Using different characters of the Old Testament, he paints a well-made portrait of the future clergyman which recalls the ideal of the monk-bishop becoming important at this time. Through the Nazirites Samuel and Samson and the figure of Joseph, Paulinus underlines the importance of struggling against the flesh and its seductions. The poet's allegorical interpretation of some Old Testament events invites Cytherius' son to

spiritually imitate the deeds of his Biblical predecessors and emphasises that, at a time when persecutions have passed, the future priest's hardships are especially in his mind. The chosen examples also involve complete families and thus give a familial dimension to the theme of consecration to God. Paulinus uses the figures of Abraham and Hannah to underline the faith and the obedience to God of Cytherius and his wife and to show how their piety can be achieved through the priestly lifeof their son. Inversely,the poet explains that the son, because of his religious function, can likewise spiritually help his parents. Like Joseph, who arrived in Egypt ahead of his family in order to preserve them against famine, Cytherius' son arrives in God's house ahead of his parents in order to feed them spiritually and help them to live in a way consecrated to God. They are in fact invited at the end of the poem to give themselves wholly to God, not through the priesthood, but through an ascetic life.

Ch.Guignard (Strasbourg), Poétique des listes apostoliques. Les premières énumérations d'apôtres dans la poésie latine chrétienne (Ve-VIe siècle)

Lists are a well-known literary form in Ancient Poetry, both Greek and Latin. For the Christian poets, the New Testament lists of the apostles (Mt 10.2 –4 and parallels) were a potential subject matter for poetic enumerations, but these lists do not seem to have exercised much fascination on them. In particular, no such catalogue is known form the Biblical epic. Indeed, in the Latin poetry of the 4th and 5th centuries, only Paulinus of Nola exploited the literary potential of an enumeration of the apostles, though in a (deliberately) incomplete form (Carmen 19.54 – 56 and 78 – 84). However, it is only with Venantius Fortunatus that the catalogue of the apostles really finds its way in the Western Christian poetry,as a number of Latin and vernacular examples will attest in the Middle Ages.

Part III: The Versification of the Bible in the Latin West in the Middle Age

V.Zarini(Paris), La réception en Afrique, au VIe siècle, du motif apocalyptique de la fin du monde àtravers le poème de Verecundus et l'anonyme « À Flavius Felix »

In 6th centry Africa, two poems provide substantial eschatological tableaux: the Carmen de paeniten tia of Verecundus of Junca and the anonymous verses Ad Flauium Felicem de resurrectione mortuorum et de iudicio Domini – it is neither possible nor, in this case, necessary to determine which poem was written first. This article seeks to set out the respective portions, in each tableau, devoted to the representation of cosmic catastrophe, and to that of the punishments of hell, along with the possible interchanges between these two representations, distinct in themselves. While classical and biblical references naturally underpin the poets' imagination, within the framework of a callto conversion, the influence of Commodian and the preference for euidentia seem to play a greater role, for these poets, than the Latin exegetical tradition on the Johannine Apocalypse.

C. Urlacher-Becht (Mulhouse), La doctrine dans les hymnes de la liturgie wisigothique. Entre tradition patristique et réécriture biblique

As it can be seen from Canon 13 of the Fourth Council of Toledo (633), the creation of a non-Biblicalhymnody was debated in Hispania in the first half of the seventh century.The argument developed in this context by Isidore of Seville to justify the "human" hymnody is based in particular on the idea that the current compositions, following the example of the hymns of Hilaire and Ambrose affirming and defending the Nicene faith, should be an "effective instrument of a pedagogy of the faith". The way in which Isidore thus inscribed the hymnody of his time in the continuity of the lauds of the great bishops of the fourth century raises the question of the place of doctrine in these poems composed at a time where the heretical threat had largely lost its relevance.

If it was no longer necessary to block the way to Arian heresy, we willsee that part of the ecclesial hymnody continued, as it was the case by the great hymnographic bishops, to be the support of an

authentic faith, and resulted in hymns of a remarkable doctrinal elaboration, largely due to the teaching of the Church Fathers. On many occasions, however, in terms of doctrine, the content of several hymns is limited in whole or in part to a versification of the Bible, the modalities and issues of which willbe examined. We will thus measure the vitality of this hymnographic creation, which was able to renew the Ambrosian model by exploring other modes of doctrinal expression, in phase with the liturgy of the time.

P. Bourgain (Paris), La dramatisation de l'histoire biblique dans la poésie carolingienne

The Bible is a huge reserve of poetical meditation. Salvation dramatically concerns the whole mankind and everybody's soul, engaging two exegetic significations, anagogy and tropology. Thence the finaljudgement appears at the end of a majority of poems written during merovingian (with anguish) and carolingian (more serenely) times. Merovingian rythms neglect chronology in favour of eschatologic signification. Carolingian poems are more dogmatic than pathetic, insisting on the actuality of the message of salvation. Penitential poems develop a poetic of complaint. Theatrical pathos appears in rhetorical devices :iterations, interpellations, implorations, favouring interrogations and imperative verbs, thus appropriating the pathos of biblical figures, or execrating the bad ones. Biblical direct speech is paraphrased and extended (it is the origin of dialogic tropes, forerunners of medieval theater). Joseph, Esther, Judith, Lazarus and the Holy Innocents are favorite themes, but their treatment is more theological than sentimental (even Christ's infancy does not generate much emotion, in spite of apocryphal Gospels ; Nicodem's Gospel is the one influential apocryph). Eschatology is the essential point, while tropology and compassion will afterwards become more important.

F. Ploton-Nicollet (Paris), Entre satire del'Église et parodie biblique. l'Apocalypse de Golias

The Apocalypsis Goliae is a long anonymous Latin poem of about 400 lines dating to the twelfth century.It is mainly known as a satire of the ecclesiastical institution parodying the Biblical Apocalypse of John. It apparently consists of three independent parts: an introduction (§ 1–13), in which the visionarysees many ancient authors, and speciallyPythagoras,whose body is covered with inscriptions; the main part of the poem (§ 14 – 104), directly inspired by the Apocalypse of John, in which an angelbrings a book sealed with seven seals and, opening them, shows the poet many allegorical scenes aimed at the clergy's depravity; finally, ashort conclusion (§ 105 – 110), in which the poet is caught away to the third heaven, where he sees various mysteries, but remembers nothing because, being hungry and thirsty, he is offered poppy bread and water from the river Lethe, which cause him to fall back to earth. The only attempt to look further by studying the poem's structure was made by Francis Newman (1967), who argued that the three parts fit the Augustinian theory of vision as exposed in De Genesi ad litteram (12, 3 – 34): Augustine actually defines three kinds of vision: corporeal, which enables to see real things, spiritual, which enables to imagine things that are not present, and intellectual, which enables to conceive invisible things (such as God or concepts). Also according to Newman, the ancient authors, embodying the artes liber ales, correspond to corporeal vision, because their knowledge enables to apprehend the world; the allegoricalvision, similar to a dream, corresponds to spiritual vision, and the final revelation, which the visionary cannot remember, corresponds to intellectual vision. Newman's hermeneutic explanation of the poem proves very effective. In the same way,the present author wishes to highlight the importance of another structuring detail of the poem, which is the – distinctly apocalyptic – motif of the book: in the first part, Pythagoras' body,covered with inscriptions, is a corporeal (in both senses) book to be read; the book with seven seals is a spiritual (i. e. allegorical) book. Lastly, in the third part, if we refer to the Augustinian theory of vision, we should expect an "intellectual" book; if we refer to the Apocalypse of John, we should expect a book to be eaten (like the "little book" that the visionary eats in Apc. 10). This could be represented by the poppy bread and water. But, whereas John ate the "little book" and kept the word of God, our poet is unable to

remember anything thereafter, which signifies that high intellectual activity and bodily care are incompatible concerns.

K. Smolak (Wien), Die Bibeldichtung Aurora des Petrus Riga (P.R.). Beobachtungen zu Stil und Poetik

The late antique genre of Biblical epic, exemplified by Juvencus, Sedulius, and Alcimus Avitus, developed out of metrical paraphrase and was subject to continual innovation and elaboration. In the later High Middle Ages, the genre had reached a point at which the exegetical presentation of biblical passages, selected primarily for poetic reinterpretation based on their exegetical usefulness, had prevailed. This predominance is not only apparent in a quantitative sense, but also because certain interpretations were occasionally implied or even assumed to be familiar to the reader.

One consequence of this fact was that new literary and stylistic means of expression came into use via the reworking of popular exegetical literature. These means of expression conformed to contemporary aesthetics, but they often explicitly engaged the tradition of classical poetry, including that of Vergil and Ovid, in various ways. The "Aurora," aptly christened with an allegorical title, provides an excellent example of this phenomenon in literary and intellectual history. The "Aurora" is a work of biblical poetry covering most of the Old and New Testaments, written by Peter Riga; it represents an incomplete 'work in progress,' already enlarged by the roughly contemporary Aegidius of Paris. In light of the perspective detailed above, selected passages have been analyzed and documented in their close – and more remote – literary and exegetical contexts: Ev(angelium) 409 f.; 2889 f., 2893 – 96; Gen(esis) 7 – 8; 88 – 102; 133 – 176; Ev 31 – 68, 129 – 134. In the latter passages, the description of the beauty of the human physique is treated as an object of the poet's personal reflection: thus representing an application of traditional rhetorical education to biblical figures, including Mary.

F. Stella (Siena), Théologie de la poésie entre Scolastique et Humanisme. Le statut de la poésie biblique

After the condemnation expressed by Isidore, codified in the Decretum Gratiani and generally accepted in the twelfth century,poetry is object of different treatments, based rather on the procedures of the dialectic, in the summae of the thirteenth century of the mendicant orders: Alexandre d'Hales , Albert the Great, Thomas of Aquino, who judges poetry as the infima doctrina (...) q uae minimum contine t veritatis. This presentation extracts and analyzes in short the cultural positions and motivations, highlighting the presence of a trend that goes back to Dionysius pseudo-Areopagite and supports a close analogy between poetry and theology, and an Agostinian current, which on the contrary exalt the contrast. Albertinus Mussatus, more than Dante, forces the interpretation of these arguments for a defense of poetry in the humanistic sense, laying the foundations for Petrarch's and Boccaccio's rehearsals until Philip Sidney and later. In this discussion, the status of biblical poetry (from Iuvencus to Pierre Riga), which at the theoretical level could solve the problem of truth content, emerges occasionally as a marginal phenomenon, which will not become a true cultural lineage, yet without much success, only with Boccaccio.

D. J. Nodes (Waco), Voice of the Muse, Word of the Church. The Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus in Late Medieval Latin Poetry

Four verse treatments of the parable of the rich man and Lazarus from the Gospel of Luke (Lk 16.19 – 31) offer case studies of the interaction between poetry and theology, overt commentary and allusion, doctrinal fidelity and literary innovation in Christian biblical poetry.Peter Riga (1140 – 1209) wrote a verse commentary in the manner of scholastic exegesis. Giles of Paris (1162 – 1224) supplemented Peter's work through a verse homily or, better, a verse collation. An anonymous poet whose work is included in a thirteenth-century anthology from York Cathedral composed allusive couplets on the theme of reversal. The anonymous poet of the Dyalogus de divite et Lazaro

(fourteenth century) prepared dramatic encounter among the rich man, Lazarus, and Abraham in the form of a rhetorical exercise. The distinct and intentional variations of genre and diction in these four examples notwithstanding, all achieve a rich blend of overt commentary and oblique reference, elements offering the patient reader a dynamic interplay between tradition and innovation, theology and poetics. Medieval Latin poems devoted to the various gospel parables, of which these four are representative, constitute a group of texts containing much to be discovered.

I. Fabre (Montpellier), Post vestigia gregum . La poétique de l'image dans le commentaire Super Cantica Canticorum de Jean Gerson (1429)

The last and uncompleted work by Jean Gerson (1363 – 1429), the commentary on the Song of Songs stands as a treatise on God's love that allows for a twofold reading, both theological and poetical. Gerson lays it out in fifty «considerations» or « proprieties» accounting for the sp onsa 's «fruitul love», which goes into ten sympsalma ta or musical sections of sorts, each coming along with a elegiac distic suming up its content and mood. Such a specific layout paves the way for a speculative reading enhancing the poem's anagogical interpretation. It also stems from a so-called «scholastic» stance which deliberately turns its back on common «rhetorical» style and its systematic probing into every single metaphor to aim at a deeper and more synthetic view on the Song of Songs' imagery.To what extent can Gerson's opus ultimum afford for a literary writing avoiding the ornatio' s flourishes while unfolding a rich poetry of its own ? This paper will address this question based on a stylistic analysis of a delineated section of sympsalma 2 commenting on Song 1, 6 – 10 and relying on Bonaventure's Itinerarium mentis in Deum.

I. Iribarren (Strasbourg), Bible, poésie etdoctrine dans la Josephina de Jean Gerson

Based on an analysis of certain passages of the Josephina , an epic poem composed by Jean Gerson at the council of Constance between 1414 and 1417, this article aims at examining three aspects of Gerson's conception of the relation between Bible, poetry and doctrinal development. The first one emerges from the formal structure of the poem, organized in twelve distinctiones as opposed to the classical cantos; the second aspect concerns the Aristotelian notion of aestimatio that governs the composition and serves as basis of Gerson's ars poetica ;finally,the third aspect focuses on the gersonian conception of sensus litteralis in biblical exegesis within the context of the controversytriggered by JeanPetit's justification of tyrannicide. <>

Nonnus of Panopolis in Context: Poetry and Cultural Milieu in Late Antiquity with a Section on Nonnus and the Modern World edited by Konstantinos Spanoudakis [Trends in Classics - Supplementary Volumes, De Gruyter, 9783110339376]

Nonnus of Panopolis (fifth century CE) composed two poems once thought to be incompatible: the *Dionysiaca*, a mythological long epic with a marked interest in astrology, the occult, the paradox and not least the beauty of the female body, and a pious and sublime *Paraphrase of the Gospel of St John*. Little is known about the man, to whom sundry identities have been attached. The longer work has been misrepresented as a degenerate poem or as a mythological handbook. The Christian poem has been neglected or undervalued. Yet, Nonnus accomplished an ambitious plan, in two parts, aiming at representing world-history. This volume consists mainly of the Proceedings of the First International Conference on Nonnus held in Rethymno, Crete in May 2011. With twenty-four essays, an international team of specialists place Nonnus firmly in his time's context. After an authoritative Introduction by Pierre Chuvin, chapters on Nonnus and the literary past, the visual

arts, Late Antique *paideia*, Christianity and his immediate and long-range afterlife (to modern times) offer a wide-ranging and innovative insight into the man and his world. The volume moves on beyond stereotypes to inaugurate a new era of research for Nonnus and Late Antique poetics on the whole.

CONTENTS

Text no reviewed.

Brill's Companion to Nonnus of Panopolis

edited by Domenico Accorinti [Series: Brill's Companions to Classical Studies, Brill, 9789004310117]

The Egyptian Nonnus of Panopolis (5th century AD), author of both the 'pagan' Dionysiaca, the longest known poem from Antiquity (21,286 lines in 48 books, the same number of books as the Iliad and Odyssey combined), and a 'Christian' hexameter Paraphrase of St John's Gospel (3,660 lines in 21 books), is no doubt the most representative poet of Greek Late Antiquity. Brill's Companion to Nonnus of Panopolis provides a collection of 32 essays by a large international group of scholars, experts in the field of archaic, Hellenistic, Imperial, and Christian poetry, as well as scholars of late antique Egypt, Greek mythology and religion, who explore the various aspects of Nonnus' baroque poetry and its historical, religious and cultural background.

CONTENTS

32 The Influence of Nonnus on Baroque and Modern Literature Author: David Hernández de la Fuente
Bibliography
General Index
Index of Principal Nonnian Passages

Becoming a Classic by Domenico Accorinti

> I read yesterday in Mr. Joseph Clarke's Sacred Literature, that Nonnus is an author whom few can read, & fewer admire. So that my opinion is nothing outrageous. ^ do not feel well; & look like a ghost. Mrs. Martin called, & thought so too! — ELIZABETH BERRIDGE (ed.), The Barretts at Hope and The Early Diary of Elizabeth Barrett Browning

..

In 2002, when the publisher Mondadori undertook to bring out the complete works of Andrea Camilleri in the prestigious series Meridiani (Italian counterpart to the French Ple^^de library),I some critics had strong reservations. How is it—they wondered—that the inventor of the Inspector Montalbano mysteries, who let his character speak the dialect of Vigata (a fictional town near Porto Empedocle, Camilleri's birthplace), finds a place in a series devoted to classic authors such as Petrarch, Manzoni, Proust, Thomas Mann, Calvino and so on? The coryphaeus of these literary critics was Roberto Cotroneo, for whom labelling Camilleri as a `classic writer' was a rash choice, if not an outrage. But Mondadori choice to give a popular author classic dignity was defended against its critics by, among others, Diego Gabutti: even Goldoni and Shakespeare—he rightly observed—were reputed in their times to be representatives of low culture. And ten years later, after the first of two Meridiani editions of Camilleñ's complete works was published, the Sicilian author has been given the honour of seeing a Companion for his Montalbano novels, edited by Lucia Rinaldi, Teaching Fellow at the Department of Italian at University College London: Andrea Camilleri: A Companion to the Mystery Fiction.

Evoking Camilleri's case, therefore, it is very appropriate to present Grill's Companion to Nonnus of Panopolis, since someone might turn up his nose at the inclusion of a late Greek poet in the series Brill's Companions in Classical Studies, in the illustrious company of Ovid, Herodotus, Cicero, Propertius, Thucydides, Apollonius Rhodius, Hesiod, Silius Italicus, Callimachus, Lucan, Sophocles, Horace, Seneca, Valerius Flaccus, Statius, and Euripides (forthcoming).

Long gone, however, are the days when the Comte de Marcellus, editor and inspired translator both of the Dionysiaca (1856) and the Paraphrase (1861), spoke of Nonnus as `le mieux enfoui des poetes grecs' and relegated his epic poem to the ancillary role of `grand magasin mythologique':

> It is doubtless a strange enterprise to unearth, in the middle of the nineteenth century, the best buried of Greek poets. To try to interest a French public in an outmoded mythology or in the verses of an Egyptian from the Lower Empire, isn't that madness? It is at least moving away resolutely from the subjects that Ares alone are used to touching us; it is in a way, I agree, going back to the century at the height of its current. I don't take a love of rhyming for genius; and it is not my inclination that I manifest here, it is my choice that I justify. As for me, I do not reread the expeditions of Bacchus in such a way as to thin under my studious fingers the margins of their rare editions, very little portable for the rest. I leave them, on the contrary, very often for Pindar, Thecritus, especially Homer, whom they have so much sought to imitate. But I am convinced that the knowledge of this poem (and all those who have read it, since its rebirth, have declared it as I do) can throw real light on certain still obscure points of antiquity. The Dionysiacs should be c^nsidered as a mythological department store.

Many years later, and in a similar disdainful tone, Herbert Jennings Rose, in his `Mythological Introduction' to the Loeb edition of the Dionysiaca (1940), belittled Nonnus' poem as witness to `Greek myths in their final stage of degeneracy, a happy hunting ground for lovers of scholarly mythology:

> The mythology of the Dionysiaca is interesting as being the longest and most elaborate example we have of Greek myths in their final stage of degeneracy.... To the student of religion or mythology, as opposed to the degeneescence of literature, Nonnos has here nothing to offer except the telling after his fashion of a few stories not to be found elsewhere, as the fight between Dionysos and Perseus (bk. xlvii. 475 ff.), of which traces can be seen in earlier art but not many in literature.... While therefore anyone who uses Nonnos as a handbook to any sort of normal and genuinely classical mythology will be grievously misled, the searcher into sundry odd corners will be rewarded for his pains, and even those who are studying the subject more generally cannot afford to neglect this belated product of the learned fancy of Hellenized Egypt.'

Recently, too, Jasper Griffin, in his essay `Greek epic' written for The Cambridge Companion to the Epic (2010), has candidly confessed to not being an admirer of Nonnus:

> Florid and repetitive, it [Dionysiaca] has a certain verve and energy, but there are many lost works of Greek literature for which we should be very happy to exchange it. Nonnus also versified, in much the same manner, the Gospel according to St John: that, too, is extant. The juxtaposition of two works, from the same pen and in much the same style, one so pagan, and the other so Christian, has set scholars an essentially insoluble puzzles.

And yet today Nonnus and his shape-shifter Dionysus continue to inspire secets. It is sufficient to mention here Robin Robertson's Hill of Doors (2013), from which I quote in full 'The God Who Disappears, where the Scottish poet

Bs his inspiration in the Orphic myth of the dismemberment of Zagreus by Titans narrated in the Dionysiaca (6.169-205):

> Born to a life of dying, the boy-god's first death came
> when he could barely crawl, the budding horns just there,
> nudged among curls, as he played on the floor
> with his toys: a knuckle-bone, ball
> and spinning-top, golden apples, a tuft of wool, and
> on his other side, the thunderbolts of Zeus.
> They entered the throne-room's dark,
> their round faces smeared with chalk into pale moons,
> and they slid forward, drawing their hungry knives.
> He saw them in the mirror, looming behind him
> in a hundred reflections,
> and he watched his body swim through other shapes:
> a doubled-up ancient with a face of rain,
> a blank-eyed baby, downy youth. Then he saw the mane
> of a lion, jaws opening, the sinewed neck
> of a bridling horse, the darting tongue
> and poison fangs and coils stretching
> for the throat of one of the murderers, then
> twisting, to the leap of a tiger, the shouldering,
> heavy-horned bull, and then suddenly the great bull
> shuddered to a stop,
> and they started slicing him
> to piecemeal; so many blades

he could see in the mirror,
working on the bull-shaped Dionysus.
He followed his image into the glass, and was soon
split and scattered, divided up, diced
into the universe.
He spends his life dying. The god who comes,
the god who disappears. Dismembered,
he is resurrected. He is beside us; beside himself.
Ghost of abandon, and abandoning,
he shatters us to make us whole.

Thus, the publication of the Companion to Nonnus of Panopolis comes at the right moment. Nonnus of Panopolis (5th century), author of both the `pagan' Dionysiaca, the longest known poem from Antiquity (21,286 lines in 48 books, the same number of books as the Iliad and Odyssey combined), and a `Christian' hexameter Paraphrase of St. John's Gospel (3,660 lines in 21 books), is no doubt the most representative poet of Greek Late Antiquity. The fact that he composed two works which seem to clash with one another, an epic poem on Dionysus and a metrical rewriting of John's text, was in the past considered as a sign of the probable conversion of a pagan author. According to this view, Nonnus was thought to have written the Paraphrase after his conversion to Christianity.

But recent scholarship has discarded the conversion theory definitively—and at the same time the posteriority of the Paraphrase to the Dionysiaca—and generally acknowledges that Nonnus was a Christian. From this perspective a valuable approach to the poet from Panopolis should consist in a parallel reading of both his works as evidence of a complex dialogue between the classical and Christian tradition in Late Antiquity.

Thanks to (a) the admirable nineteen-volume Bude edition of the Dionysiaca under the aegis of the late Francis Vian (1976-2006), (b) the eight volumes so far published of the critical edition with commentary of individual books of the Paraphrase, which Enrico Livrea embarked on in 1989, (c) the four volume BUR Classici Greci e Lanni edition of the Dionysiaca (2003-2004), and (d) a large number of articles and monographs on Nonnus and his poetry that have appeared in the last thirty years, students and scholars can now rely on rich material. The entry 'Nonnos von Panopolis; which I wrote for the Recillexikon fur Antique and Christentum (2013), is an updated supplement to the still fundamental article published by Rudolf Keydell in Pauly's Realencyclopadie der classischen Altertumswissenschau (1936), and offers a critical and detailed survey of the Nonnosforschung. The recent 'Bulletin critique: La floraison des etudes nonniennes en Europe (1976-2014)' is also a welcome and useful addition to Nonnian studies. However, and this may be surprising, scholars of Late Antiquity have not yet at their disposal a wide-ranging work, a reference handbook that takes stock of the most recent scholarship on Nonnus, exploring the historical background in which both the Dionysiaca and the Paraphrase grew out of late antique Egypt, and providing a multi-faceted approach to the 'baroque' poetry of the singer of Dionysus and Christ.

Now the time is ripe for Brill's Companion to Nonnus of Panopolis, 'surely an indication of Nonnus' integration within the classical canon at last', as Calum Alasdair Maciver notes at the beginning of his chapter in this volume. In fact, the biennial International Conference 'Nonnus of Panopolis in Context', inaugurated in Rethymno in 20n by Konstantinos Spanoudakis to promote Nonnian studies, and followed by a second symposium in Vienna in 2013, and a third, recently held in Warsaw (17-19 September 2015), shows, together with the recent flourishing of doctoral dissertations on Nonnus, that there is an increasing interest in this towering, but perhaps still underestimated, poet of Late Antiquity.

In choosing the authors and co-authors of the thirty-two chapters collected here, my aim has been twofold: to line up scholars who have associated their names with Nonnian scholarship in the last fifty years and to involve young people who have recently obtained a Ph.D. or undertaken a research project on Nonnus. Among the former are Pierre Chuvin and Gennaro D'Ippolito. This is not to be wondered at, for Chuvin published the second volume of the Bude edition of the Dionysiaca in 1976, simultaneously with Vian's first volume, and ^ D'Ippolito, on the strength of his book Studi Nonniani: L'epillio nelle Dionisiache (1964), must certainly be considered the doyen of Nonnian studies. Among the latter are Camille Geisz, Berenice Verhelst, and Fabian Sieber. In this case, too, their recruitment is more than justified. Both Geisz and Verhelst obtained a Ph.D. with a thesis on Nonnus, respectively Storytelling in Late Antique Epic: A Study of the Narrator in Nonnus of Panopolis' Dionysiaca (University of Oxford, 2013) and A Literary and Rhetorical Analysis of Direct Speech in Nonnus' Dionysiaca (University of Ghent, 2014). Sieber, for his part, under took the research project Das M213 der Schrift-Bibel-Paraphrasen and Nonnos Rezeption im Zeitalter der Reformation' at the Gotha Research Centre of the University of Erfurt (2013), and recently completed his Ph.D. with a thesis entitled Von Gott dichten—Nonnos von Panopolis, die Paraphrase des Johannes Evangeliums and die Gattung der Bibelepiqu (University of Leuven, 2015).

Therefore, as a bridge between the old and the new generation of Nonnian scholars, other leading figures, experts in the field of archaic, Hellenistic, Imperial, and Christian poetry, as well as scholars of late antique Egypt and Greek religion, have joined the Companion. Among the latter, I will mention the Dutch overseas papyrologists Jitse Dijkstra and Peter van Minnen, the Danish archaeologist Troels Myrup Kristensen, author of the recent and stimulating Maquing and Breaquing the Gods: Christian Responses to Pagan Sculpture Late Antiquity (2013), and the Spanish scholar Alberto Bernabe, the major authority in the field of Orphic religion.

Thus, this volume provides a collection of essays on Nonnus by a large international group of scholars from Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Cyprus, Denmark, England, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Netherlands, Poland, Goland, Spain, and the United States. Among my regrets—why should I not confess it?—is that Adrian Hollis, whom I had invited to write a chapter on N^nnus and Latin Poetry', died on February 5th 2013, probably depriving the Companion of one of its most important contributions.

Finally, here is Brill's Companion to Nonnus of Panopolis: thirty-two chapters (two of which were written by two authors) arranged in seven parts and devoted to various aspects of Nonnus' Dionysiaca (Dion.) and Paraphrase Par.). I have tried to model the individual essays on the interests of the different authors like a tailor who offers his customer a made-to-measure suit.

There is nothing left but to wait for their reception by the reader: habent sua fata libelli. <>

Nonnus of Panopolis in Context II: Poetry, Religion, and Society: Proceedings of the International Conference on Nonnus of Panopolis, 26th – 29th September 2013, University of Vienna, Austria edited by Herbert Bannert and Nicole Kröll [Series: Mnemosyne, Supplements, Late Antique Literature, Brill, 9789004341197]

Nonnus of Panopolis in Upper-Egypt is the author of the 48 books of the last large scale mythological epic in antiquity, the Dionysiaca. The same author also wrote an epic poem on the life and times of Jesus Christ according to St John's Gospel. Nonnus has an outstanding position in ancient literature being at the same time a pagan and a Christian author, living in a time when Christianity was common in the Roman empire, while pagan culture and traditional world views were still maintained. The volume is designed to cover literary, cultural and religious aspects of Nonnus' poetry as well as to highlight the social and educational background of both the Dionysiaca and the Paraphrasis of the Gospel of St. John.

CONTENTS

Author: Claudio De Stefani
Die Versuchung des Nonnos. Der Mythos als Brücke zwischen Heiden- und Christentum Author: Domenico Accorinti
The Quest for Nonnus' Life. From Scholarship to Fiction Author: David Hernández de la Fuente
Ut poesis pictura. Nonnus' Europa Episode as Poetry and Painting Author: Robert Shorrock
Note on Panopolis in Upper Egypt (Now Akhmim, Governorate Sohag) in Late Antiquity and After Author: Michael Zach
Bibliography
Indexes

Text not seen

NONNUS OF PANOPOLIS IN CONTEXT III: OLD QUESTIONS AND NEW PERSPECTIVES edited by Filip Doroszewski and Katarzyna Jażdżewska [Series: Mnemosyne, Supplements, Late Antique Literature, Brill, 9789004443235

Nonnus of Panopolis (5th c. AD), the most important Greek poet of Late Antiquity, is best known for his Dionysiaca, a grand epic that gathers together all myths associated with Dionysus, god of wine and mysteries. The poet also authored the Paraphrase of St. John's Gospel which renders the Fourth Gospel into sophisticated hexameter verse. This volume, edited by Filip Doroszewski and Katarzyna Jażdżewska, brings together twenty-six essays by eminent scholars that discuss Nonnus' cultural and literary background, the literary techniques and motifs used by the poet, as well as the composition of the Dionysiaca and the exegetical principles applied in the Paraphrase. As such, the book will significantly deepen our understanding of literary culture and religion in Late Antiquity.

CONTENTS

Dedication
Preface
Abbreviations
Notes on Contributors
Introduction Solved and Still Unsolved Issues about Nonnus and His Works Author: Gennaro D'Ippolito
Part 1 Nonnus and the Literary Tradition
Chapter 1 "Breaking the Fourth Wall": On Literariness and Metalepsis in Nonnus' Dionysiaca Author: Berenice Verhelst
Chapter 2 Junctures of Epic and Encomium in the Dionysiaca: The Episode of Staphylos Author: Laura Miguélez-Cavero
Chapter 3 Aura's Metamorphosis in the Dionysiaca of Nonnus: A Tale of Classical and Christian Resonances Author: Anna Lefteratou
Chapter 4 I Alone Had an Untimely Love: The Ephebic 'Epyllia' of Dionysiaka 10–11 Author: Benjamin Acosta-Hughes
Chapter 5 Nonnus' Dionysiaca and the Latin Tradition: The Episode of Ampelus Authors: Katerina Carvounis and Sophia Papaioannou
Chapter 6 Nonnus and Coptic Literature: Further Explorations Author: Gianfranco Agosti
Part 2 Literary Structure and Motifs in the Dionysiaca
Chapter 7 Visualizing Actaeon: The Motif of Recognition in Nonnus' Treatment of the Metamorphosis Author: A. Sophie Schoess
Chapter 8 Structure and Meaning through Analogy: Remarks on the Use of Spatial Form in the Dionysiaca Author: Camille Geisz

If at the beginning of the 2010s there was no doubt that Nonnian studies were gaining momentum, today we can safely say that, in the last decade, developments in the field have been simply epic. Like many great things in the history of civilization, the boom started in Crete, where the international congress "Nonnus of Panopolis in Context," the first conference devoted solely to the poet and his world, was held in Rethymno in May 2011. After that, events moved swiftly: the subsequent conferences in this series took place in Vienna (2013), Warsaw (2015), and Ghent (2018). Nonnus-related topics were springing up like mushrooms at other conferences on Late Antiquity and Byzantine times—the two periods that claim rights to the poet's legacy. Finally, many books and innumerable papers on Nonnus' works have seen the light of publication, to mention only the proceedings of the two first conferences (*Nonnus of Panopolis in Context: Poetry and Cultural Milieu in Late Antiquity*, edited by Konstantinos Spanoudakis and *Nonnus of Panopolis in Context ii: Poetry, Religion, and Society*, edited by Herbert Bannert and Nicole Kröll) and the bulky *Brill's Companion to Nonnus of Panopolis*, edited by Domenico Accorinti, which secured the Panopolitan a prominent place (if anyone still doubted it) in the pantheon of Late Antique authors. To put it briefly, from an obscure curiosity Nonnus' poetry has grown into a major topic of classical scholarship.

However popular it is now, the Panopolitan's oeuvre has by no means become *terra cognita*. Quite the reverse: without much exaggeration we may say that despite the scholarly work that has been done so far, Nonnus' poetry still poses a major challenge to researchers. On the one hand, the old questions about the poet's identity, the dating of his works, or his attitude toward the Latin tradition remain valid. On the other, once the classicizing prejudice that led scholars to think of the baroque style of the *Dionysiaca* and the *Paraphrasis* as decadent and boring had been abandoned, the poems' originality and depth were acknowledged and provoked fascinating novel questions informed by development of new theoretical approaches. Like every great author, Nonnus offers the reader a universe unto itself—an internally coherent world that can be explored at different levels and from different perspectives. In this world, the classical and Christian traditions form a harmonious and meaningful whole: they legitimize each other as Jesus makes come true what had vaguely been expected of Dionysus. Nonnus' poetry perfectly exemplifies the intricacies and ingenuity of Late Antiquity and provides an invaluable key to understanding a period that had long been forgotten and misunderstood.

With the present volume, Nonnian scholarship takes an important step toward making both Nonnus' legacy and his times more accessible to the modern mind. It brings together twenty-six contributions written by both established authorities and younger scholars engaged in pioneering research. Most of the chapters stem from papers given at the "Nonnus of Panopolis in Context iii: Old Questions and New Perspectives" conference that was held at Cardinal Stefan Wyszynski University in Warsaw, September 17–19, 2015. Most sadly, the great absentee is Pierre Chuvin, whose illness and subsequent death prevented him from contributing to this volume.

The volume opens with an introductory chapter by the doyen of Nonnian studies, Gennaro D'Ippolito. This contribution, which will certainly become a reference for future scholars working on the poet, offers a comprehensive and up-to-date treatment of scholarly discussions concerning the Panopolitan and his works: the authorship of both the *Dionysiaca* and the *Paraphrasis*, the poet's chronology and identity, as well as his sources. The highlight of the chapter is, no doubt, the section addressing the much-debated question of Nonnus' knowledge of Latin poetry. An extensive examination of the topic leads D'Ippolito to conclude that the poet must have known the works of Virgil and Ovid.

The twenty-five chapters that follow have been divided into six thematic sections. Part 1, "Nonnus and the Literary Tradition," consists of six contributions. It opens with a chapter by Berenice Verhelst, who discusses metaleptic passages in the *Dionysiaca*; that is, the passages in which the narrative boundaries are transgressed, either by the narrator or by fictional characters. As the author demonstrates, the effect of Nonnus' metalepsis is frequently humoristic and/or draws the reader's attention to the fictionality of the narrated world. The chapter by Laura Miguélez-Cavero examines Nonnus' use of encomiastic speech in the *Dionysiaca*, in particular in the episode of Staphylus in books 18 and 19. In her contribution, Anna Lefteratou takes up the transformation of Aura in book 48 of the *Dionysiaca* to show Nonnus' creative use of the metamorphosis literature that results in an ingenious variation on the theme—classicizing and rich in Christian allusions at the same time. The relationships Dionysus has with young men (especially Ampelus) in books 10 and 11 of the *Dionysiaca* provide the subject for the chapter by Benjamin Acosta-Hughes, who demonstrates how Nonnus' verse is linked to Hellenistic models. The Ampelus episode is also the focus of Katerina Carvounis and Sophia Papaioannou, who trace in it the possible influences from the Latin tradition, and especially Virgil and Ovid. Finally, Gianfranco Agosti makes a strong argument for the importance of acknowledging the Coptic cultural background, so far mostly ignored, for a better understanding of the poetry of Nonnus.

Part 2, "Literary Structure and Motifs in the *Dionysiaca*," contains seven chapters. A. Sophie Schoess explores the concept of looking and being looked at in the episode of Actaeon who, after having seen the bathing Artemis, is changed into a stag and dies torn to pieces—but his true identity is somehow preserved in a tombstone monument visualizing the hero as an animal with a human face. Camille Geisz focuses on some aspects of narrative structure of the *Dionysiaca* as she analyzes its eight bathing scenes using the concept of "spatial form." Nestan Egetashvili's contribution exemplifies the poet's penchant for playing with opposites by illustrating how he juxtaposes things and events in order to emphasize their differences and similarities. Marta Otlewska-Jung examines the notion of harmony in the epic and comes up with a conclusion that to Nonnus the harmony is not only the force that maintains the cosmic order but also the structural principle of his poetry. Awakenings (especially that of Ariadne) come under close scrutiny in the chapter by David Hernández de la Fuente, who leaves the reader in no doubt that they serve Nonnus to metaphorically mark the transition from the old to the new life. By comparing Nonnus' Aura and Colluthus' Aphrodite, Cosetta Cadau points to different models of femininity that existed within Late Antique society: that of a sworn virgin on the one hand, and that of a dedicated wife on the other. The last chapter of Part 2, authored by Fotini Hadjittofi, investigates the shift in gender roles alluded to in the episodes of Europa and Cadmus: while the abducted Europa in fact dominates over her male abductor, Cadmus is both effeminate and powerful at the same time.

The exegesis of the fourth Gospel in Nonnus' *Paraphrasis* is the main subject of the five chapters making up Part 3 ("Exegesis through Paraphrase"). Roberta Franchi looks closely at the poet's pneumatology as she examines the symbols and metaphors, usually of philosophical origin, he uses in reference to the Holy Spirit. The contribution by Jane Lightfoot clearly shows that in both Nonnus' poems books and writings are always presented as endowed with voice: they speak aloud the words of their authors. Margherita Maria Di Nino and Maria Ypsilanti explore the way in which Nonnus renders the Johannine parable of the Good Shepherd and describe a variety of paraphrastic techniques put to work by the poet. The application of one of these techniques, amplification, by two biblical poets, Nonnus and Juvencus, is dealt with in the chapter by Michael Paschalis who demonstrates that the latter, unlike Nonnus, makes almost no use of it. In the closing chapter, Laura Franco and Maria Ypsilanti analyze Nonnus' depiction of John the Baptist and Pontius Pilate and provide a detailed overview of classical, biblical, and patristic sources employed by the poet to expand the text of John.

Part 4, "Nonnus and Late Antique Culture," consists of three chapters. In the first, Ewa Osek compares the killing of the Dircean dragon by Cadmus in the *Dionysiaca* with the sacrificing of a snake by Helenus in the Orphic *Lithica* and suggests that both descriptions were influenced by the same esoteric author. Konstantinos Spanoudakis speaks of a great popularity that Theocritus and his poetry enjoyed in Late Antiquity, and discusses spiritual and mystical interpretations of *Idylls* 1 and 7; his study provides a valuable context for Nonnus' allusions to the bucolic poet. In her contribution, Nicole Kröll investigates representation of Athens and Berytus (hailed by the poet as the New Athens) in the *Dionysiaca* and their cultural significance as marks of Greek identity.

Finally, four chapters gathered in Part 5 discuss reception of Nonnus. This section opens with a contribution by Enrico Magnelli who focuses on a short hexametric poem by a certain John of Memphis and offers a new critical edition along with an English translation and a commentary. Mary Whitby discusses the epigrammatic poetry of George of Pisidia and demonstrates that aesthetically and intellectually it belongs to the world of Nonnus and his followers. Domenico Accorinti re-examines the scanty evidence for the reception of Nonnus' works in the Byzantine times and formulates some speculative hypotheses about why the literature of the period mostly passes over the poet's oeuvre in silence. Fabian Sieber surveys the studies done on the poet in Germany from

1900 to 1976 pointing to the fact that Nonnus' works attracted the most attention from German scholars during the inter- and post-war periods.

The editors would like to express sincere gratitude to all those who supported them in making this *mega biblion* possible. The "Nonnus of Panopolis in Context III" conference was generously sponsored by the President of Cardinal Stefan Wyszynski University, while the authorities of the Faculty of Humanities part-financed the editorial works. All the Brill staff, and especially Giulia Moriconi, were wonderfully supportive through the publication process. We are grateful to Katherine LaFrance and Mary Whitby who offered invaluable help with English language revisions in some sections of the volume. Finally, the editors thank all scholars who, during the unusually hot days of September 2015, came to Bielany Forest nature reserve in Warsaw to discuss Nonnus' verse, and then kindly agreed to contribute to this volume. <>

A Study of the Narrator in Nonnus of Panopolis' Dionysiaca: Storytelling in Late Antique Epic by Camille Geisz [Series: Amsterdam Studies in Classical Philology, Brill, 978-90-04-35533-0

This Study of the Narrator in Nonnus of Panopolis' Dionysiaca by Camille Geisz investigates manifestations of the narratorial voice in Nonnus' account of the life and deeds of Dionysus (4th/5th century C.E.). Through a variety of interventions in his own voice, the narrator reveals much about his relationship to his predecessors, his own conception of story-telling, and highlights his mindfulness of the presence of his narratee.

Narratorial devices in the Dionysiaca are opportunities for displays of ingeniousness, discussions of sources, and a reflection on the role of the poet. They highlight the innovative style of Nonnus' epic, written as a compendium of influences, genres, and myths, and encompassing the influence of a thousand years of Greek literature.

CONTENTS

The figure of Nonnus of Panopolis as we know it is one of contrasts, mainly on account of the variety of the subject matter of his works and of the wide range of reactions accompanying their reception. Although he left us two long poems devoid of significant lacunae, the Dionysiaca being to date the longest extant Greek epic, almost nothing is known about his life, beyond that he was born

in Panopolis in Egypt in the fifth century CE., and wrote the Dionysiaca in Alexandria. The very nature of the works he left us poses another problem, that of his religious beliefs: the Dionysiaca is based on Classical mythology while his Paraphrase of St John's Gospel stems from a Christian background. Critics have long tried to establish whether he was a pagan or a Christian, but recent scholarship acknowledges the impossibility of deciding one way or another, given the existence of both religious milieux in Alexandria in his time, and the presence of Christian elements in the Dionysiaca as well as pagan ones in the Paraphrase.

The reception of the Dionysiaca is another source of contrasts; it has varied greatly through time.3 In Late Antiquity, this epic met with a favorable reception and the Nonnian style, itself greatly influenced by Homeric verse, became a model for subsequent writers. Robert Shorrock mentions, among others, Colluthus and Musaeus, authors of epyllia, and writes that it was a 'tradition in earlier criticism to talk about a 'school' of Nonnus'. He goes on to list evidence of Nonnus' popularity up to the nineteenth century. However, the exuberance and the apparently loose structure of the Dionysiaca caused a wave of contempt among modern critics. John B. Hainsworth notes that 'survival is not a sure guide to quality. The loss of ... Nonnus' Dionysiaca would be no great cause for lamentation' and that Nonnus' 'lush verbiage would turn all but the strongest stomach'. Herbert Rose, in his 'Mythological introduction' to the Loeb edition of the Dionysiaca, presents the potential reader with a very disheartening account of what awaits him, lamenting that Nonnus had not proved 'a more consistent thinker and more of a poet'. Yet in the last few decades, interest in literature from the late antique period has been rekindled, and Nonnus is now receiving his share of it. When I began this project in 2009, it was with the aim of examining the Dionysiaca within the corpus of ancient epic poems and investigating what the narratorial characteristics of Nonnus' work could reveal about the evolution of the narrator's voice within the epic genre through the centuries.

When one considers the length of the Dionysiaca and the complexity of its narrative, one wonders at Nonnus' intended audience. Neil Hopkinson underlines the variety of genres and styles in Imperial Greek verse but adds that 'not enough evidence exists for us to be able to discern trends or developments in Imperial poetry, or to know about the nature and demands of the reading public and private patrons.' Yet from the Dionysiaca it is possible to infer some information about the late antique reader, or at least about the reader Nonnus had in mind when he wrote his epic. The abundance of mythological parallels, most of them in very short allusions, points to a reader well versed in the myths of the classical age and their characters. The number of intertextual connections to Homeric, classical, and Hellenistic literature is meant for a scholarly reader familiar with more than a thousand years of literature.

Panopolis, together with Heliopolis, Gaza, and other intellectual centres, contained a flourishing group of pagans. (...) It is this small number of intellectuals in Panopolis, Alexandria, and elsewhere, who must have been the intended audience for the Dionysiaca.

As for the contents of the poem, Dionysiac themes were en vogue from the second century a.d., as is attested by the existence of numerous poems on Dionysus now lost, and by evidence of the practice of Dionysiac cults. The impressive literary knowledge revealed by the intertextual allusions indicates that Nonnus must have had access to texts in Alexandria or elsewhere and that literary production was flourishing. The question of whether Nonnus knew Latin and could have had access to Latin texts remains in suspense— some passages of the Dionysiaca could be interpreted as allusions to Ovid's Metamorphoses, although scholars now tend to think that this is improbable, and to explain similarities by positing common Hellenistic sources. Robert Shorrock writes:

> Although it seems unlikely that Nonnus and the majority of his early readers had any real familiarity with Latin texts, Catullus 64 and Ovid should not be dismissed: whether or not one tries to argue that the Latin accounts are related to Nonnus' narrative via a lost

Hellenistic model, a knowledge of these surviving Latin texts may help to cast fresh light on Nonnus' version both through similarities and differences.

The existence of Latin sources relating stories which can also be found in the Dionysiaca is of value for a narratological analysis insofar as they provide us with alternative versions of a story, as well as alternative narratological settings by other narrators. These versions may throw into relief the specificity of the Nonnian version, even though, in the absence of definite evidence regarding Nonnus' knowledge of the Latin sources, it is not possible to determine whether the Nonnian characteristics are the result of a conscious choice made by the narrator.

Indeed a striking characteristic of the Dionysiaca is its wealth of secondary stories and mythological allusions, which poses the question of how they are inserted in the main narrative. One of the ways to approach this question is to turn to narratology in order to examine how the links between the mythological parallels and the main narrative are created by the narrator. From a broader view, the voice of the narrator is one of the structuring elements in a narrative. Thus the purpose of this study is to explore the storytelling techniques employed in the Dionysiaca, in order to highlight the role of the narrator in establishing a narratorial setting which guides the narratee through the reception of the narrative, and to examine how this narratorial voice contributes to, or draws upon, the aesthetics of the late antique period.

Narratology was first applied to Greek literature by Irene de Jong with her narratological study of the Iliad. Her recent volumes span Greek epic poetry from Homer to Hellenistic times but do not yet investigate Late Antiquity. One of De Jong's aims in her study of the Iliad was to shed new light on the Homeric narrative style, commonly described as objective and impersonal, by showing that it was in fact informed by narratorial interventions, often imperceptible to a receiver analysing the text without using narratological tools. The narrator of the Dionysiaca also manifests himself in the course of his narrative, and his interventions underline certain characteristics of his style.

Narratological concepts provide tools for analysing texts according to the prominence of a narrative voice or narrator, and to the role of this narrator in the presentation of the story, and organization of time, rhythm, and space. This study focuses on the narrator of the Dionysiaca and his interaction with his narratee. Although narrator and narratee are literary abstract concepts, and as such have, strictly speaking, no gender, the Nonnian narrator refers to himself in the masculine and possesses a distinctive persona, which makes itself conspicuous in a number of overt interventions in the course of the narrative. Close examination of this Nonnian persona yields significant results regarding the Nonnian narrator's own conception of storytelling and presentation of his own story, as well as revealing how certain types of narratorial interventions have, by the 4th century a.d., become inherent to the epic genre, whether the narrator chooses to reuse them in their—by then—accepted form, or to renew them to conform to his own choices as a storyteller.

Part 1 of this study analyses how the Nonnian narrator appropriates the conventions and expected features of epic storytelling. In the Dionysiaca's two proems, the narrator deals with the issues of inspiration and choice. He explains his choice of Dionysus as the main character of his poem. He also initiates his own views on the question of inspiration, when he transforms the Muses into Bacchic revellers: to him the contents of the poem are paramount, and the Muses are an outdated epic conceit; he does not want to reject them altogether, so he adapts them to his own narrative instead. He also proposes an unusual variety of Muses in the narrative itself, each time adapted to the particular scene in which they occur.

Part 2 turns to narratorial interventions which are present in the Dionysiaca, but more rarely found in other epic poems. Through verbs in the first person, the narrator comments on his own narrative

to explain the accuracy of his sources, or to challenge versions of myths that do not seem plausible to him. He seeks to be truthful and exhaustive. In the syncrisis embedded in the second proem, he defends the superiority of Dionysus over other mythological characters, drawing comparisons with Homeric and Pindaric precedents.

Part 3 investigates the literary relationship between the narrator and the audience. The complexity of the narratorial interventions studied in preceding parts suggests that the Nonnian narrator is very aware of his audience, and willing to engage in a dialogue with them. He addresses them directly in the second person to draw their attention to a particular scene or aspect of the story; in a more covert way, his indirect addresses can be used to highlight the role of Dionysus, or to suggest connections between different myths. In his gnomic sentences, he proposes reflections on aspects of life such as fate and love, and creates suspense and pathos, to keep up his audience's interest in the story. Finally the Nonnian narrator's search for sophistication is visible in the way he renews some Homeric similes, which engages his best-read audience in intertextual play. He adds his personal touch again by choosing to include many similes based on mythological characters, proposing as an alternative world not the mundane, everyday world of the reader, but the world of Homeric and other mythological heroes.

Part 4 shows how the Nonnian narrator not only breaks the fourth wall between his characters and his audience; he even turns himself into a character, in two ways. First, he addresses his characters through apostrophes. This device, present in Homer, is renewed by the Nonnian narrator and reveals an ambiguous stance regarding his main character, Dionysus, between admiration, disappointment, and mockery. A significant innovation consists in the narrator presenting himself as a Dionysiac reveller, dancing with the Bacchants to honor his god. In this respect, the Nonnian narrator achieves the complete transgression of all narratorial levels: the story is not told by a narrator acting as intermediary between the audience and the world of the story, but by one of the characters himself. The narrator thus justifies his rejection of the Muses: he does not need their support to tell about a world to which he belongs himself. Finally, his choice of Proteus as an alter ego reflects his search for innovation and variety.

This study proceeds largely from a diachronic approach, looking at earlier epic poems alongside the Dionysiaca, with the goal of pinpointing specific traits of Nonnian storytelling in comparison to the narratological settings of other works, as well as highlighting aspects of the evolution of the narratorial presence within the epic genre. This study draws comparisons between the Dionysiaca and Homer's poems, as well as the later works of Apollonius and Quintus, the two other main landmarks in the evolution of epic. Other influences are also at work in Nonnus' poem, and parallels with Pindar and Callimachus will be underlined as well. This study also takes into account the epyllia of Moschus, Triphiodorus, Colluthus, and Musaeus; if they are not comparable to the Dionysiaca in length, they are in terms of narrative strategies. Finally I have also explored didactic epic for narratorial parallels, including the works of Hesiod, Aratus, Dionysius Periegetes, Nicander, and both Oppians, and occasionally drawn on other genres such as lyric poetry and historiography. From this wide body of evidence emerge elements of the evolution of storytelling techniques since Homer, with Nonnus bringing up the rear and subsuming all these influences in his long poem. <>

DIRECT SPEECH IN NONNUS' DIONYSIACA: NARRATIVE AND RHETORICAL FUNCTIONS OF THE CHARACTERS' "VARIED" AND "MANY-FACETED" WORDS by Berenice Verhelst [Series: Mnemosyne, Supplements, Late Antique Literature, Brill, 9789004325890]

DIRECT SPEECH IN NONNUS' DIONYSIACA is the first more extensive study of the use and functions of direct speech in Nonnus' Dionysiaca (5th century AD). Its long soliloquies and scarcity of dialogues have often been pointed out as striking characteristics of Nonnus' epic style, but nonetheless this fascinating subject received relatively little attention.

Berenice Verhelst aims to reveal the poem's constant interplay between the epic tradition and the late antique literary context with its clear rhetorical stamp. She focusses on the changed functions of direct speech and their implications for the presentation of the mythological story. Organized around six case studies, this book presents an in-depth analysis of a representative part of the vast corpus of the Dionysiaca's 305 speeches.

The digital appendix to this book (Database of Direct Speech in Greek Epic Poetry) can be consulted online at www.dsgep.ugent.be .

CONTENTS

> 'And what is the use of a book,' thought Alice, 'without pictures or conversations?' LEWIS CARROLL, Alice in Wonderland

Whether or not we should agree with young Alice Liddell's judgement that literature is only worth reading if it is illustrated or contains dialogue, the words spoken by characters—like those of Alice—are often those best remembered and most quoted. This book presents a study of direct speech in the Dionysiaca, the magnum opus of the Greek epic poet Nonnus of Panopolis. With its 48 books (more than 21,000 lines), Nonnus' Dionysiaca is the longest surviving ancient Greek poem. Written in the mid-5th century Ad it can be seen as the last bastion of the Greek mythological epic tradition.

The story of the poem's modern reception reads as a paradox. It was long criticized for its lack of originality as the Dionysiaca is notorious for its many passages in imitation of a wide range of authors of the Greek literary tradition. But simultaneously, also its un-traditional style and un-classical lack of structural unity were the subject of much criticism. The exponential growth of Nonnus studies in recent decades has now caused a reappraisal of his poetry in scholarly circles, but how to understand the interaction between the classical and un-classical aspects (whether regarded as innovative or characteristically late antique) of his poetry remains an important question. I hope to

shed new light on this discussion by focussing on one of the aspects in which this interaction is most prominent: the varied and many-faceted "speeches" by the characters of the Dionysiaca.

A first time reader of Nonnus familiar with Homer will be surprised by the long monologues of his characters and the almost total lack of dialogue in the poem. In no other Greek epic poem do so many different characters raise their voices. A respectable number of them seem to be introduced with the sole purpose of pronouncing a soliloquy, before disappearing again. With his 35.6% speech ratio, Nonnus, at first sight, is closer to the famous Homeric balance of speech and narrator text (Iliad 45%, Odyssey 67.7%) than his other Greek epic predecessors Apollonius of Rhodes (29.4%) and Quintus of Smyrna (23.6%). This relatively high percentage, however, is the result of the great length of Nonnus' fewer, but more rhetorically elaborated passages of direct speech. The prevalence in the Dionysiaca of monologues over dialogues seems to characterize it as an epic in which the action is not so much driven forward by the conversations between the characters, but rather delayed each time the narrator allows a character to speak his/her mind.

Defined by Martin String (1966, 6) as "einer der auffälligsten Unterschiede dieses Werkes von der früheren, ja von aller anderen griechischen Epik", the use of direct speech in the Dionysiaca is a subject of particular interest. As was long ago noticed by Albert Wifstrand (1933, 141–154), the stylistic properties of Nonnus' character text stand out against the narrator text: in Nonnus, direct speech characteristically consists of short, asyndetically connected sentences, series of apostrophes and emotional exclamations and is wrought with rhetorical figures hunting for effect, such as sharp antitheses, eye-catching anaphors and clever word play. And yet this fascinating subject has received relatively little scholarly attention.

This book consists of two parts, preceded by a general introduction. Its structure reflects the double focus of my research. On the one hand, I have tried to lay bare the constant interplay in the Dionysiaca between the epic tradition and the late antique literary context with its clear rhetorical stamp. This I primarily do in part one, by comparing and contrasting Nonnus' use of direct speech to that of his epic predecessors. Parallels in rhetorical theory and practice are used in this part to put these differences into context and individual speeches are analysed according to rhetorical models in order to reveal the structure of the argumentation. On the other hand, the clear quantitative differences in the use of direct speech between Nonnus and his epic predecessors also raise questions concerning the functions of speech in the narrative structure of Nonnus' epic poetry. In part two of this book, the central focus lies on the implications of these differences for the presentation of the story and how it was perceived by Nonnus' contemporary audience.

Because of the vast proportions of the subject (there are 305 instances of direct speech in the Dionysiaca, all together 7,573 lines), I have chosen to work with case studies, which allowed me to pick a representative number of examples, and—according to the subject of the chapter in which they are used as an example—to approach them each time from a different angle.

When quoting from the Dionysiaca, I use the Greek text of the Budé edition (Vian et al. 1976–2006) but the English translation is taken from W.H.D. Rouse (1940, Loeb edition). Rouse's translation is adapted to the Budé edition whenever a different textual variant or a different interpretation of the Greek text causes an actual difference in meaning between the two editions. A summary of the Dionysiaca is also added in the appendix.

A Rhetorical Model of Analysis

Rhetorical education is undoubtedly an important part of the shared cultural background of Nonnus and his contemporaries, among whom we have to count both the ^^^^ with whom he entered into poetical competition and the audience he wanted to please and impress.

In her article "Poetry and rhetoric", Ruth Webb (1997) convincingly shows the close interaction between rhetorical education and poetical production from the Hellenistic period onwards, of which the development of the genre of the fable is a striking example: it originated in prose (Aesopus) and was used for rhetorical practice as part of the progymnasmata, but in the first centuries a. d. was turned into a poetic genre by Phaedrus (Latin) and Babrius (Greek). Webb concludes (1997, 347):

The skills developed by exercises such as the Progymnasmata, often illustrated by examples drawn from poetry, could be applied by poets and orators alike, but the rhetorical bias of the school exercises may eventually have affected their employment in poetry.

In antiquity, Homer was commonly regarded as the father of rhetoric. Quintilian explicitly refers to him as its source and prime example (Inst. 10.1.46). Menander Rhetor, in his treatise on the different types (^^^^) of epideictic speeches, regularly refers to the speeches in Homer as forerunners of a specific type, as is, for example the case for the farewell speech cf. Men. Rhet. 430.12–30, esp. 13). Apollonius'Argonautica, on the other hand, could be regarded as the first example of the influence of rhetorical training on the genre of epic poetry. As demonstrated by Volonaki (2013), Jason's heroism lies more in his tact and communication skills, which demonstrate a clear knowledge of rhetorical effect, than in (martial) "heroic" deeds.

Likewise, the exceptional length of Nonnus' speeches as well as the increased use of rhetorical means of persuasion in these speeches (as will be demonstrated) seem to find their logical explanation in the profound rhetorical influence on the poetic production of Late Antiquity (see especially Miguélez Cavero 2008, 191–370). My rhetorical analysis of the speeches of the Dionysiaca is primarily informed by ancient rhetorical theory and modern interpretations of this theory (like the informative book on ekphrasis by Ruth Webb (2009)). With regard to ancient theorists, I frequently consulted the progymnasmata handbooks by Theon, (Ps-)Hermogenes, Aphthonius and Nicolaus, the rhetorical treatises by Menander Rhetor and the Institutio Oratoria by Quintilian (especially Inst. 5.10 on argumentation).

On the Structure of This Book

In the Dionysiaca a total of 305 speeches are rendered in direct speech, embedded speeches not included, comprising together 7,573 of the 21,286 lines of this vast epic poem. Because of the proportions of the subject, a thorough analysis of every instance of direct speech in the Dionysiaca would have been both an immense task for me to fulfil, and would most probably have resulted in a quite tedious piece of scholarship for the reader of this book. As a solution, I have chosen to work with case studies, picking a representative number of speeches, and—according to the topic of the chapter in which they are used as an example—approaching the speeches each time from a different angle.

I singled out six topics as particularly interesting for further analysis. The six largely independent, but certainly complementary, essays that are the result of this approach follow in chapters 1 to 6. As mentioned above, part one (chapters 1 to 3) has a more pronounced comparative focus. In these chapters, I intend to show Nonnus both as a fervent imitator of his epic models and as an innovative poet, whose transformation of his epic sources has resulted in a very different kind of epic poetry. Part two (chapters 4 to 6) has a more pronounced narratological focus and pays more attention to the influence of contemporary rhetoric. In this section, one of the most frequently asked questions is "what effect does speech 'x' have for the presentation of the story and to what end is it inserted?

Overview of Chapters 1–6

Chapter 1. Imitation and Transformation: From Troy to India and from Medea to Morrheus

In this chapter Nonnus' (re)writing process is revealed through a comparison with his models. The episode (d. 31–35 ~ll. 14–15 and Argon. 3) is selected as a case study for its strong imitative engagement with both Homer and Apollonius (and perhaps also Quintus). Not only do the Nonnian adaptations of famous episodes in his predecessors have fewer dialogues and longer speeches; the speeches themselves have also clearly undergone a rhetorical transformation. The speaking characters no longer aim to achieve persuasion through lies or gifts, but rather by providing rhetorical (albeit often very farfetched) arguments and making use of (false) to convince the addressee.

Chapter 2. Types of Epic Speech: The Battle Exhortation

Assuming that Nonnus and his audience shared a knowledge based on tradition of what a battle exhortation conventionally looked like, this chapter compares Nonnus' battle exhortations not only with the exhortations in Homer and Quintus, but also with the practices familiar from the historiographical tradition, fused with rhetoric. Battle exhortations in Nonnus, however, clearly seem to have gained a new place and function in the battle narrative in comparison to the epic tradition. As is clear from my analysis of the different recurring topoi in his exhortations, Nonnus seems to have developed a new typology. Moreover, the examples in which Nonnus inverts or parodies the genre of the battle exhortation clearly show Nonnus as a poet who is aware of the conventions and consequently able to creatively adapt them.

Chapter 3. Speeches within Speeches

This chapter deals with speeches embedded in other speeches and thus with tertiary focalization. The focus lies on a particular type of embedded speech. In scholarship on Homer, speeches within speeches that are quoted as a potential future comment of an anonymous speaker are called "potential ^^^-speech". Absent from both Apollonius and Quintus, this Homeric device is revived in Nonnus. There are, however, clear differences regarding its use and function: reshaped to become part of his stylistic vocabulary, Nonnus' potential ^^^- speech seems to be, much more than its Homeric model, a formalized element of style. Moreover, as I will demonstrate in the second part of this chapter, besides potential tic-speech a number of other "potential" embedded speech types can be distinguished in the Dionysiaca. Nonnus' characters, for example, quite frequently make use of the rhetorical figure of procatalepsis, anticipating their addressee's reaction by "quoting" possible counter-arguments.

Chapter 4. The Rhetoric of Deception: Persuasive Strategies

In some 20 cases the introductory formula for a speech in the Dionysiaca contains a reference to its "deceptive" nature. Only a limited number of these "deceptive" speeches, however, actually contain lies. The label of "deceit" rather seems to draw the reader's attention to the manipulative rhetoric of the speech: the clever argumentation, the construction of a suitable speaker's ^^^^ (often a disguise) and the appeal to the addressee's emotions (^^^^^). The story of Hera's ruse to kill Semele is used as a case study in this chapter. Interestingly, Nonnus' version of the story contains not one but three successive manipulative speeches: Phthonus to Hera (8.50–102), Hera to Apate (8.126–164) and Hera to Semele (8.207–263).

Chapter 5. Ecphrastic Ethopoeae and the Perspective of the Text-Internal Observer

As has already been observed by Peter Krafft (1975), (minor) characters in the Dionysiaca often seem to appear only to deliver a speech, before disappearing again. The speaker does not participate in the action, but comments on the on-going events from an observer's perspective. The speech is not heard by the protagonists and can therefore not have any effect on the course of the events. In this chapter, two types of outsider's comments are closely analysed. In several cases, the

commenting character tries to identify the protagonists of the episode on sight by interpreting visual clues and formulating hypotheses. Looking at the protagonists through the eyes of a character "lost in wonder", these speeches not only guide the reader's visualization of the scene, but are also demonstrations of the art of the interpreter and invite the reader to reflect on his own readership and on his interpretation and visualization of the events in the poem.

The second group of speeches singled out for analysis are all pronounced from a divine bird's-eye perspective. In each of these cases a god or (more often) a goddess comments on the events from on high, but without intervening. The (sneering) comments of these divinities add a different perspective to the story, which often presents a contrast to the general tone of the episode and/or the tone of the comments of the ignorant observers below.

Chapter 6. Rhetoric of Seduction and Failure of Communication inthe Beroe Episode

The final chapter shows that the persuasive strategies of the characters in the Dionysiaca are not always successful. In the Beroe episode, Dionysus (4×) and Poseidon (1×) address Beroe several times in order to win her heart, but without any success. Dionysus' first three speeches are introduced by the narrator as deceitful. Instead of directly affirming his love to her, he uses vegetation metaphors and tries to flatter her by ostensibly mistaking her for Artemis. Beroe, however, fails to catch his (literary) imagery and does not understand his intentions. In this way, her eventual rejection of his love is postponed until after his fourth speech, an explicit proposal of marriage. Much attention is paid to the effect of dramatic irony in this episode and the accumulation of variations of the "rhetoric of seduction" as an effect of Beroe's postponed rejection. <>

Nonnus' Paraphrase between Poetry, Rhetoric and Theology: Rewriting the Fourth Gospel in the Fifth Century by Maria Ypsilanti, Laura Franco, with the collaboration of Filip Doroszewski, Claudia Greco [Mnemosyne Supplements: Late Antique Literature, Brill, 9789004373419]

This book investigates the various paraphrastic techniques employed by Nonnus of Panopolis (5th century AD) for his poetic version of the Gospel of John. The authors look at Nonnus' *Paraphrase*, the only extant poetic Greek paraphrase of the New Testament, in the light of ancient rhetorical theory while also exploring its multi-faceted relationship with poetic tradition and the theological debates of its era. The study shows how interpretation, cardinal both in ancient literary criticism and in theology, is exploited in a poem that is exegetical both from a philological and a Christian point of view and adheres, at the same time, to the literary principles of Hellenistic times and late antiquity.

CONTENTS

Bibliography
Appendix: Figures
Indexes

This study is the result of a research program funded by the University of Cyprus. The project springs from a novel idea conceived by the Principal Investigator, Maria Ypsilanti, who then wrote a detailed proposal on the matter, which, after it had undergone rigorous peer review by international experts, received funding. Maria Ypsilanti then recruited and supervised a group of researchers charged with implementing her ideas as outlined in her research proposal and beyond.

The resulting work is a comprehensive study of Nonnus' *Paraphrase of St. John's Gospel* from the point of view of paraphrastic technique. Through an examination of selected representative passages, the work, while focusing primarily on the exploitation of ancient rhetorical theory, also considers more general issues of poetics and of Christian exegesis. During the writing of the book, Laura Franco was the main research collaborator, while Filip Doroszewski and Claudia Greco made specific contributions. Maria Ypsilanti had overall responsibility for the editing of the work, including commenting, correcting and enriching the contributions of her research team. Some of these contributions indeed extended beyond Ypsilanti's initial ideas. For this and for the successful implementation of the research project and the realisation of the book, she is extremely grateful to the members of her team. It should be noted, however, that the chapters of this book where Maria Ypsilanti is an author or a co-author represent her own contributions to the implementation of the project.

***

An Evanescent Figure

Two hexametric poems are transmitted to us under the name of Nonnus: the *Dionysiaca*, which recounts the deeds and the adventures of Dionysus, and the *Paraphrase* of the Gospel of John. There is agreement in modern scholarship that they are both ascribable to the same person, a fifth century A.D. poet from Panopolis, whose figure is somewhat enigmatic, given the meagre information on his life. All we know about Nonnus is that he was from Panopolis (modern Akhmim), in the region of the Thebaid (Upper Egypt), and that he lived in Alexandria, where, most probably, he wrote the *Dionysiaca*.

This can be inferred from an anonymous epigram of the Greek Anthology (*AP* 9.198), written in Nonnian style, and attributed to Nonnus himself. It runs:

> Νόννος ἐγώ· Πανὸς μὲν ἐμὴ πόλις, ἐν Φαρίῃ δέ
> ἔγχεϊ φωνήεντι γονὰς ἤμησα Γιγάντων.
>
> I am Nonnus; my native city was Panopolis, but in Alexandria I mowed down with my vocal sword the children of the Giants tr. W.R. Paton, *The Greek Anthology*, *Loeb Classical Library*, Cambridge, MA, London 1916–1918

Such an assertion seems to be confirmed by the prologue to the *Dionysiaca* (1.13–15), where Alexandria is evoked through reference to the island of Pharos:

> ἀλλὰ χοροῦ ψαύοντι Φάρῳ παρὰ γείτονι νήσῳ
> στήσατέ μοι Πρωτῆα πολύτροπον, ὅφρα φανείη
> ποικίλον εἶδος ἔχων, ὅτι ποικίλον ὕμνον ἀράσσω

> But bring me, a partner for your dance in the neighbouring island of Pharos, Proteus of many turns, that he may appear in all his diversity of shapes, since I twang my harp to a diversity of songs.

Located immediately in front of the port of Alexandria, Pharos was a synonym of the city. The adjective γείτων, "neighbouring", attributed to the island, is an autobiographical hint, expressing the point of view of the poet, who lived in the city nearby. The figure of Proteus, the shape-shifting deity who lived on Pharos, is linked to the notion of ποικιλία, a pivotal concept in Nonnus' poetry. Besides the autobiographical elements, this geographical reference offers a plethora of cultural implications and allusions. It was here that the tradition of the *Septuagint* was established[6] and the Alexandrian theological school was inaugurated by Clement (c. 150–215) and Origen (185–254). Here there was a firmly-rooted Neoplatonic tradition—suffice it to mention Synesius (c. 370–413), Hypatia (c. 360–415) and Hierocles (active in the fifth century).[7] In the time of Nonnus, Alexandria was dominated by the figure of Cyril, whose commentary on the Gospel of John, written some time before 428, perhaps between 425 and 428, provides principally (but not exclusively) the exegetical basis for the *Paraphrase*.

Although the *Dionysiaca* presents the longest extant epic poem in Greek from antiquity, the name of Nonnus is hardly found in early Byzantine sources. He is remembered almost *en passant* by the historian and epigrammatist Agathias Scholasticus (c. 536–582), who lived about a century after Nonnus and refers to him as one of the "new poets" who treated the myth of Marsyas. After Agathias' brief remark, a surprisingly long silence engulfs Nonnus' name in later Byzantine literature, to the point that one is tempted to suspect that this unconventional poetic personality, who interestingly mixed pagan and Christian culture, perhaps caused the Christian establishment some embarrassment. The name of Nonnus does not appear in the manuscript tradition. Eustathius, Archbishop of Thessalonica (c. 1115–1195), in his commentaries on Homer and on Dionysius Periegetes, inaccurately quotes a few lines from the *Dionysiaca*, without mentioning the name of the author.

As Accorinti recently pointed out, there is no mention of Nonnus in Photius' *Bibliotheca*, nor is he recorded in any specific entry in the *Suda*, apart from a brief note at the end of the headword Νόνναι in the *Marcianus gr*. 448 (containing this tenth century Byzantine lexicon), which is likely to be an addition by the hand of Eustathius of Thessalonica himself, who copied the manuscript. Moreover, in the *Etymologicum Magnum* a few verses of the *Dionysiaca* (9.11–12 and 19–24) are quoted anonymously in a discussion of the etymology of the name Dionysus. Eventually, in the late Byzantine period, Maximus Planudes (c. 1255–1305) copied the *Dionysiaca* as an *adespoton* (in *Laur*. 32.16) and the *Paraphrase* in the *Marcianus gr*. Z 481. Here the *inscriptio* attributes the poem to the philosopher and rhetorician Ammonius, but in a short comment added by Planudes it is specified that, according to other sources, the work is by Nonnus.

Nonnus' Egyptian origin has a crucial bearing on his literary training. We know that during Late Antiquity hexametric poetry flourished in Egypt. The popularity of this genre can be inferred from the famous quotation from Eunapius' *Lives of Philosophers and Sophists*, where it is stated that the Egyptians were very enthusiastic about poetry. It is also evident in the extant documentation concerning the work of a large number of Egyptian poets, who were principally from the Upper Thebaid. The documentation goes back to at least the third century A.D. This evidence, which includes ancient inscriptions, papyri, and medieval manuscripts (albeit often fragmentary), offers a complex picture of the rich poetic background from which Nonnus emerged.

The concentration of poets, who mostly dealt with mythological subject-matter, in the relatively small area of Panopolis and its surroundings is remarkable. Triphiodorus (third-fourth century A.D.),

Nonnus, Colluthus (fifth-sixth century A.D.) and, most probably, Musaeus (sixth century A.D.) are all native to this region and, although they belong to different periods, share similarities in style and metrics. Apart from epic poetry, other poetic genres flourished in the area, too, as is indicated by the work of Cyrus of Panopolis (c. 400–470), to whom several poems in the *Palatine Anthology* are attributed.

It has been argued that Nonnus was a travelling poet. This label is suitable for a number of Egyptian "wandering poets", a well-known definition coined by Alan Cameron, referring to figures such as Cyrus of Panopolis, Pamprepius, Andronicus of Hermoupolis, Christodorus, Olympiodorus of Thebes, and other intellectuals, all of Egyptian origin, who, supposedly, moved about so as to participate in poetry festivals and competitions. Nonnus shares his geographical and cultural background with this group of poets, but he cannot be easily described as one of them. Given the scarcity, if not absence, of biographical data, it is difficult to tell how far he may have been a travelling poet, possessing the characteristics of these fellow—countrymen of his. However, it has been suggested that Nonnus could have travelled outside Egypt, namely to Berytus, because his vivid and detailed description of the city suggests personal experience.

In the *Dionysiaca* there are descriptions of three towns, Nicaea, Tyre and Berytus. The accounts of Tyre and Berytus are rich in details and it therefore might be assumed that the poet had a direct knowledge of them. This is especially true for Berytus, where Nonnus locates no fewer than three books of the *Dionysiaca* (41–43), which deal with the story of Dionysus' failed attempt to seduce the eponymous nymph of the city, Beroe. On these grounds, Livrea suggested that Nonnus had been a student at the law school of Berytus, renowned throughout the whole Empire. However, all his poetic descriptions of towns are fashioned in accordance with the fundamental rules of the *ekphrasis*, as codified in ancient rhetorical treatises. Not only do Nonnus' descriptions seem to be the result of the application of rhetoric, but, in some cases, they also reveal the influence of other literary works.[2] This makes it even more difficult to determine to what extent such poetic descriptions can be regarded as based on autobiographical experiences.

Notwithstanding the lack of biographical data, it is generally accepted that, despite the pagan content of his major poem, Nonnus was a Christian. An intriguing, albeit controversial, hypothesis was put forward by Livrea, who suggested that Nonnus was actually the Bishop of Edessa, who performed the spectacular conversion of the most famous harlot of Antioch, the actress Pelagia. According to the legend, after her repentance she confined herself in a cell on the Mount of Olives to live as a hermit, disguised as an eunuch. The dates of the tenure of office of the Bishop of Edessa (449–451 and 457–471) and the dates of the poet of Panopolis do indeed fall within the same span of time. However, if the *Life* of Pelagia depends on a homily by John Chrysostom (*In Matthaeum* 67–68, PG 58.636–637) that refers to the conversion of a famous harlot from Antioch, whose name is not mentioned and who lived in the fourth century, it is difficult to accept Livrea's fascinating thesis. Identification with other Nonni cannot be easily accepted.

Dates and Chronology

Nonnus' date has been, and still is, the object of scholarly debate. Not much information can be drawn from his works.

The only safe *terminus post quem* for the *Paraphrase* is represented by the monumental commentary on the Gospel of John, written, as we have seen, between 425 and 428 by Cyril of Alexandria, which certainly constitutes the most important and indisputable theological background to the *Paraphrase*. It is from this work that Nonnus, who, as has been demonstrated in the past, follows Cyril's theology closely, extrapolates and re-elaborates the exegesis of innumerable Johannine passages. Another indication formerly used to support a *terminus post quem* for the composition of the *Paraphrase* is the presence of the term Θεοτόκος, which is connected with the Christological

controversy on the double nature of Christ and with the conflict between Nestorius and Cyril of Alexandria. The fact that the Virgin is called "mother of God" could be taken to suggest a date later than 431, when Cyril's theological doctrine prevailed in the Council of Ephesus and this epithet was officially adopted by the Church. However, the date of the Council is not decisive, as the term is also attested earlier, and cannot be taken as an absolute criterion of dating.

On the other hand, a possible *terminus ante quem* for the *Paraphrase* is usually thought to be 451, when the Council of Chalcedon definitely condemned Monophysite doctrines, thus marking the separation of the Church of Alexandria from the Constantinopolitan patriarchate. The Nonnian presentation of Christ's "majestic" divinity has been regarded as being incompatible with this condemnation, and the composition of the *Paraphrase* has thus been dated between 444 and 451. This view, too, has been challenged and some critics do not think that the Council of Chalcedon is necessarily a *terminus ante quem*. One view that reconciles both sides of the controversy assumes that the *Paraphrase* was written within the period between the forties and the sixties of the fifth century.

We can postulate some other dates on the basis of the *Dionysiaca*. A plausible *terminus post quem* is given by the work of the Egyptian poet Claudian (c. 370–404), because Nonnus probably knew his works, particularly his Greek *Gigantomachy*. Equally feasible is the *terminus post quem* offered by the *incipit* of an epigram by Cyrus of Panopolis (*AP* 9.136), datable to 441–442, which is quoted twice in the *Dionysiaca*. A secure *terminus ante quem* rests on Agathias' reference mentioned above, together with five folios of a papyrus codex of the sixth century (*P.Berol.* inv. 10567) which contain a section of the *Dionysiaca* from books 14–16. To this evidence, two poems can be added, one attributed to Pamprepius and the other one anonymous, both datable between 471 and 473, and both clearly influenced by Nonnus' style. Furthermore, it has been suggested that 444, the year of Cyril's death, may be a possible *terminus post quem*, since the influential Bishop of Alexandria would not have approved of the publication of a blatantly pagan poem written by the same person who had interpreted the Gospel of John in the light of his commentary. On these grounds, the life of the poet can probably be placed sometime between 400 and 470 and the composition of the *Dionysiaca* may possibly be dated between 450 and 470.

A controversial issue in any treatment of Nonnus' life is his religious faith. The difficulty lies in the coexistence of two poems, one openly pagan and one indisputably Christian, by the same author (whose very name, it has to be noted, rather suits a Christian). The issue has triggered numerous scholarly discussions and different assumptions have been made. In the first half of the last century, it was maintained by various critics that Nonnus was a pagan who, at some stage of his life, converted to Christianity. The opposite idea, that he was a Christian apostate, has also been suggested. The issue is also associated with the relative dating of the two works. A number of critics have argued on stylistic grounds that the *Paraphrase* was written first. If we accept the conjecture that Nonnus converted to Christianity, the *Dionysiaca* must have been composed earlier than the *Paraphrase*. Other critics maintain that the two works were written simultaneously. Critics now generally do not accept either hypothesis, conversion or apostasy.

In more recent times, scholars have been more inclined to reconcile the opposing views of paganism and Christianity, especially in the light of the cultural syncretism that characterised the Neoplatonic Alexandrian milieu. From this perspective, Nonnus can be regarded in various ways: as a Christian, who was familiar with pagan mythology and wrote the *Dionysiaca* with an antiquarian attitude devoid of any ideological involvement; as a "lay" poet, mainly interested in the narrative and in the literary engagement of his work; or as a Christian who saw the Dionysian mysteries as propaedeutic for the reception of the Christian message, and the salvific god Dionysus as a prefiguration of Christ.[58] Modern scholars think that the two poems are indeed the work of one and the same

author,[59] notwithstanding the view, argued in the past and revived relatively recently, that the two works cannot be attributed to the same person.

One may attribute the poems to the same person not only in view of their strong stylistic similarities, but also because they contain numerous recurrent themes. These appear in both the *Dionysiaca* and the *Paraphrase* and are employed with such consistency, that scholars have excluded the possibility that they are the work of different authors. Because of these recurring similarities, some Nonnian critics are inclined to believe that the two poems were composed in parallel, but the chronological relationship between the two is still debated. There is general agreement on that the *Paraphrase* was composed around the middle of the fifth century and, even among those who accept that the two poems were composed at the same time, there is a tendency to believe that Nonnus started work first on *Paraphrase* and later on the *Dionysiaca*.

The Dionysiaca

The forty-eight books of the *Dionysiaca* recount the deeds of, and the myths related to, Dionysus, starting with the god's genealogy and birth and then illustrating his expedition to India, the war with the Indians and the numerous battles that led to the defeat of his antagonist Deriades. These are followed by the return of Dionysus to Europe and his apotheosis. Because of this structure, which is based on antecedents, birth and deeds, death and apotheosis, it has been suggested that the poem is modelled on the pattern of the βασιλικὸς λόγος (the "royal encomium", codified by Menander Rhetor). This view, first formulated by Stegemann and subsequently elaborated on by a number of authoritative scholars, was rejected by Keydell, Bogner and Collart, on the grounds that the poem does not strictly follow the scheme established by Menander, in that it contains countless digressions and small narrative units, which may give the impression, at least, of a general lack of unity.

However, more recent studies suggest that the *Dionysiaca*, far from being a series of episodes totally lacking in inner cohesion, rest on an overall sound and solid structure, which allows the presence of numerous *excursus* without loss of consistency. Moreover, the digressions, which are present throughout the poem to an exceptional extent and vary greatly in terms of length and function, offer the poet endless opportunities to narrate different versions of myths, including even their least known variants. This variety of mythical material not only increases the encyclopaedic character of the poem but also makes for the development of a huge variety of parallel stories, which are very much in tune with the poet's taste for ποικιλία. The prologue to the *Dionysiaca*, briefly discussed above, shows clearly that this is the focal element in Nonnian poetics. Here a complex network of allusions suggests the subject and aim of the poem. Nonnus' acknowledgment of Homer as the initiator of the epic genre is made clear from the *incipit* of the poem, which introduces the programmatic statement that clarifies the subject of the poem: the deeds of Dionysus. The key-element, which implies the idea of ποικιλία, is represented by the figure of Proteus. This marine deity was traditionally thought to live on the island of Pharos, and his metamorphic nature (ποικίλον εἶδος) embodies the idea of stylistic variety. This concept is evoked in the subtle rephrasing (ποικίλον ὕμνον) of a verse by Pindar, who is, together with Homer, one of the most influential models for Nonnus' poetry and whose style is characterised *par excellence* by ποικιλία.

Beneath this monumental poem lies an ambitious poetical vision that includes the whole literary tradition inherited from Greek culture, which is both a model and a challenge. The most representative figure of this *paideia* is indisputably Homer, who is openly evoked in the two proems of the *Dionysiaca*, one at the beginning and one in the middle, as the ultimate and unrivalled model for epic poetry. Besides Homer, Nonnus' poetry presupposes deep knowledge of all the traditional poetic genres, from archaic lyric (Pindar and his metaphorical *periphrasis*, above all) to tragedy and comedy and from Hellenistic poetry to later epic poetry (the didactic poems of the Oppians, Triphiodorus' *Sack of Troy*, Quintus' *Posthomerica*, etc.) and prose (especially the novel).

The variety of Nonnus' sources also includes Christian literature. Even though the references to the literary Christian tradition are more evident and numerous in the *Paraphrase*, themes and literary reminiscences related to Christian literature are present in the *Dionysiaca*, too, where they are often interwoven with pagan themes. This is particularly evident in such instances as the metamorphosis of Ampelus and his resurrection in the shape of a vine, and, even more significantly, the episode involving the raising of the dead Tylus, which displays notable similarities with the resurrection of Lazarus. There are also striking similarities between Dionysus' turning of the water into wine at Lake Astacis and the description of the miracle performed by Jesus at the Wedding in Cana, which, in turn, is rich in Dionysian vocabulary. The correspondences between the pagan and the Christian poem are manifest in the resemblances between the two central figures of Dionysus and Christ. Furthermore, similarities can be also observed in minute details, such as the choice of similar vocabulary, epithets and turns of phrases employed for characters and episodes that echo one another in the two poems. This web of allusions and parallel references suggests a unitary conception that links the two works together as parts of the same wide syncretic vision.

The Paraphrase

Nonnus' *Paraphrase* is a re-elaboration of the Gospel of John in twenty-one books of hexameters, which correspond to the chapters of the Fourth Gospel. John's text is followed closely and re-elaborated faithfully, without any deviation in terms of content and sequence of events. As we have already mentioned, Nonnus probably began composing the *Paraphrase* before he started on the *Dionysiaca*, and the *Paraphrase* was drawn up in Alexandria at the same time as the *Dionysiaca* was composed.

The rhetorical exercise of paraphrase was a common school practice in antiquity. It was normally taught by grammarians (γραμματικοί) as part of the preliminary training designed to teach students how to compose declamations (προγυμνάσματα). Paraphrase is commended as a particularly effective exercise in various rhetorical text-books, and especially in Aelius Theon's *Progymnasmata* (15 Patillon-Bolognesi, pp. 108–109, surviving in its Armenian translation) and Quintilian's *Institutio Oratoria* (10.5,4–11). Theon explains that paraphrase consists in rewriting the great models of the past, so that their meaning becomes more comprehensible and that its usefulness lies in the process of expressing the same ideas in different forms. Quintilian describes it in similar terms. This practice of the paraphrase writing also continued in Christian culture, as it continued to be part of the syllabus. The rhetorical background to the *Paraphrase* will be discussed in detail below.

Paraphrase extended beyond school and we do have examples of rephrasing of important works of Classical and Hellenistic literature. These are the literary paraphrases. Surviving paraphrases of texts of pagan antiquity include the paraphrases of Nicander, Oppian and [Oppian] by Eutecnius (A.D. III–V) and the paraphrases of Aristotle by Themistius (A.D. IV). Content put aside, an obvious difference between all of them and Nonnus' work is that these are prose paraphrases (either of poetic works, the paraphrases of Eutecnius, or of prose works, the paraphrases of Themistius), while Nonnus produced a poetic paraphrase of a prose text, thus clearly aiming to achieve a significant artistic result. Nonnus was not a pioneer in this: we know, for instance, that Nicander produced a hexameter verse *Metaphrasis* of the Hippocratic *Prognostics*. From a formal point of view and mainly as regards extant works, Nonnus' task displays close parallels with a group of Greek Biblical paraphrases of the fourth and fifth century, which are few in number, compared with their Western equivalents. This poetic genre developed in both halves of the Mediterranean, starting from the fourth century, and although much more extensively attested in Latin culture, it is also represented in Greek Christian literature as well.

A fair number of pieces of Greek Christian epic poetry survive. Such are the Biblical poems by Gregory of Nazianzus, the *Christus Patiens* (controversially attributed to Gregory, and generally considered to be a later Byzantine text, dated as late as in the eleventh or twelfth century) and the hexametric metaphrasis of the Psalms by one Apollinaris (unconvincingly identified with Apollinaris of Laodicea). This work has received due attention in a number of studies, but the basic questions it raises (authorship, chronology, cultural environment) and the textual condition of its almost five thousand difficult hexameters still make it a rather obscure work. While we have a *Metaphrasis of the Ecclesiastes* ascribed to Gregory the Wonderworker in the third century, probably the first Biblical paraphrase (which is in prose), the *corpus* of Biblical paraphrases was enriched by the discovery of the so-called *Codex Visionum*, a manuscript from the Bodmer collection. This includes, along with various visionary texts, the most important of which is the *Vision of Dorotheus*, a number of shorter poems of different genres. Among these pieces are further examples of this flourishing Christian hexametrical production, such as the *ethopoea* of Cain (based on *Gen*. 4.13–15 but not quite a paraphrase), the *ethopoea* of Abel (based on of *Ps*. 101 but not quite a paraphrase), the fragments of a hymn (on the structure of *Ps*. 146–150, the so-called "Psalms of the Alleluia"). Eudocia's *De Sancto Cypriano* (the paraphrase of a prose narrative) and the Homeric centos in their different redactions represent further examples of such flourishing Christian hexametrical production. As already noted, Biblical epic did not survive as a genre, if we exempt a few Byzantine examples, such as the paraphrase of *Job* by Leo the Philosopher, and Cometas' epigram on Lazarus' resurrection. Among all these Biblical poems, the most comparable to Nonnus' *Paraphrase* is the *Metaphrasis of the Psalms*, written probably between 450 and 470. Both poems are full and systematic rephrasings of Biblical text, rather than merely developments of short segments of a Biblical text (the *ethopoeae* of Cain and Abel, which are not, furthermore, paraphrases in the strict sense), elaborations on Christian themes by means of tragic vocabulary (*Christus Patiens*), or paraphrases in the cento form (Eudocia). Comparison of Nonnus' work with the *Metaphrasis* would be a separate study in itself and is beyond the scope of the present study. Here it is enough to briefly note that the two poets have a similar technique as regards employment of epic diction, which accords with the baroque trends in poetical taste in Late Antiquity, but varies at least as regards how far each expands on the original; expansion is significantly restricted in the *Metaphrasis*.

As for Latin Bible epic, several examples survive. As regards New Testament epic, we have Juvencus' paraphrase of the Gospels in dactylic hexameters, probably written late in the reign of Constantine, Proba's *Cento vergilianus de laudibus Christi*, a poem recounting the deeds of Christ in Vergilian hexameters (mid-fourth century), Sedulius' *Carmen Paschale* (fifth century) and Arator's *De actibus apostolorum* (sixth century). Old Testament poems include the paraphrase of the *Heptaeuch* by an author known as "Cyprianus Gallus" (end of fourth / beginning of fifth century), the *Alethia* by Claudius Marius Victorius (fifth century), written for didactic purposes, and the six books in Latin hexameters by Avitus of Vienne (c. 507) *De spiritalis historiae gestis*. Dracontius' *De Laudibus Dei* (fifth century) is a very free composition loosely based on the Bible. We also have three poems based on Psalms 1, 2 and 136 by Paulinus of Nola (fourth-fifth century); this author also wrote *Laus Sancti Iohannis* (*Carm*. 6.1–26), based on Luke 1.

As Nonnus does with Homer and other poets, the Latin Bible poets also draw on the Latin epic past for vocabulary and imagery.[114]Moreover, like Nonnus, these poets are also engaged in religious *interpretatio* and can also express anti-heretical views. However, like other Greek Bible poems, the Latin epics also differ from Nonnus' (and the Psalterion metaphrast's) task in that they are not based on one sole text which they paraphrase faithfully. For instance, Sedulius' poem is an adaptation of the information given by the Synoptics, taken mainly from Mark and Matthew, to a lesser extent from Luke and to an even lesser extent from John, although it does not follow the order of any of these narratives strictly. Arator's narrative is also a selection of the episodes of the Acts. Avitus treats the Old Testament episodes in similar fashion and incorporates elements from

New Testament narratives in them. The *Heptaeuch* poet and Juvencus are the most "straightforward paraphrase makers" in comparison to the others, because their poems follow the Biblical text more closely. Still, however, unlike Nonnus, Juvencus is based principally on Matthew, while combining elements from Luke and John. Although generally very faithful, "Cyprianus" also occasionally abbreviates his vast Old Testament material. Thus, Nonnus' work is quite unique, since it is the only extant New Testament poetic paraphrase in both Greek and Latin which, for all its exegetical and other additions and embellishments, rephrases one Gospel, with no insertions from the others, and stays faithful to its chapters and to the order and content of its information from beginning to end.

The reason why so many Christian authors chose epic metre for their rendering of Biblical texts has been the object of much scholarly debate. As far as Greek poems are concerned, it has been suggested that the practice might be traced back to the notorious edict promulgated by Julian in June 362, which prohibited Christian professors from teaching pagan classics in schools of rhetoric. Supposedly responding to this interdict, Christian intellectuals are reported to have written poems of Christian content in accordance with the modes of pagan epic poetry. However, it is hardly convincing that Christian paraphrase descends from this alleged poetic production, given the very short life of the edict and also given that Gregory the Wonderworker had already composed a Biblical paraphrase in the third century, as we have seen above. Furthermore, surviving paraphrases do not seem to be addressed to an audience of students, but rather to a public already competent both in the Scriptures and in the Homeric poems. The audience of the Nonnian *Paraphrase* was in all probability very similar, if not identical, to that of the *Dionysiaca*: a mixture of Alexandrian pagan intellectuals and cultivated Christians who knew the Holy Scriptures, but who were also cultivated enough to appreciate the numerous allusions to Classical literature present in Nonnus' re-elaboration of the Fourth Gospel and welcomed the "transformation" of the Gospel into epic style. It should be noted that a part of conservative Christians rejected any retelling of the Bible and disapproved of attempts to transform the original text into "Hellenic" poetry. However, works such as Nonnus' *Paraphrase* and the *Metaphrasis* of the Psalms show that this attitude was not universal.

If pagan tradition, both Classical and Hellenistic, represents a background common to both poems, Christian literature has a more crucial part to play in the *Paraphrase*. It has been argued that the exegetical element is predominant in this work, which should be thus considered an exegesis rather than a simple paraphrase. The importance of the commentary to the Gospel of John by Cyril of Alexandria is unquestionable: Nonnus follows this interpretation very thoroughly, as is demonstrated in all critical commentaries of the *Paraphrase*, to the extent that it can be postulated that he "had the commentary *ante oculos*". In the turbulent age of Christological controversies, the authority of the influential patriarch of Alexandria was a guarantee that Nonnus' interpretation of the Johannine Gospel would not deviate from Orthodox doctrine.

Cyril's influence can be detected either directly, in instances of poetic vocabulary which reproduces his prose or, more loosely, in the general concept underlying Nonnus' rendition of the *Vorlage*. However, Cyril was not the only patristic source Nonnus was familiar with. Indeed, the poet's theological background comprehends a wide range of authors, among whom is John Chrysostom (in his homilies on the Gospel of John) and perhaps Theodore of Mopsuestia (fourth-fifth century A.D.), who wrote a commentary on John with which Nonnus may have been familiar. A further possible, though far from certain, influence is that of Origen. Moreover, in certain instances Nonnus gives interpretations of the Gospel which must either have appeared in sources not transmitted to us or are his own exegesis. Alongside the Christian theological tradition, in re-elaborating the Fourth Gospel, Nonnus often takes elements from the Synoptic Gospels and combines them with the Johannine diction, most probably on the grounds that the Fourth Gospel was thought to complement the other Gospels, and the general practice of exegetes was to use the Synoptics to elucidate the Johannine text.

As far as other literature is concerned, Gregory of Nazianzus is a source whose presence in Nonnian poetry can hardly be underestimated. His orations and poems were certainly known to the poet of Panopolis, as is demonstrated both from single words and from phrasing and also from metrical practice. The influence of Gregory of Nyssa has been also discerned in the *Paraphrase*. For possible knowledge of Epiphanius of Salamis (fourth c.) and other views echoed in the Acts of the Ecumenical Councils, see below, *IV. Amplificatio*, *C. Explanations* and *H. Interptetatio*, *passim*. It has also been argued that similarities of ideas and vocabulary between Nonnus' work and the *Tübingen Theosophy*, a collection of texts mostly hexametrical and partly pagan and partly Christian, dated to the fifth or sixth century, can be attributed to the common Alexandrian milieu in which both works were composed and perhaps to Nonnus' knowledge of collections of oracles incorporated in the *Theosophy*.

We can presume that one of the reasons why Nonnus chose to paraphrase the Fourth Gospel, which is constructed around the crucial principle of the divine Λόγος, was probably its strongly spiritual and philosophical character, which attracted the interest both of Alexandrian Neoplatonic circles and of theologians such as Cyril. A Neoplatonic background is evident in the vocabulary employed by Nonnus, both in the *Dionisyaca* and in the *Paraphrase*, but in the latter work it also serves the purpose of elucidating theological concepts. Roberta Franchi observed that the philosophical foundations of Nonnus' work are characterised by a "thoroughgoing eclecticism combined with religious syncretism", so that it is difficult to draw a line between theology and philosophy. The influence of Neoplatonism can be generally detected in both poems, in terms of a common knowledge of mainstream philosophical principles and terminology the educated elite was familiar with, but also with reference to specific literary sources, among which feature Plotinus and possibly Proclus.

With its abundance of literary echoes, Nonnus' poetry comes across as a multi-faceted ensemble of allusions and reverberations deriving from an astonishing variety of different traditions. In this complex picture, writings belonging to the Orphic tradition also seem to have exerted some influence on the poet's imagery, even though is not easy to determine how much. For example, despite the fact that there are significant similarities to the *Argonautica Orphica*, these elements are not sufficient to form any conclusions about whether Nonnus drew on this anonymous poem or rather from some other Orphic text circulating in the Imperial period.

Nonnus' Influence: A Brief Overview

Nonnus' influence on later literature has often been examined. It is commonly accepted that, thanks to public recitations of both his works, Nonnus' poetry had become a classic by the second half of the fifth century and all the important poets of that period and of the next century, such as Musaeus, Colluthus, Christodorus, John of Gaza, Paulus Silentiarius and Agathias, were his followers. Imitations of the Nonnian style and echoes of his poems' content are also discernible in certain Byzantine authors, although hexameter verse is gradually replaced by iamb from the sixth century onwards. Rennaissance scholars, editors and poets showed interest in Nonnus. As far as poetic production is concerned, Poliziano (fifteenth century), Jean Dorat (sixteenth century) and Giambattista Marino (sixteenth-seventeen century) are, for instance, inspired by myths and episodes in the *Dionysiaca*. In the later Renaissance, however, there was criticism of Nonnus' style and the structuring of his pagan epic. French painters of the seventeenth century, such as Nicholas Poussin and Claude Lorrain, show traces of the influence of Nonnian subjects and Spanish scholars and poets of the same period seem also to have been acquainted with the work of Nonnus. A Greek prose paraphrase of the *Paraphrase* was written in the eighteenth century, proving that the work was read and appreciated at the time, the manuscript itself being preserved on Mount Athos (*Dionysiou* 326). In modern times, Wolfgang Goethe, Percy Shelley and Elizabeth Barrett Browning in

the nineteenth and Marguerite Yourcenar and Constantine Cavafy in the twentieth century are probably the best known authors to take an interest in Nonnus.

Nonnus' Paraphrastic Technique: Rhetorical Tradition and Poetic Creativity

Although there are no programmatic statements concerning poetics in the *Paraphrase* equivalent to those in the *Dionysiaca*, the substantial correspondences between the two poems, in terms of style, themes and echoes, evident and repeatedly noted by critics, suggest that there is a sound theoretical coherence in the two works. The literary project underlying the Christian poem is reflective of that of the *Dionysiaca*, or, more probably, the two works are intended to complement each other. Both poems, different as they may be in terms of content, belong to the same poetic *genre*, that of epic poetry, i.e., poetry realised by means of dactylic hexameter verse, and they both address a similar audience, which includes Christian and pagans.

Ancient authors felt indebted to the genres to which their works belonged and regarded themselves as subject to the laws regulating such genres. These ties represented a constraint and a challenge at the same time, as the ability of a skilled poet consisted in both mastering the codified language characterising a poetic category (as well as the rules established by the tradition), and in displaying originality within these conventions. In this sense, Nonnian poetry is paradigmatic, in that he succeeded in innovating within the tradition, as is demonstrated by the *Dionysiaca* and perhaps even more clearly by the *Paraphrase*, in which he revives the epic genre by infusing it with Christian themes expressed in a language highly indebted to the Classical and Hellenistic poetic tradition. According to Rossi, four characteristics determine the genre to which a poem belongs, if we disregard music and dance, as these do not always apply: subject-matter, structure, language and metre. In terms of all, except subject-matter, the *Paraphrase* is an epic. Because of its subject-matter, which is neither heroic nor didactic, according to the ancient Greek sub-divisions of the epic genre, it becomes (as regards ancient conventions) a "new" kind of epic.

As mentioned above, rhetoric, which was taught through school exercises (*progymnasmata*) of increasing difficulty, is an essential part of the foundations of both Nonnian works. This aspect has possibly an even more crucial bearing on the *Paraphrase*, because of the genre to which the poem belongs, since paraphrasing is, by definition, a rhetorical operation. Among this set of exercises *ethopoea* and *ekphrasis* are particularly important in Nonnus' poetry. *Ethopoea*, namely the plausible representation of a character, was a very common and basic school practice consisting of imagining what kind of words would have been pronounced on a specific occasion. The exercise might involve a speech of exhortation, consolation, farewell, seeking forgiveness or other topics and students would have to find words to suit the proposed situation. *Ethopoea* could also relate to historical figures, such as kings or political leaders, or mythical figures, such as the heroes of the Trojan War, or even deities. The piece was usually composed in prose (even though very often it re-elaborated poetic material), but poetic *ethopoeae* are also attested in papyri. This technique, theorised in ancient rhetorical treatises, is extensively employed by Nonnus in the *Dionysiaca*, where numerous characters deliver speeches whose structure is indebted to the rules of *ethopoea*. Agosti observed that one of the most characteristic traits of the *Dionysiaca* is the frequency of direct speeches that deviate from the flow of the narration. This is a typical feature of late antique poetry, which developed a taste for very refined and self-contained compositional units placed within the contexts of a wider framework. This breaking of the continuity of the narration through the insertion of smaller, *tesserae*-like segments is less evident in the *Paraphrase*, as the poem is conditioned by the structure of the hypotext. Nevertheless, the influence exerted by the practice of *ethopoea* is evident also in the *Paraphrase*, especially in the characterisation of the protagonists of the Gospel account. When describing figures such as Peter, Mary Magdalene, Pontius Pilate and Judas, Nonnus gives a more sensitive and complex description of his characters, in comparison to the concise description of the *Vorlage*.

Related to the rhetorical practice of *ethopoea* is *ekphrasis*, also widely employed by Nonnus, a device which, like *ethopoea*, contributes to the creation of the impression of fine poetical segments set in a wider narrative structure. Literary miniatures describing clothes and textiles or paintings and other depictions were particularly favoured by Alexandrian poets. The theory and the technique of describing a given object were codified in ancient treatises of rhetoric, in which *ekphrasis* was apparently one of the most basic exercises normally taught during the first stages of rhetorical training. The presence of *ekphrases* is much more pervasive in the *Dionysiaca* than in the *Paraphrase*. In the former, free from the constraints represented by the *Vorlage*, Nonnus makes profuse use of this device, not only because of his rhetorical training but also because of his familiarity with Greek novels (especially Achilles Tatius), in which literary descriptions of diverse subjects are particularly abundant. However, in his Christian poem, too, this taste for descriptive insertions is an important poetic and exegetical feature, though to a more limited extent. The original function of *ekphrases* was both to please the reader and to persuade the audience. Likewise, Nonnus' vivid descriptions in the *Paraphrase* enhance the interpretation of the Johannine diction, as graphic representations lay stress on specific ideas through the use of particularly strong images, suitable for the paraphrast's purposes.

With regard to the practice of *ekphrasis*, all rhetorical treatises lay much emphasis on the importance of the vividness (*enargeia*) of the language employed in the description of a given object. In ancient theory, *enargeia* is defined as "when an event is so described in words that the business seems to be enacted and the subject to pass before your eyes". This essential quality of style contributes to the effectiveness of the rhetorical speech that enables it to render absent things present. For Quintilian, *enargeia* is accomplished in two ways: by the representation of the *tota imago* through words and by the great number of details which express this image. The desire to visually portray scenes, actions and persons is evident in both Nonnian poems and in the *Paraphrase* it plays a significant role in the representation and interpretation of the Gospel text. Nonnus employs both the approaches described by Quintilian, in that his phrasing frequently creates images in the reader's mind and in that this procedure normally involves some verbal expansion of the *Vorlage* in which characteristic descriptive details are added.

In the literary tradition, Nonnus' poem has been defined as μεταβολή. In modern languages, the term "paraphrase" is used to indicate the process by which the language and the style of a given model are changed, so that a different literary outcome is achieved, without, however, any distortion of the meaning of the original text. The rhetorical strategies of the paraphrase, according to Theon, on which Nonnus also relies on, are the following: *adjectio* (addition), *detractio* (omission), *transmutatio* (the rearrangement of words and phrases), and *immutatio* (the substitution of one or more words with other words). The Greek terms are ἔνδεια, πλεονασμός, μετάθεσις, ἐναλλαγή. Nonnus actually carries out his literary paraphrase mainly by means of *adjectio*, combined with *immutatio* and, to a lesser extent, *transmutatio*. *Adjectio* and also *transmutatio* and *immutatio*, in that they are mainly comprised of, and realised through, *adjectio*, result inevitably in the *amplificatio* of the model and contribute to its *ornatus* (embellishment). The accumulation of adjectives and phrases and the extensive use of metaphors, which have the effect of amplifying the text, are congenial to Nonnus' "baroque" penchant for overwhelming abundance. Within the various procedures employed by the poet in his amplification of the Johannine diction, the variety of metaphorical is particularly remarkable. The amplifying (αὔξησις) or diminishing (ταπείνωσις) function of metaphors was already underlined by Aristotle in his *Rhetoric*, where it is explained that, in order either to embellish or praise, the rhetorician should borrow a metaphor from something better, pertaining to the same genre, whereas, in order to denigrate or blame, the metaphor should be borrowed from something worse. The latter statement refers to epideictic rhetoric, which in the Aristotelian scheme of things

is mostly identified with the encomium, and among the three branches of oratory epideictic rhetoric is the one with the closest connection with poetry. In the time of Nonnus, the authority on epideictic was Menander. The influence of the Menandrian treatises is particularly evident in the *Dionysiaca*, especially if we accept the theory that the poem has a macro-structure and that it follows the sequence of the elements which comprise the royal encomium, the βασιλικὸς λόγος. Moreover, as has been argued, *ekphraseis* in the descriptions of towns are clearly indebted to the Menandrian scheme of the praise of cities.

In the *Dionysiaca* and in the *Paraphrase*, the rhetorical background is certainly the same. However, the *Paraphrase* is a metatext, in which the structure of the model does not allow the insertion of ample narrative structures. As a consequence, the influence exerted by Nonnus' rhetorical training on the *Paraphrase* is to be detected in shorter segments. In general, the approach of the paraphrast is extremely respectful towards the Gospel text in terms of content and sequence of events. When the poet decides to repeat the *Vorlage* in a literal way, it is either because the Johannine diction contains Biblical quotations or because such literal repetition is particularly effective. Omissions are extremely rare as well. Occasionally, Nonnus may resort to condensing or abbreviating certain Gospel passages, and this typically happens when repetitions occur in the Johannine text. The usual procedure, the expansion of the *Vorlage*, is achieved on lexical and theological levels, so that, eventually, it is typically intertwined with religious exegesis. The rich variety of metaphorical images and rhetorical devices, such as *anaphora*, *hypallage*, alliteration, oxymoron, and *periphrasis*, for example, far from being mere embellishments, usually have an exegetical function as well and are employed in order to elucidate the Gospel text. Thus, the rhetorical practice becomes an instrument, rather than a goal, for the interpreter of the Johannine text.

The tradition of interpreting the Bible for both listeners and readers was well-established in the Christian community, especially so because of the appearance of heresies which made dogmatic clarifications necessary, as has been repeatedly demonstrated. Cyril, for instance, on whom Nonnus principally draws, stresses the need for heresy to be combatted in the introduction of his commentary on John. As regards the Latin Bible epics, it has been argued that their debt to Christian exegesis is greater than their debt to classical education. The opposite has again been suggested, and a composite view has also been proposed, according to which there is a balance between Christianity and Antiquity in Bible epic. Readings which see primarily Christianity or primarily pagan methods of paraphrase in the Bible epic in fact recognise a more or less distinctive line between engagement in Christian interpretation, on the one hand, and, on the other, adherence on the author's part to classical rhetorical models. Like his Latin counterparts, Nonnus, too, is primarily a poet-exegete and secondarily a poet-rhetorician who (simply) applies the ancient rhetorical principles of rewording (through amplification and the various techniques associated with it) to improve a given text, in this case a scriptural text. Yet—to follow a line of thought similar to that behind the composite approach we have just mentioned—the cultural distance between ancient rhetorical tradition and religious exegesis itself is not necessarily that great.

First of all, paraphrase itself can be actually an act of exegesis. This is especially true for the literary paraphrase, whether religious or not. Commentators on Aristotle elucidated his ideas, producing a kind of *philosophical* paraphrase, and other ancient paraphrasts, such as Eutecnius, also produced paraphrases which clarified the meaning of the original. Thus, the paraphrast is *a priori* engaged in the interpretation of his *Vorlage*, in pagan tradition, too. Secondly, it has been shown that Christian exegesis itself draws, at least partly, on ancient methods of interpretation, especially interpretation associated with the school practice or purely philological. In particular, Origen's commentaries on the Gospels have been examined in the light of methods of philological exegesis, such as διόρθωσις and ἀνάγνωσις (textual criticism), γλωσσηματικόν (explanation of words), τεχνικόν (grammatical and rhetorical clarifications), ἱστορικόν (explanation of facts, or, more specifically, "the enquiry that

produces as much information as possible with respect to the elements, actions, characters or background of the text"), matters of metre (μετρικόν) and style, identification of the πρόσωπον, i.e the speaker of the passage in question. These categories are in fact adjusted, by modern critics, from the description of the γραμματική by Dionysius Thrax and from the clarifications of this description by his commentator. If we transfer these principles from their use in prose commentaries to the freer and more complex poetic creation, we can see that in the *Paraphrase* especially the explanation of words and the various aspects of the ἱστορικόν, which can be rendered with the general term *realia*, are constantly in the poet's mind and are intermingled with his purely religious interpretative comments. This "*realia*" aspect can be in fact traced in every kind of amplification in which Christian exegesis is also present. With reference to the investigation of the present study, it appears in the poet's explanations (being thus interwoven with the γλωσσηματικόν), in his sketching of character and even in his elaborations of high theological significance, such as the additions concerning the details of the Crucifixion. For interpretation (which includes religious exegesis), as a literary practice rooted in the Greek tradition of *paideia* in which didacticism was inherent in poetry and Homer was an exemplary "teacher" and an encyclopaedic source, see below, *H. Interpretatio*, introductory note.

Despite the intrinsic restrictions inherent in the paraphrastic genre, where the inventiveness of the poet is undeniably constrained by the existence of a model (and respect for it) and by a specific sequence of points to elaborate on, Nonnus' creativity in reworking his model, that is, in transferring its contents to a different literary genre, finds infinite ways to express itself through the resources of ποικιλία, even in this seemingly rigid framework.

Aims of the Present Study

The purpose of this study is to investigate the different paraphrastic techniques employed by Nonnus in his rendition of the Johannine text. Notwithstanding the ample variety of the different stylistic solutions employed by Nonnus in his re-elaboration of the Johannine Gospel and despite the fact that it is impossible to categorise his overwhelming poetic exuberance, it is still possible to distinguish certain criteria of rewriting through analysis of passages of the paraphrased text and comparison with the *Vorlage*.

The 1985 monograph of Roberts, which investigates the paraphrastic techniques of Latin bible epic, offers a valuable method, although it has been criticised for its excessive focus on the debt of the Latin poems to ancient rhetoric. This study classifies a number of paraphrastic procedures, most of which are pertinent to Nonnus' work. A number of principal categories that Roberts uses to examine paraphrasing techniques, such as the insertion of *periphrasis*, literal paraphrasis, the transpositions, the synonymic expansion, the handling of the speech, the *interpretatio*, we will discuss with regard to Nonnus' work.

Nevertheless, the Nonnian re-elaboration of the Johannine text by no means falls into all the categories singled out by Roberts. For example, literal paraphrasis, omissions and transpositions are extremely rare, conflations and abbreviations seldom occur, and, conversely, the technique of *amplificatio* is so widely employed, that it is not always easy to draw an accurate line between several of its components (such as the accumulation of phrases or the handling of the speech) and the aspect of *interpretatio*. The difficulty of dissecting the poetic text into rigid compartments arises mainly from the nature of Nonnus' poem, which involves numerous references, ramifications and allusions to different traditions, ranging over centuries of pagan literature and Christian theology.

Our examination of the techniques which Nonnus employs to compose his paraphrase also includes discussions of Nonnian insertions that significantly enrich the text, in contrast to Roberts' approach. Roberts mostly employs rhetorical categorisation of the poets' paraphrastic modes. We discuss

many rhetorical figures, while also examining other techniques. These include *ethopoea*, which rests on a basis of rhetoric, but still allows a rich and free development of its material. We also look at character sketching, whether realised through speech or through some other means, the heightening of the dramatic atmosphere and the use of imagery and striking description. In all of our discussions, we look at the exegetical background and at intertextual references to other poetry, where such references seem probable and significant. Thus our schema does in essence retain Roberts' categorisation, albeit greatly expanding upon it, and rests on ancient rhetorical theory. It does enrich this categorisation and demonstrates how far exegesis is present in many other constituents of the *amplificatio*–αὔξησις, in addition to dealing with pure *interpretatio*, which concerns passages in which the exegetical element is prevalent: our analysis of the explanations, the imagery, the character sketching and the sub-chapters in which these discussions consist also sheds light on the poet's use of exegetical material and his consequent clarification of various theological notions, *inter alia*. As Nodes concludes for the Latin Bible epics, for Nonnus, too, doctrine is one of his poem's dimensions. It is not the only one, but it is still highly important.

A systematic presentation of parallels in diction, motifs, images, details in the sketching of character and other techniques between the *Dionysiaca* and the *Paraphrase* is beyond the scope of this study. However, we make reference to the pagan epic when comparisons are significant as far as Nonnus' aesthetic choices and wider poetic universe are concerned.

Our approach does not lie in attempting to categorise Nonnus' paraphrastic strategies within rigid compartments. The aim of the following chapters is rather to offer a representative selection of examples that illustrate Nonnus' various techniques of rephrasing the *Vorlage*, in an attempt to understand better the approach of the paraphrast vis-à-vis his model, while bearing in mind that we are more likely to identify certain directional principles, so to speak, rather than to discern strict guidelines.

After the Introduction, followed by a chapter which summarises the ancient theoretical discussions on and around paraphrase, we group Nonnus' modes of paraphrasing in the two main categories used in this study, that is *Non-amplificatory paraphrase* and *Amplification*. The first category examines Nonnian passages in which the original text is only minimally altered: these "non-amplificatory" techniques, which are the exception rather than the rule in Nonnus' re-elaboration, involve literal paraphrase, abbreviations and conflations and transpositions. In the latter category, the *Amplificatio*, we investigate the various forms of the typical techniques of expansion of the model. Amplification encompasses numerous individual techniques here. The examination begins with the less drastic modes, such as *periphrasis* and synonymic *amplificatio*, realised through additions of adjectives, participles and the figure of *anaphora*. The following section deals with Nonnus' linguistic explanations, a practice closely related to the use of exegesis, as the poet explains the terms both against the background of Biblical and other Christian literature but also in the light of his encyclopaedic knowledge. In this sub-chapter, then, we look for the first time at a condensed and concise form of interpretation. Next, we examine more extended and impressive instances of expansion of the Gospel. In the sections that follow, we discuss cases of Nonnus' elaboration of imagery through which theological notions are conveyed and of passages that display theatricality, through memorable visualisation of the scenes, description of landscapes and other settings and the effects of sound. In these instances of extended amplification, theological exegesis is always implied to a greater or a lesser extent, and our analysis constantly tries to take account of this crucial point. Furthermore, the rhetorical principle of *enargeia* is frequently exploited here. We then move on to examine the Nonnian techniques employed in his presentation of persons and their speech. This is an aspect of amplification related, in a sense, to the "theatrical" quality of the work, which is, however, much more focused on the characters' psychology and intellect. The relevant sections investigate the handling of the direct and indirect speech and the sketching of character. Nonnus'

substantial re-elaboration as regards insertions in the Johannine persons' words, comments surrounding these words and descriptions of the persons' appearance, gestures and movements are discussed in the sub-chapters on the handling of speech and in the character sketching sections. Here we look in further detail at the poet's use of the principles of *ethopoea* and his blending of religious exegesis with it. Yet, it is chiefly in the final section, which deals with religious *interpretatio per se*, that we investigate a number of crucial theological issues and their handling by the poet on the basis of selected representative and significant passages. It is there that Nonnus' theology is placed in the context of his contemporary Christian milieu. Trinitarian theology obviously occupies an important part of this study. <>

Religion: Rereading What Is Bound Together

by Michel Serres, translated by Malcolm DeBevoise [Stanford University Press, 9781503631496]

With this profound final work, completed in the days leading up to his death, Michel Serres presents a vivid picture of his thinking about religion—a constant preoccupation since childhood—thereby completing *Le Grand Récit*, the comprehensive explanation of the world and of humanity to which he devoted the last twenty years of his life. Themes from Serres's earlier writings—energy and information, the role of the media in modern society, the anthropological function of sacrifice, the role of scientific knowledge, the problem of evil—are reinterpreted here in the light of the Old Testament accounts of Isaac and Jonah and a variety of Gospel episodes, including the Three Wise Men of the Epiphany, the Transfiguration, Peter's denying Christ, the Crucifixion, Emmaus, and the Pentecost. Monotheistic religion, Serres argues, resembles mathematical abstraction in its dazzling power to bring together the real and the virtual, the natural and the transcendent; but only in its Christian embodiment is it capable of binding together human beings in such a way that partisan attachments are dissolved and a new era of history, free for once of the lethal repetition of collective violence, can be entered into.

CONTENTS

Michel Serres was working as fast as he could in order to deliver a finished manuscript, in the event only a day before he died, and so did not have an opportunity to correct page proof. The French edition, printed directly from the files received from the author, is marred by infelicities of various kinds that no doubt he would have wished to eliminate. In making an English translation, I have made every effort to ensure that silent modifications of the text, additions and subtractions alike, are consonant not only with the sense and spirit of the French but also with the thrust of Serres's work as a whole, and especially the attempts at synthesis over the last two decades. The subject of this final book, religion, plainly preoccupied him throughout his life.

I have streamlined the table of contents for the sake of clarity and consistency, seeking to bring out the main theme of each chapter. The various subsidiary themes—involving the idea of hot spots, networks (or webs) of relations, false gods, love and death in relation to violence, and so forth—frequently recur in the section titles, and no reader will fail either to understand their importance or to grasp their connection with one another.— Malcolm DeBevoise

> Then the scribes and Pharisees brought [to Jesus] a woman who had been caught in adultery, and placing her in the midst they said to him, "Teacher, this woman has been caught in the act of adultery. Now, in the law, Moses commanded that such should be stoned. What do you say?" ... But Jesus bent down and wrote with his finger on the ground [as though he did not hear]. And as they continued to ask him, he stood up and said to them, "Let him who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone at her." And once more he bent down and wrote with his finger on the ground. —John 8:3-8

As it was well understood by men that the woman alone had committed adultery, an agreement was reached among them that she should be stoned. Violence within a group was focused on an individual. This human sacrifice may be said to have bound together the murderers.

Before responding and pardoning, Jesus bent down to write on the ground. As if the evangelist, in his account, had pointed to a passage written beneath his own, in Jesus's hand, just as a palimpsest displays one script and hides another. Must we reread the one in order to decipher the other?

Linguists tell us that the term "religion" has two sources, one more probable than the other: rereading and binding together. In what follows, by ceaselessly reading texts in the hope of being able to reread the very one that Jesus wrote down on the ground, I try to place the two meanings in perspective, as Saint John the Apostle's account does here. Must we read it as saying that, in pardoning the victim, without punishing her executioners, it undoes the agreement that binds together these men in infamy? This is the question that the present book seeks to answer. <>

Chrysostom as Exegete: Scholarly Traditions and Rhetorical Aims in the Homilies on Genesis

by Samuel Pomeroy [Series: Vigiliae Christianae, Supplements, Brill, 9789004469228]

To what extent and to what purposes did John Chrysostom engage previous models of Biblical exegesis? In this systematic study of his Homilies on Genesis, new light is shed on the precision of his adaption of works by Basil, Origen, Eusebius of Emesa, and Eusebius of Caesarea, findings set against a wider 'web' of parallels with various other exegetes (e.g. Ephrem, Diodore, Didymus). The cumulative picture is a network of shared knowledge across geographical and ecclesial boundaries which served as creative cache for Chrysostom's discourses. With the metaphors of textual obscurity and word-depth, he prioritized name and word interpretations as a means of producing multiple layers of ethical evaluation.

CONTENTS

The 'and' in the subtitle of this book is meant as a conjunctive: in the homilies of John Chrysostom, I do not here intend for scholarly traditions to be understood as separate from their rhetorical aims. By 'and' neither do I denote a cataloguing of A followed by B, an analysis of traditions of Bible study in the Homilies on Genesis followed by a study of the preacher's many paraenetic addresses coursing throughout our 67 homilies. Instead, I attempt to view the scholastic and the oratorical as two sides of the same, organic art intended for performance.

This said, however, it must be admitted that this study devotes more pages to the archaeology and categorization of the exegetical traditions on which Chrysostom draws, what Pierre Fruchon called the 'prior community'. That is because while there are many studies that include John Chrysostom in a reception-history or effect-history analysis of Genesis exegesis, we know a limited amount about how Chrysostom interacted with the sizeable foundation work that had already been done on the book of Genesis by the late 4th-century. And in order to analyze the rhetorical purposes of tradition, which I accomplish by case-studies in Chapters 2, 3, and 4, that which Chrysostom received as tradition must also be established—chapters 5, 6, 7, and 8.

The important study of Hagit Amirav, as Frances Young recognized, suggests that much can be learned about the transmission of ideas and biblical learning in early Christianity by scrutinizing John Chrysostom's approach to the teaching of the book of Genesis. His work illuminates an ongoing process of debate about patterns of reference around specific texts and offers the opportunity to examine how rhetorical context and the idealized aims of discourse factor into the choices made. The present volume, therefore, may be viewed as an extended analysis of the inspiring work of these two scholars.

If John Chrysostom possesses any originality in the history of the art of biblical interpretation, it is in his eclectic and almost compilatory practice on the one hand, and his at times brilliant application of technical questions to moral paraenesis on the other. This diversity of practice is likely the product of the contexts in which he worked and the resources at his disposal. I avoid the word 'method' because it is slightly misleading, implying the systematic strain for a coherence between hermeneutical theory and interpretative result that does not belong to our preacher. That is not to downplay the importance of such passages where hermeneutical theory comes to the fore—we have always famous passages like that in his Homily 5 on Isaiah 6, which captured Bultmann's attention (see Chapter 2, n. 15). It is to stress rather that at the points where he can be tested, Chrysostom is not always internally consistent (as Catherine Broc-Schmezer demonstrated so aptly) nor does he perform in the way we would expect of a student of Eusebius of Emesa and Diodore, raising again the question of context and tradition. While as a genre compilatory exegesis would flourish well after Chrysostom's time, a systematic study of his exegesis of Genesis deepens the conclusions of Amirav and Young and, I hope, provides us with a fuller profile of his activity insofar as it involved the bible, its interpretations, and the ways these traditions were employed for Christian self-understanding. Attending to Chrysostom helps us put an ear to the ground and, as it were, detect even if faintly how the waters of biblical science were flowing at the time.

***

John Chrysostom's interrelation of exegetical tradition and rhetorical aim may be described by what Jauss aptly called the 'symbiotic unity' between 'imitation and creativity, preservation and discovery, tradition and innovation'. In the form that we have them, the *Homilies* were composed with precise reference to other models, at least sections of Eusebius of Emesa's and Diodore's *Commentary on Genesis*, Basil of Caesarea's *Letter* 260, Eusebius of Caesarea's *Demonstration on the Gospel* 8.1, his *Question 7 to Stephen*, and Origen's *Scholia on Genesis*. Systematic parallels throughout indicate that the list was likely more extensive, but lack of surviving material does not at this point permit further precision. The fact that so many of Chrysostom's exegetical choices can be paralleled to other Late Antique exegetes attests to a widespread, shared, network of exegetical traditions, 'webs' of text-referents on which Chrysostom built as he interpreted the text anew.

Joining paradigms of research that view Chrysostom's homiletic discourses as an integral art, this work has shown how previous models of exegesis functioned as both creative cache and methodological ideal for his pedagogical purposes. Disputation, which included the dialogical revision of traditional models, is always related to ethics, the implementation of behaviour envisioned by the preacher to connect biblical history with his own context. In this way, Chrysostom's handling of the bible may be understood as 'zetetic', in contrast to other knowledge-models of Late Antiquity such as Epiphanius's 'antiquarian' approach.[2] Whereas Epiphanius deployed biblical learning to create overwhelming, cumulative caricatures of his opponents' views, Chrysostom constructed contained engagements with previous exegetical models for the purposes of making memorable and coherent his ethical teaching. While this was not an open invitation to scholastic curiosity or democratic dialogue between different religious viewpoints, the asking and answering of questions regarding the biblical text, and the subtle adaptation of how previous models posed such questions, is essential to his idealized pastoral purposes.

As mirrored by the structure of the present work, focusing on how Chrysostom accomplishes this connection takes us to the heart of his standing in webs of patristic exegetical tradition and illuminates just how interconnected these webs were across authors of disparate ecclesial contexts and literary genres.

Chrysostom's theoretical expression in the *Homily 5 on Isaiah 6* that non-literal reading is warranted only where the text permits is shown to be an overused and perhaps unhelpful gateway into Chrysostom's hermeneutics. As expressed systematically in practice, Chrysostom's non-literal readings are warranted through name-depth study. In line with a 'zetetic' model, themes, images, and doctrines of spiritual and canonical relevance are 'hinted at'. They are found 'hidden' under or 'murkily' veiled by the specific words, places, and names in the biblical text. Chrysostom has thereby too often been simplistically ranged next to Diodore's distinction between *theōria* and *historia* and Theodore's polemic against allegory as the importation of foreign meaning. As such, *theōria* does not occur for exegetical value in the *Homilies on Genesis*, and in the rare cases where Chrysostom brought up polemics against allegory, they concerned the controversial theological implications of the paradise narrative that circulated widely. While he shared some of their didactic emphases, techniques, and awareness of exegetical questions-and-answers, and so should be positioned in relation to Antiochenes, in practice Chrysostom's non-literal readings preferred Syro-Palestinian and Alexandrian terminology and tradition.

Holding these elements together permits a global perspective on Chrysostom's didactic priorities, from which we distinguish three.

Asking Exegetical Questions to Defamiliarize

'Do not be estranged', Chrysostom would say at numerous points concerning a biblical word, image, or verse. This use of the Greek root *xenos* is illustrative, for often Chrysostom would ask questions about the biblical texts in order to create gaps of understanding for his audience, what Chin has observed as the creation of an 'unstable' biblical text. Viewed from within the wider panorama of Late Antique Christian exegetes, especially Antiochenes Eusebius of Emesa, Diodore, and Theodore who were aware of the translated character of the Septuagint and sought to clarify it, Chrysostom's basis of operation from the fundamental supposition of the bible's linguistic instability is unsurprising. Chrysostom expressed this instability with a range of metaphors pertaining to obscurity and clarity and hidden treasure, but also with subtler cues such as 'instead of' or questions like 'what is this?' The *Homilies on Genesis* form a strong reference point for a curriculum of questions-and-answers presupposed in many of his other Old Testament exegetical works, such as *On the Obscurity of the Old Testament*, *Sermon 9 on Genesis*, *Homilies on the Changing of Names, Homilies 7 and 9 on the Statues*. In this dossier, *zētēma*, *aporia*, and related terminology reflect a scholastic engagement with the book of Genesis for catechetical and pastoral purposes. Into the gaps created by these destabilizing 'questions' he could invest his own ideality of meaning, related back to the single-*skopos* or *hypothesis* of the particular discourse. Even the seemingly simple task of glossing and paraphrasing, which was widespread throughout his homilies and often guided by learned resources, is aimed to revert his audience's attention to their envisioned spiritual significance.

Covenant practices, intermarriage, a shoestrap, basic human action-metaphors ('Their eyes were opened'), the rainbow, a refugee packing up his tent like a soldier, a brother feeling anger for his violated kinsman—all such cases could be affirmed as unfamiliar and so containing a particular teaching which Chrysostom wished to give. Many of these were less obviously problematic—who needed to think twice about the anger felt over a violated kinsman? Assessing the background to Chrysostom's word glosses illuminates that his knowledge of scholastic traditions imposes the possibility of conveying knowledge or bringing out content which can be related to the thematic coherence of the discourse. Thus, in his *Homily 29 on Genesis*, asking how Noah's sons Sem and Japheth knew not to publish abroad their father's nakedness, Chrysostom's answer is that it was by the natural law, a question related to traditional exegetical discussion about how Noah knew to make wine. But in asking the question about what would seem a rather obvious response from the perspective of moral judgement, Chrysostom defamiliarizes the scene by investing it with an anticipatory character, prefiguring the law given to Moses and so establishing a providential red-thread of Jew and Gentile throughout human history. The typology is riveted further by the looming possibility, which he poses, of contradiction and redundancy in the narrative: does the curse on Cham at one point contradict his blessing at an earlier one? Why is Canaan brought up in the first place? The questions enable him to show this providential red-thread as the *skopos* of the Noah cycle, studied here and in Amirav's work. The layering of Chrysostom's reading strategies thereby becomes complex, as a non-literal, typological interpretation of Noah's sons is correlated directly to literary-critical concerns about narrative coherence, word glossing, and the *skopos* which the *paraenesis* makes clear: the sign that the divine has not abandoned human beings is that they are responsible for their own actions, always capable of choosing to single themselves out from the crowd and take the narrow path of virtue.

Similarly, a number of cherished cultural practices, particularly those surrounding family and honour-traditions, are called into question. Speculating about Cain's marriage connected to reflecting on the deeper significance of names such as Seth and his son Enosh, Cain's brother and nephew. Chrysostom used exegetical traditions to pose questions that would place these characters into sharp relief, their stemming from the same stock being an obvious problem that 'made foreign' the view that honour succeeded accorded to bloodline. Thus, 'What is the meaning [of Seth's name]?',

follows with non-literal readings connecting Seth and his son to themes of salvation history like the transgression of Adam and the resurrection of Christ. Chrysostom suggests, then, that all along, it is mindset that has composed the true lineage of honour, and so the true divine people. This provides an important window into Chrysostom's logic for selecting non-literal readings.

By singling out a particular name or word, non-literal readings serve as material for totalized contrast within his definitions about what is true versus what is false. At several points, notably at the ends of discourses, Chrysostom explains 'true' characteristics and qualities, such as 'freedom' or 'death'. These follow upon the exegetical discussions which have defamiliarized seemingly intimate or presupposed practices. In this Stenger's analysis of text-worlds provides the helpful categories of refamiliarization and defamiliarization. Chrysostom's take on death as 'truly' sleep alone, for instance, defamiliarizes this intimate and universal experience. His teaching is that the salvific economy of Christ has effected a historical change in the meaning of 'death' in light of the resurrection, in which his audience is implied to share. Through exegesis of Gen 49–50, in which he relied on Eusebius of Caesarea's *Demonstration on the Gospel* 8.1, the 'anticipatory' character of the text heightens this point, as Joseph's mourning is not allayed even after speaking proleptically about salvation in Christ.

'True freedom' is related to the typology of Cham, Sem, and Japheth who signify, respectively, those living in slavery, the Jews, and Gentle Christians. Their names have been made to stand for familiar, long-established historical constructs. However, Chrysostom effectively dissolves his own typology by eschewing the idea that a particular race was destined to servitude. For even those in Cham's line, the Ninevites, famously fasted and repented in time for restoration. To accomplish this, Chrysostom demonstrates some revision of previous models. Coming across the name 'Nebrod', he asks, 'What does this mean, "opposed to God?" ' Understood as opposed to God by the onomastic sources, Nebrod is actually aligned within the family of repentant, and so truly 'free', persons. Exegetical traditions draw out aspects of these narratives that could serve the dialectic of familiarity and distance that Chrysostom created with his audience.

Selecting and Modifying Exegetical Traditions for 'Symphonia'

Chrysostom consistently drew upon traditions which create concord between biblical texts, yet this is accomplished most often as a pedagogical method and seldom as a stated *skopos*. While earlier apologists developed the concept of the 'symphonia' between Christian and classical Greek culture, biblical commentators championed this notion as an internal literary phenomenon, witnessing to the stability of history presided by divine providence. As a strategy for creating overlapping cognitive 'text-worlds', it served Chrysostom's purposes. Explicit mention of the *symphonia* of Scripture, such as between Old and New Testaments or across the Old Testament itself, occurs only a few times in the *Homilies on Genesis*. Yet Chrysostom's intertextual method effectively reaches toward this ideal consistently throughout. It can work to clarify linguistic questions, such as when he juxtaposes the expression 'opening of the eyes' found across different parts of Genesis. Both occurrences of this expression, Chrysostom shows, signify the act of understanding. It was found that some of these word-use juxtapositions derived from his exegetical training. For instance, like other Antiochenes, Chrysostom cites two Genesis texts in parallel to explain the meaning of the stars being 'placed' in the sky, and these Antiochenes demonstrate remarkable consistency in clarifying what this verb 'placed' should *not* mean. Examples like the latter abound and prove the sharing of a common exegetical resource by which Theodore, Diodore, Eusebius of Emesa, and Chrysostom could give the exact same gloss on this 'placed' verb, the same parallel text, and the same explanation.

But for Chrysostom, more often, the concern for *symphonia* frames the question itself, as when he asks why Scripture 'contradicts itself' at certain points. The points he brings up under this heading are developed extensively in other writings such as Eusebius of Emesa's *Commentary on Genesis* and Origen's homilies. Often the same explanations are witnessed, such as Origen's and Chrysostom's

referring to the providence over the human race in face of the problem of God resting in Gen 2,4 versus Christ saying that the Father is 'still working' in John 5,17. Chrysostom reports this as a *zētēma*, gesturing towards the shared scholastic culture of patristic biblical exegetes. Our case-study of *Homily 37 on Genesis* brings the concern for *symphonia* (one of the few places in the *Homilies on Genesis* where the term appears) to the fore in a systematic way throughout the discourse. Multiple exegetical questions address Scriptural internal contradiction, but he goes a step beyond this and synchronizes traditions of biblical study with other text-worlds, such as the juxtaposition of biblical literature as 'deep' versus pagan literature as shallow and 'broad' (the two are contradictory, then); alternatively, the providence of the creator (appeal to which solves the potential textual contradictions) is 'contrary' to human understanding, extending his promise even through the family of a refugee. Exegetical traditions thereby undergirded his construction of a hierarchy in which the audience was expected to make value judgements, such as between pagan and Christian literature, or the practice of almsgiving versus public displays of wealth.

Considering whether Chrysostom used *testimonia* traditions extends our understanding of the pedagogical concern for *symphonia* and returns to the question of his evaluative process to legitimate non-literal readings. With Ephrem the Syrian (and to the best of our knowledge, no other available patristic work), Chrysostom shared the textual construction that made Sodom and Gomorrah into a case where the divine acts in accordance with what we know is just: he investigated the situation before announcing a verdict. The precise application of the same four biblical texts to the same pericope and the judiciary *skopos* speak towards a more experiential aspect of *symphonia*, that between bible and life. Similarly, a common citation framework of texts from Deuteronomy, Ezekiel, and Jeremiah, witnessed across several different early Christian authors and literary genres, upholds the notion that the bible does not teach that children suffer for the sake of their parent's sins. But Chrysostom appears unique in applying this framework to harmonize with the problem of Canaan's curse. Again, the presentation of a value judgement on his father Cham as incontinent is the result. Chrysostom presents multiple 'spaces' in which the texts and their question resonate with various other moral and literary quandaries, such as the superfluous addition of names and the publication of a patriarch's mistake. Textual knowledge, aided by exegetical tradition, opens onto different levels of the same question of moral autonomy.

His innovation from within this web lies in the way he applied text-referent traditions to new problems and biblical texts. Since we were able to view the use of this *testimonium* tradition regarding generational sin in its context, Chrysostom's innovative take was only one among several other exegetical traditions at work in the same homily. He connects this tradition, for instance, with the typology of the sons of Noah and his use of Origen's *Scholia* for explaining some details regarding the wine and enumeration of family members. Concordance, then, functioned to instate Chrysostom's intended ethical teaching and confirm his non-literal interpretations with the creation of parallel images.

In this vein, he changed an obscurity about the bowing of Joseph's parents known by Diodore and Eusebius ('To whom?', they asked) to a potential contradiction regarding the efficacy of Joseph's dream—Chrysostom raised the possibility that this was unfulfilled prophecy. Precisely this notion of anticipatory speech, then, recurs throughout the homily, showing how the 'faith' spoken of in Hebrews 11 is exemplified by the bowing of Jacob's parents. It also sets up the exposition of the Blessing of Jacob (Gen 49) for which Chrysostom used a non-Antiochene source, Eusebius of Caesarea, to create a systematic typology. This rather dense tissue of traditions shows us that Chrysostom could revise Antiochene traditions as suited his aims, and that the result enabled him to create coherence with his ensuing exploration of non-literal exegesis. Typology is often reinforced by concordance within the biblical text. So, Eusebius of Caesarea's typology of Gen 49 finds warrant for Chrysostom because 'the vine' in 49,11 may accord with John 15,1 where Christ self-identifies as

'the vine'. But other aspects of this non-literal reading, such as the 'white teeth', are not argued intertextually; they are supplied by Eusebius. In such moments, it is the tradition that determines Chrysostom's exegetical choices. So too Chrysostom adapts an allegory of 'light' developed in Didymus and Origen, which they supported with concordance between Gen 1,3, John 1,9, and Rom 13,13, the last clearly conveying the ethical import because Paul recommends his readers to walk as 'children of the light'. Whereas they viewed the 'darkness' of creation as the 'devil' or 'ignorance', Chrysostom used the same three text referents to say that this darkness is 'error', specifically the error of holding that the creation comes from pre-existent matter. He thereby used an Alexandrian allegorical tradition, based in concordance, to advance his own teaching. Diodore explicitly denounced this idea as 'allegory', just as he had the Eusebian typology of Gen 49.

Creating Non-literal Readings from Traditions of Name-and Word-Depth Study

In his typologies and onomastic interpretations, John Chrysostom departs from his Antiochene *milieu*. Thus, to accurately describe Chrysostom's experience of interpretation, we must account for three things. First, the fact that the name is the gateway. Second, that this knowledge is provided and warranted through tradition. Third, that Chrysostom strove to connect these meanings with other exegetical maneuvers in the context of the discourse by creating a fluid but hierarchical evaluative framework.

If Origen's method for evaluating the appropriateness of a non-literal reading included the identification of philological parallels, John Chrysostom may be said to share this methodology insofar as he was guided by previous traditions. Chrysostom discerned which ideas and words from previous traditions could be used to unite or corroborate the *skopos* of a discourse. 'A single idea', writes Rousseau about Chrysostom, 'dominates an extended address; an address nevertheless held carefully together by constant repetitions and cross-references'. What is remarkable about this pattern in Chrysostom's *Homilies on Genesis* is that traditions of text-referent are themselves the basis for the provision of parallels that construct non-literal meanings.

We see this especially with his use of onomastic traditions. The text-referent of Noah as 'rest' (not 'righteous') provides Chrysostom with a key word absent from the Genesis text but that can be searched out elsewhere in Scripture, leading to his identification of 'rest' in a rare variant of Job 3,23, where 'death is rest for a man'. With Didymus Chrysostom allegorizes this death to be the curse of Adam (warranted by the text: 'You shall surely die', warns God) which is labor and toil. The precision of these agreements demands a shared resource between the two authors. The same justification based on name-interpretation is found in his elaborate use of Eusebius of Ceasarea's *Question to Stephen* 7 to explain the birth of Thamar's twins in Gen 37 as a detailed typology of the historical drama of the Church—God's true people—ceding first order to the Jews. Divine favor, in fact, rested on them first but only for a 'little while'. Each interpretative move is based on *historia* of the text, such as the 'little bit' by which Zara's hand rises out of the birth canal first, only to be put back. But the initial impetus for committing to the typological reading comes from Eusebius—the onomastic tradition is not known before him, and the numerous linguistic parallels between he and Chrysostom are telling. It is Eusebius who provides Zara as meaning 'rising', and this messianic image is enough for Chrysostom to elaborate the entire interpretation in detail.

Name interpretation was not an occasional practice of adornment but could substantiate the *skopos* throughout an entire homily. Taking up the meaning of 'Nod' as 'tossing', Cain's vagabond condition, Chrysostom highlights in *Homily 19 on Genesis* the meaning of other names and their importance. It leads to a reconsideration of the purpose of naming at the fundamental cultural level. Using the framework of natural law, exegetical traditions that reveal the depth of names show that the practice of naming children belongs to an even deeper moral and historical importance. What his

audience considers as an honour-practice can be cast as an opportunity to express the same gratitude as Seth, whose name is a 'memory' of Adam and Abel, and whose son Enosh's name 'invokes' the Lord; similarly, 'Enoch' is 'murkily' 'about' the resurrection. Naid, in this sequence, is negatively interpreted to show the effects of a lineage gone awry. Thus, the exegetical traditions which supply the name-referent couples inspire a hierarchical-evaluative framework.

Antiochene Debates about Non-literal Interpretations

At several points, John Chrysostom adopted interpretations which Diodore explicitly deemed 'allegorical', and conversely, Chrysostom rejected interpretations as 'too philosophical' that were Diodore's opinions. This calls for a revision of our understanding of Chrysostom as Diodore's pupil. Based on this research, Chrysostom should be considered as an eclectic exegete, well-trained in Antiochene works, but who made consistent effort to incorporate a broad range of resources witnessed by Syrian and Alexandrian authors.

Chapter 5 substantiated that to a considerable extent, Chrysostom was aware of questions-and-answers in the *Commentary on Genesis* by Eusebius of Emesa, and at many points, based on the surviving material, Diodore and Chrysostom go different directions from this common source. At the same time, however, a considerable collection of other cases exhibits total independence from and contradiction to Diodore and Eusebius. The most interesting point for our considerations emerges from the comparison of Diodore, Eusebius of Emesa, Eusebius of Caesarea, and Diodore on Gen 49. There, it is clear that the Emesene and Diodore know the Caesarean's readings but reject most of them, restricting Christological referents to only two verses. Chrysostom was, with the support of a known resource, willing to say more, that the whole pericope was spoken 'about Christ'.

This expression 'about' (περὶ) acquires a technical meaning for Greek exegetes, as they identified problematic readings by denying that they could be 'about' a subject absent from the text, such as Theodore denying that Micah 5 was 'about' Christ and Chrysostom affirming that it was, in fact, 'about' him. It was a debate about which points in the text could be validated as either the change of a *skopos* or the addition of a *skopos* in a layered reading. Chrysostom's distinction from his contemporary Antiochene authors is his willingness, in practice, to determine ecclesiological, moral, and Christological referents over an extended pericope. His non-literal readings follow directly upon texts that receive literal readings, making it seem difficult to determine the reason behind his change of the *skopos*. Chrysostom included non-literal readings at the points where he clearly has the resources to make these distinctions. Such resources provided intra-biblical connections and ethical and theological themes to incorporate into his discourse. For instance, Jacob's deathbed bowing as prophecy is related to Gen 49 as anticipatory speech, and these in turn reflect back upon Jacob's actual death scene in which his son weeps in anticipation of Christ overcoming death—of which 'we' know the benefit. This returns us to the integrality of rhetoric and exegesis. Chrysostom's non-literal readings are always adduced for their value as text-images in his task of leading souls according to what he viewed as the teachings of the Church.

Chrysostom regularly presented exegetical traditions to his audience because he believed in the reciprocal relation of knowledge and ethics. The knowledge that certain figures, characters, images of the Old Testament could be viewed in a figurative, salvation-historical dimension supported his paraenetical elements by which he sought to instill his understanding of Christian identity. By presenting his teachings as a search for treasure, he urges the reader to consider the Divine authorship of history, which is reflected and made accessible to the reader by the language of the bible, and tiny words like names and places especially could lead one to perceive this providence. By invoking the precision and economic effectiveness of previously developed ideas, Chrysostom creates a dialogical space for the reader to consider the physical objects around him as spiritual

because even their names may be invested with typological significance. For Chrysostom, this connection is intelligible because it is manifest in the bible itself, especially through the prominence in the Old Testament of etiological narrative. He presupposes a continuity of the physical universe, that seen both in text and in world, as the arena in which the Creator was incarnated for the sake of showing a higher—or deeper—ethical plane on which to act. From here he can place the reader's spiritual path into evaluative relationship with that of the biblical heroes and create qualitative hierarchies spanning between both worlds. His experience as an interpreter is dictated by this need. To view Chrysostom's art in its full dimensions, his dialogical revision of previous exegetical models provides a perspective on his concerted effort to bring the developed resources of biblical science of his epoch to bear for his audience's benefit. <>

Converting the Imagination: Teaching to Recover Jesus' Vision for Fullness of Life by Patrick R. Manning [Horizons in Religious Education, Pickwick Publications, 9781725260535]

For two thousand years countless people around the world viewed reality through a Christian lens that endowed their lives with meaning, purpose, and coherence. Today, in an era of unprecedented secularization, many have ceased to find meaning not only in Christianity but in life in general.
In *Converting the Imagination*, Patrick Manning offers a probing analysis of this crisis of meaning, marshalling historical and psychological research to shed light on the connections among the disintegration of the Christian worldview, religious disaffiliation, and a growing mental health epidemic. As a response Manning presents an approach to religious education that is at once traditionally grounded in the model of Jesus' own teaching and augmented by modern educational research and cognitive science. **Converting the Imagination** is an invitation to transform the way we teach about faith and make sense of the world, an invitation that echoes Jesus' invitation to a fuller, more meaningful life. It is sure to captivate scholars and practitioners of religious education, ministers seeking to reengage people who have drifted away from the faith or to support young people suffering from existential anxiety, and anyone in search of deeper meaning in their religious traditions or in their own lives.

Review

"When Jesus began a parable--as he so often did--with 'the reign of God is like . . .' he was surely engaging people's imaginations, inviting them to begin with their own reality and to imagine from there their way forward into the reign of God. This is the pedagogy that Pat Manning favors in Converting the Imagination. In our era, when people find 'reasoning' less persuasive, engaging their imaginations is a crucial strategy for educating-in-faith. Manning does this very well!" --Thomas Groome, Professor of Theology and Religious Education, Boston College

"In this thought-provoking book--a must-read for all who are interested in the intersection of faith, pastoral practice, and contemporary culture--Dr. Manning shows how present-day Christian religious educators can tap the imagination to foster conversation and ongoing personal and social transformation. In the process, he discusses how we can develop a sustaining religious vision for our lives as we navigate the turbulent waters of pluralistic, postmodern culture." --Harold D. Horell, Professor of Religious Education, Fordham University

"Patrick Manning has synthesized a practical three-part educational approach to the Infinite. Inviting educators to trust the power of [religious] symbols, he shows them how to reenchant the imaginations of learners. While he takes into account relevant writings in philosophy, theology,

Scripture, transformative learning, developmental psychology, religious education, and imagination, Manning's ground is always his students--real people struggling to navigate meaning in a postmodern world. While intended for religious educators, this book will also serve arts and literature teachers." --Eileen Daily, Lecturer, Director of Doctor of Ministry Program, Boston University

A Fading Vision

"I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly" (John 10:10, NRSV). Jesus' promise clearly enticed people in his day, so much so that some of them dropped whatever they were doing to "come and see" what this abundance of life might entail (John 1:39, NRSV). Does Jesus' vision of the fullness of life exert the same attractive power today?

It did for me. In fact, I remember a very particular moment in my life when this vision snapped into focus. It came one evening toward the end of my final year at college when I was gathered in the chapel of my dormitory with fellow residents and friends to celebrate the weekly 10 PM. Sunday Mass. Every chair was filled, and people sat along the back wall and on the floor around the altar. The presider, the rector of our residence hall, was concluding the Eucharistic prayer, his words heavy with meaning. He looked around the chapel, catching the eyes of those gathered, with a solemn expression that said we are doing something important here, something in which we are fortunate to participate. His words gave way to the reverberating sound of the piano, guitar, and dozens of voices filling the room with a resounding hymn. My heart, too, felt full as I stepped forward to distribute Communion to my friends. Some weeks before I had been accepted into a service-through-teaching program that would take me to a Catholic high school in Tennessee for the next two years. As I pressed the Body of Christ into the outstretched palms of my friends, I thought to myself, "This is what teaching is: bringing Christ and the fullness of life he offers to others. This is what my life will be about."

In many ways, this moment encapsulated the life of abundance that I had been gradually living into for much of my life up to that point and in a particularly intense way for the previous four years. During that time, I had lived, studied, and worshipped within a university community that expressed the fecundity of the Christian imagination in its architecture, its scholarship, and, most importantly, in the interactions among its members. I had studied the Great Books and the Christian theological tradition and found better answers to my questions than I had hitherto discovered. More importantly, I learned to ask better questions than I had previously formulated. Of greatest consequence was befriending people who were truly alive, who celebrated the joys of life—food, music, conversation—with the relish of a child sinking her toes into the grainy warmth of a sandy beach. These were people whose eyes shone brightly when they interrogated life's big questions and shared their dreams of how they might give their gift to the world.

Knowing such people helped me to see and feel the meaningfulness of the Christian conviction that we are all children of God. Overwhelmed with gratitude for the abundance of blessings in my life, I increasingly came to see life as a gift and the world as originating from love and returning to love. This world made sense to me, and I was confident of my role in it. My life was not perfect, but it was good and it was full. Jesus' promise seemed true.

Soon thereafter I graduated. In the years that followed, my vision of life was tested by adversity, heartbreak, and loss. I moved from my Midwestern, Catholic university community, where I felt very much at home, to a new school community in Memphis, Tennessee, constituted by predominantly Baptist, African-American colleagues, and students whose culture was very different from that which I had known. I shared in the grief of students who had witnessed the violent murder of family members. Around the same time, relationships that had been central in my life were breaking down. All of this complicated my vision of the life of abundance to which Jesus calls us, but it did not destroy it. Only years later, as I reflected back on this period of my life with the benefit of insights from research and study, could I appreciate why that vision held and why that of others faced with similar challenges did not.

These days I occupy the other side of the classroom as a college professor. True to my original vision, I teach and write with the aim of inviting others into the fullness of life that I have discovered in following after Jesus. This is the aim that motivated me to write this book. In recent years, this goal has come to look increasingly ambitious, for I have found that the experience of most of my students is very different from my own. One class I teach for first-year students, a required core course centered around the big questions and classic texts of the Catholic intellectual tradition, has been particularly revealing in this regard. At this stage in their lives, these students are full of excitement and nervousness about college, new relationships, and their future. With the world opening up before them, they are growing in awareness of the perennial challenges of being human and the pressing issues of our day. They are beginning to sort out where they fit in the world and to assert themselves as agents of social change. It is exhilarating to witness the reaction when the students' raw energy comes into contact with the great questions and texts of the Christian tradition.

These students are different from recent generations of students in several ways. For one thing, they tend to be more respectful of a diversity of perspectives and slower to judge or criticize beliefs that differ from their own. At the same time, they are less willing to accept tradition and authority for its own sake. That past generations believed something to be important or that church officials proclaim a doctrine to be true is for them not sufficient reason to accept it for themselves. They seek verification in their own lives and the lives of their contemporaries. Like every generation, they seek meaning and fullness for their lives. However, I find that their search for meaning has a different flavor. There seems to be a greater sense of urgency—even desperation—perhaps because they are less inclined to take for granted the traditions and beliefs of their forbearers and so have little foundation upon which to build. Often their search for meaning embarks not from the safe harbor of family religion but rather far out in the open waters of pluralistic, postmodern culture with the shore nowhere in sight. Even those who have grown up within a well-established religious tradition are less confident that it can provide real meaning for their lives. When these students arrive in the classroom, they bring these gifts, limitations, aspirations, and anxieties with them. Of course, there is the usual anxiousness that comes with being a young adult—anxiousness about making friends, earning good grades, getting a job—but what I have seen in my students in recent years goes beyond these perennial stressors.

Take David for example. When I met David, he had recently arrived on campus and was eager to begin the new adventure of college. He dived right in, meeting lots of people, joining clubs and

sports teams, and taking full advantage of the weekend (and sometimes weekday) party scene. David is handsome, funny, and likeable. He comes from a family of considerable means and Catholic devotion. His father's success in the business world has radiated to David in the form of professional contacts, internships, and other forms of social capital. Suffice it to say that David's prospects for the future were bright.

Given all that I knew about David, it took me by surprise when late in the year he confided in me that he had been struggling with depression for several months. After a fast start to the academic year, he had settled into an unshakable malaise. His world had faded to grey. He lacked energy for things that had once been passions and experienced no joy or excitement in what should have been one of the most exciting periods of his life. He isolated himself from friends and neglected assignments. A broken relationship seems to have been the initial trigger, but there was more to it than that, he said. Despite his Catholic upbringing and enviable career prospects, he lacked a sense of purpose in his life. He just didn't see any point, any meaning to it all.

David's story is not unusual these days. My students frequently make comments to the effect that they feel anxious "like literally every single day," that "there is nothing to see . . . nothing to feel," that they "view the world as a threat" and "feel lost in the shuffle." From 2008 to 2017 there was a 71 percent increase in young adults experiencing serious psychological distress. One in four young adults in this country has a diagnosable mental illness.2 Generally speaking, college students are reporting the lowest levels of mental health in at least a quarter century. Many readers of this book could undoubtedly name students or acquaintances of their own who struggle with mental health issues. The world of higher education is now coming to the realization that we have a full-blown mental health crisis on our hands. What we have been slower to grasp—and this is a central claim of this book—is the fact that this mental health crisis is only one facet of a much larger crisis of meaning affecting much of the Western world.

As a teacher, it pains me to hear a student say that he cannot find meaning in his life or that he is so ridden with anxiety that he cannot function normally. As a Christian educator, a situation like David's troubles me on another level because his Catholic faith appears not to be helping him. He could not be further away from the fullness of life Jesus promised, a life supposedly marked by wholeness, joy, meaning, and purpose. Of course, being a Christian does not preclude suffering. Conditions like clinical depression often have a genetic basis that no amount of religion can fix. Besides, Jesus virtually guaranteed that suffering awaits those who follow him. Nonetheless, Christian faith is supposed to be a source of hope in moments of difficulty, a life raft for life's shipwrecks. Like many of his contemporaries, David found none of the above in the faith he inherited from his parents. The homilies he had heard on a weekly basis in church and the religious teachings he had learned over years of Catholic education seemed insubstantial to the point of irrelevance in the face of his very concrete, very real existential struggles. Listening as he poured out his bleeding heart, I could not help but feel that we as a church had failed this young man. It is my hope that this book will facilitate a conversation among Christian educators about how we can do better.

THE DEEP ROOTS OF DISAFFILIATION AND MENTAL DECLINE

David's situation is in a way paradigmatic of an ever-growing group of contemporary Christians. I speak of them as a group in a loose sense, for on the surface they may look very different from one another. They are not only college-aged people like David but also adolescents and mature adults. Some may attend worship services every week, others a couple of times a year, others never. Some may have even abandoned their church for a new denomination, a new set of spiritual practices, or nothing at all. What they all have in common is a Christian heritage that has lost its vital meaning for their lives. When they were searching for meaning in the midst of a breakup, the death of a loved one, or simply the day-to-day, they found nothing in their Christian faith to help them.

Of this group it is those who no longer identify with any religion—the so-called "nones"—who garner the most attention. This attention is due in part to their rapidly growing numbers. As of 2019, 26 percent of the adult US population identified as religiously unaffiliated, up 9 percent since only ten years before. For millennials, the figure is more than 40 percent. The Catholic Church has been particularly hard hit by disaffiliation with nearly 13 percent of all Americans now describing themselves as "former Catholics." There exists a great diversity of beliefs and practices among the nones, a fact that journalists and authors sometimes overlook in their reports. For example, a significant number of people who select "none" on surveys attend worship services, and far more consider religion important to their lives. Although they no longer desire to bind themselves to the religious institutions of their ancestors, many persist in a spiritual quest for meaning, value, and transcendence.

Despite outward appearances, many people who retain their traditional religious affiliation are not so different from those who abandoned theirs. There are many who continue to call themselves "Christian" in whose lives religion and spirituality factor much less than in those of some nones. This seems to be the case for a growing number of Catholics, who have in many ways absorbed a secular outlook and who in the past half century have grown virtually indistinguishable from non-Christians in their moral views. For them, the vestiges of Christianity may remain, but their faith plays little role in shaping their decisions and actions and they maintain little in the way of a personal relationship with God. As Ronald Rolheiser puts it, they profess belief in God, but "rarely is there a vital sense of God within the bread and butter of life." Many of the disaffiliated experience the same hangover or nostalgia for religion. They may even be more proactive than their "religious" counterparts in seeking the transcendent, although they may seek it in nature or meditation or CrossFit rather than in an institutional religion.

This phenomenon is not unique to Catholicism. Recent surveys show a huge drop in the number of Mainline Protestants who feel certain of God's existence. We see similar trends in other religious groups. One-in-five Jews now describe themselves as having no religion, with millennial Jews being far more likely to identify in this way. The number of American Hindus who consider religion very important to them has been cut almost in half in the past decade. While there are numerous examples of movements of young people recommitting to their faith as many of their peers are heading for the exits, the general direction of the trend is clear. The above statistics suggest that religious disaffiliation is a widespread phenomenon and that whatever is causing people to abandon their religion transcends the particularities of any one religious community.

Although the recent exodus from organized religion in the United States is certainly cause for concern, that is not the issue I want to address in this book; rather, it is only part of the issue. There seems to be a deeper problem affecting not only the "nones" but also many people who still identify as religious. On one level, these individuals indicate that they are not finding meaning in the faith of their forebears. They say things like "it didn't quite make much sense to me" and "I don't think that being Catholic or [any] other type of religion will change my life." But the issue appears to go even deeper than religion. Many contemporary persons are simply not finding meaning anywhere. In the words of one young person, they are "wounded by . . . existential anxiety" and "searching for the meaning of life." This lack of meaning and the existential distress it precipitates are the central issues I address in this book. My concern is not only for millennials or the religiously unaffiliated but rather for all those people who are presently failing to find meaning for their lives in their religious tradition, particularly the Christian tradition.

No issue is more fundamental for religious educators. Religious education as I understand it is not merely about teaching information on religion. Insofar as it touches the religious dimension of the human person, it involves exploring questions of meaning, relationship, and transcendence. Especially

when carried out as one of the constitutive elements within the life of a faith community, religious education contributes to the work of inviting the personal and communal transformation that leads to wholeness of life. I trust that any religious educators who conceive of their work in similar terms will likewise consider it of paramount concern that people are failing to find meaning in religion and life in general.

That a problem exists is widely acknowledged, but the source of the problem is not well understood. One well-worn explanation is that modernization and the increase of human knowledge dispel the shadows of ignorance and superstition in which religion thrives, making its eventual disappearance inevitable. Scholars have now generally rejected this linear account of secularization, as the relationship between modernization and religion has proven quite complicated. Charles Taylor is one prominent scholar to have criticized this account, what he calls the "subtraction story" of secularization. Underpinning Taylor's critique is the psychological insight that people's deeply embedded worldviews are highly resistant to revision based on new information and rational argumentation alone. Radical change in the way people make sense of reality does not occur primarily on the intellectual level but rather at the level of the preconscious operations of the imagination.

For communities and the individuals who live within those communities, it is images, stories, rituals, and practices rather than theory that most powerfully shape their intuitive understanding or sense of the way the world is. Taylor describes this way in which a community collectively and pre-theoretically imagines the world as a "cosmic imaginary." For centuries, even those who were only marginally Christian viewed reality through the lens of a Christian imaginary. The accepted view was that the world they lived in had been created by God, that their successes and sufferings in life were influenced by spiritual forces, both good and evil, and that their eternal fate depended on living a good moral life. Because everyone took God's existence for granted, to think of a world devoid of God was literally unimaginable.

However, over the course of the past 500 years, religious, social, moral, and scientific developments contributed to the erosion of the Christian imaginary and the emergence of a myriad of visions of human flourishing, none of which have been able to provide the stable meaning previously afforded by the old Christian imaginary. Christians no longer live in a Christian world inhabited entirely by other Christians. Today they live in a world where the Big Bang rivals (in the minds of some) divine creation as an explanation for the genesis of the universe. Their neighbors are not all Christians like themselves but also Muslims and ethical culturists and atheists. Living in a cultural milieu marked by such a diversity of beliefs, it is much more difficult for anyone to take a particular view of reality (whether theistic, atheistic, or other) as a given. Increasingly, modern persons are forced to sort through the constellations of competing accounts of reality and cobble together for themselves a worldview that gives meaning and coherence to their lived experience.

Taylor's analysis suggests that, if so many people today are failing to cope mentally with life's challenges, that this is not only because the world has grown more fast-paced and complicated. Equally important is the fact that many contemporary persons lack a mental framework for making sense of it all. When people lack the means of making meaning of life events, they are less able to handle the ordinary and extraordinary stressors of modern life (final exams, breakups, layoffs, economic recessions) and so succumb to mental illness. Imperfect though it may have been, the Christian imaginary provided such a framework for previous generations, but members of this generation are increasingly abandoning that framework on account of its perceived lack of relevance or meaningfulness and failing to find an adequate alternative.

In Search of a Response

Taylor's analysis, corroborated by current research on how human beings make meaning and by what I see routinely in Catholic schools and parishes, has convinced me that underlying increasing disaffiliation and mental health issues is a widespread crisis of meaning. Other scholars have previously diagnosed this problem. Although it is certainly worthwhile to deepen that analysis, my intent in this book is to make a contribution to the body of projects aimed at responding to the problem.

While I wholeheartedly affirm proposals for addressing these issues by a variety of means, I believe that religious educators qua teachers have a crucial role to play. More specifically, I believe religious educators can train learners in formal educational settings in ways that will assist them in making sense of their lives—including their faith lives—amidst the fragmenting forces of postmodern culture. If people are not finding meaning in the Christian tradition, it is not because there is no meaning to be found. The problem lies with the failure of Christian communities to adapt to new cultural challenges to faith.

The problem is at root a problem of meaning, and meaning is always fundamentally a matter of the imagination. Nostalgic appeals to the old Christian imaginary will not help such people insofar as that imaginary will never again enjoy the unquestioned acceptance it once did. Nevertheless, what teachers of the faith can do to help contemporary Christians is train them in the habits of imagining that are necessary for constructing a meaningful Christian worldview in a pluralistic and rapidly evolving culture.

For a number of years now I have striven to do just that by taking a more imagination-centered approach in my teaching. On the one hand, I have made an effort to help students tap into the Christian tradition as a source of deep meaning flowing from Jesus' life-giving vision for the world. On the other hand, rather than viewing students' critical questions and desire for deeper meaning as a threat, I have endeavored to invite and develop these capacities through their engagement with the Christian tradition in the confidence that doing so would better prepare them to live meaningful, faithful lives in postmodern society. As I have refined this approach and applied it with greater intentionality and consistency, I have noticed that my students are more attentive, interested, and engaged with the course than in previous years. I have had greater success tapping into their passion and creativity and have observed growth in their capacity for reflecting on their own meaning-making. As my students have imaginatively engaged the wisdom, symbols, and visions of Christianity (and other religious traditions), they have (re)discovered greater meaning for their lives and, in many cases, grown more hopeful and less anxious.

In the following pages, I lay out the specifics of the pedagogical approach that facilitated these transformations. Chapters 1 through 3 establish the groundwork for a pedagogy of transforming imaginations. I take as my point of departure in chapter 1 Jesus' timeless call to personal transformation (i.e., conversion). I argue that today, as in ages past, only by undergoing a radical transformation in our desiring, imagining, and living can human beings, who are divided within themselves by both external and internal forces, achieve wholeness.

In chapter 2, I draw upon contemporary research in cognitive science and cognitional theory to understand the unique challenges to faith and meaning-making confronting Christians today. Through this analysis, the picture comes into focus as to how new mental challenges in society, coupled with the erosion of traditional resources for making sense of life, have contributed to current trends toward religious disaffiliation and existential dis-integration. This research provides the basis for my hypothesis that reclaiming Christian faith as a way of life and an integrating meaning framework in the current context will require (among other things) at least a critical mass of Christians to grow into a "post-critical" form of religious consciousness, that is, a form of meaning-making that is self-

aware, self-authoring, self-transcending, and that unites the powers of imaginative thinking and critical reasoning. The term "post-critical consciousness" will likely strike the average reader as somewhat esoteric, but in essence it is merely a psychologically informed way of describing the most recent development in the ongoing evolution of human spirituality. Chapter 3 relates this new development in religious consciousness to earlier manifestations of Christian interiority and explains how development to this new form of interiority occurs.

Building upon these foundational chapters, in chapters 4 through 6 I present a three-phase pedagogical process that has enabled me to help learners take possession of their imagining and recover meaning and wholeness in their lives. In presenting this new process, I am consciously appropriating and extending the examples and work of Jesus and other educators and scholars. Notable among these are Mary Warnock, Kathleen Fischer, and Richard Côte, three prophets of the imagination whose seminal works have drawn attention to the vital place of the imagination in human living, education, and faith. In a sense, my own book is an effort to respond to their pleas for renewed attention to the imagination as have other religious educators like Maria Harris, Jerome Berryman, and Charles Foster. Where Harris's and Foster's books focus more on the imagination of the teacher or the educating community, my focus in this book is on the imaginations of learners and helping learners cultivate ways of imagining that are more adequate to our present context. (Barryman's book is distinct in its focus on play.) In the final chapter of this book, in addition to offering some clarifications concerning my pedagogical approach, I will point to still more efforts by other religious educators, leaders, and spiritual guides that I see as complementing my own project and forming the basis for a comprehensive response to the current crisis of meaning.

I have developed this pedagogical approach by teaching in Catholic schools and parishes in the United States and through reflection primarily upon my own Catholic Christian tradition. I can therefore testify to its appropriateness for Christian (particularly Catholic) religious education in the United States context. Nonetheless, the issues I confront here—religious disaffiliation, the struggle to make meaning, communal and personal fragmentation—affect people of other faith communities as well, both in the United States and elsewhere. Insofar as religious educators from other traditions and contexts recognize their own challenges in those I describe here, I trust they will find something of benefit in what follows.

Dire as the situation is for many, the present is a moment of opportunity as well. Coming to grips with the fact that many Davids in our society and our faith communities are failing to make sense of their lives may turn out to be the impetus we need to rethink the ways we worship, build community, and hand on the faith. It may prompt us to look for new resources and ways of envisioning and living into the reign of God. Indeed, it may be that God is showing us a new way forward precisely in the questions, criticisms, and seeking of our young people and those who express dissatisfaction with our religious traditions as they encounter them. This may very well be a once-in-an-era opportunity to revitalize our faith communities by rediscovering resources within our faith traditions and within each other for responding to our deepest questions, concerns, and hopes and for serving the needs of the world. <>

OBJECTIVE RELIGION: COMPETITION, TENSION, PERSEVERANCE edited by Byron R. Johnson, with a Foreword by Rodney Stark [Baylor University Press, 9781481313643]

Though many scholars and commentators have predicted the death of religion, the world is more religious today than ever before. And yet, despite the persistence of religion, it remains a woefully understudied phenomenon. With **OBJECTIVE RELIGION**, Baylor University Press and Baylor's Institute for Studies of Religion have combined forces to gather select articles from the *Interdisciplinary Journal of Research on Religion* that not only highlight the journal's wide-ranging and diverse scope, but also advance the field through a careful arrangement of topics with ongoing relevance, all treated with scientific objectivity and the respect warranted by matters of faith. This multivolume project seeks to advance our understanding of religion and spirituality in general as well as particular religious beliefs and practices. The volume thereby serves as a catalyst for future studies of religion from diverse disciplines and fields of inquiry including sociology, psychology, political science, demography, economics, philosophy, ethics, history, medicine, population health, epidemiology, and theology. The articles in this volume, *Competition, Tension, and Perseverance*, document the pervasiveness of religion and demonstrate the complex ways faith, spirituality, and religious matters are consequential for individuals as well as societies across the world. Together these essays demonstrate the resilience of religion.

Review

Byron Johnson has done more for the social scientific study of religion than anyone else. He has committed to an evidence-based approach to answer the big question of what accounts for the persistence, pervasiveness, and persuasiveness of religion around the world. In this top-shelf volume he has assembled a stellar lineup of specialists that offer sophisticated answers to this perennial question. This comprehensive contribution is absolutely mandatory reading for academic scholars, graduate students, the educated public, and anyone else who recognizes that in order to understand the world in which we live, we must understand religion. -- Robert Emmons, Professor of Psychology, University of California, Davis

This volume offers a carefully curated set of chapters on the economics and persistence of religion, as well as the tensions caused by religion, drawn from some of the best articles published in the *Interdisciplinary Journal of Research on Religion*. This is an essential resource on the myriad ways that faith, spirituality, and religion continue to matter to both individuals and societies. It is a wonderful resource for scholars in a wide variety of social science disciplines. -- Matthew T. Lee, Director of Empirical Research, Human Flourishing Program at Harvard University

Objective Religion is exceptional for presenting the social scientific facts about religion across the world. There is no anti-religion bias that interferes with objectivity, and none of the unfounded assertions that we see in academia these days that religion is on its last legs. This volume does a fabulous job of staying honest with the facts and interpreting them without the assumptions of neo-atheism or rampant secularism that are found in less scholarly works. Rodney Stark remains the premier sociologist of religion in the United States, and Byron Johnson deserves equal seating. Together at Baylor?s Institute for Studies of Religion, they have changed our thinking for the better. -- Stephen G. Post, Professor of Family, Population and Preventive Medicine, Stony Brook University

This is an intriguing set of papers from numerous scholars of religion with exceptional expertise, shedding light on the dynamics, practice, persistence, and societal effects of religion, both past and present. They together make a case for religion's enduring importance. -- Tyler J. VanderWeele, John L. Loeb and Frances Lehman Loeb Professor of Epidemiology, Harvard T. H. Chan School of Public Health and Director, Human Flourishing Program, Harvard University

Religion and Tension

A definition, tension is the state of being stretched. It can also refer to mental or emotional strain. It is not surprising, therefore, that many think of tension only in a negative way. The reality, however, is that tension can also be viewed as a positive factor that motivates people to do things that may prove to be beneficial for them as well as for others. That is to say, tension should not necessarily be viewed as something to be avoided or discouraged. Religion should be recognized as a powerful force that creates tension which can lead to important outcomes.

"How Religion Divides and Unites Us" is the subtitle of Robert Putnam and David Campbell's popular book American Grace (2010). In an obvious way the book's subtitle captures the essence of the tension that religion brings to bear on individuals and groups. The tension associated with

religion touches every aspect of religious life and one can argue it causes just as much tension for those who would call themselves non-religious. The tension caused by religion is much more complicated and consequential than simply how it divides or unites us. Glock and Stark's classic book Religion and Society in Tension (1965) explores a number of different ways that tension influences religion, religious behavior, religious practices, and religious movements. For example, how do we distinguish cults from sects? Why do churches and even entire denominations split? Moreover, why have some denominations decided to merge? Why do some congregations grow and thrive, while others shrink or die? Why do "strict" or theologically conservative churches seem to benefit from establishing many more rules and boundaries than their less strict counterparts? Why have more theologically liberal denominations consistently lost members over the last seven decades? A common denominator in all of these important questions is the degree to which there is the presence of tension.

Even the casual observer would likely acknowledge that religion is often controversial and contested in contemporary society. But history reminds us that religion has always caused tension. For example, Jesus often spoke in ways that sent a message of tension: "I did not come to bring peace, but a sword" (Matthew 10:34). Many scholars have suggested Jesus was communicating that his message would ultimately cause division and conflict. Some would accept his message and others would reject it, but there is little doubt his message would create tension for all hearing it. In fact, the dramatic rise of Christianity itself would be yet another example of how Christianity's message would create tension by challenging conventional wisdom on how to think and act on matters such as marriage, family, morality, providing for widows and orphans, service to others, and taking care of underserved populations (Stark 1997).

The chapters in part 2 take a look at how tension can influence retention strategies among American Jews, help us to better understand atheists, provide insight into how issues like abortion affect Mainline Protestants, and how people view atheists or cultists differently. Religion and tension are inextricably linked, and understanding these linkages can help us to more fully appreciate the ways in which religion and tension do or do not influence individuals as well as society.

The Persistence of Religion

he secularization thesis states that the world is becoming more secular with each passing day. Moreover, the thesis posits that the continued rise in secularism will also be accompanied with the falling off of religion (Berger 1967). The central hypothesis of the secularization thesis is that modern science will always undermine religious belief and, ultimately, religion will continue to shrink. Indeed, scholars have long predicted the death of God and the demise of religion. In the nineteenth century, Nietzsche famously announced that God was dead. In the twentieth century, increasing reliance on science and technology led to a widespread rejection of religious belief on the grounds of its irrationality.

In contemporary society few reasonable people would deny that we live in a secular age, but at the same time, few would deny that theories of famous scientists like Newton, Darwin, and Einstein tell us nothing about what lies beyond the natural world. For all the predictions of the rise in secularism, science has not been able to provide adequate answers to questions of ultimate meaning that continue to be posed by so many.

In his important book ^ Secular Age (2007), Charles Taylor begins with this fascinating question: "Why was it virtually impossible not to believe in God in, say, 1500 in our Western society, while in 2000 many of us find this not only easy, but even inescapable?" Taylor is correct to point out the existence of this seismic shift. But as Taylor also recognizes, the story is far more complicated than this shift would seem to imply. For example, in one of its most famous and controversial publications, Time magazine featured the provocative question, "Is God Dead?" on the April 8, 1966

cover. Nevertheless, the ascension of secularism has never been able to remotely suggest that religion has been replaced in the United States, or any other country in the world.

Religion has not died. In fact, the opposite has occurred: it has persisted and proliferated. Despite the relentless pursuit of scientific advancement, in the twenty-first century we now see religious influence everywhere. The Gallup World Poll confirms that more than 90 percent of people in every country in the world believe in God. In fact, the data suggest that the world is more religious now than it has ever been (Stark 2015). There continues to be an appeal of spirituality to people eager to explore fundamental questions of meaning. For all its benefits, science is at a distinct disadvantage when it comes to answering the most important questions of ultimate meaning.

The most secular countries in the world that have seen declines in traditional religions have also witnessed increases in other forms of spiritual belief For example, the more secularized countries also see the proliferation of superstitions, belief in aliens, and the growth of the occult as well as other forms of nontraditional spirituality (Stark 2015). As Andrew Greeley once noted, "secularization is the religious faith of the secularized" (Greeley 1995).

In the chapters to follow, the persistence of religion is captured studies that focus on religious congregations, estimating the number Muslims in the world, the decline of secularization and religious revival in China, and the persistence of Ukrainian Baptists in the midst of persecution. <>

Why Translate Science? Documents from Antiquity to the 16th Century in the Historical West (Bactria to the Atlantic)

edited by Dimitri Gutas [Series: Handbook of Oriental Studies. Section 1 The Near and Middle East, Brill, 9789004472631]

From antiquity to the 16th century, translation united culturally the peoples in the historical West (from Bactria to the shores of the Atlantic) and fueled the production and circulation of knowledge. The Hellenic scientific and philosophical curriculum was translated from and into, to mention the most prevalent languages, Greek, Syriac, Middle Persian, Arabic, Hebrew, and Latin.

To fill a lack in existing scholarship, this volume collects the documents that present the insider evidence provided in contemporary accounts of the motivations and purposes of translation given in the personal statements by the agents in this process, the translators, scholars, and historians of each society. Presented in the original languages with an English translation and introductory essays, these documents offer material for the study of the historical contextualization of the translations, the social history of science and philosophy in their interplay with traditional beliefs, and the cultural policies and ideological underpinnings of these societies.

Contributors

Michael Angold, Pieter Beullens, Charles Burnett, David Cohen, Gad Freudenthal, Dag Nikolaus Hasse, Anthony Kaldellis, Daniel King, Felix Mundt, Ignacio Sánchez, Isabel Toral, Uwe Vagelpohl, and Mohsen Zakeri.

CONTENTS

Alexander reached Bactria, founding cities named after him along the way, and in subsequent centuries the Romans campaigned in and eventually annexed Iberia, Gaul, and Britain, thus generating a continuous geopolitical area from the west of India to the Atlantic, which constitutes the historical West. In the intellectual history of this vast area no single factor was more instrumental in culturally uniting it and fuelling the motor of civilization—the production and circulation of knowledge—than translation. Translation, of course, is present in multiform ways in all cultures,[1] and was arguably nowhere more integrally enmeshed into the fabric of society than it was already at the dawn of history in ancient Mesopotamia, the civilization antecedent to the one that is our concern; but in the case of the West it evinces a longevous identity of function, nature, and teleology that commands attention, explanation, and, well, admiration.

Throughout the historical period that ranges from Alexander the Great to the sixteenth century, the peoples in the West acquired through translation, studied, and developed the Hellenic scientific and philosophical curriculum of higher learning—in short, science, broadly defined. There were translations, to mention the most prevalent languages, from Greek into Latin, Syriac, Middle Persian, and Arabic; from Syriac into Arabic and from Arabic into Syriac; from Sanskrit into Middle Persian and from Middle Persian into Arabic; from Arabic into Latin, Hebrew, and Greek; from Hebrew into Latin, and from Latin into Hebrew and Greek. Because the scientific knowledge that was transmitted, apart from whatever practical benefits it afforded, was acknowledged by all, tacitly or not, to be a supreme good in itself, it was a source of power and dominance to its possessor. Translation as a social movement was accordingly highly political, and the transmission itself was a deliberate and on occasion aggressive act of acquisition, a conquest, its course related closely to military, political, and social developments throughout this long period of eighteen centuries. At the end of it, all the peoples in this vast area with their various languages attained, by means of translation policies pursued by their elites as a concomitant of self-assertion and political prominence, a similar state of scientific advancement and higher learning. The process was properly the conquest of knowledge.[3] If the religious dimension is also taken into account—the fact that the peoples in the West were all adherents of monotheistic religions in the Biblical tradition—the level of homogeneity that was reached among them, both in the concordance of scientific views and the dialectic between science and religion that affected the process, is remarkable, indeed historic.

In this process, the Graeco-Arabic translation movement of the early ʿAbbāsid period (eighth to tenth centuries) played a pivotal role and constituted the node where translations into Arabic converged and whence they later spread out; and by the same token it brings to light the identity of the historical enterprise and the interconnectedness and continuity of its progression in relay. Recent scholarship has been investigating from outside the historical causes of this and other translation movements from and into the languages mentioned above, but what has not been adequately taken into consideration is the insider evidence provided in contemporary accounts of the motivations and purposes of translation given in the personal statements by the agents in this process, the translators themselves, and the actual or reported eyewitness accounts of the scholars and historians of each society.

This volume aims to collect the documents that present this evidence and accordingly complements and breathes life into the narrative and descriptive accounts of translations in other studies, notably the massive work edited by Kittel and others referred to above. It is intended for all researchers who, in the quest for the historical contextualization of the translations—that is, their causes, function, and significance—wish to study not only the personal status of the translators and the scientists who used their work in their respective societies, but also more broadly the cultural policies of the states and the ruling elites in these societies: their ideological orientations and underpinnings, and their conception of science and its importance in the interplay with traditional beliefs as well as its interface with politics. In short, it is intended that this volume present the material for a social history of science. Its aim, as a handbook, is to make this material easily accessible to research, not to conduct the research itself.

The emphasis and the scope of the volume have been accordingly on the motivations for translating science into the languages participating in the relay of translations mentioned above and not on all translations or all languages. The reasons include, most obviously, the absence of such a dedicated focus and comprehensive reach in previous studies. But most significantly the challenge was to extract information that provides insights into the cultural core of a society that is not otherwise explicitly stated, or if it is, is stated for apologetic purposes that conceal the motivating factors beneath—which itself is revealing of them. Thus, at one extreme, among the documents collected for the most extensive translation movement in this history, the Graeco-Arabic one in Baghdad, we are at a loss to find clear and unequivocal statements about the motivations that led to it; while at the other, the Sasanian self-serving and apologetic justification for the Greek to Middle Persian translations, namely the repatriation of knowledge stolen from the ancient Iranians by Alexander the Great, invites further investigation into the motor ideologies in that society. Accordingly, the net has been thrown wide, and the authors of the chapters here have scoured their respective literatures for all documents that might provide some information, or shed some light, however indirectly, on the motivations for translating science. For the period with which we are concerned, science included what we call philosophy as well as ‘occult’ sciences, notably astrology, divination, and oneiromancy. The authors of these books may be authentic or pseudonymous, and even in one representative case, that of Ibn Waḥšiyya, non-existent, something that encapsulates the obverse of the theme of this book, the translation of authoritative scientific texts: authority vested in a scientific text because it is claimed to be a translation.

It should be noted, however, that the documents selected do not include those that refer to the techniques of translation in particular, although some such passages may have been inserted when deemed helpful for the main objective of motivations for scientific translations. Similarly, religious literature has been excluded, in that apart from the fact that the motivations for translation of religious texts are transparent enough, they refer to a different order of social reality, attitudes, and endeavour, though in this case too some documentation on religious translation has been included where it helps, by contrast or at times by extension, to illuminate scientific translations in a given

society. Within these parameters, though, coverage was extensive, if not total, left as it was to the discretion of each author.

The chapters are chronologically arranged in this relay of translations by the language into which the translations were made, ranging from classical Latin to Renaissance Latin. Each chapter is divided into three parts. The introductory essay in Part One provides information about the authors, history, and context of the selected documents, aiming to facilitate, but not offer, their study and analysis. The English translations of the documents that follow in Part Two are either written by the authors themselves, or taken from a satisfactory published version, as indicated. Part Three presents the documents in their original languages following standard editions, with occasional interventions by the author, if deemed necessary, who is responsible for the accuracy of the text in the printed volume. Bibliographical references to primary and secondary literature come at the end.

∴

The essays and documents collected in this volume were first presented and discussed at a conference held in Berlin in November of 2016 in association with the project on 'Aristotle's *Poetics* in the West (of India) from Antiquity to the Renaissance', funded by the Einstein Stiftung Berlin and housed in the Berlin Graduate School Muslim Cultures and Societies (BGSMCS) / Seminar für Semitistik und Arabistik at the Freie Universität, with Beatrice Gründler acting as the academic sponsor and mentor and myself as the Einstein Visiting Fellow. Funds were also kindly provided by the BGSMCS. I gratefully acknowledge this munificent support, especially as it afforded me the opportunity to conduct this research in the city and its institutions where our field has been graced with the contributions of so many scholars. And a big thank you goes to Beatrice Gründler, their current successor, who made it all possible, with knowledge, skill, grace, and joie de rechercher. <>

Illuminating the Secret Revelation of John by Shirley Paulson [Westar Studies, Cascade Books, 9781666730128]

Buried for more than a thousand years in the sands of Egypt, the Secret Revelation of John has stayed a secret far longer than it should have. Even now, more than seventy-five years after its discovery in 1945, it eludes easy understanding even as it shines with the message of God's loving presence amid suffering and violence. Illuminating the Secret Revelation of John is the first study written for the curious public, as well as for scholars who have not yet plumbed its depths. The ancient Secret Revelation of John unearths three gems of healing wisdom that have been encrusted in a millennium of doubt and theological limitation. This new work explores the many facets of these gems with a historical setting and background, a contemporary paraphrase, and a study section that invites pondering of and conversation about new questions to explore.

The Economics of Religion

The economics of religion is a relatively new subfield of inquiry, though the study of religion itself is ancient. Many other disciplines, notably philosophy, theology, history, anthropology, psychology, political science, and sociology have had much to say about religion, religious beliefs, and religious practices. Adam Smith first made reference to the church and competition between religions in An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations (1776) and in The Theory of Moral Sentiments (1759). Smith discussed three concepts which economists of religion still debate—the role of competition, religious institutions including service provision, and religious pluralism.

The value of religious pluralism, the relationship between pluralism and religious participation, and the role of the church and the state were debated between Adam Smith and David Hume and continue to be debated more than two hundred years later. Hume argued for the state sponsorship of one unique religion and how the relationship between religion and politics can lead to civil disorder. In contrast, Adam Smith argued that religious competition is ultimately good for the consumers of religion and for the nature of the religious product itself.

The work of Adam Smith brought to light a number of important and fundamental linkages between economic thinking and religious thinking that, regrettably, was overlooked for many decades. Quoting Gordon Allport, Charles Glock and Rodney Stark wrote that the "subject of religion seems to have gone into hiding" (Glock and Stark 1965, x). But this all began to change after World War II when religion and religious competition would finally begin to be explored within the social sciences. Sociologists were among the first to study modern religion and religious organizations by focusing on concepts such as competition (Stark and Glock 1968; Stark and Bainbridge 1986). Roger Finke and Rodney Stark would develop this line of thinking into an important thesis known as the "religious economies" argument (Finke and Stark 1992). Based on their analysis of religious markets in the United States, Finke and Stark were some of the earliest scholars to make significant contributions in this overlooked area. Their focus was on such things as the process by which sects became churches, the formation of cults, as well as splits and mergers within renewal movements in various denominations (Finke and Stark 1988; Stark and Finke 2000). Research in this vein would come to document that in the United States in the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century, modernization went hand in hand with religious mobilization (Warner 1993).

The five chapters in part 1 of this book tackle some of these same important concepts and issues both inside and outside the United States. Research on the economics of religion continues to provide empirical evidence that the United States remains quite distinct from religion in other parts of the world, and particularly the older paradigm of European secularization. For example, women continue to participate more in church-related activities than men; church attendance increases with age; and African Americans attend church more than whites. Many such important trends are examined in these chapters in light of the contemporary data now available from so many different countries. Contemporary studies continue to document the importance of religious belief and practice, as well as social networks within houses of worship in the United States (Putnam and Campbell 2010).

Existing research on the economics of religion is benefited by the availability of much better data than we have had on religion previously (Finke 2013). Empirical studies of religion tend to be measured either in terms of religious beliefs, such as prayer and other indicators of belief; or alternatively in terms of religious participation and attendance such as churchgoing, which are indicators of belonging or practice. These markers have expanded now to include data on religious regulations and persecution which incorporates international regulation and violence indices. A body of empirical evidence on the economics of religion has continued to grow since 2000. Indeed, there is evidence that the world is more religious than it has ever been (Stark 2015). The following chapters nicely capture in a contemporary way a number of these concepts, trends, and issues within this important and growing subfield on the economics of religion.

Review

"Paulson makes the Secret Revelation of John approachable for laypeople and scholarly sound for the academy. Her treatment of the text is brilliant. . . . Paulson brings the Secret Revelation of John back from its biblical exile at a time when it is very much needed and solidifies its importance to the redemption of Christian spirituality in the twenty-first century."" --Stephanie Duzant, Associate Minister, St. Matthew's Community African Methodist Episcopal Church of Hollis

"Paulson insists on an integrated approach which includes incisive historical investigation, important literary analysis, twenty-first-century meaning making, and contemporary questions. She paints with a clear and broad brush. . . . Those of us who have known the importance of the Secret Revelation of John for more than a generation now have an accessible and informed next step forward."" --Hal Taussig, Union Theological Seminary, retired

"Paulson provides an accessible introduction to the Secret Revelation of John. . . . Paulson unpacks its primary message and its spiritual insights in down-to-earth language. Most importantly, she addresses its relevance in the twenty-first century as she explores its multiple layers of meaning--including its subversive challenge to a Roman Empire that kept people in their place. . . . She helps us to grasp that SRJ reveals a liberation freely available to all."" --Deborah Saxon, author of The Care of the Self in Early Christian Texts

CONTENTS

I remember vividly the day the Secret Revelation of John nudged its way into my life. It happened in early 2003, while I was sitting in the office of my seminary advisor, George Kalantzis. He was an excellent listener, and after giving me the space to explain my thoughts about God, Christ, and the power of spiritual healing, he stepped away and pulled his copy of the Secret Revelation of John off the shelf. He asked if I'd ever read it. No, I had never heard of it.

"Good," he said, "read it before you read anybody else's commentary on it. Then, decide for yourself what it means." I read it several times, each time feeling like I was drawing closer to a remarkable treasure just beyond my grasp. But like almost everyone else who picks it up, I kept running into an impenetrable forest of strange words and ideas.

A powerful message of healing and hope shone through, and finally I knew it was time to listen to the voices of scholars who had studied it before me. Karen King announced in her 2006 monograph, The Secret Revelation of John, that "the importance of the Secret Revelation of John can hardly be overestimated." Fifteen years later, after reading the views of many scholars, and pursuing my own ideas about it, I'm more convinced than ever of its extraordinary value.

I wrote my doctoral thesis as a critical conversation on the healing theologies in Christian Science (my faith tradition) and the Secret Revelation of John. My supervisors, Karen Wenell and Stephen Pattison, challenged me to wrestle with both the text itself and my personal reaction to it. Themes of healing surfaced easily for me. But its jarring transport through time and space, the transformation of characters and their identities, the power of demons, and allusions to an ancient culture often threw me off course.

My family and nonscholarly (but very smart) friends became an important part of the publication of this book, because in my earliest attempts to show them the sparkling treasures within the Secret Revelation of John, their eyes would go dull, and I'd lose them! They, too, couldn't get past the impenetrable forest. But I knew they would love it, if only I could find a way to light a path for them. My husband, Richard, was my best critic and conversation partner during all the years it took for this book to take shape.

Hilary Barner is one of those friends who read my manuscript without any prior knowledge of the Secret Revelation of John and told me where the language slipped into confounding scholarese. I hope she and my friends have succeeded in helping this book find its way into the hands and hearts of people who will treasure it.

I also had the good fortune of enlisting the support, scholarly wisdom, and experience of scholars Hal Taussig, Deborah Niederer Saxon, Stephanie Duzant, and Celene Lillie, who already valued the Secret Revelation of John. They see this project as a foundational study for biblical, theological, and religious scholars and professors, and they have held me to the scholarly standards they and their colleagues should expect. I can't say enough about the contributions and insightful support I received from my Westar editor, Arthur Dewey. He read and critiqued each version of the manuscript, but more importantly, he was an inspired and crucial conversation partner who encouraged me to tackle some of the tougher topics I hadn't even considered.

In order to meet the needs of both the general public and curious scholars, some compromises were made that need explanation here. Scholars know that all of the codices from the Nag Hammadi collection were damaged when they were discovered, leaving significant lacunae in some parts of the texts. Usually, the missing letters and words are noted in brackets where translators have surmised the meaning. Due to this book's goal of focusing on the meaning of the text, all the distracting brackets and textual difficulties have been removed. However, since all translated portions are referenced by page or chapter and verse, scholars may confirm these details from the original translations listed in the Sources Cited.

Another clarification should be noted concerning the existence of a shorter and longer version of the Secret Revelation of John itself (more commonly known as the Apocryphon of John in academic circles). I presented the story line as if it were one, but in fact two of the extant versions are longer and include material that is not included in the two extant shorter versions. Although I generally use the longer version, I occasionally mix them—again, for the purpose of avoiding confusion for the first-time reader. Karen King has provided an excellent parallel reading of the longer and shorter versions in her book for a comparison between the two versions.

Finally, an important tool I have provided to help modern readers find meaning is my full paraphrase of the longer version, located at the back of the book. As with any paraphrase, it should not be read as a translation, because the paraphrase skips over details that are nearly meaningless in contemporary culture. If this paraphrase can help readers find their way into the heart of the text, a full translation from other sources will help them study the details more accurately.

***

Alexandria! Not Rome, Not Jerusalem

A strange and ancient book has been moving from the bookshelves of scholars and into the hands of curious and (often) Christian thinkers and spiritual seekers. Even though scholars have been able to read the Secret Revelation of John since it came to light in 1945, the odd images of the Yaldabaoth god, the Mother Barbelõ, and the unwise Wisdom have left most modern readers scratching their heads. The title is rather obscure, its logic appears to run in circles, and many people say it's one of

those "gnostic" heresies. Understandably, many churchgoers have found little incentive to pick it up. But since scholars have been chipping away at these outer obstacles and polishing the rough gems, they've come to realize this book is of great value, especially to those who love the Bible!

The purpose of this book is to pick up the polished gems and look at them carefully in the light of our modern experiences and historical perspectives. To do so, we'll drop in for a visit in the city where all the forces came together to give it birth in the second century. Religion teachers, philosophers, Christ-followers, Jews, and students flocked to this cultural center of the world. No, not Rome, and not Jerusalem. But they converged on Alexandria, the great city situated along the north coast of Egypt and founded by Alexander the Great centuries before Jesus was born. All the constituent parts of the Secret Revelation of John cohabitate in second-century Alexandria, as we'll see after we listen to a few of the people we encounter.

After getting acquainted with second-century Alexandrian life, we'll look at the way the Secret Revelation of John speaks to the heart of twenty-first-century readers as well. Then we'll start to explore the text itself. The bulk of the book is organized like a kind of literary museum, where we can pause to think about some of the most important contributions to our lives today. We won't be able to see all the possibilities, but there will be enough to whet our appetite for returning again and again.

Welcome to Second-Century Alexandria

We want to start our tour in second-century Alexandria, because the Secret Revelation of John was written for people who were looking for answers to life's tough questions of the time, a period of formidable upheaval. In the midst of political and social turbulence, people tend to seek a deeper understanding of their own identity, their communities, the divine Being, and the universe. This is the state of Alexandria we are about to encounter.

Alexandrians understood well the confluence of Roman, Greek, Egyptian, and Jewish customs. This city, known for its attraction to writers and thinkers, seems to have been the perfect spawning ground for the radically new, but Christ-based, ideas in the Secret Revelation of John.

If we could walk through the neatly laid out streets of this bustling port city in the second century, we might be startled to discover such a visible blending of the multicultured way of life. The great Library, the cultural center of the city, explains much of the draw for teachers and students throughout the Mediterranean area who are eager to learn philosophy, rhetoric, religion, science, or some other scholarly subject. The Library, a part of the vast Alexandrian Museum complex, holds the largest collection of papyrus scrolls in the world and functions like a modern interactive research center with a zoo, an observatory, and a medical laboratory. Greek philosophers belonging to all sorts of schools from Stoicism to Epicureanism have flocked to Alexandria and mingle readily with the Egyptian cosmologists and those who practice mystery religions. A large community of Jews have settled here too, since the destruction of their temple in 70 CE forced even more of them to flee Jerusalem, augmenting the numbers already in Alexandria.

But the very success of this great metropolis may have also become the source of its heartache. Rome, over a thousand miles away, has installed its military authority throughout the Mediterranean area, but it is especially tough with Alexandria. Compared with Alexandria's fertile ground for research, questioning, thinking, and writing, Rome and its preoccupation with conquest and gladiator entertainment presents a stark contrast. Here is an image of Roman attitudes toward success:

This Roman cameo, known as the Gemma Augustea, was carved in approximately 10–20 CE. It poignantly captures the contrast between the superior and dominant Romans (in the top half) and

the people they have subdued throughout the Roman Empire (in the bottom half). In the image, the beam lifted in the lower left was the type used in victory parades with one of the prominent captives bound to it for display in the parade.

However, all the measures of Alexandrian success continue to threaten the Roman imperialists, who retaliate with ever-tighter domination over this second-largest city in the world. We can't miss the heavy imprint of Rome's conquest in everyday life. Ever since the Romans gained control of Egypt, some thirty years before Jesus's birth, Alexandria's huge production of grain and its largest port in the world had together made it the breadbasket for Rome. A century later, when the Flavian dynasty (69–96) controlled Egypt, the emperor had become so dependent on the produce from its wealthiest city, Alexandria, that he took it for granted as his personal territory.

From beyond Rome in the West to Asia in the East, this Mediterranean jewel attracted attention. A thriving Jewish community had already settled in Alexandria long before, along with Greeks and other foreigners. No wonder multitudes of Jews found their way to this prospering city hundreds of miles away when Emperor Titus destroyed their temple in Jerusalem and the city along with it in the year 70! The new migrant Jews joined those already established, tried to rebuild their lives, and contributed to the Alexandrian prestige. It had become the world center of Jewish religion and culture.

But the next Jewish-Alexandrian generation could no longer tolerate intensifying Roman oppression. When exploitation reached the breaking point, rebellion became the next alternative. Failing to find any relief, thousands of Jews rose up in desperate rebellion once again. But they ultimately perished at the overpowering hands of the Roman military during the socalled Rebellion of the Exile of 115–117.

By now, the Jewish communities in Egypt are effectively diminished. And yet we understand why they're still fighting. It's a fight for survival against the incessant oppression of and aggressive control over Jews. Above all, though, they're fighting for their God, the God who brought them out of bondage a couple of millennia before.

Many of the Jews who had become faithful followers of Jesus probably perished along with their fellow rebelling Jews,5 but the painful losses for everyone rearranged precarious relationships among the people of Alexandria as they searched in all directions for solace and guidance. A mounting anti-Jewish attitude has been pressuring the Jewish Jesus-followers to separate themselves from their traditional Jewish colleagues, causing them to sort out their own relationships with their Greek and Roman neighbors.

These Jews are eager to engage in conversation with the ubiquitous Greek philosophers and teachers of religion, as all of them respond to the human outcry. As they look more deeply into their own teachings and traditions, their search is not a scholastic, intellectual exercise. It is a response to the hard questions of the day: How can we survive war? What is the meaning of soul? Who is God, and what happens after death? How is God both good and omnipotent? Is healing related to salvation? How does anyone cope with Roman oppression?

Pausing to listen to some of the teachers around the city, it is no surprise that we run across the full gamut of answers to these urgent questions—answers from Stoics, Jews, astrologists, demonologists, and various groups studying Plato's philosophical writings, which were enjoying an upswing in popularity. Christ-followers too are offering answers to the big questions. Among these was the teacher who had just finished writing his seminal work, the Secret Revelation of John.

Now we stop to listen intently. It could be his broad knowledge of Greek, Roman, Egyptian, and Jewish culture that attracts both Jews and non-Jews to his school, but his message is clearly a Christ-

centered, Jewish one. The saving power inherent in his Christ message originates in Jewish teachings, but he uses non-Jewish customs and philosophies to demonstrate the power of Christ.

Naturally, the soldiers, sent from Rome to keep control in Alexandria are nervous when they pick up on any implications of a disrupted hierarchical order. Claiming superiority for any power outside the Roman patriarchal order threatens Roman hegemony.6 But we can discern a subversive and hidden message from this teacher. It makes sense to people who have lived among the conquered populations, and yet the Roman supervisors may or may not fully grasp what these pupils and this teacher are talking about.

The Roman Empire, starting with the emperor himself and including the whole cosmos, operates as a strictly hierarchical order. Although the divine remains supreme over all, human power originates from the emperor and descends to the Patricians (those with the highest advisory positions and great wealth), next to the Senators (with political power from ancestral lineage and wealth), and down to the Equestrians (possessing secure minimum worth and involved in various types of businesses), descending further to the Commons (all other freeborn Roman citizens with the right to legal marriage with other Roman citizens), and finally to the Freedpeople (men and women who earned or won their way out of slavery). Women subserve men, and children are governed by nonenslaved adults. Below all of them, at the lowest rank, are the enslaved (usually those whose families had been captured in Roman conquests). They are the most numerous members of society, but they have no authority even over their own lives.

In the setting of this gathering of students around a teacher, however, a quick glance at the clothing of the learners clues us into the fact that they come from all social classes. We see how easily fellowship flows among the classes, including between the enslaved and those from higher stations. There is good reason for the Romans to be nervous about these students and their teacher. Not only his message of equal worth, but also the common Greek language and culture, serves to unify master and pupils, classes and ethnic groups. Even the Jews who fled to Alexandria from Judea are more fluent in Greek than Aramaic now, so it is not surprising that the sacred texts were translated from Hebrew into Greek here in Alexandria.

This school, like most of the other small groups of pupils with their teachers, primarily uses the Greek version of the Hebrew Bible, known as the Septuagint. Although some of the pupils are Jewish, most of the newer students come from a Greco-Roman background, knowing only the Greek and Roman gods. The sacred Jewish text, in combination with the powerful and transforming ideas they hear from this teacher concerning the teachings of Jesus of Nazareth, draw them in fellowship with these Christ-following Jews. Some Gentile philosophers in Alexandria have also begun to introduce the Jewish God into their own teachings, inspiring many Greeks throughout the city to find their way to the Christ-following teachers.

Despite the teachers' deep interest in the teachings from the Septuagint, the resurgent interest in Plato has also grabbed the attention of the wider population. Greeks themselves recognize how the ideas from his Timaeus and Parminides take on new relevance five hundred years later in the heat of ever-increasing Roman oppression. Our teacher recognizes the influence of these Hellenized intellectuals in the struggle to reenvision social and political systems, but he uses their familiar teachings to distinguish them from his own Christ teachings.

Numerous other philosophical systems have gained popularity also. Almost everyone is conversant with Greek Stoicism, because it offers practical solutions, especially to the problem of ubiquitous demons. You can't really see demons, but you know their existence by the feelings they instill in you. They are like the spirit of fear that takes over during a terrible storm, or great anger when someone with higher power abuses you.

People know these demons well—hundreds of them—because they stir up passions at just about any time or place, causing diseases and every form of human suffering. Since no one, from enslaved people to patricians, can escape the torment of demons, the Stoic solution of learning to control one's own passions resonates with people of all classes.

However, one of the most important secrets of the Secret Revelation of John may well be that its author sees a direct link between the action of these unseen powers (demons) and the work of the Roman emperor's minions. Gaining control of the demons might provide the key that unlocks the secrets of the power behind Rome, as well as the painful personal effects of demons.

The author of the Secret Revelation of John takes advantage of another source of support for the mastery of the demons. Local Egyptian scholars lecture particularly well on the all-important relationship between human body parts and numerous divinities and demons. Their popular Hermetic Vulgata offers a vast knowledge of the names of demons, and since demons can be exorcised through addressing them by name, this enormously helpful resource supports exorcists of all types.

Another Egyptian scholar, Ptolemy (100–170), continues to convert the worldviews of religious leaders, philosophers, and teachers through his well-known work in mathematics and astronomy. As he refocuses attention to the heavenly motion, he realigns their view of the universe. And now we notice how a combination of his (Ptolemy's) new astronomy with Aristotle's physics from five hundred years earlier is widely accepted. It is both practical truth and religious doctrine.

Crosscurrents of science, philosophy, and religion evoke creative ideas about God and the world, humanity and health, and the meaning of life. Our teacher encourages discussion on topics as broad as cosmology, anthropology, health, and ethics, because all of them relate to the larger picture of salvation. As most of the teachers of Alexandria do, this teacher also makes a wide variety of materials available to his pupils, including diverse philosophical and sacred traditions, astrology, magic, asceticism, baptismal experiences, and studies on exorcism and healing. As he nimbly weaves his way through the treacherous shoals of Roman threats, demonic powers, and religious contradictions, we hear a remarkable blend of imagery from Greek philosophy, Jewish scriptures, and Egyptian influences.

But his lectures always lead back to the teachings of Jesus. Whether he's criticizing Jewish and Greek customs or drawing on their stories and myths, he persistently demonstrates how Christ provides the ultimate answers to their questions. He talks about a salvation from suffering and darkness. It's also a salvation that inspires all people to live together in harmony. The more we listen to this teacher, the more amazed we become. Unlike any other teacher, this man has woven together the greatest mysteries of the world. Who else has described the action of God's creation and all of cosmology, its relationship to the world we live in, and the way Christ alone is able to finally save from all evil in completeness and perfection? No one! Ever! These are truly the gems of Christ we had never noticed before, never realized their great beauty and worth.

Walking home after the class through the vast Jewish quarters, we can't help but wonder about these Jews. They make up almost a fifth of the city population, and although some have contributed more broadly to the great cosmopolitan mix, others remain in closed communities, adhering to very strict ethnic behaviors. Our teacher leans heavily on their sacred texts, especially Genesis. But most of them think it's too jarring to rethink what Moses said about creation. They don't want to hear of it.

Their isolation may contribute to their vulnerability in times of crisis. On the one hand, they and the Christ-following Jews were all persecuted together during the horror of the Roman-led Rebellion of

the Exile (115– 117). But on the other hand, that agonizing event began to drive a wedge between the two groups.

One of those Christ-following Jewish teachers, Justin (100–165), exemplifies this sad separation between the Jewish sects. We can't tell for sure whether Justin has ever stopped to converse with our teacher, the author of the Secret Revelation of John. But Justin makes his position quite clear in his own book, Dialogue with Trypho, a Jew, that the purpose of Jewish scripture is to prophesy Jesus, and the Jews who don't see that are simply wrong.

On the other hand, our teacher has another way of regarding his ancient heritage in the Secret Revelation of John. Some of the earlier Hebrew texts inspire truth and should be taken seriously, he teaches. And some of them need second-century updating. His knowledge of the Jewish Bible and his concern for the value of these ancient, sacred texts demonstrate his proficiency and his faith. References to the Jewish book of Genesis and to Wisdom literature keep surfacing while he's talking, and it is evident that he is also drawn to the newer gospels that have been circulating about Jesus.

Conversations between the Secret Revelation author and his disciples, and between Justin and his disciples, might have also perked up our ears if either of them had ever moved to the subject of the Roman magistrates. Although it would most certainly have taken place in hushed tones, we can be sure neither one of them would have believed in the ultimate power behind the Roman atrocities. Christ-followers united behind the conviction that evil power is not of the one God but of false powers or demons.

Our teacher is drawing a lot of attention. Some of us are simply curious, but we notice students from faraway places have started listening in too. The teacher does not evade the deepest questions, such as why and how evil came to be, what God means in the midst of death and fear, and how to be saved from this evil—whether evil is identified as demons or Roman oppressors. Jews explain the cosmos and the origin of evil from their book of Genesis. But those answers are not thorough or deep enough for the Greek converts, who seek answers to new philosophical questions challenging the second century. Jesus had introduced a novel approach to his Judaean faith, and his ideas, particularly concerning the nature of the divine presence, are especially pertinent to the second-century struggles with Rome. The world has changed since Jesus's time, but his teachings of the present realm of God and dominion over evil seem to translate clearly to the current situation.

Welcome to the Twenty-First-Century World

Almost the same could be said about the twenty-first century as the second century. That is, the world has changed since Jesus's time, but his teachings of the realm of God and dominion over evil seem to translate clearly to the current situation. Who wants to read an ancient book with multiple gods, attacking demons, two kinds of Adam, and set in such a foreign culture?

We might consider reading an ancient book if it offers new ideas that help us navigate our identity in the world of artificial intelligence, guides us through a potentially cataclysmic climate change, offers equitable healthcare, and even reduces time-related stress.

Modern-day ideas such as these are some of the enduring gems from the Secret Revelation of John that we'll stop to investigate. For unknown reasons, the Secret Revelation of John and other texts important to Christ-followers disappeared within a couple of hundred years of being written down, not to be seen for another sixteen hundred years or more. Copies of the Secret Revelation of John had already circulated at least as far as from Egypt to France, and probably farther.8 What happened to these texts and all the others discovered in Nag Hammadi is a contentious issue. Some say they

were banned; others say readers simply lost interest. But now they look like treasures to both scholars and current followers of Jesus.

We can imagine the thrill of the archaeologists and scholars who first saw the ancient papyri in 1945 and realized what they were looking at!

But, as with most major discoveries from ancient times, a huge amount of work lies between the discovery and the understanding of what it means.

These ancient texts had been hidden and buried in the sands of eastern Egypt, near Nag Hammadi, which is about five hundred miles south of Alexandria.

But what did they mean? In our age of instant cell-phone translators, it is hard to realize the difficulty involved in removing the roughened outer layers of these gems. Brittle and broken pages of papyri, the ancient Coptic language, and centuries of cultural sea changes all contributed to challenges for the translators. Although all of the texts in the Nag Hammadi collection (sometimes called the Nag Hammadi library) were written in Coptic, there is a good possibility many or all of them were copies of original texts composed in Greek. And when they first came to light, few scholars were familiar with Coptic.

Furthermore, dealing with the Coptic version of a lost Greek text is not the only difficulty for translators. Even if the language were better known and many of the pages and words hadn't been destroyed, good translations are more than word-for-word exchanges. In order to understand the conversations in the Secret Revelation of John, for example, translators need to know something about the cultural meaning of the words. And beyond these difficulties, the greatest translating challenge may come from the fact that the ensuing church traditions and doctrines have established a certain mindset that still distorts the intended message for modern readers.

Reading a text written in the second century requires a kind of vision that transcends most of what we've learned from the church over the millennia. What do these stories tell us—stories written before there was a canon of literature to defend; before there was a cathedral to pay for; before there was a church council to judge; before there was anything like a "Christian" center in Jerusalem, Rome, or Constantinople; and before Gregorian chants and Renaissance painters created our images of God? There is a Savior in the Secret Revelation of John, but he/she did not require a confession of creed to determine who is in or out.

The teacher who wrote the Secret Revelation of John was also aware that times had changed since Jesus had awakened so many hearts and minds over a century earlier. Jesus's spiritual call for awakening and transformation spoke to the hearts of his own generation, just as the people of second-century Alexandria experienced it in their time. Alexandria had been the heartbeat of the second century. Such luminaries as Philo, Basilides, Clement, Ptolemy (the philosopher), Galen, Valentinus, Justin, and Origen had all contributed in some measure to the explosive thinking, struggling, and learning in Alexandria. And the author of the Secret Revelation of John still had something new to say.

How do we make sense of it in the twenty-first century? Does it bring comfort and wisdom to those of us who live in a culture so extremely remote from its second-century origin? People today are more concerned about whether our grandchildren will survive a dramatic climate change, whether the world has enough space for the movement of refugees and emigrants, or what is in charge of the new world order. But true gems hold their value through the changing millennia, and the literary gems in the Secret Revelation of John convey an element of confidence and assurance we need especially now, when the pace of life is accelerating so rapidly.

The story of the Secret Revelation of John captures the hearts and minds of modern readers as well as it did those of second-century Alexandrians, because it opens with a picture most people relate to at some point in our human experiences. Jesus's disciple John (not the real person, but a character dramatizing the role) is distraught, struggling in the midst of a crisis of faith. Everything Jesus had taught him to love and believe in seemed to have gone up in smoke when Jesus was suddenly arrested, humiliated, and crucified by the Romans. Where was God? How did evil gain such power? Where would he (John) go next? What could he trust now?

The horror behind the questions was all too real in the second-century Mediterranean world. Twenty-first-century fears are not too different. What should we do when the fabric of global existence wears dangerously thin? Science and technology, politics and education have so far failed to reverse the threat. Strangely, our weakening faith in the promises of technology and biomedicine returns us to an equal footing with the ancient world before those promises ever appeared. We are glimpsing further evidence that our thoughts govern the health of our personal and corporate bodies more than technological wonders have ever been able to do.

Rome's endless military conquests exemplified the nature of power struggles. Emperors kept amassing greater power to bolster their hierarchical authority over the empire. Persons were captured and enslaved with every victory, women were raped, and thousands of dissenters (maybe like Jesus) were crucified. Women, poor people, and enslaved people—the majority of society—all served the preservation of power at the top. Everything and everyone had to remain and function within the proper order of hierarchical control.

Sadly, oppression still operates in almost every form of human society. Political extremism excites fear of disenfranchisement in new forms. The barbarity of pedophilia and sexual abuse is not yet erased from our modern world, and violence strikes indiscriminately.

When the Secret Revelation of John was written, there were signs that the Roman Empire was weakening. Could it sustain its expansion and hegemony into the future? As superpowers rearrange their relationships with each other and with other types of power on the world stage today, we still wonder where the power will come from and how it will be used.

Questions of health and of how people identified themselves as individuals in antiquity show up in the press and in scholarly inquiries today. But the questions arise for different reasons. Computer knowledge, from artificial intelligence to quantum-mechanics computers, threatens privacy and even our worth and identity. Do our minds belong to us or to computers, governments, or cyberspace criminals?

Illness plagues every society, ancient and modern. Our attitudes toward the body and the means of health are radically different from attitudes about health at the time of John's revelation. Even during the second century, ideas about health varied greatly. But the vision of healthcare that the Secret Revelation of John lays out is bold. Since the Savior rescues people from mental and bodily anguish, the Secret Revelation presents the idea of health itself as a state of thought. Salvation is not restricted to the sinful soul, but the Savior is a specialist in mind-comforting, mind-correcting, and mind-guiding. Therefore, people who respond to the Savior's teachings can ultimately learn how to avoid the thoughts of sin and sickness. The author of this revelatory message appeals to Jesus's style of healingby-awakening rather than to the biomedical theories of antiquity, so his healing message resonates with people today who are thinking beyond the limitations of biotechnology.

The secret of John's revelation is that Jesus's teachings are available to meet cosmic and personal questions for all eras. The teachings are available, but they are secret—an ancient method of transmission. The teachings are secret, not just because they would offend some, but because they

are hard to grasp. It requires more humility than intellectual depth, more sincerity than social prestige to understand them.

The ideas are abundantly available in the other texts in the Bible, but this second-century writer pulls them out of obscurity and defines them as the three essential explanations for healing and salvation. The book consists of three major parts, each one representing a major gem.

1. God is both loving and omnipotent good.
2. Evil is an impotent counterfeit or fraud.
3. The experience of healing is an essential element of full salvation for everyone.

The first gem—that God is both loving and omnipotent good—has entangled scholars and theologians for centuries. How could God be loving and let horrific things happen to people if God is really more powerful than evil forces? This is a brave author who tackles such a tough problem about God. The second gem is equally challenging: When every person on earth experiences evil as a reality, how could this author even think about evil as a mere fraud? But if this second gem is proven true, then it serves as a marvelous gift to the world. And, the third gem is probably more startling to church authorities than ordinary people. The idea that everyone has the opportunity to experience healing and being saved from evil forces rings true to those who are truly humble and sincere. Each gem first enters the human mind as a rough and worthless rock, but as the author of the Secret Revelation polishes them, one chapter at a time, they bring light, hope, and joy.

In the story's conclusion at the end of the Secret Revelation of John, the Savior tells John that he has "finished everything for you in your hearing" (Meyer, 132). "The Savior communicated this to John for him to record and safeguard" (Meyer, 132).

Now, to open the pages of the book itself, imagine this Jewish teacher we met in Alexandria trying to make sense of the second-century upheaval he lived in. He imagines what Jesus might have said in a kind of post-resurrection scene to comfort his disciples in Jerusalem after his violent death, some 180 years before. The Alexandrian teacher envisions Jesus coming to his disciple John, who is distraught over the failure of the new movement, and Jesus opens John's eyes to a deeper understanding of the work of salvation. This is the story of the Secret Revelation of John. <>

THE TEXT OF THE PENTATEUCH: TEXTUAL CRITICISM AND THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS by Sidnie White Crawford [Series Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft, De Gruyter, 9783110465846]

In the last several decades since the first publications of the biblical Dead Sea Scrolls, a revolution has occurred in the understanding of the history of the text of the Hebrew Bible during the Second Temple period. The present volume is a collection of articles documenting that revolution, written by Sidnie White Crawford over an almost thirty-year period beginning in 1990. As a member of the editorial team responsible for publishing the Qumran scrolls, the author was responsible for the critical editions of nine Deuteronomy scrolls and the four Reworked Pentateuch manuscripts; thus, her work played a critical role in the changing understanding of the textual history of the Pentateuch,especially the book of Deuteronomy and the Rewritten Bible texts. The author's lifework is brought together here in an accessible format. While the majority of the articles are reprints, the volume will close with two major new pieces: a text-critical study of the Deuteronomic Paraphrase of the Temple Scroll and a comprehensive overview of the history of the text of the Pentateuch.

CONTENTS

…Why then bother to republish these first four articles at all, if they are hopelessly outdated? One reason is that they are in a sense historical artifacts; you cannot understand where the field of textual criticism has gone if you do not understand where it started, and these articles are products of the first "post-Qumran" phase of textual criticism. Another reason is that, in rereading these articles, I realized that they contained valuable information that does not even appear in DID 14 and so may be of some use to scholars now working on Deuteronomy. In Chapter 1, the listing of the variants is accompanied by a text-critical discussion that is not included in DID 14. Chapter 2 contains my first extended argument that 4QDeut was not an entire Deuteronomy manuscript at all, but an excerpted text. The discussion surrounding "excerpted texts" has become an important piece of the larger conversation about the nature and function of the Qumran scrolls collection. Chapter 3 contains extended discussions of paleography and orthography; the paleographical discussions in

particular are helpful for understanding the "Cross method" and how paleographic dates are determined. Finally, Chapter 4, which overlaps with Chapter 3, contains reconstructions of the fragments that do not appear in DJD 14. Hand reconstructions were how the scope and layout of each manuscript was determined at the time these scroll editions were published; those processes are hidden in DJD 14 but laid out and explained here.

After an interval of about a decade in which my attention was taken up with the "Rewritten Bible/Scripture" manuscripts (see below), I produced my next article on the text of Deuteronomy, "Reading Deuteronomy in the Second Temple Period" (Chapter 5). During that decade, the discussion surrounding the text of the "Bible" had changed drastically, informed by the complete publication of all the "biblical" manuscripts from Qumran and the simultaneous publication of the manuscripts of 4QRewirked Pentateuch. Several things had become evident during this time. First and perhaps most importantly, it was clear that the texts of books that later became part of the Jewish canon of scripture were not "fixed" in the Second Temple period but remained "fluid" until the end of the first century CE. The second realization was a corollary to the first: there was no canon of scripture in the Second Temple period. The most that could be said was that there was movement towards a canon as the era progressed. Third, Second Temple scribes were not mere copyists but were active participants in the handing on of ancient textual traditions. ^ related fourth realization was that the effort to affiliate texts with the MT, or the LXX, or the SP was misguided: the three complete exemplars of the Pentateuch were only that, complete; they did not necessarily contain a text to be preferred over the fragmentary remains of the Qumran manuscripts. In fact, the MT. LXX, and SP were simply late, individual examples of textual streams that flowed during the Second Temple period, streams that contained more or less closely related manuscripts. Chapters 5 to 13 all effect these realizations and my attempts to grapple with them. Many of these articles began life as conference papers before becoming parts of conference proceedings volumes, making them somewhat difficult to access. I am pleased to have them collected here.

In this group of articles I suggest that by the third century BCE, when our Qumran evidence begins, the individual books of the Pentateuch had all reached a recognizable "shape," although the text within that shape was still fluid. Scribes worked within the recognizable shape to pass on the textual tradition; thus, we now have manuscripts that we can identify as part of the Deuteronomy textual tradition, even though the discrete details of those manuscripts may vary. I emphasized more and more throughout these articles the independent role of the scribe in this process of textual transmission. Further, the manuscript evidence made clear that, by the time of our earliest manuscripts, the Pentateuch was recognized as a larger block of material, enabling scribes to incorporate material from one part of the Pentateuch into another (e. g., 4QpaleExod^{m}, 4QNum^{b}, 4QDeut^{n}).

However, while, as illustrated by these articles, the assumptions underlying the enterprise of Hebrew Bible textual criticism have changed dramatically in the past thirty years, I continue to affirm its value as a discipline. I believe, as will be clear from these articles, that text criticism can reveal important data concerning the textual history of a particular book and that it is often possible (although not always) to determine which variants are earlier (or primary) and which are later (or secondary). Using the methods of text criticism judiciously and weighing each variant individually, it should be possible to reach what I call "the earliest inferable stage" of a text. That is why I have agreed to produce a critical, eclectic edition of Deuteronomy for The Hebrew Bible—A Critical Edition project, the subject of Chapters 6 and 13. As I state in Chapter 6, "While I am under no illusion that my work will miraculously reveal the Ur-text of Deuteronomy, I do believe that the large amount of evidence [found in the manuscripts of Deuteronomy] means that ... a critical text" can be produced.

The final article in this section, "Deuteronomy in the Temple Scroll and its Use in the Textual Criticism of Deuteronomy," creates an excellent segue to the second section of the book, dealing as it does with textual criticism in the Temple Scroll. The Temple Scroll, identified as a "Rewritten Bible" text soon after its publication, contains long passages from Deuteronomy and so constitutes part of the body of evidence for the textual criticism of Deuteronomy. But the Temple Scroll also exists as a composition in its own right. Deuteronomy serves as one of its sources, but the Temple Scroll has its own voice, setting, and theological agenda.

The second section of this volume, even more than the first, illustrates how my mind has changed over the course of a career working on the Qumran scrolls. This is indicated by my difficulty in naming the section. "Rewritten Bible," an older description, was not correct, since there was no "Bible" in Second Temple Judaism, but could I use "Rewritten Scripture"? Was "Rewritten" appropriate, or would "rewriting" be better? Was "Scripture" suitable? All of these terms have been called into question for a variety of reasons. Finally, I settled on "Rewriting the Classical Literature of Ancient Israel." "Rewriting" reflects the ongoing nature of the scribal work that can be perceived in all of the works discussed in this section. "Classical Literature," a term borrowed from the field of classics, signals the status of the literature on which the scribes worked; it was the cultural tradition of Israel, handed on over centuries to reach the late Second Temple period scribes who produced the Qumran manuscripts. This literature had a high status in Second Temple Judaism, none more so than the Torah or Pentateuch, which is the focus of discussion in this section.

It must be admitted, however, that the contents of these chapters will strike some as hopelessly out of date. This, I am afraid, is true; the discussion surrounding the manuscripts 4Q158 and 4Q364-367 has changed so much since the first article in this section was published in 1992 that articles written then seem almost unrelated to articles written now on the same subject. However, once again I found that these articles have two characteristics in their favor: they present information about the manuscripts under discussion not available elsewhere, and they give a good historical overview, when read chronologically, of the progress in the field. For those reasons I have chosen to include early publications in this selection of articles.

My work on the manuscripts gathered under the rubric "Reworked Pentateuch" began shortly after I completed my doctoral dissertation and while I was preparing the Deuteronomy manuscripts for publication. Thus, there is often a dialogue between the two sections, and they cannot be disentangled from each other. John Strugnell, who had already invited Emanuel ^^^ to collaborate with him on the edition of the 4QReworked Pentateuch manuscripts, asked me to take his place on the project, and ^^^ graciously accepted me as his partner. 4Q364-367 were assigned to Strugnell by the original editorial team because they contained what he described as a "wild" Pentateuch text, too far removed from the known exemplars of the Pentateuch to be considered a "biblical" text. This judgment concerning the 4QRP manuscripts in comparison to the three complete exemplars included even the Samaritan Pentateuch, with which 4Q364 shares harmonistic expansions and content editing, demonstrating how narrowly the boundaries between "biblical" and "nonbiblical" were drawn by that first generation of editors. Strugnell had titled the manuscripts "Pentateuchal Paraphrases," but ^^^ and I considered that title misleading and not really reflective of the nature of the text contained in the manuscripts. We settled, with the help of George Brooke, on the title "Reworked Pentateuch," which happily still reflects the nature of the texts of the four manuscripts, i.e., pentateuchal texts that show extensive signs of scribal revision in the course of their transmission.

The first article in this section, Chapter 15, is a very early article on 4Q364 and 365, first presented at the famous Madrid Qumran conference in 1991. At that time, those manuscripts were not yet available to the scholarly community and therefore generated much discussion among the

conference attendees. It is noteworthy that on the first page I refer to them as "complete Pentateuch scrolls," indicating that even at that very early stage of research I was treating 4Q364 and 365 (as well as 366 and 367) as manuscripts of the Pentateuch, albeit with texts expanded beyond that of any known exemplar. Since this was the first public presentation of these fragments, I naturally focused on the expanded sections. One of those section, 4Q365 fragment 23, excited great interest because it was the first time that such scribal activity in a legal text was seen in any example of a Pentateuch text. This section in particular should be read together with the following short note on fragment 23 (Chapter 16), written with my former student Christopher A. Hoffman. What I would particularly like to point out is that in this very first article on 4Q364-367, the idea that these are simply expanded texts of the Pentateuch, not qualitatively different from other known exemplars, is already present in embryonic form and would be taken up quite vigorously in subsequent scholarly discussion.

The next two articles, Chapters 17 and 18, should be read as a pair, separated by almost twenty years. Chapter 17 is the first extended discussion of the five fragments that ^^^ and I had separated out from the fragments of 4Q365 and published separately as 4Q365a. The article is concerned primarily with the possible identification of these fragments with the Temple Scroll, then only published in the form found in 11QTemplea. I rejected that identification, but I tentatively suggested that the material found in the fragments may have been source material for the Temple Scroll. The second article is more concerned with their identification as part of 4Q365, with which they had been placed by Strugnell on the basis of paleography. In this article (Chapter 18), while I acknowledge that their identification with 4Q365 is possible, I am concerned that the physical placement of at least one of the fragments in the manuscript 4Q365 remains difficult. I would argue that in the end we cannot be certain that all of the fragments of 4Q365a belong with 4Q365.

Chapters 19 and 20 contain much overlap but were written from different perspectives. Both represent discussions of the phenomenon then known as "Rewritten Bible" as it was happening in the late 1990s. The first, a short article written for a Festschrift honoring Frank Moore Cross that focuses on the manuscripts of 4QRew^rked Pentateuch, still uses the canonical categories "biblical" and "nonbiblical," although with the recognition that the type of scribal activity seen in these manuscripts is a continuation of scribal activity found in earlier "biblical" books. I acknowledged that "it seems clear that the reader of this text (sic) was expected to view it as a text of the Pentateuch" (235). However, I was less certain about its reception in the community that preserved it, a much more difficult question to answer. However, my thinking about the text's nature and its presumed status had clearly changed in this period, as scrolls scholars began to come to terms with the wealth of data presented in the now fully-published scrolls corpus.

Chapter 20 contains my first musings on the archaeology of Qumran and how that should affect our understanding of the scrolls collection. It is essentially a critique of a too-rigid application of the Qumran-Essene hypothesis and cautions against the then-prevalent assumption that all the manuscripts found in the Qumran caves were written at Qumran, as well as the corollary idea that they were the possession of a sectarian community and therefore not reflective of "normative" Judaism. The article discusses the manuscripts of 4QReworked Pentateuch, Jubilees, and the Temple Scroll. I concluded that, while it was impossible to determine (at that time) whether or not a manuscript was actually copied at Qumran, there was no reason to assume that they were products of the Qumran movement. In fact, all three texts qua texts (that is, not as manuscript copies, but as compositions) predate the settlement at Qumran and should be viewed as part of the plentiful and previously unknown literature of the Second Temple period.

The last two chapters in this section are much more recent (2016, 2019) and therefore better reflect the state of the discussion concerning the manuscripts of 4QReworked Pentateuch. They also

reflect my continuing interest in the phenomenon of excerpted texts, first explored in Chapter 2. An important component of both chapters is the examination of the material remains of a manuscript, not just its text, and a manuscript's archaeological context. The articles suggest that excerpted manuscripts were far more numerous in the Qumran collection than was previously supposed, and that 4Q366 and 367 were in fact not complete manuscripts of the Pentateuch, as originally claimed, but were excerpted manuscripts. I close this section with a postscript on excerpted texts, focusing even more intently on archaeological context and suggesting several more examples of excerpted texts in the Qumran collection.

The volume closes with a chapter original to this volume, "Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible in the Twenty-First Century: Theory and Praxis," which considers my own philosophy of textual criticism in some detail. The philosophical and/or epistemological underpinnings of textual criticism have been brought to the foreground in recent years, and it now behooves a textual critic to set out her own philosophical assumptions. Likewise, the methodology employed in the practice of textual criticism needs to be transparent in order for any critical edition to gain scholarly acceptance. I therefore lay out my own methods with particular reference to the book of Deuteronomy.

It is my hope that this volume will serve the reader as a historic overview of the growth of the field of Hebrew Bible textual criticism in the late twentieth-early twenty-first centuries, as well providing practical examples of the discipline as it is now practiced, drawn from my own work on Deuteronomy and the Reworked Pentateuch manuscripts. <>

The Notion of »Holy« in Ancient Armenian Texts from the Fifth Century CE: A Comparative Approach Using Digital Tools and Methods by Thomas Jurczyk [Bielefeld University Press, an Imprint of transcript Verlag. 9783837661811] Open Access

Religious studies have long discussed the comparative notion of »holy« beyond religious, cultural, and linguistic boundaries. In this book, Thomas Jurczyk conducts a diachronic comparison of the meaning and application of two notions and their related word fields that are commonly associated with a broader comparative notion of holy, namely the Ancient Armenian term »surb« and its related words and the English word field associated with »holy«. To compare these two semantic fields, his methodological approach operates on the principle of distributional semantics and applies, among others, tools and methods from the field of corpus linguistics.

CONTENTS

This book **"THE NOTION OF 'HOLY' IN ANCIENT ARMENIAN TEXTS FROM THE FIFTH CENTURY CE"** aims at contributing to the broader discussion in the study of religion on the comparative notion of holy beyond religious, cultural, and linguistic boundaries. Notions such as holy are of crucial importance for the study of religion as they enable the comparison and hence study of different religious traditions based on common tertia comparationis. With this in mind, this book compares the meaning and application of two notions and their related word fields that are commonly associated with a broader comparative notion of holy. Both notions stem from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds. The first notion is represented by the Ancient Armenian term surb, a word that is often rendered as "holy" in English translations of Ancient Armenian texts. The second notion is represented by the English term "holy."

The choice of Ancient Armenian and English notions was guided by the following reasons. Firstly, the examination of Ancient Armenian sources and the use of surb therein are still a desideratum in the broader discussions about a comparative notion of holy in the study of religion, at least compared to other ancient notions such as Latin sacer/sanctus or Greek hágios.4 Consequently, a detailed analysis of the Armenian terminology adds new aspects to both the broader discussion of the comparative notion of holy and the application and meaning of words related to holy in ancient societies.

Secondly, the two notions of surb and holy stem from different languages with different cultural and historical backgrounds. Therefore, both notions and their respective semantic fields are relatively independent of each other. Consequently, potential overlappings between these semantic fields can rightfully be interpreted as an indication of an existing comparative notion or semantic field of holy beyond cultural, historical, and linguistic boundaries.

Lastly, despite the long time gap between the languages and the corresponding cultural backgrounds, the notions of surb and holy are related to one another. The relation between these two notions is notably perceivable in their common application in the translation of the Christian terminology of holy in the Bible. Furthermore, contemporary English translations of Ancient Armenian texts tend to translate the notion of surb and its related word field with words from the semantic field of the English notion of holy. These links between surb and holy illustrate that a comparison of both concepts is not entirely arbitrary but based on empirical data. Nevertheless, the assumption implicitly made by the translators that both notions correspond to each other still needs to be examined. This is one major aim of this book.

The overall research question is divided into two interrelated research foci. The first focuses on the specific semantic problem of the meaning of the Armenian notion of surb in early Armenian texts from the fifth century CE. This first part exclusively concentrates on the examination of the Armenian texts and does not take into account the use and meaning of holy in the English sources. The second research focus undertakes a comparative study by relating the word field around surb to the contemporary English notion of holy. Furthermore, the two notions of Armenian surb and English holy are evaluated in view of the comparative notion of holy in the study of religion. The inquiries are based on macro- and microanalyses of Ancient Armenian and contemporary English text corpora that apply digital tools and methods from the field of corpus linguistics.

The methodological approach in this book operates on the underlying principle that the meaning of words and notions can only be derived from their semantic, syntactical, and pragmatic contexts. Accordingly, a lexicographical6 approach based on fixed meanings, synonyms, and etymological explanations is rejected in favor of an approach which seeks to avoid any presuppositions in meaning. One such premise is as that surb means "holy, sacred; pure, clean, exempt, spotless, stainless (...)," simply because it is commonly found that way in dictionaries such as Petrosean's lexicon (Venice, 1875). Instead, the meaning of both the Ancient Armenian terminology around surb and the contemporary English notion of holy should be derived from their use cases. The application of tools and methods from the field of corpus linguistics is an adequate choice to obtain a thorough overview of the syntactical and semantic contexts of both notions as they allow the handling and examination of large text corpora.

The Importance of Comparative Notions for the Study of Religion

The importance of comparative notions such as holy for the study of religion, to which this book attempts to contribute, has been stressed by Oliver Freiberger in his book "Considering Comparison. A Method for Religious Studies" (2019). Besides Freiberger's convincing plea for the need for comparative notions in the study of religion, his book also provides a concise framework of how to evaluate and locate comparative studies based on their scale, mode, and scope.

In accordance with the methodological framework that Freiberger presents in his fourth chapter (Freiberger 2019, 111ff.), the aim of the comparative study in this book corresponds to the taxonomic mode (Freiberger 2019, 126ff.). This mode is preoccupied with "classify[ing] religious items and thus contribut[ing] to the taxonomic effort in the study of religion" (Freiberger 2019, 127). The scale of the study in this book differs depending on the size of the texts in the respective corpora. Yet, the overall focus lies on the meso- or even macro-level (Freiberger 2019, 131ff.). Regarding the scope of a study, Freiberger proposes three different categories.

Generally put, the category "scope" reflects the distance between the items compared in a study. Studies with a contextual scope compare items within one historical context or cultural milieu that can be delineated both spatially and temporally—for example, the Mediterranean world in late antiquity, northeast India in the fifth century BCE, or contemporary Brazil. Studies with a cross-cultural scope go beyond postulated cultural boundaries, such as in a comparison of ancient Chinese and ancient Greek religion. Studies with a trans-historical scope are comparisons across time and always appear in conjunction with one of the other two scopes. (Freiberger 2019,143)

Taking up these three scopes, the comparative approach in this book has a crosscultural and trans-historical scope. Yet, despite their different cultural and historical backgrounds, the contemporary English notion of holy is still linked to the Ancient Armenian notion due to translations, among others.

Overall Structure of This Book

Following the introduction, Chapter 2 provides a brief overview of the historical background of Armenia in the fifth century CE, the comparative notion of holy in the study of religion, and selected examples of the notion of holy in other ancient languages. Chapter 3 offers a more detailed articulation of the methodological approach of this book that is largely based on corpus linguistics and influenced by ideas of distributional semantics. Chapter 4 provides an overview of the texts used in the examination. The texts range from collections of short texts (tweets) to largesized text corpora (English Web corpus 2015 [enTenTen2015]) and can be grouped into three overall corpora.

The first corpus is the Armenian text corpus, including the Ancient Armenian Surb Corpus (AASC) and the Ancient Armenian Full Text Corpus (AAFTC). Both corpora are based on the same texts, namely "The History of the Armenians" by Agat`angelos, the "Life of Maštoc`" by Koriwn, the "Epic Histories," and the Gospels in their Armenian translation according to the so-called Zohrab Bible. The English corpus is divided into two subcorpora of very different sizes. Firstly, there is the Holy/ Sacred English Corpus (HSEC), which includes text samples from different genres (academic texts, religious texts, encyclopedia entries, tweets). Secondly, this book uses the already existing English Web corpus 2015 (enTenTen2015) corpus with the help of Sketch Engine. The English Web corpus 2015 (enTenTen2015) includes more than 15 billion words of contemporary English texts that have been scraped from the Internet.

The examination part of this book starts in Chapter 5. This chapter analyzes the semantic fields of the English notion of holy and the Armenian notion of surb. The examination is based on the text corpora and the methods introduced in Chapters 3 and 4.

The results of the examination in Chapter 5 are used in Chapter 6 for the overall comparison of the different semantic fields. This chapter also discusses the final results of the comparisons in view of the two previously mentioned research foci. Thus, Chapter 6 will propose a concise answer to the question: What is the meaning of surb in Ancient Armenian texts from the fifth century CE? Furthermore, it will also evaluate whether the semantic fields of the English notion of holy and the Ancient Armenian notion of surb are linked to each other and if so, what implications this might have for the comparative notion of holy in the study of religion (Freiberger 2019, 158ff.). <>

<>

<>