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EDITED BY  
MATTHEW RYAN HAUGE  
AND ANDREW W. PITTS

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# Ancient Education and Early Christianity

Edited by Matthew Ryan Hauge and Andrew W. Pitts

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For our mentors ...  
Dennis R. MacDonald and Stanley E. Porter



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# Abbreviations

AGJU	Arbeiten zur Geschichte des antiken Judentums und des Urchristentums
AJP	<i>American Journal of Philology</i>
ANRW	<i>Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt: Geschichte und Kultur Rom im Spiegel der neueren Forschung.</i> Edited by H. Temporini and W. Haase. Berlin, 1972–
ASP	<i>American Studies in Papyrology</i>
BAR	<i>Biblical Archaeology Review</i>
BECNT	Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament
BETL	Bibliotheca ephemeridum theologiarum lovaniensium
BEVT	Beiträge zur evangelischen Theologie
BJRL	<i>Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester</i>
BNJ	<i>Byzantinisch-neugriechische Jahrbücher</i>
BZ	<i>Biblische Zeitschrift</i>
CBQ	<i>The Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
CCS	Cambridge Classical Studies
CQ	<i>Classical Quarterly</i>
CR	<i>Classical Review</i>
CW	<i>Classical World</i>
ECHC	Early Christianity in its Hellenistic Context

FGH	<i>Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker</i> . Edited by F. Jacoby. Leiden, 1954–64.
GRBS	<i>Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies</i>
HAW	Handbuch der Altertumswissenschaft
HTR	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
HTS	Harvard Theological Studies
JBL	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
JHS	<i>Journal of Hellenic Studies</i>
JSIJ	<i>Jewish Studies, an Internet Journal</i>
JSNT	<i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament</i>
JSNTSUP	<i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament, Supplement Series</i>
JSOTSUP	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament: Supplement Series</i>
JTS	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
LNTS	Library of New Testament Studies
MH	<i>Museum helveticum</i>
NEOT	<i>Neotestamentica</i>
NOVT	<i>Novum Testamentum</i>
NOVTSUP	<i>Novum Testamentum Supplement Series</i>
NSC	New Surveys in the Classics
NTM	New Testament Monographs
NTS	<i>New Testament Studies</i>
NTTSD	New Testament Tools, Studies, and Documents
OBO	Orbis biblicus et orientalis

OCD	<i>Oxford Classical Dictionary</i>
OED	<i>Oxford English Dictionary</i>
PCPS	<i>Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society</i>
PHILANT	Philosophia Antiqua
PhW	<i>Philologische Wochenschrift</i>
PRSt	<i>Perspectives in Religious Studies</i>
RE	<i>Realencyklopädie für protestantische Theologie und Kirche</i>
REA	<i>Revue des études anciennes</i>
RhM	<i>Rheinisches Museum für Philologie</i>
SBLSP	Society of Biblical Literature Seminar Papers
SBLSymS	Society of Biblical Literature Symposium Series
SBLTT	Society of Biblical Literature Texts and Translations
SBLWGRW	Society of Biblical Literature Writings from the Greco-Roman World
SEG	Supplementum epigraphicum graecum
SJSJ	Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism
SNTSMS	Society of New Testament Studies Monograph Series
TAPA	<i>Transactions of the American Philological Association</i>
TDNT	<i>Theological Dictionary of the New Testament</i> . Edited by G. Kittel and G. Friedrich. Translated by G. W. Bromiley. 10 vols. Grand Rapids, 1964–76.
TENTS	Texts and Editions for New Testament Study
TS	Theological Studies
TSAJ	Texte und Studien zum antiken Judentum

<i>TYNBUL</i>	<i>Tyndale Bulletin</i>
<i>VC</i>	<i>Vigiliae christianae</i>
<i>WGRW</i>	Writings from the Greco-Roman World
<i>WUNT</i>	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
<i>ZPE</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik</i>

## Contributors

**Sean A. Adams** (PhD, School of Divinity, University of Edinburgh) is Lecturer in New Testament and Ancient Culture at the University of Glasgow, UK.

**Craig Evan Anderson** (PhD, Claremont Graduate University) is Adjunct Professor of Religious Studies at Pomona College in California, USA, Adjunct Professor of Religion at Claremont School of Theology in California, USA, and Adjunct Professor of Biblical Studies at Azusa Pacific University in California, USA.

**James R. Harrison** (PhD, Macquarie University) is Director of Research at Sydney College of Divinity, Australia.

**Matthew Ryan Hauge** (PhD, Claremont Graduate University) is Associate Professor of Biblical Studies at Azusa Pacific University in California, USA.

**Catherine Hezser** (PhD, Jewish Theological Seminary of America) is Professor of Jewish Studies at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, UK.

**Ronald F. Hock** (PhD, Yale University) is Professor Emeritus of Religion at the University of Southern California, California, USA.

**Dennis R. MacDonald** (PhD, Harvard University) is the John Wesley Professor of New Testament and Christian Origins at Claremont School of Theology, California, USA.

**Andrew W. Pitts** (PhD, McMaster Divinity College) is Assistant Professor of Biblical Studies and Christian Ministries at Arizona Christian University, Arizona, USA.

**Jennifer R. Strawbridge** (DPhil, University of Oxford) is Research Lecturer and Chaplain at Keble College, Oxford, UK.

**William Varner** (EdD, Temple University) is Professor of Biblical Studies at The Master's College, California, USA.

# Ancient Education and Early Christianity

Matthew Ryan Hauge and Andrew W. Pitts

Over the past several years, a number of significant works have advanced our understanding of both Jewish and Greek education in the Hellenistic era.<sup>1</sup> Several works have sought to further probe the primary sources while recruiting the insights of ongoing research in classical studies for its relevance to understanding the earliest Christians and their social matrix. This work ranges as broadly as understanding Paul's context<sup>2</sup> to Jesus' level of education<sup>3</sup> to the literary structure of New Testament forms such as the parable,<sup>4</sup> and many more besides. The present book seeks to provide the first volume – to our knowledge – that brings together significant contributions from a range of scholars working in this emerging domain of scholarly interest.

The first part of the book unpacks various backgrounds and settings for educational activity in both the Jewish and Greco-Roman worlds. The inaugural chapter, by Catherine Hezser, 'The Torah Versus Homer: Jewish and Greco-Roman Education in Late Roman Palestine', investigates the interaction between Roman imperialism and the Jewish educational structures that potentially influenced it (or not). In Chapter 3, Craig Evan Anderson, continues this Jewish emphasis by exploring parallels between Moses and

<sup>1</sup> E.g. Raffaella Cribiore, *Writing, Teachers, and Students in Graeco-Roman Egypt* (American Studies in Papyrology 36; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996); Teresa Morgan, *Literate Education in the Hellenistic and Roman Worlds* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Catherine Hezser, *Jewish Literacy in Roman Palestine* (Texts and Studies in Ancient Judaism 81; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001); Raffaella Cribiore, *Gymnastics of the Mind: Greek Education in Hellenistic and Roman Egypt* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001); *Education in Greek and Roman Antiquity* (ed. Yun Lee Too; Leiden: Brill, 2001).

<sup>2</sup> E.g. Andrew W. Pitts, 'Hellenistic Schools in Jerusalem and Paul's Rhetorical Education', in *Paul's World* (ed. Stanley E. Porter; PAST 4; Leiden: Brill, 2008), 19–51; Ryan S. Schellenberg, *Rethinking Paul's Rhetorical Education: Comparative Rhetoric and 2 Corinthians 10–13* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 2013).

<sup>3</sup> Chris Keith, *Jesus' Literacy: Scribal Culture and the Teacher from Galilee* (LNTS 413; London: T&T Clark, 2011).

<sup>4</sup> Matthew Ryan Hauge, *The Biblical Tour of Hell* (LNTS 485; London: T&T Clark, 2013).



Plato as educators. Moving into education in the Greco-Roman world, Ronald F. Hock, outlines the classroom setting of a liberal school, in Chapter 4, entitled: 'Observing a Teacher of *Progymnasmata*'. The final chapter in this section, by James R. Harrison, looks at 'The Seven Sages, The Delphic Canon and Ethical Education in Antiquity'. Harrison argues that historians of early Christianity will be greatly benefited by a deeper understanding of Delphic ethical traditions.

The second part of the book deals with early Christian appropriations of ancient education. Matthew Ryan Hauge's chapter, 'Fabulous Parables: The Storytelling Tradition in the Synoptic Gospels', opens this section with a discussion of the relevance of the Progymnastic fable for discussing the Synoptic parable tradition. In Chapter 7, Andrew W. Pitts works out the implications of the origination of mimesis in the Hellenistic schools for understanding the role of invention in potential Markan imitations. Sean A. Adams, in an essay entitled 'Luke and *Progymnasmata*: Rhetorical Handbooks, Rhetorical Sophistication and Genre Selection', deals with a range of issues related to retracing Luke's educational influences while making several important criticisms of prior research in this arena. In Chapter 9, 'Luke's Antetextuality in Light of Ancient Rhetorical Education', Dennis R. MacDonald investigates similarities between Luke and Quintilian's educational manual. Turning to Paul, Jennifer R. Strawbridge asks the question 'Was there a School of St. Paul?', using the schooltext papyri as her primary resource in answering this question. Finally, in Chapter 11, William Varner rounds off our picture of education in early Christianity by considering the role of the *Didache* in early Christian catechesis.

Part One

# Educational Contexts and Settings



# The Torah Versus Homer: Jewish and Greco-Roman Education in Late Roman Palestine

Catherine Hezser

When discussing the types of education available to Jews in late Roman Palestine, one needs to take the provincial context into account: Jews who lived in Roman Palestine were Roman subjects who reacted to the experience of Roman imperialism in different ways, depending on their socio-economic status, geographical location and religious persuasion. A variety of attitudes towards Roman culture and Hellenistic forms of education would have existed among the Jewish population, or at least among those for whom these issues were relevant: the large majority of Jews, especially those who lived in the rural areas of the Galilee, would not have had sufficient leisure time and money to engage in any type of learning besides the practical skills needed for subsistence farming and small-scale business.<sup>1</sup>

We may assume that those interested in any type of literary education would have been either religiously devout Jews who valued Torah study, Jews of the upper strata of society who aspired to participate in the elite culture of the Roman Empire, or more or less Hellenized Jews who tried to combine local traditions with a broader outlook, similar to Josephus in the first century. We probably have to reckon with a range of combinations among these groups, of which the Greco-Roman impact on rabbinic learning and the patriarchal family's combination of Jewish and Greek learning can be considered points on a scale.

What is clear, though, is that the type of Jewish education reflected in rabbinic literature and promoted by rabbis would have constituted an 'indigenous' type of education, based on local traditions, which competed

<sup>1</sup> For a detailed discussion of Jewish education in antiquity, see Catherine Hezser, *Jewish Literacy in Roman Palestine* (WUNT 81; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001), 39–109.

with Hellenistic and Roman *paideia*, at least in cities in which both types of learning were available. The rabbinically defined Jewish education, geared at males only and focused on Torah reading skills, constituted a local alternative to the empire-wide focus on Homer and Virgil, that constituted the core of a Hellenistic and Roman education in antiquity. The Jewish education advertised by rabbis was meant to instil a particularly Jewish religious and ethnic identity, in contrast to the ‘international’ Hellenistic culture with which provincial elites were eager to familiarize themselves. Owing to the lack of what is nowadays known as ‘intercultural education’ in antiquity, these two types of education would have been likely to clash with each other, especially as far as their content was concerned. But they were not mutually exclusive: in fact, one could argue that a combination of both was necessary for Jews to accommodate themselves with the hybrid cultural environment of late Roman and early Byzantine Palestine.

### *1. Torah learning as an ‘indigenous’ provincial education*

Ancient Jewish intellectuals’ emphasis on Torah learning was contemporaneous with the Hellenization and Romanization of Palestine which eventually led to the destruction of the Second Temple and the provincialization of its inhabitants in the first and second centuries CE. When the Temple as the focal point of Jewish ritual identity was destroyed and the Land of Israel became Romanized, the textual tradition transmitted from times past became the anchor on which a newly defined rabbinic Jewish identity could be fastened. Although rabbis propagated the ideal that all of their fellow male Jews should become proficient in Torah study, in reality, especially in the first two centuries CE, only a few would have been able and willing to invest time and money in gaining elementary Torah reading skills whose practical value was limited.

At the same time, rabbinic *halakhah* expanded the significance of Torah knowledge to all areas of daily life. Rabbis set themselves up as experts in the indigenous tradition who could give advice on whatever issues and problems Jews might encounter at home, while working, or with non-Jews. Rabbis’ prestige and interest in their Torah interpretation may have (slightly) increased in the late third and fourth centuries, together with their increased presence in the major cities. The establishment of synagogues as local Jewish

religious centres from the fourth century onwards would have increased the need for male Torah readers and served as an incentive for Torah reading skills.<sup>2</sup> Therefore the interest in Torah study and the availability of non-kin teachers is likely to have risen at that time.

Obviously, what is commonly understood as 'indigenous' rarely existed in its pure form but was always already more or less 'contaminated' through contact with others, that is, with people and cultures not belonging to the in-group.<sup>3</sup> Jonathan Friedman has suggested use of the term in its relative and ambiguous sense, to avoid the assumption of a strict dualism between an autochthonous people with its 'authentic' culture and the impositions brought about by foreign rulers.<sup>4</sup> Such a dualism is often implicit in studies of imperialism and colonialism, which examine the locals' accommodation with or acculturation to the new order. What we mean by indigenous here is the culture and tradition transmitted by those 'native' inhabitants of Palestine who imagined themselves to be ethnically and religiously Jewish in their encounter with what they perceived as other ethnic and religious groups.<sup>5</sup> This tradition (the Hebrew Bible) was already the result of earlier forms of hybridization, but it was held up by the self-proclaimed guardians of Jewishness as their group's sacred tradition that could not be contaminated ('Word of God') but only interpreted and applied to new situations.

Therefore, rabbinic discourse on Jewish education shifts between the idealization of Torah learning, resistance to 'Greek' learning and actual, perhaps not self-conscious, imitation and appropriation of Hellenistic and Roman mores. According to social anthropological theory, 'local identities are either weakened or integrated as subaltern categories of a larger imperial order'.<sup>6</sup> By insisting on the unchangeability and continued significance of the Torah and by presenting it as a Jewish alternative to 'Greek' learning by, at the same time,

<sup>2</sup> Catherine Hezser, 'Private and Public Education', in *The Oxford Handbook of Jewish Daily Life in Roman Palestine* (ed. Catherine Hezser; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 471.

<sup>3</sup> On the problematic aspects of the term 'indigenous' and 'indigeneity' see, e.g. Jonathan Friedman, 'Indigeneity: Anthropological Notes on a Historical Variable', in *Indigenous Peoples: Self-Determination, Knowledge, Indigeneity* (ed. Henry Minde; Delft: Eburon Academic Publishers, 2008), 51.

<sup>4</sup> See Friedman, 'Indigeneity', 29–30.

<sup>5</sup> On the development from an ethnically Judean to a religiously Jewish identity in Hellenistic times, see Shaye J. D. Cohen, *The Beginnings of Jewishness: Boundaries, Varieties, Uncertainties* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1999), 5, who points out that Jewishness must be understood as an imagined identity: 'Jewishness is in the mind'.

<sup>6</sup> Friedman, 'Indigeneity', 36.

adopting certain Hellenistic educational forms, rabbis became the quintessential facilitators of a diasporized form of Judaism, which has remained the dominant form of Judaism until today.

## 2. Analogies between Rabbinic and Hellenistic forms of education

Although rabbis insisted that Jewish boys and men should focus all of their intellectual energies on the Torah rather than on Greek and Latin texts, the way in which they represent Torah education is in many ways similar to Hellenistic education as it was practised in the Roman world at large and in the Near East in particular. Before examining these similarities, let us recall rabbinic objections to other types of literature that were seen as extraneous to Jewish identity formation and therefore should not be given further consideration except *via negationis*, that is, by rejecting them. In tannaitic Midrashim rabbis urge their fellow-Jews: ‘Do not deal with anything else but them [i.e. the Torah and commandments]. Do not mix other things into them saying, “I have learnt the wisdom of Israel, I shall now learn the wisdom of the nations”.’<sup>7</sup> According to this absolutist view, Jews should occupy themselves with the indigenous knowledge of the Torah only, rather than ‘wasting’ time and energy on other types of knowledge which are nevertheless acknowledged as ‘wisdom’ here.

In another tannaitic statement, attributed to R. Aqiva, the so-called ‘extraneous books’ of the Bible are singled out as harmful to Jews: whoever reads them will have no share in the world to come (*M. Sanh.* 10.1). The ‘extraneous books’ were probably the Greek Jewish writings included in the Septuagint but not part of the emerging canon of the Hebrew Bible.<sup>8</sup> Whether the reading mentioned here was supposed to include both private and public reading or public reading only, as Schiffman suggested, remains unclear.<sup>9</sup> In the Talmud Yerushalmi the book of Ben Sirach is presented as an example of these types of texts (*y. Sanh.* 10.1, 28a), which were valued by Christians but rejected

<sup>7</sup> Sifra Aharei, pereq 13:11; cf. Sifre Deut. 34. Translation with Sacha Stern, *Jewish Identity in Early Rabbinic Writings* (AGJU 23; Leiden: Brill, 1994), 176.

<sup>8</sup> See, e.g. Simcha Paull Raphael, *Jewish Views of the Afterlife* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2009), 80; Lawrence H. Schiffman, *Texts and Traditions: A Source Reader for the Study of Second Temple and Rabbinic Judaism* (Hoboken, NJ: KTAV Publishing House, 1998), 306.

<sup>9</sup> Schiffman, *Texts and Traditions*, 306.

by some rabbis as inappropriate reading material for Jews. Interestingly, the (anonymous) Yerushalmi's verdict on Homer and other (Jewish and/or non-Jewish?) books written after the prophetic books of the Bible is less forthful: a mere warning is issued rather than a future divine punishment: 'One who reads them is like one who reads a letter' (*y. Sanh.* 10.1, 28a), that is, they are profane books that can serve entertainment purposes only: 'For reading they were given, but for laborious study they were not given' (*y. Sanh.* 10.1, 28a).<sup>10</sup> The rabbis who formulated this comment were obviously not concerned about Jews reading Greek literature for pleasure as long as they did not treat these texts in the same way as the Torah, that is, as divine wisdom.

These statements already indicate that rabbis valued the Torah most but were divided over the reading of Jewish Hellenistic and non-Jewish Greek texts. They emphasized that only the Torah should be considered divine wisdom deserving of close study by (male) Jews, but not everyone dismissed Greek literature as such. The fact that the Talmud Yerushalmi especially mentions Homer and permits its reading may also indicate more liberal attitudes amongst rabbis towards Greek cultural tradition in late antiquity, when the rabbinic monopoly on Torah study was well established and Greek knowledge considered less threatening.

### 2.1. *The Torah and Homer as base texts*

One major similarity between the rabbinically defined Jewish education and Greek education seems to have been the focus on a particular base text which students would have learned to read, memorize and discuss with their teachers and amongst themselves.<sup>11</sup> Although adult male focus on Torah study began in the Hellenistic period already, this practice seems to have been limited to more or less small groups of urban literate elites.<sup>12</sup> Second

<sup>10</sup> Translation with Schiffman, *Texts and Traditions*, 307. See also *M. Yad.* 4:6, where the works of Homer are said to be 'not precious' and not able to impart uncleanness to the hands who touch them.

<sup>11</sup> On the similarities between the Torah and Homer in this regard, see also Maren R. Niehoff, 'Why Compare Homer's Readers to Biblical Readers?', in *Homer and the Bible in the Eyes of Ancient Interpreters* (ed. Maren Niehoff; Jerusalem Studies in Religion and Culture; Leiden: Brill, 2012), 7–8.

<sup>12</sup> See Albert Baumgarten, *The Flourishing of Jewish Sects in the Maccabean Era: An Interpretation* (SJSJ 55; Leiden: Brill, 1997), 47 (text study at Qumran), 49 (Josephus), 50 n. 42 (Pharisees, Sadducees, Essenes).



Temple texts provide no evidence on any Jewish endeavours to teach children Torah outside of the home. Although Josephus insists that (male) children should learn the laws of the Torah so that they ‘may neither transgress nor have any excuse for being ignorant of them’ (*Ag. Ap.* 2.25, 204), the obligation to provide this education rested with the fathers and depended on their own literacy, leisure time and religious commitment. Extra-familial Jewish elementary teachers and schools are never mentioned in any pre-rabbinic Jewish text and seem to have been a late antique development. As I have already pointed out elsewhere, reference to them appear almost only in Amoraic and Stammaitic traditions of the third and following centuries.<sup>13</sup> Even then, Torah education was voluntary and informal and no organized Jewish school system existed.

The late antique Jewish Torah education, as rabbis envisioned it, comprised a loud reading knowledge of certain portions of the Torah only. To teach Aramaic-speaking children to read Torah portions in Hebrew would have involved learning the alphabet and vocabulary in order to be able to identify words. Rabbinic sources refer to teachers supervising children’s reading (*M. Shab.* 1:3) and children ‘preparing their [Torah] portions’ for loud recitation (*T. Shab.* 1:12). A story about R. Aqiva alleges that a teacher would write the alphabet on a tablet and later certain Torah portions from the books of Leviticus and Numbers, which his students would then learn to read and memorize (*ARNA* 6).<sup>14</sup>

While Jewish elementary education focused on the Torah, Hellenistic and Roman elementary education focused on Homer. Teresa Morgan’s examination of mostly Egyptian Greek school papyri revealed that most of the literary fragments were extracts from the *Iliad* and (less frequently) the *Odyssey*.<sup>15</sup> Raffaella Cribiore has pointed to the ‘unusual wealth of lectional signs’ and blank spaces for comments in a papyrus fragment of the *Iliad* found in Egypt.<sup>16</sup> Other Greek authors were much less often represented amongst the school texts. Portions of Homer were taught once children had mastered

<sup>13</sup> See Hezser, *Jewish Literacy*, 48–60.

<sup>14</sup> For a much more detailed discussion of the sources see, Hezser, *Jewish Literacy*, 75–80.

<sup>15</sup> Teresa Morgan, *Literate Education in the Hellenistic and Roman Worlds* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 69, 105.

<sup>16</sup> Raffaella Cribiore, *Gymnastics of the Mind: Greek Education in Hellenistic and Roman Egypt* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 140.

the alphabet. This procedure was adopted by Romans who valued a Greek education for their children.<sup>17</sup>

The focus on Homer was probably partly due to the antiquity of the text. But it would also have been a matter of popularity and contents. As Wilkins has emphasized, ‘Homer would furnish abundant material, not only for the study of the language, but also for the elucidation of points of ancient history and mythology, geography and religion, manners and customs.’<sup>18</sup> Both the books of the Torah and the works of Homer combined consecutive narrative frameworks with ancient customs and practices, descriptions of landscapes and colourful characters with whose adventures the readers could identify themselves. Suspense was combined with moral, historical and theological instruction. Another important aspect may have played a role: the texts had emerged out of more or less long periods of oral transmission and were therefore most suitable for continuous loud reading, memorizing, re-narrating and other types of secondary oral uses that formed part of ancient educational practices.

Did Homer have a similar significance for Hellenistic identity as the Torah had for Jewish identity? According to Morgan, ‘Homer is the quintessential Greek author, associated with Hellenism and pan-Hellenism as far back as we can trace. Reading Homer is, among other things, a statement of Greek identity, and more precisely of identity with those in a society who are reading Homer in any particular period.’<sup>19</sup> Similarly, Froma Zeitlin has pointed to ‘the role of Homer as the touchstone of Hellenic affiliation (and self-identification) in the Hellenistic period and beyond.’<sup>20</sup> The rabbis who stood behind the Yerushalmi’s permission to read Homer, albeit not to study it in detail (see above), probably knew that they could not prevent their literate, Greek-reading fellow-Jews from familiarizing themselves with this text in order to be conversant in the empire-wide Hellenistic idiom. Familiarity with Homer was not only a sign of acculturation but also linked the thus educated

<sup>17</sup> See Stanley F. Bonner, *Education in Ancient Rome. From the Elder Cato to the Younger Pliny* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2012 [orig. 1977]), 20, 27; A. S. Wilkins, *Roman Education* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011 [orig. 1905]), 57.

<sup>18</sup> A. S. Wilkins, *Roman Education*, 58.

<sup>19</sup> Morgan, *Literate Education*, 75.

<sup>20</sup> Froma I. Zeitlin, ‘Visions and Revisions of Homer’, *Being Greek Under Rome: Cultural Identity, the Second Sophistic and the Development of Empire* (ed. Simon Goldhill; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 203.

Palestinian Jews to the elites of the neighbouring Near Eastern regions in Roman Egypt and Syria. At the same time, however, late antique Palestinian rabbis pointed to Torah study as a marker of a specifically Jewish identity within the all-pervasive Hellenism.

From the perspective of rabbis, there was something that the Torah had but Homer did not, which they were eager to stress: they presented the Torah as the genuine and direct word of God, based on direct inspiration. The works of Homer, on the other hand, were generally thought to be a human creation, even if Homer was elevated to quasi-divine status by some Hellenistic writers.<sup>21</sup> The rabbinic endowment of the Torah with sacred status probably served as a motivating force for its study and exegesis. According to rabbis, the only direct way to know God's will was through reading and interpreting the Torah, which required Torah education. Indirect ways available to the illiterate and 'unlearned' included Torah readings in late antique synagogues, listening to discussions among scholars, or gazing at biblical scenes in synagogue artwork.

Obviously, the sacredness of the Torah versus the profaneness of Homer was a matter of one's perception rather than a difference in the actual content and quality of the texts. Contentwise, the works of Homer contained myths about the gods and moral tales about ancient heroes that could easily match the biblical narratives. In fact, they served as the basis for later developments in Greek mythology and religion. Herodotus (fifth century BCE) already wrote that Homer (and Hesiod) 'are the ones who created a theogony for the Greeks and gave the gods their names and distinguished their honors and arts and indicated their appearances' (2.53).<sup>22</sup> Just as rabbis believed the Torah to constitute the very basis of Jewish religious beliefs and practices of their own day, Greeks (and Romans after them) believed that the writings of Homer were the 'originators' of Greek religion: 'Of what else could Herodotus be thinking? It is therefore fair to interpret him as saying that Homer and Hesiod established a canonical Greek mythology consisting of these stories and

<sup>21</sup> Zeitlin, 'Visions and Revisions', 203 says: '... the fact is that Greek culture never developed the notion of a sacred book'. Zeitlin, 'Visions', 204 refers to writers who call Homer 'a child of Heaven, descended from Zeus, or sent down by the Muses'.

<sup>22</sup> The quotation appears in Lowell Edmunds, 'Introduction: The Practice of Greek Mythology', in *Approaches to Greek Myth* (ed. Lowell Edmunds; Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990), 4.

genealogies.<sup>23</sup> Francesca Schironi, therefore, suggests that ‘Homer can be seen as “the sacred text” of the Greeks, who for centuries recognized his greatness and placed the Homeric poems at the core of their education.’<sup>24</sup>

Too close familiarity with the works of Homer, Hesiod and their likes could affect the way Palestinian Jews saw themselves: were they part of a broad, empire-wide pan-Hellenic culture or natives of the Land of Israel who worshipped their very own, monotheistic god? Could the divergent myths be harmonized? Or did the Torah represent truth and Homer fantasy, as rabbis tried to emphasize? The all pervasiveness of Greek myths in the mime and pantomime performances of the theatres of late Roman Palestine and the representations of Greek mythological figures in public and private spaces even in Galilee might have motivated local Jews to learn more about the stories behind these images. Therefore, late antique rabbinic attitudes towards the reading of Homer were very similar to their attitudes towards theatres and circuses: they knew that they could not prevent their fellow Jews from enjoying Hellenistic culture and therefore tolerated it as long as it remained entertainment.<sup>25</sup> Yet they also stressed that Torah study and attendance of ‘synagogues and study houses’ would be the proper Jewish option to choose in the multicultural context of the province.

## 2.2. *The discussion and interpretation of the Torah and Homer in higher education*

Apprenticeship with rabbis constituted a secondary, higher form of education, which only very few young men are likely to have pursued. Not only did it require at least an elementary knowledge of the text of the Torah, that is, Hebrew reading skills and memorization of Torah portions, it also meant dedicating the prime years of one’s life to the service of one’s teacher with whom one lived (*shimush hakhamim*). Study with a rabbi involved both listening to his views, in whatever situation they were uttered, and observing him, since his practice was as relevant as his theories. Although the Torah was the basis of rabbinic

<sup>23</sup> See Edmunds, ‘Introduction’, 4.

<sup>24</sup> Francesca Schironi, ‘The Ambiguity of Signs: Critical σημεία from Zenodotus to Origen’, in *Homer and the Bible in the Eyes of Ancient Interpreters* (ed. Maren R. Niehoff; Leiden: Brill, 2012), 88.

<sup>25</sup> On rabbis’ attitudes towards theatres and other aspects of ‘popular culture’, see Catherine Hezser, ‘Toward the Study of Jewish Popular Culture in Roman Palestine’, in *The Words of a Wise Man’s Mouth Are Gracious* (Qoh. 10,12): *Festschrift for Günter Stemberger* (ed. Mauro Perani; SJ 32; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2005), 267–97.

knowledge, rabbis were not philologists who closely analysed written texts. In fact, owing to the high value and rarity of Torah scrolls in antiquity, most rabbis would not have had written Torah scrolls at home or owned scrolls of particular books of the Bible only.<sup>26</sup> Even local access would have been limited to larger towns and cities that had study houses and/or synagogues with Torah apses (a feature of fifth- and sixth-century synagogues) where Torah scrolls could be kept permanently.<sup>27</sup> Therefore discussions would mostly be based on rabbis' and students' memorization of Torah verses: oral discourses with quotations of the base text from memory.

According to Criboire, the study of Homer was not limited to primary education either: Homer's works were also used in grammatical and rhetorical studies, as Libanius' *Progymnasmata* show.<sup>28</sup> Despite the supplementary use of the tragedians, 'Homer never lost his grip on the practitioner of rhetoric.'<sup>29</sup> As in rabbinic studies, the text was simulated by recitation rather than reading from a written source. Libanius refers to a student 'challenged point-blank to "wrestle" with recitation from memory of verses of Homer' (*Ep.* 187.3).<sup>30</sup> Yet rhetorical education was not limited to Homer as rabbinic education was to the Torah. Other prose authors were used as well. Thus, Homer did not receive the exclusive attention in Greek higher education that the Torah received in rabbinic studies, probably because it was not imbued with the same type of sanctity.

Criboire's reference to the practical aspects of Greek rhetorical education are particularly interesting: 'The foremost concerns of the Roman student were the practical models offered by his teacher and his own practice in declaiming.'<sup>31</sup> The instruction was not bookish but 'relied more heavily on the teacher's own digestion of the literary sources', in contrast to the Greek East, where 'reading the historians and orators in class was standard practice.'<sup>32</sup> Palestinian rabbinic education seems to have been more similar to the Roman

<sup>26</sup> See Hezser, *Jewish Literacy*, 146–9.

<sup>27</sup> According to Rachel Hachlili, 'The State of Ancient Synagogue Studies', in *Ancient Synagogues in Israel, Third – Seventh Century CE* (ed. Rachel Hachlili; Oxford: BAR Inter ..., 1989), 3, the apse did not become a feature of Palestinian synagogues until the end of the fifth century CE. Only then 'the Torah shrine became an integral element in the synagogue building ...'

<sup>28</sup> Criboire, *Gymnastics of the Mind*, 226.

<sup>29</sup> Criboire, *Gymnastics of the Mind*, 226.

<sup>30</sup> Criboire, *Gymnastics of the Mind*, 226.

<sup>31</sup> Criboire, *Gymnastics of the Mind*, 227.

<sup>32</sup> Criboire, *Gymnastics of the Mind*, 227.

rhetoric model then: rabbinic sources do not present rabbis and their students bent over written texts, as is the practice in modern *yeshiva* education. Rather, rabbis are said to have expressed their own legal and exegetical views and supported them with the recitation of biblical prooftexts from memory – the students’ task was primarily to memorize their teachers’ views, to ask questions and to ultimately learn to develop their own interpretations. The rabbi became a model and example which students would learn to emulate, not primarily in his ability to cite from the Torah but especially in his ability to apply the Torah to new and current circumstances, to use it to solve contemporary problems, a task that involved a large amount of innovation and development. In a similar manner, Homer’s writings were not simply reproduced in Hellenistic and Roman times but appropriated by later writers and teachers of higher education.<sup>33</sup>

It seems that the Hellenistic and Roman appropriation of Homer was limited to grammatical and rhetorical education, however, and to poets and prose writers who alluded to, quoted from and build upon his narratives.<sup>34</sup> These types of appropriation are, to some extent, comparable to rabbinic Bible exegesis and Midrash, as earlier scholars have already shown. In his re-examination of rabbinic Midrash in the light of Homer and rhetorical education Yair Furstenberg points to Saul Lieberman, Henry Fischel, Philip Alexander, Burton L. Visotzky and others who have conducted detailed studies of rabbinic aggadah on this background.<sup>35</sup> What seems to have been more important to rabbis, however, was religious law, *halakhah*. The question then is whether halakhic education is comparable to education in Roman law.

### 2.3. Halakhic education and Roman jurists’ training

Rabbis’ foremost practice was the development and application of *halakhah*, that is, legal rules that concerned both the religious and the civic sphere and encompassed all areas of daily life. They offered advice in all kinds of halakhic

<sup>33</sup> See Zeitlin, ‘Visions and Revisions’, 203–4.

<sup>34</sup> See, for example, Stephen Hinds, *Allusion and Intertext: Dynamics and Appropriation in Roman Poetry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 37–8. See also the articles in *Cultural Borrowings and Ethnic Appropriations in Antiquity* (ed. Erich S. Gruen; Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2005).

<sup>35</sup> Yair Furstenberg, ‘The Agon with Moses and Homer: Rabbinic Midrash and the Second Sophistic’, in *Homer and the Bible in the Eyes of Ancient Interpreters* (ed. Maren Niehoff; Leiden: Brill, 2012), 299–302, with references.

matters to their co-religionists and decided legal cases they were confronted with. Within the provincial context they functioned as informal legal arbitrators comparable to Roman jurists.<sup>36</sup> As Jill Harries has pointed out, ‘The functions of both were to give legal advice, interpret the “unwritten” legal tradition, and pass on their learning to others.’<sup>37</sup> Lines of succession and competing ‘schools’ developed, in which disciples were expected to remain loyal to their masters.<sup>38</sup>

Just as the rabbinic focus on the Torah provided an alternative to a Hellenistic education based on Homer, rabbinic arbitration deriving its legitimacy from the Torah competed with other forms of formal and informal arbitration available to Jews in late Roman Palestine. Provincial Jews had a choice between rabbis, other informal legal experts, local courts based on Hellenistic or Roman law and the jurisdiction of the Roman governor, depending on the type of case, the availability of experts and their ideological affiliation.<sup>39</sup>

Rabbinic legal education would have been both theoretical and practical. Disciples would listen to their teachers’ legal discussions and controversies with colleagues. They would also witness their decisions in cases that were brought before them by laypeople who requested their advice, or rabbis’ own imposition of specific halakhic rules on local communities.<sup>40</sup> Furthermore, rabbis own behaviour in all kinds of situations served as a model and example, representative of their legal views.

Is Roman legal education comparable to the education of these provincial adjudicators who gave advice on the basis of their ‘indigenous’ tradition which was transmitted and discussed orally? It seems that from the time of Diocletian onwards, the study of Roman law became more official and formalized as law schools in Caesarea, Alexandria, Athens and Constantinople ‘gradually came under government control.’<sup>41</sup> According to an edict of emperor Leo I, promulgated in 460 CE, ‘only persons who had undertaken formal legal training at one of the recognised law schools of the empire were allowed

<sup>36</sup> See Jill Harries, ‘Courts and the Judicial System’, in *The Oxford Handbook of Jewish Daily Life in Roman Palestine* (ed. Catherine Hezser; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 85–101, esp. 93.

<sup>37</sup> Harries, ‘Courts’, 93.

<sup>38</sup> Harries, ‘Courts’, 93.

<sup>39</sup> On the competition between rabbis and other types of legal experts, see Catherine Hezser, *The Social Structure of the Rabbinic Movement in Roman Palestine* (TSAJ 66; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1997), 475–80.

<sup>40</sup> See Hezser, *Social Structure*, 190–5, 337–8, 360–8.

<sup>41</sup> George Mousourakis, *The Historical and Institutional Context of Roman Law* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003), 363.

to serve as advocates in the courts of law.<sup>42</sup> In the law schools the written texts of the classical jurists and imperial constitutions were studied, a format that resembled medieval rabbinic academies more than classical rabbinic education. It seems that we have to look at classical jurists' training instead.

Like rabbinic *halakhah*, jurists' law was based on legal responses to actual cases and advice given on a case-to-case basis. Decisions were made *ad hoc*, witnessed by apprentice jurists and transmitted both orally and in writing to later generations. The case decisions and *exempla* became a 'living source of law'.<sup>43</sup> As Berman has pointed out, 'The Roman jurists were intensely practical in their approach to law.'<sup>44</sup> Most importantly, 'The Roman jurists refused to adopt the Hellenistic system of education; legal training continued to consist chiefly of very informal, individual apprenticeship in the house of an older practitioner.'<sup>45</sup> The jurists did not teach their students theoretical legal principles or cover topics in a systematic way but confronted students with legal problems and actual cases that required solutions.<sup>46</sup>

The turn towards a more systematic and formalized legal education and transmission of legal material seems to have happened in Roman society earlier than in rabbinic society. The classification of civil law into four main categories is usually ascribed to Q. Mutius Scaevola in the first century BCE. Jurists of the imperial period, that is, the first to fifth centuries, 'refined and developed the dialectical techniques that had been applied by their republican predecessors, without changing them fundamentally.'<sup>47</sup> In the second century, 'a tendency toward somewhat greater abstraction' expressed itself in the formulation of definition and rules, which remained linked to cases.<sup>48</sup> As I have already shown elsewhere, amoraic comments on and applications of tannaitic case stories are comparable to this development.<sup>49</sup>

<sup>42</sup> Mousourakis, *Historical and Institutional Context*, 363.

<sup>43</sup> Mousourakis, *Historical and Institutional Context*, 357.

<sup>44</sup> Harold Joseph Berman, *Law and Revolution: The Formation of the Western Legal Tradition* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1983), 135.

<sup>45</sup> Berman, *Law*, 135.

<sup>46</sup> Berman, *Law*, 135.

<sup>47</sup> Berman, *Law*, 137.

<sup>48</sup> Berman, *Law*, 137.

<sup>49</sup> Catherine Hezser, 'The Codification of Legal Knowledge in Late Antiquity: The Talmud Yerushalmi and Roman Law Codes,' *The Talmud Yerushalmi and Graeco-Roman Culture* (ed. Peter Schäfer; TSAJ 71; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck 1998), 1.591–4.



Interestingly, the development towards abstraction and systematization seems to have coincided with the establishment of more formalized law schools and rabbinic ‘academies’, but this development happened much later in rabbinic than in Roman society. As Jeffrey Rubenstein has convincingly argued, rabbinic academies are a development of the stammaitic period in Babylonia, that is, they seem to have existed only from the late fifth and sixth centuries onwards.<sup>50</sup> The informal nature of rabbinic legal training in Roman Palestine in contrast to the increased formalization of Roman law in late antiquity was probably due to the provincial context: rabbis were given leeway in relatively unimportant civil, family and religious law issues. The legal matters rabbis dealt with were too unimportant for Roman authorities to concern themselves with. To let the provincials adjudicate themselves according to their ‘indigenous’ traditions would have been convenient and provided stability to the imperial system.<sup>51</sup>

#### *2.4. Similarities and differences between rabbinic education and Libanius’ school*

One of the main differences between rabbinic and Roman secondary education in late antiquity seems to have consisted in the degree of institutionalization and the geographical range of these types of learning. Although both rabbinic study and the rhetorical study offered by Libanius seems to have been linked to individual teachers, Libanius was the head of a proper ‘school’, as the title of Criatore’s book already indicates (‘The School of Libanius’). Libanius provided ‘the most prominent school of rhetoric in Antioch’, which seems to have enjoyed some kind of official recognition by the local and regional rulers.<sup>52</sup> The school had other teachers and a fixed curriculum. It attracted students ‘from all provinces of the Roman East’ and employed teaching methods shared by other schools elsewhere in the empire.<sup>53</sup> It represented a certain type of cosmopolitan education that could unite Roman elites and bind the provincial upper strata to the ‘core’ of Roman culture and society: ‘By

<sup>50</sup> Jeffrey L. Rubenstein, *The Culture of the Babylonian Talmud* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003), 16–38.

<sup>51</sup> See also Nassim Nicholas Taleb, *Antifragile. Things that Gain from Disorder* (London: Penguin, 2012), 97.

<sup>52</sup> Raffaella Criatore, *The School of Libanius in Late Antique Antioch* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), 1.

<sup>53</sup> Criatore, *School of Libanius*, 1.

sending their sons to Libanius' school, parents, particularly those who lived in remote regions such as Paphlagonia or Cappadocia, gave them a cosmopolitan experience.<sup>54</sup>

By contrast, rabbinic education was not empire-wide and cosmopolitan but Middle Eastern and local. It began in Roman Palestine in the late first century and expanded to Persian Babylonia in the third century CE. There is no evidence of a rabbinic impact on Jews who lived outside of these regions, although a few individuals from Egypt and Syria may have come to Palestine to study with rabbis.<sup>55</sup> This geographical restriction may be seen as an indication of the provinciality of rabbinic learning, which clearly focused on the Land of Israel and even tried to maintain this focus after its expansion to Babylonia. At the same time, rabbinic study was the outcome of the diasporization of Palestinian Judaism, as already argued above. It catered to Jews as Roman provincials (and Babylonian Diaspora Jews) by providing an alternative to the current empire-wide types of secondary learning.

According to Cribiore, Libanius' school did not occupy a specific building; rather, its location shifted in accordance with the teacher's popularity: first he taught fifteen students at home, 'then moved to more visible private quarters on the fringe of the city square', until he 'settled in the city hall on becoming Antioch's official sophist'.<sup>56</sup> The earlier private and unofficial stages of his teaching are similar to the ways rabbis functioned, whereas the eventual official recognition and institutionalization of his teaching was never enjoyed by Palestinian rabbis, except for the patriarch, perhaps. It remains unclear, however, whether certain patriarchs maintained proper local schools or, and this is more likely, functioned like other rabbis in maintaining personal disciple circles.<sup>57</sup> Shaye Cohen has argued that patriarchs resembled scholars, but most of the evidence he cited stemmed from later Babylonian Talmudic texts which do not reflect the situation in late antique Palestine.<sup>58</sup>

<sup>54</sup> Cribiore, *School of Libanius*, 27.

<sup>55</sup> See Arye Edrei/Doron Mendels, *Zweierlei Diaspora: Zur Spaltung der antiken jüdischen Welt* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2010); Catherine Hezser, *Jewish Travel in Antiquity* (TSAJ 144; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), 444–6.

<sup>56</sup> Cribiore, *The School of Libanius*, 30.

<sup>57</sup> See the discussion of this issue in David Goodblatt, *The Monarchic Principle: Studies in Jewish Self-Government in Antiquity* (TSAJ 38; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1994), 162, 209.

<sup>58</sup> Shaye J. D. Cohen, 'Patriarchs and Scholars', *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research* 48 (1981): 57–85.

Proper rabbinic academies seem to have developed in Babylonia in Islamic times only.<sup>59</sup>

Concerning the student base, both rabbinic students and Libanius' students were male. Some scholars have argued that initially, in the first and second century CE, rabbinic students came from wealthy backgrounds and a diversification took place in late antiquity only, when rabbis became the role models for a broader population.<sup>60</sup> The issue remains uncertain, however. At least in late antiquity, most rabbis and their students seem to have stemmed from the working middle strata of society, while only a few of them were wealthy.<sup>61</sup> Since rabbinic studies required at least elementary Torah knowledge, one may assume that the students were young men (or older) rather than children. As in Libanius' case, study with a particular rabbi sometimes involved the student's relocation, since he had to live at the place of his teacher as long as he studied with him. Actual work relationships with the teachers are imaginable, that is, student and rabbi may have shared certain trades which allowed them to spend a lot of time with each other. Libanius' students on the other hand would have belonged to the leisured strata of society, just like Libanius himself.

Unlike Libanius, rabbis did not teach jointly with other rabbinic teachers or with their former students. On the contrary, a fierce competition seems to have existed amongst sages, who even tried to prevent their students from teaching within a close radius of their own location.<sup>62</sup> Rabbis seem to have been much more individualistic in this regard, but another reason probably is that they never established proper 'schools' that could survive the death of an individual rabbi. A rabbi's students were meant to perpetuate his traditions by memorizing them, teaching them to their students and applying them to later cases, but this was an intellectual succession rather than the continuation of an established 'school'. The relatively small circles of students associated with each rabbi, the lack of official recognition and international 'fame', as

<sup>59</sup> Jeffrey L. Rubenstein, 'The Rise of the Babylonian Rabbinic Academy: A Reconsideration of the Evidence', *JSIJ* 1 (2002): 55–68. On the lack of rabbinic academies in Amoraic Palestine, see Hezser, *Social Structure*, 195–214.

<sup>60</sup> See Shaye J. D. Cohen, 'The Rabbi in Second-Century Jewish Society', in *The Cambridge History of Judaism* (eds W. D. Davies and Louis Finkelstein; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 3.922–90.

<sup>61</sup> See Hezser, *Social Structure*, 257–66.

<sup>62</sup> See the discussion of the texts in Hezser, *Social Structure*, 108.

well as the decentralization of Judaism after 70 CE may have prevented the development of larger rabbinic ‘schools’. By contrast, Libanius had some of his ex-students teach with him.<sup>63</sup> Interestingly, Cribiore notes that ‘they did not have the authority of full *didaskaloi*, but occupied subordinate positions, had to render account to him in everything, and followed his directions ...’<sup>64</sup> They did not constitute a challenge to Libanius’ status for ‘Libanius was his school’.<sup>65</sup>

The relatively small number of students associated with individual rabbis enabled them to live with their masters and ‘serve’ them.<sup>66</sup> The rabbi’s private accommodation would have sufficed as a setting for this close student–master relationship. Libanius seems to have similarly taught his students at home as long as he had a few students only. Only later, when the student body expanded and he became the ‘official sophist of Antioch’, did he move his ‘school’ to the city hall and call it *didaskaleion*.<sup>67</sup> At that stage Libanius allegedly used the theatre of the city hall for his lectures and classes.<sup>68</sup> Rabbis seem to have also used local structures for their own purposes sometimes. Some towns seem to have had so-called study houses (*batei Midrash*) of which no archaeological remains survive. The nature and function of the ‘study houses’ remains unclear: some seem to have been associated with particular rabbis (who funded them, built them and/or taught there), whereas others were local institutions which provided a space for Torah-based discussions.<sup>69</sup> Perhaps some rabbis also occasionally taught in synagogues or rooms attached to them: both synagogues and study houses are associated with activities that rabbis propagated but they were not rabbinic institutions in antiquity. No evidence exists for an analogy to the ‘building complex for higher education, mainly grammar, rhetoric, and philosophy’, as it existed in late antique Berytus and Alexandria.<sup>70</sup> Rabbinic instruction seems to have been much more limited in scope and informal, which, again, leads us to the local, provincial and ethnically Jewish focus of rabbinic learning.

<sup>63</sup> Cribiore, *The School of Libanius*, 36.

<sup>64</sup> Cribiore, *The School of Libanius*, 37.

<sup>65</sup> Cribiore, *The School of Libanius*, 37.

<sup>66</sup> See Hezser, *Social Structure*, 332–6.

<sup>67</sup> Cribiore, *The School of Libanius*, 43.

<sup>68</sup> Cribiore, *The School of Libanius*, 44.

<sup>69</sup> See Hezser, *Social Structure*, 202–10.

<sup>70</sup> See Cribiore, *The School of Libanius*, 44.

At the end of this section it is necessary to point to the different types of sources that exist for the rabbis and Libanius, respectively. For Libanius a large number of his letters are available that provide a direct insight into many aspects of his teaching and network-building. By contrast, we do not possess any first-hand accounts of individual rabbis. Rabbinic traditions associated with individual rabbis were transmitted orally for centuries and transformed and adapted to changing circumstances in this process. The documents that came down to us are much later conglomerations of material which underwent several stages of editing. These sources make it impossible to reconstruct the teaching methods and contexts of individual rabbis. They can be evaluated collectively only. Even if particular rabbis stood out amongst their colleagues and had a particularly large circle of students, such a phenomenon may not have left sufficient traces in the sources or was deliberately suppressed by editors who tried to create the impression of an intellectual movement rather than celebrate individual teachers.

### *3. Palestinian Jews and Hellenistic education*

Unfortunately, only traces of Palestinian Jews' Hellenistic education remain. Since we do not possess Greek Jewish writings from late antiquity, our information mostly stems from rabbinic sources, which are partly polemically inclined towards 'Greek wisdom'. What is clear, though, is that a proper Greek education, starting with elementary instruction and continuing with the so-called *artes liberales*, would have been available to and taken up by wealthy urban Jewish families only. To what extent the Jewish provincial elites were actually knowledgeable of the Greek language and Greek culture and favourably inclined towards a Hellenistic education for their children would have depended on the time and place in which they lived, their connections to prestigious Romans, as well as their personal ambitions and attitudes.

Our evidence about Jews gaining a higher Greek education in late antiquity is very limited.<sup>71</sup> Rabbinic sources discuss in a theoretical manner whether Jews should teach their children Greek. In general, they suggest that the

<sup>71</sup> See my prior discussion of this issue in Hezser, *Jewish Literacy*, 90–4, 103–9; Hezser, 'Private and Public Education', 474–6.

historical and socio-economic circumstances should be taken into account. In times of enmity with Rome, teaching one's children Greek was seen as inappropriate. Thus the *Mishnah* rules: 'In the war against Titus [or: Quietus in some manuscripts]<sup>72</sup> they decreed ... that a person should not teach Greek to his child [or: son]' (M. Sot. 9:14). During the revolts against Rome a desire to acquire Greek language skills and a Greek education was probably seen as a step towards affiliation with the enemy. It is noteworthy, though, that the *Mishnah* was formulated from retrospect and was probably meant to refer to politically difficult times (cf. the context of the statement). Yet these situations are presented as exceptions: during a stable political climate brought about by the *Pax Romana* rabbis would not have objected to Jews obtaining a proficiency in Greek.<sup>73</sup>

Another criterium was the socio-economic status of the family. The *Mishnah's* parallel in *Tosefta Sotah* 15.8 specifies that even in times of political turmoil an exception should be made for the family of a prominent rabbi: 'They permitted the house of R. Gamliel to teach their children [or: sons] Greek, because they were close to the government.' A later variant, appearing in the Talmud Yerushalmi, has replaced R. Gamliel by Rabbi, that is, the patriarch R. Yehudah ha-Nasi (*y. Shab.* 6.1, 7d). The patriarch and particularly prestigious rabbis were assumed to have social connections to the Roman imperial administration and would therefore have required a good knowledge of Greek.

The study of Greek would begin with teaching the Greek alphabet to Aramaic-speaking Jewish children. Wealthy Jewish families would have had Greek-speaking household slaves who could function as pedagogues and primary teachers.<sup>74</sup> One may assume that these educators would also read portions of Homer with the children. Obviously, only those provincial Jews who had Greek reading skills would be able to proceed to any form of higher Greek education. A mere knowledge of spoken Greek, with which the urban Jewish population would have been familiar to varying degrees, would not

<sup>72</sup> Quietus was the leader of Trajan's army in 115 CE.

<sup>73</sup> See also J. N. Sevenster, *Do You Know Greek? How Much Greek Could the First Jewish Christians Have Known?* (NovTSup 19; Leiden: Brill, 1968), 47: 'From this prohibition it therefore appears that it was in no way uncommon among the Jews of Palestine that a man taught his son Greek, and if this was forbidden in 117, there is good reason to assume that the custom had been observed for some time.'

<sup>74</sup> See Catherine Hezser, *Jewish Slavery in Antiquity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 122, 147, 248, 359–62.

have been sufficient to study grammar, philosophy, or rhetorics. At the same time we may assume that a provincial grandee would have been expected to be conversant in Greek literature and culture, at least to a certain degree.

Except for the possibility that the son of a fourth-century Jewish patriarch studied rhetorics with Libanius, we have no direct evidence of Jews acquiring any sort of Greek higher education in late antiquity. Obviously, the lack of evidence cannot be interpreted as evidence of a lack of such education amongst Jews of the upper strata of society. A letter that Libanius wrote to the so-called 'patriarchs' at the end of the fourth century CE mentions that the patriarchs' son studied rhetoric with Libanius in Antioch and with his disciple Argeios in Pamphylia beforehand.<sup>75</sup> Owing to the plural ('patriarchs') and the lack of any specific Jewish identification in the letter, it remains uncertain whether the addressee really was the Jewish *nasi*.<sup>76</sup> If so, the letter would be 'evidence for the wide-ranging Hellenistic acculturation of the Jewish patriarchs'.<sup>77</sup> Libanius, quoted by Cribiore, educated 'wellborn young men' in rhetoric, and the sons of the Palestinian patriarchs would have fit this description.<sup>78</sup>

Other members of the Jewish provincial elite who studied rhetorics, law, or philosophy at the schools of higher education in late antiquity may not have left any traces in the sources because they were indistinguishable from their non-Jewish fellow students. They may have merged completely with other Greek-speaking provincials. We would be able to identify them as Jewish only if they chose to be commemorated in Jewish contexts, that is, in synagogue donors and burial inscriptions. How large and influential this strongly Hellenized segment of the late antique Jewish population of Roman Palestine was is impossible to estimate. Rabbinic sources may therefore give us the wrong impression: the alternative Jewish education they offered may have been taken up by a religiously committed and relatively well-off ethnic minority only. It coincided and competed with an empire-wide Greek and Roman education which it partly imitated.

<sup>75</sup> Libanius, *Ep.* 1098.

<sup>76</sup> See *Greek and Latin Authors on Jews and Judaism* (ed. Menahem Stern; Jerusalem: Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1980), 596.

<sup>77</sup> Martin Jacobs, *Die Institution des jüdischen Patriarchen. Eine quellen- und traditionskritische Studie zur Geschichte der Juden in der Spätantike* (TSAJ 52; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1995), 268. My translation from the German.

<sup>78</sup> Libanius, *Or.* 55.23, quoted in Cribiore, *School of Libanius*, 1.

## Exodus from the Cave: Moses as Platonic Educator

Craig Evan Anderson

The word, 'educate,' derives from the Latin term *educare*, meaning, 'bring out, lead forth'. This term, *educare*, further derives from *educō*, the compound of *e-* ('out') and *duco* ('to lead').<sup>1</sup> The fact that 'education' finds its etymological base in the notion of 'leading out' or 'drawing out' is illuminating.<sup>2</sup> It certainly captures the educator's practice of drawing out responses from students. Even more strongly, it connotes the transmission of the student from one cognitive state to another, in which the educator facilitates the student's adoption of new ways of thinking.<sup>3</sup>

Fundamental to this concept is the idea of transition, or even more pointedly, liberation. 'Drawing out' indicates the extraction of something from its initial fixed state, thereby freeing it from the stagnancy of its surroundings.<sup>4</sup> We find this concept in phrases such as when we

<sup>1</sup> The interrelated Latin words, *educare* and *educō*, are semantically linked to the Proto-Indo-European source, *deuk*, which refers to leading; see e.g. Michael Moore, 'On the Roots of Teaching and Learning,' *ETC: A Review of General Semantics* 66 (2009): 424. We find the notion of positional leadership within the Latin *ducere* in the English derivative 'duke'. We find the notion of directionality within *ducere* in the English derivatives 'conduct' and 'conduit', both of which stem from the Latin word *conducere* (*com* 'together' + *ducere* 'to lead').

<sup>2</sup> Moore, 'On the Roots', 422–4, demonstrates the connection between education and leading through multiple languages. For example, he cites the fact that the Hebrew word for learn/teach, לָמַד, coincides with the word for goading or prodding cattle; similarly, he highlights the German semantic connection between *Erziehung* ('education') and *ziehen* ('pull, drag').

<sup>3</sup> Moreover, this transmission could also be more than merely cognitive. Given the substantive impact that education typically has upon one's socio-economic station in life, it is often the means by which an educator leads a student out from one life and into a new and better life.

<sup>4</sup> Interestingly, the etymology of 'education' parallels that of 'exegesis', the standard practice of biblical studies. Much like the Latin term *educare*, the Greek word 'exegete' is also rooted in the meaning 'to draw out'. The Greek term 'exegesis' (ἐξήγησις) derives from the word ἐξηγέομαι. Like the Latin *educō*, the Greek word ἐξηγέομαι is also based in the compound of the words 'out' (ἐξ) and 'to lead, to draw' (ἡγέομαι).

Thus in their etymology, the terms 'educate' and 'exegete' both refer to the process of 'drawing out'. One pertains to drawing forth students; the other pertains to drawing insights out of texts. Nevertheless, they both reflect the same process for learning, whether the learner is the agent who



metaphorically refer to the ‘diamond in the rough’ or attempt to ‘separate the wheat from the chaff’.

### 1. *The Allegory of the Cave as the Platonic model of education*

Perhaps the most renowned illustration of the concept of ‘drawing out’ as it pertains to education is within Plato’s Allegory of the Cave, which he lays out in Book VII of the *Republic*. Plato introduces the allegory as ‘an image of our nature in its education (παιδείας) and want of education’ (*Rep.* 7.514a).<sup>5</sup>

In the Allegory of the Cave, Socrates famously explains to his dialogue partner, Glaucon, education as a process of liberation from imprisonment: he describes people bound within a cave in which they are only able to see the shadows of artificial objects; one person becomes free of her or his bonds and escapes the cave, witnessing sunlight for the first time and seeing the true state of the natural world; the escapee embraces the role of educator when she or he chooses to re-enter the cave, unshackle the other prisoners from their confinement and then leads the prisoners out of the cave into sunlight so that they may see things as they truly are.

According to the dialogue, Socrates presents the Allegory of the Cave largely as an argument intended to counter certain notions regarding the educational process that seem to have been prevalent in Athens at that time. Following his description of the interaction between a teacher (one whose eyes have become accustomed to the sunlight) and a student (one whose eyes are still accustomed to the darkness), Socrates states: ‘Education is not what the professions of certain men assert it to be; they presumably assert that they put into the soul knowledge that isn’t in it, as though they were putting sight into blind eyes’ (*Rep.* 7.518b–c). On the contrary, for Socrates and Plato, education is not about putting knowledge into a student, but rather it is about leading the student out of the dark realm of artificial objects and into the sunlit realm of nature’s truth.<sup>6</sup>

does the ‘drawing out’ (in the case of exegesis) or whether the learner is the object, the one whom the agent ‘draws out’ (in the case of education).

<sup>5</sup> Translation by Allan Bloom, *The Republic of Plato: Translated with Notes and an Interpretive Essay by Allan Bloom* (2nd edn; New York: Basic Books, 1968), 193.

<sup>6</sup> In Plato’s *Republic*, the Allegory of the Cave (*Rep.* 7.514–519) immediately follows the Analogy of the Divided Line (*Rep.* 7.509d–513e), and as such, it contextually serves as an elaboration of the

That is, for Socrates and Plato, education is a journey; it is a transformative experience best exemplified through the metaphor of the spatial transition of students from an undesirable location to a desirable location. Nevertheless, the journey is an uncomfortable one: the students' eyes are accustomed to darkness and have difficulty adjusting to light and the teacher's eyes are accustomed to light and have difficulty relating to the darkness (*Rep.* 7.518a–b).

## 2. From Athens to Jerusalem

The notion that education is a process by which a teacher facilitates a student's transformative journey that the Allegory of the Cave presents is emblematic of the conceptuality of the Athenian philosophical school of the mid-first millennium BCE. Plato's writings emphasize penetrating dialogue as an educational method prized by the philosophers of Athens due to its rich capacity to elicit transformation within its participants. This dialectic approach to education served as a characteristic feature of Plato's Academy (Ἀκαδημία) in Athens that many would regard as the first institution of higher learning in the Western world.

If we geographically shift our attention from Athens to Jerusalem during the same time period, we rather surprisingly find some similar notions of education developing there.<sup>7</sup> These similarities are surprising given the vastly

basic concepts of the Analogy of the Divided Line. Both illustrations are dedicated to articulating a continuum of incremental truth, whereby an education entails one's moving from conjecture (εἰκασία) based upon witnessing images to understanding (νόησις) based upon comprehending ideas.

<sup>7</sup> Throughout this chapter, I use 'Jerusalem' to signify the locus of the composition of the Book of Exodus. This is a simplification due to the fact that the Book of Exodus is the result of a long and complex compositional process and we are far from certain regarding the exact location of its composition. Moreover, in contrast to my references to Jerusalem, many scholars have posited a northern Israelite origin for portions of the Book of Exodus. For example, arguing for the influence of priests based in Shiloh and/or Anathoth, see e.g. Richard Elliot Friedman, *Who Wrote the Bible?* (Summit Books, 1987; repr., San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 1997), 70–88.

Nevertheless, while the Book of Exodus may feature some non-Jerusalem components, there is good reason to associate much of the book with Jerusalem. For example, despite the fact that many scholars claim that the exodus tradition originates in northern Israel, representing Israel's secession from Solomonic Judean authority, owing to the parallel portrayals of Solomon and Exodus' pharaoh, one could credibly posit a southern (Jerusalem-based) origin for the pharaonic depiction of Solomon: Marvin A. Sweeney, *I & II Kings: A Commentary* (The Old Testament Library; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2007); *King Josiah of Judah: The Lost Messiah of Israel* (Oxford: Oxford University, 2001), contends that the connection between pharaoh and Solomon stems from the courts of the Jerusalem-based kings, Hezekiah and Josiah, whose scribes presented Solomon as a flawed dynastic founder so that he might serve as a foil for the more righteous Judean

different political and cultural circumstances of Athens and Jerusalem in the mid-first millennium BCE.

Inquiry into education in the mid-first millennium BCE often focuses upon Athens; it does not often focus upon Jerusalem. This is understandable given the fact that Athens yields a rich supply of historical sources from this period as a civilization on the rise. Jerusalem, on the other hand, does not.<sup>8</sup> In terms of cultural and political strength, Jerusalem had peaked in the seventh century BCE in the midst of the power vacuum in the Levant that Assyria had created by eliminating Judah's rivals.<sup>9</sup> However, by the outset of the sixth century BCE, Babylon invaded Judah and decimated Jerusalem, which then languished for centuries, gradually recovering from the devastation as a minor state under the jurisdiction of Persian imperial authority.<sup>10</sup>

Nevertheless, biblical scholars recognize the Persian period (i.e. the sixth to fourth centuries BCE), contemporaneous with the Classical Greek period, as the principle time for the formation of the Pentateuch.<sup>11</sup> Regardless of the subordinate political standing of Jerusalem during the Persian period,

kings, Hezekiah and Josiah. See also the arguments by Giovanni Garbini, *Myth and History in the Bible* (trans. Chiara Peri; JSOTSUP 362; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2003), 55–71.

<sup>8</sup> Despite the fact that scholars widely acknowledge that the Hebrew Bible is largely the product of Jewish scribal activities in the sixth to fourth centuries BCE, historical sources from this time period are notoriously scarce. Fortunately in recent years, Israeli archeologist Oded Lipschits has played a central role in developing several volumes of collected scholarly essays illuminating this time period: *Judah and the Judeans in the Neo-Babylonian Period* (eds Oded Lipschits and Joseph Blenkinsopp; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2003); *Judah and the Judeans in the Persian Period* (eds Oded Lipschits and Manfred Oeming; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2006); *Judah and the Judeans in the Fourth Century B.C.E.* (eds Oded Lipschits, Gary N. Knoppers and Rainer Albertz; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2007).

<sup>9</sup> For an overview of seventh-century BCE Jerusalem, see Israel Finkelstein and Neil Asher Silberman, *The Bible Unearthed: Archaeology's New Vision of Ancient Israel and the Origin of its Sacred Texts* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2001), 251–95; William M. Schniedewind, *How the Bible Became a Book: the Textualization of Ancient Israel* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

<sup>10</sup> For a comprehensive archaeological assessment of the meagre conditions of Judah during the Persian period, see Charles E. Carter, *The Emergence of Yehud in the Persian Period: a Social and Demographic Study* (JSOTSUP 294; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1994).

<sup>11</sup> In recent decades, Persian imperial authorization theory has served as the dominant means by which scholars account for the production of the Pentateuch in the Persian period. This began with the seminal essay by Peter Frei, 'Zentralgewalt und Lokalautonomie im Achämenidenreich', in *Reichsidee und Reichsorganisation im Perserreich* (eds Peter Frei and Klaus Koch; 2nd edn; OBO 55; Fribourg: Universitätsverlag, 1996), 8–131. Subsequently, major scholarly works investigating the composition of the Pentateuch built upon the foundation that Frei established. See Erhard Blum, *Studien Zur Komposition des Pentateuch* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1990); David M. Carr, *Reading the Fractures of Genesis: History and Literary Approaches* (Louisville: John Knox Press, 1996). For recent collections of essays addressing Persian imperial authorization theory in particular and the composition of the Pentateuch in general, see *Persia and Torah: the Theory of Imperial Authorization of the Pentateuch* (ed. James W. Watts; SBLSymS 17; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2001); *The Pentateuch as Torah: New Models for Understanding its Promulgation and Acceptance* (eds Gary N. Knoppers and Bernard M. Levinson; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2007).

the production of the Pentateuch (and the shaping of the Hebrew Bible as a whole) is unquestionably a monumental achievement of ancient scribalism.<sup>12</sup>

Upon initial appearances, the basic presentation of education in the Hebrew Bible looks quite different from the Platonic counterpart that we have been addressing. Plato and his circle of Athenian philosophers operated within an academic context, engaging in sophisticated dialogue within arguably the most cosmopolitan city in the world during the Persian period. However, when we look to the Hebrew Bible, we find nothing similar to Plato's academy, at least on an institutional level. Although much of the Hebrew Bible took its shape during the Persian period (i.e. during the lifetimes of Socrates and Plato), very little of its material is in fact literarily set during that time.<sup>13</sup> On the contrary, most of the Hebrew Bible is literarily set during the Iron Age (c. 1200–600 BCE) and some of it, such as the material within the Pentateuch, is set earlier than that.

Even at the height of its economic and cultural power in the Iron Age, seventh-century BCE Jerusalem cannot compare to the sophistication of fourth-century BCE Athens. Depicting the lives of Iron Age shepherd and farmers, the Hebrew Bible principally tells the tale of a rural ancient community struggling for political viability while lurking in the shadows of imperial giants. Within the Hebrew Bible's portrayal of rural ancient Israelite life, education occurred in the household between parents and children.<sup>14</sup> This familial education largely emphasized the oral transmission of kinship traditions focusing upon the preservation of narratives that were central to the people's collective identities.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>12</sup> After exhaustively demonstrating the smallness of the Persian province of Yehud, Carter, *Emergence of Yehud*, 285–8, notes the troubling disparity between its modest population (and consequently its socio-political insignificance) and the robust biblical corpus that biblical scholars assign to it, asking, 'If Yehud was this small and this poor, how could the social and religious elite sustain the literary activity attributed to the Persian Period?' The solution to this emerges once we factor in the impact of Persian sponsorship in the rehabilitation of local cults which, in the case of Yehud, seems to have been accompanied by the production of biblical texts.

<sup>13</sup> The compositional history of the books of the Hebrew Bible is widely discussed and disputed among scholars. For some of the best monographs available presenting the state of current scholarship on the composition of the Hebrew Bible, see Konrad Schmid, *The Old Testament: A Literary History* (trans. Linda M. Maloney; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2012); David M. Carr, *The Formation of the Hebrew Bible: A New Reconstruction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

<sup>14</sup> Victor H. Matthews and Don C. Benjamin, *Social World of Ancient Israel, 1250–587 BCE* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1993), 27–9.

<sup>15</sup> E.g. Deut. 6.7–9, 20–25; see also, Caryn A. Reeder, *The Enemy in the Household: Family Violence in Deuteronomy and Beyond* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012), 19–23.

Yet despite these differences, biblical and Platonic presentations of education share some important commonalities, particularly when we examine the biblical figure of Moses. In part, this may be due to the fact that, like Plato's writings, the biblical narratives about Moses seem to have taken shape in the mid-first millennium BCE.

The composition of the Pentateuch has fascinated modern scholarship for centuries.<sup>16</sup> By the late eighteenth century, scholars were beginning to untangle the complexity of the Pentateuch's intermeshed sources, and by the nineteenth century, scholars started to notice that much of the Pentateuch seems to post-date the material in the Former and Latter Prophets that synchronically follows it. In particular, scholars puzzled over a key observation: if the Iron Age Israelites had the priestly instructions of Moses, why do the prophetic books so seldom make reference to it?<sup>17</sup> Driven by observations such as this, scholars over the past two centuries have increasingly recognized that the Pentateuch's presentation of the life of Moses seems to have taken shape in the Persian period.<sup>18</sup>

### 3. *Moses as teacher*

The iconic educator of the Hebrew Bible is undoubtedly Moses. For most of the history of Judaism, Jewish communities have referred to Moses according to the title, 'Moses our Teacher' (וּמֹשֶׁה הַשֵּׁנִי).<sup>19</sup> Rabbinism grew out of Jewish

<sup>16</sup> For helpful overviews of the history of scholarly inquiry concerning the composition of the Pentateuch, especially in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, see e.g. Joseph Blenkinsopp, *The Pentateuch: An Introduction to the First Five Books of the Bible* (The Anchor Bible Reference Library; New York: Doubleday, 1992), 1–30; Ernest Nicholson, *The Pentateuch in the Twentieth Century: The Legacy of Julius Wellhausen* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998).

<sup>17</sup> This crucial observation first caught people's attention when articulated by Eduard Reuss in a lecture that he delivered in Strassburg in 1833; see Friedman, *Who Wrote the Bible?* 162–3; Nicholson, *The Pentateuch*, 9.

<sup>18</sup> Of the 766 references to Moses in the Hebrew Bible, over 700 of them are located within the Hexateuch. There are only 61 references to Moses in the books following Joshua, and half of those come from Ezra-Nehemiah and 1–2 Chronicles. The remaining thirty-one references to Moses in the Hebrew Bible predominantly come from late biblical texts: two in Daniel, eight in Psalms, one in Malachi, one in the post-exilic portion of Micah (6.4), two in the post-exilic portion of Isaiah (63.11–12), five in exilic Deuteronomistic speeches (1 Sam. 12.6, 8; 1 Kgs 8.9, 53, 56) according to Martin Noth, *The Deuteronomistic History* (trans. Jane Doull; Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2005 [orig. 1981]), 5–6, etc. Thus, if we put analysis of the Hexateuch to the side, it is difficult to find any reference to Moses dating from the pre-exilic period. For an illuminating investigation into the dating of the Moses material in the Hebrew Bible, see Garbini, *Myth and History*, 1–9, 55–71.

<sup>19</sup> The Hebrew Bible, as a source, is too early for us to find direct reference to Moses as a 'teacher'. Once again, education in ancient Israel was a practice of the household – there was no institutional

scribalism and Moses is the Hebrew Bible's scribe *par excellence*.<sup>20</sup> The Pentateuch directly credits Moses as functioning as God's scribe, at least for portions of the Pentateuch, and Jewish and Christian tradition credits Moses for the composition of the entire Pentateuch.<sup>21</sup> Moreover, Rabbinic Judaism itself is principally an elaboration of Mosaic Torah.

The biblical account of Moses' death, Deut. 34.10-12, celebrates Moses as Israel's founding teacher. First, it identifies Moses as Israel's greatest prophet (אֵיבֹן) – the office of prophet is affiliated with education in terms of the prophet's role to inform a constituency, orating instructions to them. Second, just as Plato's Academy was located on the site of a grove of olive trees sacred to Athena, goddess of wisdom, the notable location of Moses' place of death bears similar toponymical ties to divine wisdom and writing. According to Deut. 34.1, Moses died upon Mount Nebo (נֹבֶן) fulfilling God's command (Deut. 32.49). Isaiah 46.1 mentions the Babylonian god, Nebo (נֹבֶן in Hebrew, or 'Nabû' in Akkadian), in conjunction with another Babylonian god, Bel.<sup>22</sup> According to Babylonian literature, Bel(-Marduk) functioned as the divine king and Nabû was his divine scribe.<sup>23</sup> The onomastic connection between 'Nebo', the mountain on which Moses dies, and 'Nebo' (Nabû), the Assyrian and Babylonian god of wisdom and scribalism offers a potential bridge between Moses and (the Babylonian god of) wisdom and scribalism.<sup>24</sup>

educational system in Iron Age Israel. As such, references to 'teachers' (usually as terms derived from הרִי or דָּנָל in the Hebrew Bible) are quite rare, predominantly appearing in very late texts (see e.g. 1 Chron. 25.8; Job 36.22; Ps. 119.99; Prov. 5.13; Isa. 30.20; 50.4; Hab. 2.18). In the New Testament, references to 'teachers' (usually διδάσκαλος) are much more common, as we start to see indications of the Jewish educational path that paved the way for the rabbinic period, which blossomed in the middle of the first millennium CE.

<sup>20</sup> Ezra would be the only other person to serve as a possible candidate for this title (i.e. the Hebrew Bible's scribe *par excellence*); however, the pedigree of Ezra's scribalism is specifically anchored to his connections to Moses, i.e. Ezra's is qualified *because* he is similar to Moses (Ezra 7.6).

<sup>21</sup> For biblical references featuring Moses serving as scribe, see Exod. 17.14; 24.4; 34.27-28; Num. 33.1-2; Deut. 31.9, 24-29.

<sup>22</sup> Interestingly, Isa. 46.1 refers to the gods Bel(-Marduk) and Nebo going into captivity in an inversion from the Jews' release from captivity under the sponsorship of Cyrus. Naturally, these references to going into or out from captivity comport with the story of Moses as the leader of the Israelite exodus from captivity.

<sup>23</sup> For a thorough description of Nabû, the Babylonian god of writing, see A. R. Millard, 'Nabû', in *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible* (eds Karel van der Toorn, Bob Becking and Pieter W. van der Horst; Leiden: Brill, 1999), 607-10. The tie between Moses and Mount Nebo could then implicitly suggest that Moses functioned as scribe (Nabû) to Yahweh as king (Marduk).

<sup>24</sup> This connection has been clear to some scholars (see, e.g. Schniedewind, *How the Bible Became a Book*, 26). However, others have challenged that connection. For example, A. R. Millard rejects the notion of associating Nebo, the mountain on which Moses dies, with the Babylonian god, Nabû, stating, 'there is no compelling reason, apart from the identical spelling, to associate' the toponym,

#### 4. Exodus from the cave

As we noticed earlier, the term ‘education’ etymologically derives from the notion of ‘drawing out’. Along these lines, the Allegory of the Cave presents Platonic education in terms of a narrative in which one is ‘drawn out’ from her or his imprisonment in a shadowy state of pseudo-reality and into the sunlit realm of ultimate reality.

Interestingly, the Book of Exodus features Moses as the lead character in this same story. First, the Book of Exodus follows the same basic spatial orientation that we find in the Allegory of the Cave, alternating from Point A to Point B: A person travels from the place of captivity (Point A) to the place of liberation (Point B); subsequently that person decides to leave the place of liberation (Point B), travelling back to the place of captivity (Point A) for the sake of assisting other captives journey from the place of captivity (Point A) to the place of liberation (Point B).<sup>25</sup>

The Book of Exodus introduces Moses as someone who was born in the context of an oppressive Egyptian political system. Early in his story, Moses escapes Egypt (i.e. the cave), journeys to another land, and in the burning bush theophany at Mount Horeb/Sinai encounters God (i.e. the sunlight). This experience of encountering God (the sunlight) leads him to journey back into Egypt (the cave) in order to liberate its prisoners. Moses then spends

Nebo, with the Akkadian god. Millard, ‘Nabû’, 609, bases this claim upon the observation that ‘Nabû is not known to have had devotees in those regions.’

Millard’s rejection of association between Moses’ death spot and the god Nabû seems to misunderstand the criteria for making such an association. Devotees to Nabû do not need to be historically located in the region of Moab in order for the location of Moses’ death to be tied to the Babylonian god of wisdom and writing. Aside from the references to Moses’ death (Deut. 32.49; 34.1), the other texts that Millard cites basically cohere in their attestation of Nebo as a toponym in the vicinity of Moab: notably all of these toponymic references to ‘Nebo’ in Num. 32.3; 33.47; Ezra 2.29; Neh. 7.34 (*sic?* ‘Nebo’ [נבון] appears in Neh. 7.33 in both Hebrew and English versions of the book) appear in biblical texts that are the products of exilic/post-exilic priestly redaction. As such, they reflect a geographic outlook that is historically set in the wake of Babylonian political presence in that area. Furthermore, regarding the references to Nebo as Moses’ death spot (Deut. 32.49; 34.1) it is vital to acknowledge their structural proximity to references to Moses’ scribal activity.

<sup>25</sup> Spatial transition is a central theme within the Book of Exodus. On this topic, see especially, Mark S. Smith, *The Pilgrimage Pattern in Exodus* (JSOTSUP 239; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1997). In addition to the polarity of Egypt versus Mount Sinai, the Book of Exodus emphasizes the stations of the Israelite journey through its repetition of the word עָסַתְּ (‘set out’): Exod. 12.37; 13.20; 15.22; 16.1; 17.1; 19.2; 40.36-37. Moreover, even while the Israelites remain encamped at Mount Sinai for the latter half of the Book of Exodus, Moses’ recurring trips up and down the mountain as the intermediary between God (on the mountaintop) and the people (camped at the base) participate in the motif of the educator’s journey; Rolf P. Knierim, ‘The Composition of the Pentateuch’, *SBLSP* 24 (1985): 393–415.



the majority of the Book of Exodus facilitating the process of the Israelites' liberation from Egypt (the cave) and journey into the presence of God (the sunlight).

Second, both the Allegory of the Cave and the Book of Exodus present the difference between the beginning point (the cave) and the ending point (the sunlight) in terms of degrees of revelation: the cave offers a filtered imitation of reality whereas the sunlight offers an unadulterated view of reality. Just as Socrates declares for those who are imprisoned within the cave, 'such men would hold that the truth is nothing other than the shadows of artificial things' (*Rep.* 7.515c), the Book of Exodus portrays Egypt as a pseudo-reality, a cave of shadowy, artificial things. 'Knowing' (יָדַע) serves as one of the central themes of the Book of Exodus and Egypt's basic problem is that it 'does not know'. According to Exodus 1.8, the Egyptians enslaved the Israelites on the premise that the new Pharaoh 'did not know Joseph' (לֹא יָדָע יוֹסֵף). Moreover, in Exodus 5.2, Pharaoh resists Moses' demand to release the Israelite people (predicated upon YHWH's authority) by stating 'I do not know YHWH' (לֹא יָדָעְתִּי יְהוָה). Consequently, in order to correct this slavery built upon the premise of ignorance, YHWH embeds the disclosure of his identity within the process of liberating the Israelites from Egypt, repeatedly exclaiming that everyone – the Egyptians, the Israelites and even those outside of Egypt – will 'know' YHWH.<sup>26</sup>

It seems to be largely owing to the theme of the disclosure of knowledge that the Book of Exodus prefers to refer to the so-called plagues as 'signs' (אֵימֹת). The word, 'plague', typically translates the Hebrew word, נֶגַף, which means 'to strike'.<sup>27</sup> Although the narrative features this word, 'plague' (נֶגַף), it uses the term, 'sign' (אֵימֹת), much more prominently and abundantly.<sup>28</sup> As such, the purpose of YHWH's so-called plagues ultimately rests within their capacity to serve as 'signs' disclosing a greater reality than the mere pseudo-reality of Egypt.

<sup>26</sup> The Israelites will know what YHWH has done (Exod. 6.7; 10.2; 16.6, 12); the Egyptians will know what YHWH has done (Exod. 7.5, 17; 8.6, 18 [8.10, 22 in English]; 9.14, 29; 11.7; 14.4, 18); Jethro as a representative of those outside of Egypt know what YHWH has done (Exod. 18.10-11).

<sup>27</sup> Alternatively, Exodus 11.1 uses נֶגַף instead of נֶגַף.

<sup>28</sup> For occurrences of the word, 'plague' (נֶגַף or נֶגַף) in Exod. 1-14, see Exod. 7.27 (8.2 in English); 9.14; 11.1; 12.23, 27, 30. For occurrences of the word, 'sign' (אֵימֹת) in Exod. 1-14, see Exod. 3.12; 4.8-9, 17, 28, 30; 8.19 (8.23 in English); 10.1-2; 12.13; 13.9, 16.



Third, like the shadows cast upon the cave wall, the Book of Exodus presents Egypt as imitators of YHWH's ultimate reality. The Egyptian Nile infanticide (Exod. 1.22–2:10) bears important ties to the Noah-flood story (Gen. 6–8), suggesting that the Egyptian drowning campaign is a twisted imitation of God's earlier drowning campaign.<sup>29</sup> Moreover, the Egyptian magicians are able to imitate some of YHWH's early signs; however, eventually they cannot continue to replicate YHWH's revelation of ultimate reality.<sup>30</sup>

Fourth, just as the cave is a place of darkness, the Egyptians' vision is obscured by a shroud of darkness. The darkened nature of Egypt becomes increasingly evident in the narrative as YHWH's signs overwhelm Egypt: eventually YHWH sends such a dense swarm of locusts upon Egypt so that in Exodus 10.15, 'it covered the eye of all of the land and it darkened the land' (עָרָאָה דְּשָׁחַתוּ עֵינֵי כָּל אֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם וַיִּשְׁכַּח הָאֲדָמָה). This 'darkening' (דְּשָׁח) of the land by locusts anticipates the next sign in Exodus 10.21–22, which is a full-blown gloomy 'darkness' (חֹשֶׁךְ) that lasts for three days. Notably, the narrative draws attention to the fact that Egypt does not recover from this darkness – the account of the sign of darkness (Exod. 10.21–29) ends with a revealing exchange between Pharaoh and Moses: Pharaoh tells Moses to be sure to 'never again see my face' (וְיִנְפֹךָ תֹּאמַר יִסְתַּלֵּא); Moses assures Pharaoh, 'it will be as you said – I will never again see your face' (תִּרְבֹּד וְנִי יִנְפֹךָ תֹּאמַר דּוּעַ יִסְתַּלֵּא). This tense interaction serves as a clever allusion within the narrative to the fact that YHWH's final sign before the release of the Israelites will be Passover, which occurs at midnight – i.e. shrouded in darkness so that, even though Pharaoh and Moses will converse once more, they will not be able to see each others' faces. In contrast to the darkness that engulfs Egypt, YHWH takes on the semblance of the light of undying

<sup>29</sup> The parallel between the drowning caused by God in Gen. 6–8 and the drowning caused by Egypt in Exod. 1.22 is, in fact, a component within the major theme within the Book of Exodus of portraying Moses as a new and better Noah. Some of the numerous links establishing this connection between Gen. 6–8 and the Book of Exodus include: Salvation from drowning waters; identification of a 'box' (הַבֵּת) as a defence from the waters; parallels between the construction of Noah's 'box' (הַבֵּת) and the Tabernacle (see e.g. Terence Fretheim, *Exodus* [Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching; Louisville: John Knox, 1991], 268–9); God changing his mind (סָחַג) in the context of assessing people as 'corrupt' (תָּחַשׁ) and consequently proposing to restart his efforts with humanity, focusing upon a single person in whom God has found 'favour' (חֵן) following a mass destruction of people (Gen. 6; Exod. 32–33).

<sup>30</sup> The imitation of the Egyptian magicians is a component of the first of three cycles of plagues (7.11–12, 22; 8.3, 14–15 [8.7, 18–19 in English]); for structures of the plagues narrative, see e.g. Fretheim, *Exodus*, 105–6.

fire, framing the Egyptian episode (Exod. 5–12) first by appearing as the burning bush (Exod. 3–4) and later appearing as the pillar of fire (Exod. 13–14). In conjunction with the notion that YHWH parallels the sunlight of Plato's Allegory of the Cave, some scholars recognize an association between YHWH and the sun within ancient Israelite religion.<sup>31</sup> Perhaps one of the most overt indications of this is the solar orientation of the Tabernacle (see e.g. Exod. 26.22; Num. 3.38).

Fifth, Platonic education is a matter of recollecting that which is forgotten; it is about memory.<sup>32</sup> In much the same manner, the Book of Exodus focuses upon restoring a forgotten bond between God and Israel. Exodus 2.24 emphasizes this, noting the point at which God 'remembers' (רָמַז) his covenant with Israel. Based upon this recollection, God then meets Moses and commissions Moses upon the premise of the restoration of a once-forgotten ancestral bond (Exod. 3.6, 15).

Sixth, in the Allegory of the Cave, Socrates notes that liberation is a difficult process for the prisoners whose eyes have become accustomed to the darkness (*Rep.* 7.515c–516b). Similarly, Moses anticipates resistance from the Israelite prisoners when God commissions him to draw them out of Egypt (Exod. 3.13; 4.1). As expected, the Israelites display discomfort with their transition from the cave into the sunlight, expressing a desire to return to Egypt (Exod. 16.2-3; 17.2-3) and an unwillingness to be in the presence of God (Exod. 20.18-21).

Seventh, we should note one last connection between the concept of education within the Allegory of the Cave and the Book of Exodus based upon the notion of 'drawing out.' As we have seen, the notion of 'drawing out' is central to the concept of education: 'drawing out' is the etymological basis for the Latin-based word 'education,' and 'drawing out' is the principal action of the educator in Plato's Allegory of the Cave. In conjunction with these, it is important to note that Moses' very name means 'draw out.' Exod. 2.10 semantically links the name, 'Moses' (הַמֹּשֶׁה), to the Hebrew term for 'drawing out' ('*mašah*,' מָשַׁח). Exodus 2.10 explains this meaning of Moses' name in relation

<sup>31</sup> J. Glen Taylor, 'Was Yahweh Worshipped as the Sun?' *BAR* 20 (1994): 52–61, 90–1; Mark S. Smith, 'The Near Eastern Background of Solar Language for Yahweh,' *JBL* 109 (1990), 29–39; for a comprehensive argument on this topic, see J. Glen Taylor, *Yahweh and the Sun: Biblical and Archaeological Evidence for Sun Worship in Ancient Israel* (JSOTSUP 111; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993).

<sup>32</sup> Steinar Bøyum, 'The Concept of Philosophical Education,' *Educational Theory* 60.5 (2010): 548.

to Pharaoh's daughter drawing the infant Moses out of the water of the Nile.<sup>33</sup> This, of course, anticipates Moses' role later in the narrative, 'drawing out' Israel from the Red Sea in particular and from Egypt in general.

### 5. Education's rejection of empire

As we have seen, despite the disparate political circumstances of Athens and Jerusalem in the mid-first millennium BCE, these communities generated parallel narrative models of education. For Athens, this took shape in the famous Allegory of the Cave, one of several illustrations that Plato uses to explain the learning process. For Jerusalem, this took shape as the Book of Exodus.<sup>34</sup>

Both the Allegory of the Cave and the Book of Exodus represent a rejection of conventional notions of education. The Allegory of the Cave indicates this by highlighting the misconceptions of educators. Plato's mission in the *Republic* is to re-imagine the polis and overturning misguided notions of education is an important component within that mission. Although, unlike the Allegory of the Cave, the Book of Exodus does not overtly claim to challenge 'education', its thematic attention to 'knowledge' (עֵדִי) indicates its interest in addressing the bases for thought systems.

Built into this, both the Allegory of the Cave and the Book of Exodus feature an anti-urban component. The artificial items within Plato's cave signify urban achievements that one must reject in order to begin to become truly educated. The Book of Exodus is even more aggressive about this point, pitting rural Mount Sinai against urban Egypt. After Moses re-enters the cave, he liberates its prisoners from their shadowy, artificial realm as slaves of Egypt and escorts them to the metaphoric sunlight of the theophany on Mount Sinai. Following God's *figurative* education of the people represented by the

<sup>33</sup> Names play an important role in the Book of Exodus: the very title of Book of Exodus in Hebrew, תּוֹמֵשׁ, means 'names'; the book opens by listing Israelite tribal names (1.2-4), the burning bush episode gives special attention to the disclosure of the divine name, הַיְהוָה (3.13-15); a second disclosure of the divine name distinguishes it from earlier names that God uses (6.2-3); it is Pharaoh's failure to recognize and respect the divine name (5.1-2) that establishes the premise for the plagues narrative.

<sup>34</sup> Although biblical scholars recognize that the Book of Exodus gradually developed over time, they also generally acknowledge that the last major components of the book came together during the Persian period. As such, the book in its final form is ultimately a Persian period literary work.

exodus from Egypt through the agency of Moses (Exod. 5–18), God begins the *literal* education of the people by the transmission of laws and instructions through the agency of Moses (Exod. 19–40).

What this demonstrates is a basic conceptual consistency between ostensibly disparate cultures regarding ancient notions of education. The Allegory of the Cave and the Book of Exodus both argue that societies use cultural dogmas, sometimes even under the guise of education, in order to shackle their constituent populations within a social framework. These two texts champion the concept that true education occurs once one removes herself or himself from the stagnancy of the imitative illusions of the propagandistic cosmopolitan realm and embraces the mysterious uncertainties of liberation.



# Observing a Teacher of *Progymnasmata*

Ronald F. Hock

## 1. *Ancient education and modern scholarship*

Scholarship does not stand still, and yet for the latter half of the twentieth century this axiom did not apply in the case of the history of ancient education. Instead, dominating the field was H. I. Marrou's comprehensive and detailed *Histoire de l'éducation dans l'antiquité*, first published in 1948 and translated in 1956 into English, in the form best known to us, as *A History of Education in Antiquity*.<sup>1</sup> The dominance of Marrou's *History* arises from its superiority to what had gone before as well as from its comprehensiveness and detail that documented primary, secondary and tertiary education from Homeric times through its mature form in the Hellenistic period on down to the end of antiquity.<sup>2</sup>

### 1.1. *Primary and secondary education*

And yet the axiom still holds. Scholarship does move on. By the late twentieth century scholars began to challenge Marrou's dominance in a variety of ways. New general, if more focused, accounts of ancient education

<sup>1</sup> See H. I. Marrou, *Histoire de l'éducation dans l'antiquité* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1948), and H. I. Marrou, *A History of Education in Antiquity* (trans. George Lamb; New York: Sheed and Ward, 1956). The dominance of this book is reflected in the French version going through five subsequent editions and the English version being reissued by the University of Wisconsin Press in 1982. It has also been translated into many other languages.

<sup>2</sup> For a fine analysis of Marrou's book, see Yun Lee Too, 'Writing the History of Ancient Education', which introduces the volume she edited, titled *Education in Greek and Roman History* (ed. Yun Lee Too; Leiden: Brill, 2001), 1–21. Two points of interest: first, she notes that Marrou, an intellectual historian of early Christianity, wrote this book, starting in 1943, as a mere favour for a friend who was the editor of Paris' Éditions de Seuil, and, second, Too situates Marrou's *History* in the *Annales* tradition of French historiography with its emphasis on *la longue durée*, which makes sense of Marrou's comprehensive sweep of the largely Greek, specifically Hellenistic, form of education continuing through Roman and Christian versions and even on up to modern Europe.

began to appear, beginning with that by Stanley Bonner and others<sup>3</sup> and more especially by Raffaella Cribiore.<sup>4</sup> Cribiore in particular has changed our view of ancient education by putting less emphasis on the literary accounts used by previous scholars and focusing instead on the papyri, wooden tablets and ostraca – now over 400 – from the sands of Egypt that document actual classroom activities. This documentary evidence frequently corrects the often idealized and uniform literary record and provides greater specificity and fluidity in reconstructing when and what students learned. This evidence is especially abundant for the first two levels of the ancient curriculum, that is, the primary level (learning to read), starting at age seven, and the secondary level (reading literature and learning grammar), starting at about age eleven.<sup>5</sup>

A few examples from Cribiore's and others' work will illustrate a more nuanced picture of ancient education.<sup>6</sup> For example, she has used the numerous documentary texts to create a typology of hands: zero-grade, alphabetic, evolving and rapid.<sup>7</sup> It is this typology that has shown the fluidity in when and what students learned. At the primary level students first learned to write their own names, something missed by earlier scholars.<sup>8</sup> They also learned the alphabet, sometimes forwards and backwards, and copied lists of words as well as short passages which they could not read but could use to

<sup>3</sup> See Stanley F. Bonner, *Education in Ancient Rome: From the Elder Cato to the Younger Pliny* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977). Cf. also Alan Booth, 'Elementary and Secondary Education in the Roman Empire', *Florilegium* 1 (1979): 1–14; Robert Caster, 'Notes on Primary and Secondary Schools in Late Antiquity', *TAPA* 113 (1983): 323–46; and Teresa Morgan, *Literate Education in the Hellenistic and Roman Worlds* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

<sup>4</sup> See Raffaella Cribiore, *Gymnastics of the Mind: Greek Education in Hellenistic and Roman Egypt* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001). This book incorporates and extends the work she did in *Writing, Teachers, and Students in Graeco-Roman Egypt* (ASP 36; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996). See more recently her *School of Libanius in Late Antique Antioch* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), and *Libanius the Sophist: Rhetoric, Reality and Religion in the Fourth Century* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2013).

<sup>5</sup> For catalogues of this evidence, see Cribiore, *Writing*, 173–287, and Janine Debut, 'Les documents scolaires', *ZPE* 63 (1986): 251–78.

<sup>6</sup> For the standard view, based largely on literary sources and some documentary ones, see Marrou, *History of Education*, 150–9, 265–74; and Bonner, *Education*, 166–78. Still, some documentary sources have long been available. See esp. *Les Papyrus Bouriant* (ed. Paul Collart; Paris: Édouard Champion, 1926). Cf. also J. Grafton Milne, 'Relics of Graeco-Roman Schools', *JHS* 28 (1908): 121–32; Paul Beudel, *Qua ratione Graeci liberos educerint, papyris, ostracis, tabulis in Aegypto inventis illustrator* (Dissertation, Münster, 1911); Erich Ziebarth, *Aus der antiken Schule: Sammlung griechischer Texte auf Papyrus, Holztafeln, Ostraka* (2nd edn; Bonn: Marcus und Weber, 1913); and Paul Collart, 'À l'école avec les petits grecs d'Égypte', *CdÉ* 11 (1936): 489–507.

<sup>7</sup> See Cribiore, *Writing*, 102–18.

<sup>8</sup> See Cribiore, *Writing*, 40, 139–52, and *Gymnastics*, 167–9.

improve their handwriting.<sup>9</sup> Calligraphy was thus important, and it continued at the secondary level. These students, now with evolving and rapid hands, still practised handwriting on lists of words, a clear break with the alleged *ordo docendi* of the literary sources.<sup>10</sup> These lists, often made up of names of gods, Homeric heroes and even philosophers, also supplied students with cultural knowledge.<sup>11</sup> The focus at the secondary stage, however, was reading the poets, especially Homer and strikingly few others,<sup>12</sup> as well as grammar, which included declensions of nouns on to inflecting a complete sentence, such as a *chreia* attributed to Pythagoras, through all the cases and numbers.<sup>13</sup> Besides poets and grammar students began to compose simple paraphrases and might even write letters home, the latter presumably to impress the parents who were paying for their education.<sup>14</sup>

### 1.2. Tertiary education

At the tertiary level, as we have noted, this evidence tapers off due to the drastically reduced number of students who advanced to the study of rhetoric, beginning with *progymnasmata* and then with rhetoric proper.<sup>15</sup> Accordingly, at this level we are still dependent on the rhetorical texts that survived antiquity on parchment and then made it into print. Two of the standard collections of rhetorical texts from the nineteenth century are still partially in use: Christian Walz's *Rhetores Graeci*, published in nine volumes from 1832 to 1836,<sup>16</sup> and Leonard Spengel's like-named *Rhetores Graeci*, published in three volumes in 1854–5.<sup>17</sup> The rhetorical texts of interest here, and long of interest to me, are the textbooks of composition, argumentation and style that

<sup>9</sup> See Criboire, *Writing*, 43–4, and *Gymnastics*, 169–70.

<sup>10</sup> See Criboire, *Writing*, 129–35.

<sup>11</sup> See Janine Debut, 'De l'usage des listes de mots comme fondement de la pédagogie dans l'antiquité', *REA* 85 (1983): 261–74, esp. 263–9.

<sup>12</sup> Papyri of Homer's *Iliad* predominate, being three times more frequent than those of the *Odyssey*; only one tenth as often do papyri of Euripides appear (see further Criboire, *Gymnastics*, 194–201, and Morgan, *Literate Education*, 105–16). See also Ronald F. Hock, 'Homer in Greco-Roman Education', in *Mimesis and Intertextuality in Antiquity and Christianity* (ed. Dennis R. MacDonald; Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 2001), 56–71.

<sup>13</sup> See Frederic G. Kenyon, 'Two Greek School Tablets', *JHS* 29 (1909): 29–40, esp. 29–31.

<sup>14</sup> Criboire, *Gymnastics*, 216–19.

<sup>15</sup> See further Morgan, *Literate Education*, 57, 64, 72, and esp. Criboire, *Gymnastics*, 233–4.

<sup>16</sup> See *Rhetores Graeci* (ed. Christian Walz; 9 vols; Stuttgart: Cotta, 1832–6; repr. Osnabrück: Zeller, 1968).

<sup>17</sup> See *Rhetores Graeci* (ed. Leonardus Spengel; 3 vols; Leipzig: Teubner, 1853–6; vol. 1 revised by C. Hammer in 1865; repr. Frankfurt: Minerva, 1966).



prepared students for rhetoric proper and are known as *progymnasmata*<sup>18</sup> as well as the collections of model *progymnasmata*<sup>19</sup> and the commentaries on Aphthonius's textbook.<sup>20</sup>

### 1.3. *Progymnasmata*

To back up, Walz included the *Progymnasmata* attributed to Aphthonius, Hermogenes and Theon, and Spengel added a reconstructed version of the *Progymnasmata* by Nicolaus of Myra, which had been known previously from a notice in the Suda.<sup>21</sup> Spengel's reconstruction of Nicolaus's *Progymnasmata* was based on some detective work by Eberhard Finckh, who had noted that some brief quotations from Nicolaus in the Aphthonian commentator Doxapatres matched portions in the Aphthonian scholia.<sup>22</sup> Spengel then used these scholia to fill out the rest of Nicolaus's text.<sup>23</sup> At the end of the century Heinrich Graeven discovered an actual, if incomplete, manuscript of Nicolaus's *Progymnasmata* in the British Museum,<sup>24</sup> which confirmed Finckh's detection and allowed Joseph Felten in 1913 to produce what has become the standard edition of Nicolaus.<sup>25</sup>

Standard editions of some other *Progymnasmata* also appear in the early twentieth century. Again in 1913 Hugo Rabe edited the *Progymnasmata* attributed to Hermogenes.<sup>26</sup> Then in 1926 he edited the *Progymnasmata* of Aphthonius.<sup>27</sup> Rabe had intended to edit Theon as well, but his death in 1932 and the wartime destruction of his notes<sup>28</sup> put a stop to that effort,

<sup>18</sup> See *The Progymnasmata*. Vol. 1 of *The Chreia in Ancient Rhetoric* (eds. Ronald F. Hock and Edward N. O'Neil; SBLTT 27; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1986).

<sup>19</sup> See *Classroom Exercises*. Vol. 2 of *The Chreia and Ancient Rhetoric* (eds. Ronald F. Hock and Edward N. O'Neil; WGRW 2; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2002).

<sup>20</sup> *Commentaries on Aphthonius's Progymnasmata*. Vol. 3 of *The Chreia and Ancient Rhetoric* (ed. Ronald F. Hock; WGRW 31; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2012).

<sup>21</sup> See Suda 3.469 Adler: Νικόλαος ... ἔγραψε προγυμνάσματα.

<sup>22</sup> See Finckh's *praefatio* in Spengel, *Rhetores Graeci*, 3.xxv.

<sup>23</sup> For Spengel's reconstruction, see his *Rhetores Graeci*, 3.449–98,

<sup>24</sup> See Heinrich Graeven, 'Die Progymnasmata des Nicolaos', *Hermes* 30 (1895): 471–3.

<sup>25</sup> See *Nicolai Progymnasmata* (ed. Joseph Felten; *Rhetores Graeci* 11; Leipzig: Teubner, 1913). Graeven's manuscript ends towards the end of Chapter 8 on encomium and invective (at p. 58, 18 Felten) so that he must rely on the Aphthonian scholia for the remainder of his text (some twenty-one pages).

<sup>26</sup> See *Hermogenis Opera* (ed. Hugo Rabe; *Rhetores Graeci* 6; Leipzig: Teubner, 1913), 1–27.

<sup>27</sup> See *Aphthonii Progymnasmata* (ed. Hugo Rabe; *Rhetores Graeci* 10; Leipzig: Teubner, 1926), 1–51.

<sup>28</sup> On Rabe's death and the loss to scholarship, see Georg Lehnert, review of H. Rabe, *Prolegomenon Sylloge*, *PhW* 54 (1934): 65–74, esp. 65. On the destruction of Rabe's notes, see A. E. Douglas, review of I. Lana, *I Progimnasmata di Elio Teone*, *CR* 11 (1961): 164–5, esp. 164.

so Spengel's edition continued to be used until 2002 when Michel Patillon published a text of Theon that restored the original order of the chapters and included the missing chapters that had survived in Armenian.<sup>29</sup>

The gap between Rabe's various editions and Patillon's parallels the gap in scholarship on the *Progymnasmata*. As a result, in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries scholarship has increased significantly. General surveys of the *Progymnasmata* have appeared, in particular that by Herbert Hunger,<sup>30</sup> and George Kennedy has produced a useful translation of all the *Progymnasmata*.<sup>31</sup> Specific studies have also begun to proliferate. A few examples: Malcolm Heath has attempted to re-date Theon's *Progymnasmata*. Scholars typically assign Theon to the first century CE, in part due to a reference to a Stoic named Theon mentioned by Quintilian,<sup>32</sup> but Heath points out that there is another Theon, a fifth-century Platonist, mentioned in the Aphthonian commentators,<sup>33</sup> and a number of passages makes better sense when read in this later context.<sup>34</sup> Heath also argues that the *Progymnasmata* attributed to the second-century Hermogenes of Tarsus but widely discounted by scholars could well be the *Progymnasmata* by Minucianus, which is no longer extant but mentioned in the Suda.<sup>35</sup> Craig Gibson has confirmed what many have only suspected that Nicolaus was a Christian on the basis of a typically Christian pairing of words, παιδοφθόρος and μοιχός (boy-corrupter and adulterer), which appear in his discussion of the common place.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>29</sup> See *Aelius Theon Progymnasmata* (eds Michel Patillon and Giancarlo Bolognesi; Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2002).

<sup>30</sup> Still the best comprehensive survey is that by Herbert Hunger, *Die hochsprachliche profane Literatur der Byzantiner* (2 vols; HAW 12.5.1-5; Munich: Beck, 1978), 1:92–120. Cf. also Bonner, *Education*, 250–76; Ruth Webb, 'The Progymnasmata as Practice', in *Education in Greek and Roman Antiquity* (ed. Yun Lee Too; Leiden: Brill, 2001), 289–316; Malcolm Heath, 'Theon and the History of the Progymnasmata', *GRBS* 43 (2003): 129–60; Manfred Kraus, 'Aphthonius and the Progymnasmata in Rhetorical Theory and Practice', in *Sizing Up Rhetoric* (eds. David Zarefsky and Elizabeth Benacka; Long Grove, IL: Waveland, 2008), 52–67; and Robert J. Penella, 'Progymnasmata in Imperial Greek Education', *CW* 105 (2011): 77–90.

<sup>31</sup> See George Kennedy, *Progymnasmata: Greek Textbooks of Prose Composition and Rhetoric* (WGRW 10; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003), 1–172.

<sup>32</sup> See Quintilian, 3.6.48 and 9.3.76. For the first-century dating, see Willi Stegemann, 'Theon (5)', *RE* 5A (1934): cols. 2037–54, esp. cols. 2037–8, and Hock and O'Neil, *Progymnasmata*, 63–5, 75 n. 10.

<sup>33</sup> See John of Sardis, *Comm. in Aphth.* 12 (p. 218, 3 Rabe), and Doxapatres, 2.513, 25–6 Walz.

<sup>34</sup> See Heath, 'History of the Progymnasmata', 141–58.

<sup>35</sup> See Heath, 'History of the Progymnasmata', 132, 158–60.

<sup>36</sup> See Nicolaus, *Progymn.* 7 (p. 45, 13–14 Felten), and Craig Gibson, 'Was Nicolaus the Sophist a Christian?' *VC* 64 (2010): 496–500.

#### 1.4. Collections of sample *progymnasmata*

Advances have also appeared recently with regard to the collections of sample *progymnasmata*. All sample *chreia* elaborations are now available,<sup>37</sup> but pride of place goes to Craig Gibson's text and translation of Libanius's voluminous sample *progymnasmata*, long available in the eighth volume of Richard Foerster's Teubner edition.<sup>38</sup> In addition, Eugenio Amato has re-edited the surviving sample narratives and speeches-in-character of Libanius's student, Severus of Alexandria.<sup>39</sup> And Gibson has prepared a text and translation of the sample *progymnasmata* by Nikepheros Basilakes for the Dumbarton Oaks Medieval Library<sup>40</sup> and has investigated some of the sample *progymnasmata* included by Doxaptores in his commentary on Aphthonius.<sup>41</sup>

#### 1.5. Commentaries on Aphthonius's *Progymnasmata*

But when it comes to the commentaries on Aphthonius, scholarship has not advanced much beyond Hugo Rabe's extensive work. At the start of the twentieth century he did much to sort out the commentary tradition on Aphthonius's *Progymnasmata*. The scholia that contained the *Progymnasmata* of Nicolaus received attention first,<sup>42</sup> as Rabe realized that these scholia along with those on the other Hermogenean works that make up the *Corpus Hermogenianum* (that is, the *Progymnasmata* of Aphthonius and four rhetorical treatises attributed to Hermogenes, the latter also the subject of significant recent scholarship<sup>43</sup>) were part of a coherent rhetorical corpus best represented in

<sup>37</sup> See Hock and O'Neil, *Classroom Exercises*, 79–359.

<sup>38</sup> See *Libanius's Progymnasmata: Model Exercises in Greek Prose Composition and Rhetoric* (trans. Craig Gibson; WGRW 27; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2008). Cf. Richardus Foerster, *Libanius Opera* (12 vols.; Leipzig: Teubner, 1903–27), 8.24–571.

<sup>39</sup> See Eugenio Amato, ed., *Severus Sophista Alexandrinus: Progymnasmata quae exstant omnia* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2009). Some of these *progymnasmata* have long been available in Walz, *Rhetores Graeci*, 1.534–48, and have received brief attention in a series of articles by Otmar Schissel and his students, all with the same title: Schissel, 'Severus von Alexandria: Ein verschollener griechischer Schriftsteller des IV. Jahrhunderts n. Chr.', *BNJ* 8 (1929–30): 1–13; F. P. Karntaler, *BNJ* 8 (1929–30): 327–30; Joseph Gletner, *BNJ* 9 (1930–31): 96–103; Anna Staudacher, *BNJ* 10 (1931–2): 321–4; and Karl Pichler, *BNJ* 11 (1934–5): 11–24.

<sup>40</sup> The volume is scheduled for publication in 2015 (via email of 7 October 2014).

<sup>41</sup> See Craig Gibson, 'The Anonymous Progymnasmata in John Doxaptores' *Homiliae in Aphthonium*', *BZ* 102 (2009): 83–94.

<sup>42</sup> See Walz, *Rhetores Graeci*, 2.1–68, 565–684.

<sup>43</sup> Recently Hermogenes's treatises have received renewed attention. A new edition has appeared: *Hermogène: L'Art rhétorique: Traduction française intégrale, Introduction et notes* (ed. Michel Patillon; Paris: L'Âge d'homme, 1997), and translations are now available: Malcolm Heath, *Hermogenes, On Issues: Strategies of Argument in Later Greek Rhetoric* (Oxford: Clarendon Press,

two Paris manuscripts, Paris. gr. 1893 and 2977.<sup>44</sup> He dated the corpus to about the year 1000 and called it P.<sup>45</sup> Little came of this work. Except for detecting an Introduction to Rhetoric among the Aphthonian scholia<sup>46</sup> and editing some parts of P that deal with the Hermogenean treatises in his *Prolegomenon Sylloge*,<sup>47</sup> Rabe's work was overshadowed by the discovery of manuscripts that contained another and earlier commentary by John of Sardis that was known previously only from some quotations in Doxapatres.<sup>48</sup> Rabe himself edited this commentary.<sup>49</sup> Rabe also did some preliminary work on the commentary by John Doxapatres, such as securely dating him to the late eleventh century<sup>50</sup> and tracing his many quotations – over 90 alone, for example, in the case of the tenth-century commentator John Geometres<sup>51</sup> – not back to the sources themselves but to an earlier *Vorlage* or collection of scholia.<sup>52</sup>

Since Rabe the commentaries on Aphthonius have largely remained on the shelf, perhaps because, as one reviewer of the *Prolegomenon* put it, these texts are 'a dreary waste of pedantry and triviality'.<sup>53</sup> But scholarship is picking up. Hunger includes a brief but orienting discussion of the commentaries in his survey,<sup>54</sup> and George Kustas uses Doxapatres to good effect in his learned analysis of rhetorical obscurity in Christian, or Byzantine, theology.<sup>55</sup> In

1995), 28–60; Cecil W. Wooten, *Hermogenes, On Types of Style* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1987); and *Invention and Method: Two Rhetorical Treatises from the Hermogenic Corpus* (ed. and trans. George A. Kennedy; WGRW 15; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2005).

<sup>44</sup> See Hugo Rabe, 'Aus Rhetoren-Handschriften. 3. Die Quellen des Doxapatres in den Homilien zu Aphthonius', *RhM* 62 (1907), pp. 559–86, and 'Rhetoren-Corpora', *RhM* 67 (1912): 321–57, esp. 323–32. For fuller discussion, see Hock, *Commentaries*, 85–8.

<sup>45</sup> Rabe, 'Rhetoren-Corpora', 324.

<sup>46</sup> See Rabe, 'Quellen des Doxapatres', 559–62. For details, see Hock, *Commentaries*, 88–91. This 'Introduction to Rhetoric' appears in *Prolegomenon Sylloge* (ed. Hugo Rabe; *Rhetores Graeci* 14; Leipzig: Teubner, 1931), 59–64.

<sup>47</sup> See Rabe, *Prolegomenon*, 183–228, 238–55, 255–8, 351.

<sup>48</sup> In 1908 Rabe made reference to this discovery in two articles: 'Aus Rhetoren-Handschriften: 5. Des Diaconen und Logotheten Johannes Kommentar zu Hermogenes' Περὶ Μεθόδου δεινότητος', *RhM* 63 (1908): 127–51, esp. 128–30, and 'Aus Rhetoren-Handschriften: 6. Weitere Textquelle für Johannes Diakonos', *RhM* 63 (1908): 512–30, esp. 517.

<sup>49</sup> *Ioannis Sardiani Commentarium in Aphthonii Progymnasmata* (ed. Hugo Rabe; *Rhetores Graeci* 15; Leipzig: Teubner, 1927).

<sup>50</sup> See Rabe, *Prolegomenon*, li–lii, and 'Quellen des Doxapatres', 580–1. Cf. further Hock, *Commentaries*, 129–31.

<sup>51</sup> See Rabe, 'Quellen des Doxapatres', 573.

<sup>52</sup> See Rabe, 'Quellen des Doxapatres', 564–74, 585, accepted by Hunger, *Literatur*, p. 1.79. Cf. Hock, *Commentaries*, 132–3.

<sup>53</sup> See J. D. Denniston, 'Review of H. Rabe, *Prolegomenon Sylloge*', *CR* 46 (1932): 86.

<sup>54</sup> See Hunger, *Literatur*, 1.78–9.

<sup>55</sup> See George Kustas, *Studies in Byzantine Rhetoric* (Analecta Blatadon 17; Thessaloniki: Patriarchal Institute for Patristic Studies, 1973).

addition, Kennedy has translated portions of John of Sardis's commentary,<sup>56</sup> and K. Alpers has published a monograph on John of Sardis.<sup>57</sup> Craig Gibson is collecting and translating the ninety fragments of Geometres's commentary that are preserved by Doxapatres.

That this scholarship on the commentaries is rather thin and sporadic, however, is no measure of their potential value for our understanding of rhetorical education. Indeed, were it not for these commentaries we would be in the dark about how students were taught the individual *progymnasmata*. And especially helpful in this regard is the thorough and detailed commentary by Doxapatres, which is the longest at 483 pages in Walz's edition<sup>58</sup> and which gives us the specifics on what and how a teacher might have guided his students through Aphthonius's spare treatment, a mere fifty-one pages in Rabe's edition.

To be sure, Doxapatres's late eleventh-century date might cause us to pause when using his commentary for education in the Greco-Roman period – as in the Christian content of some of his comments<sup>59</sup> – but a number of factors make this date less problematic. First, Doxapatres's quotations often go back many centuries – for example, from the first century BCE to the third century CE which would include Dionysius Thrax, Aristides, Lucian and Hermagoras.<sup>60</sup>

Second, the very genre of the commentary also goes back many centuries before Doxapatres. The earliest commentary on *progymnasmata*, of which we have evidence, even if not on Aphthonius's *Progymnasmata*, goes back to the third century when Menander of Laodicea wrote a commentary on the second-century *Progymnasmata* by Minucianus as well as on the Hermogenean treatises.<sup>61</sup> Moreover, the practice of writing commentaries on

<sup>56</sup> See Kennedy, *Progymnasmata*, 173–228.

<sup>57</sup> See K. Alpers, *Untersuchungen zu Johannes Sardianos und seinem Kommentar zu den Progymnasmata des Aphthonius* (Braunschweig: Cramer, 2009).

<sup>58</sup> See Walz, *Rhetores Graeci*, 2.81–564. This commentary would be even longer if the last chapter were complete, for comments on the last forty-one lines (in Rabe's edition) of Aphthonius's sample introduction of a law are missing. Walz (2.411 n. 29) also notes that material has been lost at the end of the common place chapter and the beginning of the encomium chapter.

<sup>59</sup> On the Christianizing, see further Hock, *Commentaries*, 137–8.

<sup>60</sup> See Doxapatres, 2.197, 7–8; 200, 1; 310, 15–20; and 416, 27 Walz (Dionysius Thrax); 115, 22; 134, 18; 447, 11; 497, 5 (Aristides); 495, 23 (Lucian); and 513, 24 (Hermagoras).

<sup>61</sup> See the Suda 3.361 Adler: Μένανδρος, Λαοδικεὺς τῆς παρὰ τῷ Λύκῳ ποταμῷ, σοφιστῆς. ἔραψεν ὑπόμνημα εἰς τὴν Ἑρμογένους τέχνην καὶ Μινουκιανοῦ Προγυμνάσματα, and Malcolm Heath, *Menander: A Rhetor in Context* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 93.

authoritative books in other fields, such as philosophy, medicine and literature, goes back to the first centuries of our era.<sup>62</sup> Indeed, the careful reading of these books by students with explanatory comments by the teacher was a principal pedagogical method in these disciplines, as evidenced by Epictetus, to cite but one example, whose students read with him classic Stoic works by Zeno and Chrysippus.<sup>63</sup>

Third, that Doxapatres's sources and genre were used for so many centuries is yet another example of *la longue durée* that characterized ancient education – from the Hellenistic, to the Greco-Roman, on through the Byzantine periods. Hence we can assume a broad continuity in the method and content of teaching that endured century after century.

## 2. Observing a teacher of Progymnasmata

Accordingly, in what follows I will use Doxapatres's extensive commentary to allow us to sit in on the classroom of a teacher like Doxapatres and observe how he might have guided his students through Aphthonius's *Progymnasmata*. Admittedly, we are not in the same position as we are for Epictetus, whose discourses (διατριβαί) possess a near stenographic record of the philosopher's engagement with his students.<sup>64</sup> Doxapatres wrote a commentary (ἐξήγησις) that provides an almost word for word analysis of Aphthonius's text. Still, the workings of a classroom can be reconstructed from this analysis. The comments would be the teacher's instruction, and the numerous 'It has been asked ...' can be seen as questions put to the teacher by an astute student. In addition, for reasons of space we will be able to sit in on the instruction for only two days, once at the very beginning, the first day of classes, and a second a little later during instruction in the narrative.

<sup>62</sup> For examples, see Jaap Mansfeld, *Prolegomena: Questions to be Settled before the Study of an Author or a Text* (PhilAnt 61; Leiden: Brill, 1994), 2–9.

<sup>63</sup> See Ronald F. Hock, "By the Gods, It's my One Desire to See an Actual Stoic": Epictetus' Relations with Students and Visitors in his Personal Network, *Semeia* 56 (1993): 121–43, esp. 136: '[F]or Epictetus being a Stoic required a rigorous academic training which included reading various textbooks on philosophy (2.16.34; 17.40; 21.10) but in particular the works of Chrysippus and other Stoics (1.4.6; 10.10; 17.13; 2.16.34; etc.), listening to Epictetus's expositions of them (2.6.23; 14.1; 21.11) ... [A]nd Epictetus took it seriously, too, rising early to prepare for class (1.10.8) and employing an assistant to help with the readings.'

<sup>64</sup> See Hock, 'An Actual Stoic', 122–3.

### 2.1. *The first day of classes*

What goes on this first day is not what the students expected as they began their study of Aphthonius's *Progymnasmata*, for, as Jaap Mansfeld has shown, there was much to discuss even before turning to a classic text like Aphthonius's. This discussion included addressing various and traditional topics, sometimes three, four or up to ten,<sup>65</sup> and such discussions were referred to by a conventional formula that appears, for example, in a title regarding the books of Democritus. The first-century CE Thrasyllus, as Mansfeld notes, wrote a treatise designed to introduce the philosopher's books and called it 'What comes before reading the books of Democritus' (Τὰ πρὸ τῆς ἀναγνώσεως τῶν Δημοκρίτου βιβλίων).<sup>66</sup>

We can thus modify this formula and say that our students were greeted on that first day with the subject 'What comes before reading (or studying) the *Progymnasmata* of Aphthonius (Τὰ πρὸ τῆς ἀναγνώσεως τῶν Ἀφθονίου Προγυμνασμάτων).' Doxapatres's introductory chapter<sup>67</sup> discusses precisely what might be included before reading Aphthonius's classic text and its first progymnasma, the fable. We begin our observations by acquainting ourselves with the students and their teacher. Doxapatres has some brief comments on both that are worth noting.

2.1.1. Students The students are young men who have just come from reading the poets under a grammarian, that is, from having completed their secondary education, probably at age fifteen years or so, and hence are ready to start the tertiary or rhetorical stage (p. 80, 11 Rabe). This stage began with the *progymnasmata*, which, Doxapatres says, will form a series of 'stair steps' (ἀναβαθμοί) (147, 18) that will allow them to ascend to the very threshold of rhetoric proper. The image of students ascending stair steps is both daunting and encouraging. Ascent suggests a difficult activity, and indeed 'for young students rhetoric is difficult to master, for it is not easy for those first learning

<sup>65</sup> For fuller discussion, see Hugo Rabe, 'Aus Rhetoren-Handschriften. 10. Einleitungen', *RhM* 64 (1909): 539–90, and Denis van Berchem, 'Poetes et grammariens: Recherche sur la tradition scolaire d'explication des auteurs', *MH* 9 (1952): 79–87.

<sup>66</sup> See Diogenes Laertius, 9.41, and Mansfeld, *Prolegomena*, 8, 97–105.

<sup>67</sup> Doxapatres's introductory chapter is available in both Walz, *Rhetores Graeci*, 2.81–144, and Rabe, *Prolegomenon Sylloge*, 80–155. References to this chapter here will be to Rabe's edition by page and line. For our subsequent discussion of the narrative chapter, we must still use Walz's edition.



the subject to grasp immediately all of its parts at once' (144, 19–20). Stair steps, however, also have a more positive connotation, as the ascent is made up of smaller, easier steps, and here is where the study of *progymnasmata* comes in. The *progymnasmata* are the stair steps by means of which students can become proficient not with the whole of rhetoric but with some part of it at each stage so that by working through the progymnasmatic sequence they will be ready to study rhetoric proper (144, 21–145, 2). And while stair steps do not remove all the difficulty, Doxapatres further bolsters the students' motivation by making rhetoric worth the effort when he calls it 'a great mystery' (80, 12).

But for those students who are motivated to make this ascent, Doxapatres adds, they must not only read the *progymnasmata* but must also be able to compose each progymnasma and thereby learn how to handle for themselves the various rhetorical terms and skills that each progymnasma teaches. Indeed, the student who 'has simply read the book will be no better off than the one who has not read it at all' (143, 6–8), a requirement also emphasized by Epictetus, who lamented that all too often his students merely read Chrysippus and other Stoics and yet did not live out their doctrines.<sup>68</sup>

2.1.2. The teacher Doxapatres also has high expectations of what a teacher of *progymnasmata* should be able to provide his students. Not surprisingly, the teacher must have a complete grasp of the whole of rhetoric, which meant after the fifth century a thorough grounding in the rhetorical works of Hermogenes. This grasp would allow the teacher to point out the ways that the *progymnasmata* anticipate Hermogenes's treatments of issues, style, invention and so on. For example, many things in the *progymnasmata* point ahead to Hermogenes's *Types of Style*, such as in the narrative (διήγημα) whose virtues are clarity, persuasiveness, brevity and standard Greek (141, 25–142, 3). The student is thus prepared when he encounters Hermogenes's more extended discussion, say, of clarity as made up of purity and distinctness.<sup>69</sup> More generally, Doxapatres cites Hermogenes's works at least seventy-three times

<sup>68</sup> See Hock, 'An Actual Stoic', 136–7, where among various examples Epictetus 'portrays one student as knowledgeable about Chrysippus, Antipater and Archedemus but otherwise unchanged – still miserable, quick-tempered, cowardly and so on (3.2.13–14)' (137).

<sup>69</sup> See Hermogenes, *On Types of Style* 1.2–4 (226, 13–241, 9 Rabe).



in his commentary, according to my preliminary count, demonstrating how thorough he thought a teacher's familiarity with Hermogenes ought to be.

Besides the whole of rhetoric, the teacher must also know the speeches of the ancients, such as Aristides and Demosthenes,<sup>70</sup> but detailed knowledge of the historians – especially Thucydides – is also necessary. For, to take the latter, the teacher must know, for example, the exact passage in Thucydides<sup>71</sup> so that he can help his students compose a description (ἐκφρασις) of a place (τόπος) when Aphthonius suggests Chimerium, the port of the Thesprotians, as a subject for students to practice composing a description (142, 20). Doxapatres also expected the teacher to know and use other textbooks in studying the *Progymnasmata* like those by Dionysius Thrax on basic grammar and Porphyry on beginning philosophy.<sup>72</sup>

2.1.3. What comes before reading Aphthonius's *Progymnasmata* Having briefly described the students and their teacher in our classroom, we are now ready to observe what came before they turned to the *progymnasmata* itself. Doxapatres's introductory chapter (80, 8–154, 10) has this function. The chapter is organized into two major sections. The first uses a scheme based on Aristotle's four questions for investigating any subject – Does it exist?, What is it?, What sort of thing is it? and Why is it? Here, of course, the questions are about the subject of rhetoric, which is ever the context of the *progymnasmata* (83, 1–127, 2). The second section treats Aphthonius's *Progymnasmata* itself according to another standard set of headings, this time eight – aim, utility, authenticity, order of reading, rationale for the title, division into parts, pedagogical style, and why his *Progymnasmata* is preferred over others' (127, 22–140, 24).

A qualification is needed, however, before we begin. The first section that uses the Aristotelian scheme about the existence of rhetoric, its nature, etc., requires only the briefest discussion because, as Rabe has pointed out, Doxapatres already has in view his four-part commentary on the

<sup>70</sup> Doxapatres cites Demosthenes, according to my count, 45 times.

<sup>71</sup> See Thucydides, 1.46.3–4. Doxapatres cites Thucydides 11 times in the commentary.

<sup>72</sup> Doxapatres cites Dionysius four times, once incorrectly, as we have seen, and Porphyry 15 times. For the texts, see *Dionysii Thracis Ars Grammatica* (Gustav Uhlig; GG 1.1; Leipzig: Teubner, 1883), 3–101, and *Porphyrii Isagoge et in Aristotelis Categoriae Commentarium* (ed. Adolf Busse; CAG 4.1; Berlin: Reimer, 1887), 1–22.

Hermogenean treatises.<sup>73</sup> Students may not have received a full discussion of this scheme. If anything, they might have been told that rhetoric not only exists but is of divine origin, as proved by citations from Genesis (84, 17–93, 15); rhetoric is defined as a ‘discipline’ (τέχνη) (93, 21–3), not as ‘infallible knowledge’ (ἐπιστήμη) or ‘empirical knowledge’ (ἐμπειρία) (108, 1–116, 15); rhetoric as a discipline is ‘a system of perceptions that is organized around a goal that is useful in life’ (116, 1–3); and rhetoric is the specific discipline that involves ‘facility in speech in a civic context that has as its goal to speak as persuasively as possible’ (108, 2–4).

2.1.4. The eight headings It is the second major section with its eight headings that clearly preceded the reading of Aphthonius’s *Progymnasmata*, and our students certainly learned about them so that this section must be treated in detail. The relevance of these headings provide helpful guidance for students who will be taking up Aphthonius’s textbook.

2.1.4.1 Aim (ὁ σκοπός) The teacher would state the aim of the *progymnasmata*, which is ‘to prepare and familiarize us with the types and parts of rhetoric as well as with the parts of a public speech’ (128, 6–8). Given this aim, ‘we ought to learn first what the types and parts of rhetoric and the parts of a public speech are’ (128, 8–10) and then to investigate how we are trained beforehand (προγυμναζόμεθα) in these types and parts by means of the *progymnasmata* (128, 10–12). Accordingly, the teacher would summarize for his students first the types and parts of rhetoric and then the parts of a public speech.

To learn about the types of rhetoric the students would be given a division (διαίρεσις) of rhetoric. Hence the teacher would say: ‘Rhetoric is divided (διαίρεῖται) into three types (εἶδη) – advisory (συμβουλευτικόν), judicial (δικανικόν) and celebratory (πανηγυρικόν) – because these types conform to community occasions of advising, judging and celebrating (129, 1–4). But, interestingly, the teacher might also point out a personal conformity in which the three types of rhetoric are also analogous to the three parts (μέρη) of the soul – the advisory to the rational part (λογικόν) of the soul, the judicial to

<sup>73</sup> See Rabe, ‘Einleitungen’, 539.

the emotional (θυμικόν), and the celebratory to the appetitive (ἐπιθυμικόν) (cf. 129, 4–17).<sup>74</sup> Moreover, each type is divided into two parts (μέρη) – the advisory into persuasion (προτροπή) and dissuasion (ἀποτροπή), the judicial into prosecution (κατηγορία) and defence (ἀπολογία), and the celebratory into encomium (ἐγκώμιον) and invective (ψόγος) (129, 17–21).

Next, the students are taught the four parts (μέρη) of a public speech – introduction (προοίμιον), statement of the case (διήγησις), argument (ἀγών) and conclusion (ἐπίλογος). They also learn the tasks of these parts. The introduction makes the audience properly disposed for the following speech by making it attentive and instilling in it either good will or hatred. The statement of the case sets forth the actions in the case in a way that clarifies the actions and favours the speaker. The argument proves the speaker's view of the actions in the case, and the epilogue recalls the principal points in the argument and fills the audience with emotion (131, 11–133, 5).

The teacher then anticipates how the individual *progymnasmata* provide training in composing the types of rhetoric and parts of a speech by indicating which *progymnasmata* will provide training in what type or part. Thus preliminary training in advisory speeches will be learned in the chapters on fable, thesis and *chreia* and maxim, whereas training in judicial speeches will occur during instruction in refutation, confirmation and common place. Training in celebratory speeches, they are told, will take place in the chapters on encomium, invective and comparison (133, 6–14).

Similar preparation for the parts of a speech would also be given. For example, the fable is analogous to an introduction, 'for just as the task of the introduction is to render the audience attentive to what will be said in the statement of the case, so also the task of the fable is to prepare the audience for the moral of the story (ἐπιμύθιον) (133, 18–21). They are told that practice in composing statements of the case will clearly take place in narrative and description, whereas similar practice for the argument will come in refutation and confirmation and for the epilogue in the common place (133, 15–134, 9).

An astute student might ask: how can there be only one aim when there are 14 *progymnasmata*? The answer he is given might be: Just as Porphyry in the *Introduction* teaches five terms – genus, difference, species, property and

<sup>74</sup> For this analogy, see further Hock, *Commentaries*, 139–40.

accident – the book still has only one aim, as is also the case with Hermogenes’s *On Issues*, which has four divisions of issue but only one aim, with his *On Types of Style* which has seven basic styles but only one aim, so also Aphthonius can have 14 *progymnasmata* but still have only one aim (134, 10–135, 3).

2.1.4.2 Utility (τὸ χρήσιμον) The second heading is the briefest since utility of the *progymnasmata* is clear from the aim. The various *progymnasmata*, the teacher will say, are useful with respect to the types and parts of rhetoric and to the parts of a public speech.

2.1.4.3. Authenticity (τὸ γνήσιον) This heading is also brief, for the teacher need only say that no one has ever doubted Aphthonius’s authorship (135, 7–13).

2.1.4.4. Order of reading (ἡ τάξις τῆς ἀναγνώσεως) The teacher might well make a distinction with this heading. He will note that the order of each *progymnasma* in Aphthonius’s sequence will be justified in each chapter where dissenting opinions will be given but Aphthonius’s order will be defended. Here, however, the order involves where Aphthonius’s textbook stands in relation to the four rhetorical books of Hermogenes. And in this context he will affirm that there is no dispute about Aphthonius’s being first, saying: ‘The *Progymnasmata* is justly placed first, since it is an introduction to the whole of rhetoric and introductions ought to go before what they introduce’ (135, 17–20).

2.1.4.5. Rationale for the title (ἡ αἰτία τῆς ἐπιγραφῆς) The title that Doxapatres assumes is The *Progymnasmata* of Aphthonius the sophist. The teacher is expected to discuss each part and reject alternatives. Thus the students will be told that the name Aphthonius (Ἀφθόνιος) is both a proper name as well as a derived one since it makes etymological sense in two ways. He poured forth speech ‘abundantly’ (ἀφθόνως) and he pumped out springs of instruction for his students without emotion, that is, without ‘envy’ (φθόνος) (136, 9–13).

The word ‘sophist’ (σοφιστής), they are told, has several meanings. It is used of someone who teaches or of a philosopher who delights in what

is good and prudent, or of someone who meddles or deceives, but in this context it is to be paired but also distinguished from ‘orator’ (ρήτωρ). Both compose speeches, but an orator composes for an actual case and speaks in a courtroom, as Demosthenes did, whereas a sophist teaches students rhetoric and composes speeches for fictional cases and does not compete in a courtroom, as Libanius did (136, 14–137, 5). In keeping with this distinction Doxapatres calls Aphthonius sophist, according to my count, 39 times but orator never, but also appropriately he calls him teacher (διδάσκολος) nine times.

The book’s title is *Progymnasmata* (Προγυμνάσματα) not *Gymnasmata* (Γυμνάσματα), because the book comes before (πρό) the true rhetorical instruction in Hermogenes’s treatises *On Issues*, *On Invention*, *On Types of Style* and *On the Method of Forceful Speech* (137, 5–21).

Given the preliminary rhetorical aim of the *progymnasmata*, an astute student might ask why the book’s title is not *Progymnasmata into Rhetoric* (εις τὴν ῥητορικὴν). The teacher appeals to analogy: Just as Porphyry who wrote an introduction to the most royal of disciplines did not add ‘into philosophy’, so Aphthonius titled his introduction to the most beneficial of disciplines for authors simply *Progymnasmata* (138, 12–21).

2.1.4.6. Division into headings (ἢ εἰς τὰ κεφάλαια διαίρεσις) This heading is not really necessary, for the teacher would simply repeat the point made earlier that various *progymnasmata* provide training in the types of speech and the parts of a speech (139, 12–18).

2.1.4.7. Pedagogical style (ὁ διδασκαλικὸς τρόπος) Students now learn that there are four pedagogical styles – divisional (διααιρετικὸς), definitional (ὀριστικὸς), demonstrable (ἀποδεικτικὸς) and analytical (ἀναλυτικὸς) – but that Aphthonius used only two of them: division and definition. For example, students would learn that in the fable chapter Aphthonius will provide a division (διαίρεσις) of fables into rational (λογικὸς), character-type (ἠθικὸς) and mixed (μικτός)<sup>75</sup> and a definition (ὀρισμός) in the narrative chapter:

<sup>75</sup> See Aphthonius, *Progymn.* 1 (p. 1, 11–12 Rabe).

‘A narrative is the exposition (ἔκθεσις) of an event (πράγματος) that has happened or could have happened’ (139, 19–140, 5).<sup>76</sup>

2.1.4.8. Why Aphthonius’s *Progymnasmata* was preferred over those of Hermogenes and the others (διὰ τί τὰ τοῦ Προγυμνάσματα τῶν Ἑρμογένους καὶ τῶν λοιπῶν προτετίμηται) This is not the usual eighth heading but it is more appropriate in this context as students might ask: why study this textbook and not some other? The teacher could answer: because Aphthonius’s textbook is clearer and easier to understand since he not only provided instructions (μέθοδοι) for each progymnasma but also composed examples (παραδείγματα) of each that made use of those instructions (140, 14–24).

If Doxapatres is our guide, the teacher might round out his discussion of what came before reading the *Progymnasmata* of Aphthonius by clarifying the one word that will govern the students’ lives for a year or more: What is a progymnasma? A progymnasma, they are told, can be defined generically as follows: ‘A progymnasma is training (ἄσκησις) in modest tasks so as to gain facility in greater ones’ (143, 16–17). The teacher could illustrate the reason for a progymnasma by drawing on what Doxapatres says a bit later: It is foolish, he says, to learn pottery on a huge storage container (πίθος) but should start rather on smaller containers, such as a small flask (λαγύνιον) (148, 3–7).

When applied to the specific discipline of rhetoric, a progymnasma ‘is introductory practice (τριβή) that provides useful training through compositions that anticipate the types and parts of rhetoric’ (143, 22–4). The teacher might clarify this definition by saying that the word ‘types’ (εἶδη) obviously refers to the three types of rhetoric, but that the word ‘parts’ (μέρη) refers either to the division of each of these three into two or it refers to the parts of a public speech (143, 26–127, 3).

2.1.5. Summary So, our first day of classes has ended with students having learned what they should know before reading Aphthonius’s *Progymnasmata*. They now know: that the aim of their textbook is rhetorical and in particular how the various *progymnasmata* will prepare them, on completing their reading, to compose any of the types and parts of rhetoric as well as the

<sup>76</sup> See Aphthonius, *Progymn.* 2 (2, 14–15 Rabe).

parts of a public speech; that the utility of the *Progymnasmata* lies wholly in this rhetorical application; that the *Progymnasmata* is genuinely attributed to Aphthonius the sophist is genuine; that this textbook, as an introduction to rhetoric, is correctly placed before the four treatises of Hermogenes; that Aphthonius's name is both proper and etymologically meaningful; that 'sophist' is the proper title for him; that the title *Progymnasmata* is sufficient without 'into rhetoric' and that the prefix *pro* in *Progymnasmata* is necessary to identify it as an introduction to Hermogenes's books; that Aphthonius's pedagogical style focuses on definition and division; and that Aphthonius's *Progymnasmata* is the best such textbook available owing to its clarity in providing not only instructions but also examples. In short, the students are now ready to read Aphthonius's text.

## 2.2. *Sitting in on a class for a second time*

On entering the classroom again we find that the students are now ready for the second of the stair steps in their ascent to the threshold of rhetoric, that is, they are ready to read Aphthonius's second chapter, the narrative (διήγημα). But the teacher does not immediately turn to the instructional section (μέθοδος) of the chapter, but rather discusses two preliminary matters – the reasons for the narrative chapter being second in the progymnasmatic sequence and the rhetorical aim of the narrative chapter. In other words, the teacher begins the lesson by discussing first what comes before reading the narrative chapter itself. Indeed, these two matters are the same as those found in Doxapatres's introductory chapter, but now applied specifically to the narrative – the fourth heading, the order of reading (ἡ τάξις τῆς ἀναγνώσεως), and the first, the aim (ὁ σκοπός).

2.2.1. Order Doxapatres supplies nine reasons for placing the narrative second in the sequence (190, 6–193, 21), and the teacher could give his students as many or as few of them as he thought best. For example, he could say, citing Doxapatres's second reason: 'Just as Aphthonius placed the fable first because it is simpler than all the other progymnasmata, for we do not need any headings in it for confirmation, as is the case with the others, but simply need to set it forth, so also he placed the narrative after the fable but

before the others since it is more complex than the fable insofar as it has headings, as it were, i.e. the circumstantial elements, but is simpler than the other progymnasmata' (190, 8–14). Or he, citing Doxapatres's fifth reason, could say: 'Just as the fable is placed first since it is analogous to the first part of a public speech, so also the narrative is placed after the fable since it is analogous to the second part of a speech, the statement of the case' (191, 4–7). The point is that the order of reading is important, and the students will therefore read the narrative chapter confident that Aphthonius's placement of it as second in the sequence is justified.

2.2.2. Aim The second matter to be taken up before actually reading the narrative chapter is its aim (193, 8–20). As we might expect, the students are told that the aim is rhetorical since learning to compose a narrative will eventually help them with all three types of speech since narratives occur in judicial, advisory and celebratory situations as well as with the parts of a speech, though primarily with the second part, the statement of the case, and occasionally when composing digressions or narrative-style introductions.

The students can finally begin to read the narrative chapter itself, and the teacher in fact reads the opening words of the chapter, its definition of a narrative: 'A narrative is the exposition of an event ...' (2, 14–15 Rabe). But, if Doxapatres is our judge, the teacher might pause and take this opportunity to speak more generally about the instructional section (μέθοδος) of all the chapters. (Preliminary matters on the fable are placed by Doxapatres at the end of his introductory chapter (145, 7–154, 14), so here is the first place to introduce general comments on the instructional section.

2.2.3. Aphthonius's instructional sections The teacher would observe that these sections have much in common. Every chapter includes a definition (ὀρισμός) of the progymnasma. There is a division (διαίρεσις) of the progymnasma in all the chapters except the refutation, confirmation and common place. *Progymnasmata* often have headings or sections that govern their literary structure. *Progymnasmata* are also differentiated from other forms – a *chreia* from a maxim, a hymn from a praise, a thesis from a hypothesis. A few *progymnasmata* contain the origin of their name, such as the *chreia*, common place and encomium, and there are some features that occur only once, such as



the origin of the fable and the virtues of a narrative (193, 22–194, 26). In other words, the students are given some indication of what to expect as they go from one progymnasma to another.

2.2.4. Definition In any case, the teacher turns back to the definition of a narrative, which opens Aphthonius's chapter on the narrative. It reads in full: 'A narrative is the exposition of an event that has happened (γεγονότος) or could have happened' (2, 14–15 Rabe). The students could be told that this definition did not originate with Aphthonius but is found in earlier writers of textbooks, such as in Hermogenes' (196, 5–10).<sup>77</sup> Thus, even though traditional, the definition still requires considerable comment. Since students had been taught about definitions during the first day of classes, the teacher might note that the word 'exposition' (ἔκθεσις) is the generic term (γένος), whereas the remaining words are the differentiating ones (διαφοραί) (195, 8–10). In addition, the teacher might add that this definition can be criticized, for it has the disjunctive conjunction 'or' (ἢ), 'for one ought not to put such conjunctions in definitions because it is appropriate for what is being defined to share in everything in the definition and not with this but that' (195, 12–14). Accordingly, some prefer not to call it a definition at all but 'a rough approximation' (ὑπογραφή) (cf. 195, 15–196, 5).

Whatever it is called, the teacher would point out that at least the 'definition' follows the rule of putting the generic term 'exposition' before the differentiating ones (196, 11–14). As to the specific words in the definition, an astute student, for example, might ask why Aphthonius used only a past tense, specifically the perfect participle γεγωνώς ('has happened') because, he thinks, narratives can be about events in the present and future as well. The teacher responds first by saying that when they eventually begin to compose actual courtroom speeches, the statements of the case will almost always deal with past events. Second, he adds that present and future narratives are not really narratives. Rather, present narratives are merely a 'pointing out' (ἔνδειξις), as in Euripides where a man points out the heroes to Antigone, and future narratives only a 'foretelling' (πρόρρησις), as in the case of a mantis (197,

<sup>77</sup> See Hermogenes, *Progymn.* 2 (p. 4, 6–7 Rabe).

12–198, 9).<sup>78</sup> In addition, while treating the participle γεγονώς, we might add that teacher and student alike would be aware that verbs not only indicate the time of the event but also the aspect or manner of it, so that a διήγημα narrates a past event but also perfective in aspect rather than imperfective.

2.2.5. Difference from related forms The teacher will have less to say about the second topic of the instructional section, the difference (διαφορά) between a narrative (διήγημα) and a narration (διήγησις) (cf. 2, 16 Rabe). They will read that Aphthonius's focus was on the differing lengths, the διήγημα being shorter and narrating one event, such as the making of Achilles's weapons,<sup>79</sup> whereas the διήγησις is longer and narrates many events, i.e. the entire *Iliad* (cf. 2, 17–18 Rabe), but the teacher could add that others see the difference in other ways – for example, the διήγημα as a report of what has happened, the διήγησις as an account of what is debatable in a judicial speech with a view to what is advantageous to the speaker; or the διήγησις as a setting forth of true events, the διήγημα as the telling of what could have happened (198, 17–199, 3).

2.2.6. Division The third topic of the instructional section is the division (διαίρεσις) of the narrative. The students read: 'The kinds of narrative are dramatic, historical, and public' (cf. 2, 19–20 Rabe). To judge from Doxapatres's lengthy discussion (199, 3–208, 20), the teacher would have much to say about this division. He might note that others, such as Hermogenes, divide the narrative into four kinds – fabulous, fabricated, historical and public. The teacher would explain that Aphthonius has simply combined the fabulous (stories contrary to nature and incredible) and fabricated (stories that are doubtful but possible) into the dramatic narrative (cf. 199, 11–22).

An astute student might ask why the dramatic narrative is listed first in the division (200, 7–8). The teacher could respond by saying that the dramatic is placed first because it is related more closely to the preceding progymnasma, the fable, but he also knows that the members of a division are equal so that in this case order (τάξις) is immaterial, reminding the students that he had

<sup>78</sup> See Euripides, *Phoen.* 119–81.

<sup>79</sup> See *Il.* 18, the whole book being named Ὀπλοποιία (e.g. Strabo, 1.17.7).

made the same comment on the three kinds of fable as being equal and so not ranked (200, 16–20; cf. 170, 1–15).

Now if the dramatic narrative cannot claim first place, it nevertheless receives more attention than the others. For example, the teacher would comment on the name ‘dramatic’ (δραματικόν) as derived from what it most resembles, namely poetry and especially drama (δρᾶμα) (201, 20–1). He would also give examples of the dramatic narratives by telling the stories of Phaethon and the chariot, Oineus and his daughter Deianeira, and Pasiphae and the bull (202, 6–30).

A student on hearing these dramatic narratives might then ask how they differ from fabulous ones (μυθικά) (204, 11–12). The teacher would answer that dramatic stories are sometimes possible, such as the story of Polyxena after the fall of Troy,<sup>80</sup> whereas fabulous narratives are totally impossible, such as Achilles’s talking horse,<sup>81</sup> as mentioned earlier (204, 13–19; cf. 199, 16–17). But the teacher will have to admit that the distinction is weak (205, 12–4).

The other members of the division receive much less attention, but one comment on the public narrative represents some interchange between students and teacher. Aphthonius defined the public (πολιτικόν) narrative as ‘that which orators use in their arguments’ (παρὰ τοὺς ἀγῶνας) (2, 22 Rabe). Aphthonius’s language here raises a problem. A public speech has four parts, and narratives occur for the most part in the second part, the statement of the case, but also in the arguments when needed in an elaboration with a narrative example. What Aphthonius meant, the teacher will say, is that ‘in their arguments’ means ‘in their public speeches’ (παρὰ τοὺς πολιτικούς λόγους) (205, 15–27). An astute student might ask why Aphthonius did not just say ‘in their public speeches’ (205, 28–9). The teacher falls back on the convention of the part signifying the whole so that Aphthonius could designate a whole speech by a part, but only that part that is superior to the others, such as head over the other parts of a body, as Homer did when he said, ‘Teucer, dear head’ (φίλη κεφαλή).<sup>82</sup> Since the argumentative part of a speech is superior to the introduction, statement of

<sup>80</sup> Polyxena was a daughter of Priam and Hecuba. After the fall of Troy the ghost of Achilles demanded that she be sacrificed on his grave (see Euripides, *Tro.* 39, 622–30).

<sup>81</sup> See *Il.* 19.392–417.

<sup>82</sup> See *Il.* 8.281.

the case and conclusion, Aphthonius designated public speeches by their arguments (205, 30–206, 17).

Finally, the teacher brings up the claim of some that dramatic narratives contribute nothing to rhetoric since they are by nature false and so not persuasive. He responds to this position by saying ‘the orator accepts dramatic narratives as true, for this is a principle of the discipline and does not waste time on natures, for this is distinctive of philosophy’ (208, 1–3). Moreover, the rhetorical utility of these narratives will become apparent later in the chapters on refutation and confirmation, for dramatic narratives can be refuted and confirmed since they are ambiguous and allow treatment on both sides.

2.2.7. Elements of a narrative Such, then, is a sampling of what teachers might say when dealing with the division of narratives. But then it is on to the fourth section of Aphthonius’s μέθοδος for the narrative when he says: ‘Six things are essential to a narrative’ (2, 23 Rabe). The word ‘things’ is not in the Greek, only the word ‘six’. Consequently, a noun must be supplied with the adjective ‘six’. Doxapatres, and so the teacher, falls back on an ill-suited term, ‘headings’ (κεφάλαια), and indicates its lack of precision by adding ‘as if (they were) (οἰοεῖ)’ headings (208, 21–2). Strictly speaking, headings have defined both content and an order, as in the elaboration of a *chreia* through eight headings, beginning with the encomiastic heading (208, 22–7). The six ‘things’ of a narrative have no particular order. A narrative can begin with the person (πρόσωπον) or action (πράγμα) or one of the others, and either one can appear again later in the narrative, whereas once the encomiastic heading is treated it will not appear later in a *chreia* elaboration (208, 27–209, 2). He cites Aphthonius’s model narrative where it begins with the action, not the person: ‘In love fell Aphrodite with Adonis’<sup>83</sup> (3, 7 Rabe) (209, 2–7).

In a sense, the teacher has made an important distinction about order by comparing a *chreia* elaboration with a narrative, but terminologically he is on safer ground when he later tells his students that these six ‘things’ are ‘circumstantial elements’ (τὰ περιστατικά)<sup>84</sup> (209, 14). Aphthonius simply listed them: the person who acted, the action that was done, the time it occurred, the place

<sup>83</sup> This awkward English rendering is designed to match the Greek word order where the action ‘fell in love’ begins the sentence: ἦρα ἡ Ἀφροδίτη τοῦ Ἀδωνίδος.

<sup>84</sup> I have emended Walz’s τὰ περιστατά to τὰ περιστατικά/.

where it occurred, the manner in which it occurred and the reason why it occurred (cf. 2, 23–3, 2 Rabe). The teacher points that the order is important as the first two – person and action – are essential to every narrative, and the person more than the action since there must first be a person before an action can take place. In addition, placing the person first in a narrative is productive of clarity, which is a virtue of narrative, as in the previous narratives where the persons Phaethon and Oineus are mentioned first (210, 1–16; cf. 202, 6 and 14).

An astute student might ask why reason (αἰτία) is last in the sequence even though it is more important than time, place and manner. The teacher could reply that reason is last since it is the most powerful of all the circumstantial elements, thereby putting the other three in the middle, much as Homer did when he said: ‘But the not so brave soldiers Nestor drove to the middle’<sup>85</sup> (210, 16–30).

The teacher now turns to the individual circumstantial elements, beginning with ‘the person who acted (τὸ πράξαν πρόσωπον)’ (2, 23), but a student has a prior question: why has the sophist left out ‘material’ (ὕλη) in his enumeration of the circumstantial elements? The teacher responds by saying that while philosophers separate out material from the other elements, orators do not. In fact, he can cite Hermogenes in support of the sophist by saying that in the third chapter of his book *On Invention* we read: ‘Philosophers add even a seventh element, material (ὕλη), which the orator has not separated out but plausibly distributes it among each of the others in any way he can.’<sup>86</sup> The teacher then illustrates how material can be incorporated into each of the six elements. Here is a sampling: the material of the person (τὸ πρόσωπον) is the encomiastic topics: race, nature, upbringing, fortune, disposition, age and so on. The material of the action (τὸ πρᾶγμα) is whether it is great or petty, easy or difficult, necessary or not, advantageous or not, glorious or shameful, and so on. The material of time (ὁ χρόνος) is divided either into past, present or future or into the seasons or into night and day or into occasions such as war and peace or lamentation and festival (212, 13–214, 9).

<sup>85</sup> See *Il.* 4.297–99.

<sup>86</sup> See Hermogenes, *On Invention* 3.5 (140, 19–141, 3 Rabe).

2.2.8. Virtues of a narrative The students next read: ‘The virtues (ἀρεταί) of a narrative are four’ (3, 3 Rabe). When transitioning to the next and final topic in Aphthonius’s instructional section the teacher might rehearse what they have already read – definition, difference, division, and circumstantial elements. He reminds them that ‘a narrative is the exposition of an event that has happened or could have happened’ (cf. 2, 14–15 Rabe); ‘a narrative differs from a narration as a poem from a stanza’ (cf. 2, 16); ‘a narrative is divided into dramatic, historical, and public’ (cf. 2, 22–3); and ‘essential to a narrative are six elements – the person who acted, the act that was done, and so on’ (cf. 3, 3) (215, 9–21).

The teacher then turns to the first virtue, clarity (σαφήνεια) and is asked by a student why clarity and the others are called ‘virtues’. The teacher replies that virtues imply their opposites, vices, as is also the case in narratives where clarity has its opposite in obscurity (ἄσάφεια) (215, 21–30). He then goes on to note that Hermogenes did not discuss the virtues of narrative in his *Progymnasmata* but rather the styles (σχήματα) of narrative, naming five: using the nominative case, the oblique case, interrogatives, no conjunctions and all comparisons. Each style is illustrated – for example, the interrogative: What terrible thing did Medea not do? Did she not fall in love with Jason? Did she not betray the golden fleece? Did she not kill her brother Apsyrtus? And so forth. But Hermogenes also indicated where these styles would be used appropriately: the nominative in history, the oblique in public speeches, the interrogative in cross-examinations, and the omission of conjunctions in epilogues<sup>87</sup> (216, 1–26).

Where Hermogenes does address clarity is in his *On Types of Style*, and, if Doxapatres is any guide, students received a huge dose of Hermogenes’s analysis, beginning with clarity being the combination of purity (καθαρότης) and distinctness (εὐκρίνεια). Each is then analysed in eight ways: thought, approach, diction, figure, clause, structure, cadence and rhythm (216, 26–217, 1). Again, only a sampling of what students might have been told regarding each for both purity and distinctness: ‘A thought is pure if it is clear to many and altogether familiar, such as Demosthenes’s statement, “Gentlemen of the jury,

<sup>87</sup> See Hermogenes, *Progymn.* 2 (4, 21–6, 2 Rabe).

Conon of Halaieus, my friend, died childless ...’;<sup>88</sup> for this thought is clear to most and altogether familiar not only to the wise but can be understood by ordinary people’ (217, 1–9). A pure approach means beginning with the action itself and adding nothing extraneous; pure diction means using words that are common and familiar to all and not figurative or difficult to pronounce; pure clauses are short and express complete thoughts; a distinct approach keeps actions in their natural order; distinct diction is the same as pure diction; and distinct figures form a group, as in the three principal opinions regarding God – rule by no one, rule by one and rule by many (cf. 217, 1–219, 2).

Besides, Hermogenes the teacher might bring in other commentators on clarity, or rather its opposite, obscurity, for by avoiding obscurity students can make their speeches clearer. The teacher could treat obscurity as it is found in John of Sardis or Geometres. To take just the former:<sup>89</sup> There are many ways to avoid obscurity either in the actions narrated or in the language used. For example, the actions should not be beyond common knowledge, such as dialectic or geometry, be presented in a confusing order as though the first events were last. Obscurity from language occurs through the use of foreign, ambiguous, or obsolete words; through a complex syntax with transpositions, lengthy periods and allegory; and through lengthy and unrelated digressions (cf. 219, 2–220, 6). With such supplemental information from Hermogenes and others on achieving clarity and avoiding obscurity (even from this brief and incomplete summary) it is clear that the students would have gained a detailed and practical sense of what clarity meant and how it could be achieved.

The next virtue is brevity (συντομία), and the teacher proceeds in the same way, beginning with supplemental and much briefer material from Hermogenes’s *On Types of Style*, noting, for example, in his discussion of conciseness (γοργότης) that it is achieved with an approach using quick replies and short counter-propositions (cf. 227, 15–228, 13).<sup>90</sup> Then the teacher can cite other commentaries, such as John of Sardis and Geometres. John of Sardis among other things recommends not beginning far back in time, as Euripides did in many prologues; avoiding digressions that wander

<sup>88</sup> See Demosthenes, 48.5.

<sup>89</sup> See John of Sardis, *Comm. in Aphth.* 2 (20, 7–21, 14).

<sup>90</sup> See Hermogenes, *On Types of Style* 3.1 (313, 5–7 Rabe).

from the case and periphrasis (βίη Ἡρακλείη) when Herakles suffices; and using the shorter of two synonyms – sword (ξίφος) for dagger (μάχαιρα) – and one word ‘he died’ (ἀπέθανεν) instead of several ‘he exited life’ (τὸν βίον ἐξέλιπεν) (228, 13–229, 9).<sup>91</sup> Geometres has many of the same recommendations, but adds that brevity is especially appropriate if grief might be caused, as Homer did when he briefly said ‘Patroclus lies dead,’<sup>92</sup> but brevity is not appropriate for narrating a happy event, as Odysseus spoke at length to the Phaeacians (230, 17–23).<sup>93</sup> Again, the teacher has much to offer the students to expand on what Aphthonius meant by the single word brevity.

On plausibility (πιθανότης) the teacher merely refers to Hermogenes’ *On Types of Style* and then makes use of the commentaries of John of Sardis and Geometres to give some sense of how to achieve plausibility in a narrative, such as narrating in full by including the circumstantial elements – person, action, place, time, manner and cause. Each of these elements should be consistent with the others, and the cause of each should be added, ‘for the cause is very conducive to persuasiveness’. In addition, plausibility comes from the character and emotion of the speaker – the former if it is not feigned, the latter if it excites others. Finally, unlaboured and extemporaneous language produces plausibility, as does the insertion of phrases like ‘I think’ and ‘perhaps’ (234, 3–29). Geometres has many of the same recommendations that underscore what John of Sardis had said (235, 2–236, 5).

Standard Greek (ὁ τῶν ὀνομάτων ἑλληνισμός) received much less attention. The teacher simply advised avoiding foreign words and specialized knowledge as well as solecisms and barbarisms. For example, the students should not write Δημοσθένου, but Δημοσθένους (p. 240, 6–11). He also has to admit that most of the commentators do not discuss standard Greek at all (240, 28–30). The students may have been glad to hear it.

2.2.9. Example of a narrative The teacher now leaves the instructional section (μέθοδος) (2, 14–3, 4 Rabe) and turns to Aphthonius’s second part of the chapter, the example (παράδειγμα). The model narrative is a dramatic narrative about the rose and why it is red (3, 5–19 Rabe). A student might ask why Aphthonius

<sup>91</sup> See John of Sardis, *Comm. in Aphth.* 2 (21, 15–23, 1 Rabe).

<sup>92</sup> See *Il.* 18.20.

<sup>93</sup> See *Od.* 9–12.



chose a dramatic narrative and not a historical or public one. The teacher seems somewhat at a loss as he suggests that Aphthonius might have been indifferent about which to choose or that a dramatic narrative because it is closer to a fable, the previous progymnasma, than a historical or public narrative (242, 19–28).

At any rate, a dramatic narrative is what Aphthonius provided. It begins: ‘Let the one who admires the rose for its beauty consider the injury to Aphrodite’ (3, 6–7 Rabe). The teacher points out that this sentence has the place (τάξις) of an introduction to the narrative itself (243, 8–9). He also notes the ways that this narrative embodies the virtues of a narrative. For example, the use of the nominative case throughout produces clarity (σαφήνεια). The sentence ‘The goddess loved Adonis and Ares loved her in return’ (3, 7–8 Rabe) divides the whole into parts and so produces distinctness and therefore clarity. Aphthonius, the teacher adds, avoided digressions and irrelevancies, such as including the birth of Aphrodite from the testicles of Kronos or her love for Anchises to whom she bore Aeneas, and so achieves brevity (συντομία). The narrative gains credibility (πιθανότης) because it is reasonable for a passionate Aphrodite to fall in love with Adonis. And, to round out the virtues, the teacher notes that the narrative uses no foreign words or technical words but only ordinary and familiar language of standard Greek (ἢ τῶν ὀνομάτων ἑλληνισμός) (244, 12–245, 31).

The teacher also points out the circumstantial elements in the narrative: falling in love and loving in return are the actions (πράγματα); Ares, Adonis and Aphrodite are the persons (πρόσωπα); a rose garden is the place (τόπος); striking the thorny bush is the manner (τρόπος); jealousy or haste is the cause (αἰτία) of her injury and reddening of the rose; and the time (χρόνος) is implicitly spring because roses are blooming (246, 8–15).

An astute student might ask why Aphthonius started his narrative with a verb or action and not a noun or person, especially since beginning with a person produces clarity (246, 17–19). The teacher defends Aphthonius’s choice of beginning with a verb by saying that there should also be a concern for the beauty of the sentence and good cadence, and they sometimes require a change in word order, precisely what Aphthonius did here to achieve a harmonious sentence (246, 19–24).

Finally, the teacher could comment on specific features of the narrative. Thus, the mention of Adonis elicits a summary of the myth regarding him

(246, 25–247, 3). The verb ‘she pursued’ (ἐδίωκεν) is used in the sense of ‘she longed for’ (ἐπόθει) (247, 3–4). And the teacher notes that the word ταρσός for the flat part of Aphrodite’s foot also refers to the city of that name (=Tarsus) and to the base of a basket for cheese (247, 7–10).

2.2.10. Summary As with the introductory chapter that focused on what comes before reading Aphthonius’s *Progymnasmata*, so also here in the second chapter on the narrative the students have learned much. Our observations of what went on in the classroom, while selective and often summarized, indicate that before turning to the chapter itself there were matters to be discussed, in particular the justifications for placing the narrative second in the progymnastic order (τάξις) and the ways narrative meets the rhetorical aim (σκοπός) of the *progymnasmata* by providing training in all three types of rhetoric and four parts of a speech, especially the second part, the statement of the case.

Moreover, even when the students have read the first sentence, the definition of a narrative, which opens the instructional section (μέθοδος) of the chapter, the teacher pauses to summarize the contents of this and the other instructional sections. He says that a definition is the only subject to appear in every chapter, that a division of the progymnasma appears in all but three, that an etymology of a progymnasma appears in only a few, and that some subjects appear in only one, such as the virtues of a narrative. The students’ sense of what to expect here and in future chapters thereby became clearer. The teacher informs the students that the narrative chapter has five subjects: definition, differentiation, division, so-called headings, and virtues. For each subject the teacher proceeds slowly. The definition is traditional, is problematic because of its disjunctive conjunction (‘or’), and uses a past participle (‘has happened’) because most narratives in speeches deal with past events. The differentiation between narrative and narration has to do largely with length, the narrative being the shorter. The division identifies three kinds of narrative, in no particular order, with the dramatic narrative receiving extended attention, because of its later utility for refutation and confirmation. The so-called headings are the six circumstantial elements, with person, action and reason being most important and with a seventh, material, being distributed among the six. The virtues of a narrative are four (clarity, brevity, credibility and

standard Greek) and are examined in detail with the help of Hermogenes's *On Types of Style* as well as with earlier commentaries.

Lastly, the teacher goes through Aphthonius's model dramatic narrative, noting its inclusion of the six elements and its conformity to the four virtues. A few comments on details in the narrative itself also receive attention.

### 3. Conclusions and implications

A second day of observing a teacher of *progymnasmata* has ended and we can now reflect on our experiences of what went on in that classroom. During these two days we got some idea of the content and method used in teaching *progymnasmata*. On the first day of classes we learned that the teacher did not delve immediately into Aphthonius's textbook but discussed *inter alia* eight headings that required attention before actually reading the textbook. On our second visit we found the teacher guiding his students as they read the second chapter (of 14) in Aphthonius's *Progymnasmata*, the chapter on narrative, proceeding through preliminary matters and then on to carefully discussing the instructional and example sections virtually word for word.

The primary observation from our attending these classes is one of surprise. The lack of an introductory chapter in Aphthonius's *Progymnasmata* and the brevity of his narrative chapter hardly prepared us for the rigour, thoroughness and abundance of material that the teacher shared with his students in that classroom. The teacher, with commentary at hand, first provided his own introduction to the *Progymnasmata* by adopting the traditional format of eight topics that come before actually reading a classic text.

Even when dealing with the chapter on narrative the teacher began with two preliminary topics that required attention: the concern for the correct placement of the narrative in the progymnasmatic sequence and that for making the chapter's rhetorical aim explicit. And then when the students actually began to read the narrative chapter, the teacher paused again to survey what the students should expect in the instructional section in this and the other *progymnasmata*. The pauses continued, thereafter, too as the teacher commented on almost every word of Aphthonius's text in both the instructional section and the model narrative – explaining, supplementing, defending and even criticizing. Other *progymnasmata*, especially that by

Hermogenes, were brought in to fill omissions in Aphthonius's treatment, and the teacher even looked ahead to Hermogenes's rhetorical treatises, such as *On Invention* and *On Types of Style*, to supplement Aphthonius's text as well as to underscore the rhetorical character of the preparation that the students were receiving. And besides the myriad comments of the teacher, the students asked questions for further clarification.

In short, the narrative may be only the second of the steps in the students' ascent to the threshold of rhetoric, but given all that the students had to absorb it is clear that this ascent was steep indeed. It is, finally, difficult to overestimate how widely knowledgeable and rhetorically sophisticated these young men already were, and there were twelve increasingly longer and more complex *progymnasmata* to go!

The implications of having observed a teacher of *progymnasmata* for the study of the New Testament and other early Christian literature are many, but only a few will be indicated here. Elsewhere I have had a hypothetical 'graduate' of the tertiary curriculum read the introductory verses of the Gospel of Mark (1.1-15) and how he would analyse them – categorizing the verses obviously as a narrative but also as an introductory narrative, a brief narrative (διήγημα) that introduces the longer Gospel story (διήγησις). Consequently, he would look for the ways that these verses fulfilled both the virtues of a narrative and the purposes of the introduction to the whole.<sup>94</sup>

New Testament scholars are beginning to analyse various passages in terms of the *progymnasmata* – whether it is Paul's letter to Philemon, which is structured as a speech-in-character (ἠθοποιία),<sup>95</sup> the portrait of Jesus in John as modelled on the topics of the encomium (ἐγκώμιον) and invective (ψόγος),<sup>96</sup> or 1 Corinthians 13 as an encomium or as the related form common place (κοινὸς τόπος).<sup>97</sup> These analyses would benefit, however, if the commentary

<sup>94</sup> See Ronald F. Hock, 'The Opening of the Gospel of Mark and Insights from the *Progymnasmata*', forthcoming.

<sup>95</sup> See Ronald F. Hock, 'Paul and Greco-Roman Education', in *Paul in the Greco-Roman World: A Handbook* (ed. J. Paul Sampley; Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 2004), 198–227, esp. 209–10.

<sup>96</sup> See Jerome H. Neyrey, 'Encomium versus Vituperation: Contrasting Portraits of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel', *JBL* 126 (2007): 529–52.

<sup>97</sup> See James G. Segountos, 'The Genre of 1 Corinthians 13', *NTS* (1994): 246–60 and R. Dean Anderson, 'Progymnasmatic Love', in *Christian Origins and Greco-Roman Culture: Social and Literary Contexts for the New Testament* (eds. Stanley E. Porter and Andrew W. Pitts; TENTS 9; ECHC 1; Leiden: Brill, 2013), 551–60.

tradition were also brought to bear, for it is in the commentaries that we get closest to observing how students learned the habits of thought and expression that would govern not only their composing rhetorical speeches but all literary activity – gospels, acts and epistles included.

## The Seven Sages, The Delphic Canon and Ethical Education in Antiquity

James R. Harrison

The ethical maxims of the famous seven sages of Greek antiquity were collected by the unknown Sosiades,<sup>1</sup> inscribed at Delphi and disseminated throughout the eastern Mediterranean basin in preparatory schools and gymnasia for at least six centuries.<sup>2</sup> The seven sages, who as a group flourished from the late seventh to early sixth century BC, are identified by Plato as Thales of Miletus, Pittacus of Mytilene, Bias of Priene, Solon of Athens, Cleobulus of Lindus, Myson of Chen, and Chilon of Sparta (*Prot.* 343a; *Hipp. Maj.* 281c).<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In addition to Sosiades' unattributed collection of the 147 sayings of the seven sages (O. Hense, *Ioannis Stobaei Anthologii Libri Duo Posteriores Vol. 1* [Berlin: Weidmann, 1894], §173, 125–8), there is also Demetrius of Phaleron's attributed collection of the same sayings (§172, 111–25). The latter are grouped under the name of each sage, accompanied by his patronymic and birthplace, along with the verb ἔφη ('he said') introducing the sayings belonging to each sage. However, the collection of Sosiades – a contemporary of Demetrius of Phaleron (350–280 BC) – is the definitive presentation, having been confirmed by the documentary evidence as the collection of maxims recorded throughout the eastern Mediterranean.

<sup>2</sup> On the seven sages, see O. Barkowski, 'Sieben Weise', *RE II A/2* (1923): 2242–64; W. Wiersma, 'The Seven Sages and the Prize of Wisdom', *Mnemosyne* 1/2 (1933–4): 150–4; B. Snell, *Leben und Meinungen der sieben Weisen: Griechische und lateinische Quellen erläutert und übertragen* (München: Heimeran Verlag, 1938; 4th ed., 1971); A. Mosshammer, 'The Epoch of the Seven Sages', *California Studies in Classical Antiquity* 9 (1976): 165–80; D. Fehling, *Die sieben Weisen und die frühgriechische Chronologie: eine traditionsgeschichtliche Studie* (Bern: Frankfurt am Main; New York: P. Lang, 1985); A. N. Oikonomides, 'Records of "The Commandments of the Seven Wise Men" in the 3<sup>rd</sup> c. BC: The Revered Greek "Reading-book" of the Hellenistic World', *Classical Bulletin* 63 (1987): 67–76; R. P. Martin, 'The Seven Sages as Performers of Wisdom', *Cultural Poetics in Archaic Greece: Cult, Performance, Politics* (eds. C. Dougherty and L. Kurke; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 108–28; J. Bollansée, 'Fact and Fiction, Falsehood and Truth. D. Fehling and Ancient Legendry about the Seven Sages', *MH* 56 (1999): 65–75; A. Busine, *Le Sept Sages de la Grèce antique. Transmission et utilisation d'un patrimoine légendaire d'Hérodote à Plutarque* (Paris: De Boccard, 2002); (ed. I. Ramelli and trans.), *I Setti sapienti: vite e opinioni nell' edizione di Bruno Snell* (Milano: Bompiani, 2005), 7–32; J. Engels, *Die sieben Weisen: Leben, Lehren und Legenden* (München: Verlag C. H. Beck, 2010); L. Kurke, *Aesopic Conversations: Popular Tradition, Cultural Dialogue, and the Invention of Greek Prose* (Princeton/Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2011), 102–15.

<sup>3</sup> However, while the 'seven' sages are identified in Plato's tradition, a debate existed in antiquity regarding their number, identity and membership (Diogenes Laertius 1.41–42). On the 21 *sophoi* in the ancient lists, see Engels (*Die sieben Weisen*, 9–78, esp. 39ff.).

A consensus has emerged among classical scholars regarding the genre of wisdom enunciated by the seven sages. Martin argues that the seven sages, significant figures in the early Greek social and political world (Aristotle, *On Philosophy*, Fragment 8; Plutarch, *Vit. Sol.*, 3.4; Diogenes Laertius, 1.40), espoused practical wisdom,<sup>4</sup> as opposed to purveying abstract ideas or establishing philosophical movements.

Ramelli has challenged this construct, arguing that the Greeks themselves debated whether the sages belonged to the history of philosophy or not.<sup>5</sup> Thus, in the case of the seven sages, 'wisdom' and 'philosophy' were not as widely separated as Martin posits.<sup>6</sup> Engels has steered a middle course, situating the seven sages within a high 'wisdom' tradition. They purveyed practical philosophy in a poetic and aphoristic genre and espoused both ethics and political philosophy, upon which the later philosophical movements built their moral edifice.<sup>7</sup> Last, Kurke has explored the development of *sophia*, as it shifted from practical wisdom to philosophy, highlighting its links with Apollo at Delphi and the transmission of the inscribed ethical tradition of the seven sages at the site (Plato, *Charm.* 164d-165a; *Prot.* 343a-b; *Hipparch.* 229a; Plutarch, *Mor.* 385E-392A).<sup>8</sup> Given the fluidity of the category of 'sophist' and 'philosopher' in the fifth century BC,<sup>9</sup> it is likely that the aphorisms of the seven sages operated at a more sophisticated ideological level in the civic life of the polis and the private life of the household than has been previously appreciated,<sup>10</sup> with the likelihood that they formed an integrated curriculum that could be passed down for the instruction of future generations in wise living.

Surprisingly, New Testament scholars have largely ignored the insight that the Delphic canon provides regarding the individual, household, civic and

<sup>4</sup> Martin ('The Seven Sages') concludes that the seven sages were practitioners of practical wisdom: they reveal sagacity through their poetic composition, political adeptness, competitive public performance and religious activities as a sacrificial *collegium*.

<sup>5</sup> Ramelli, *I Setti sapienti*, 9–15. On Diogenes Laertius' discussion of the seven sages, see Engels, *Die sieben Weisen*, 33–40. On the difficulty of analysing the sources cited by Diogenes and evaluating their reliability, see Busine, *Les Sept Sages*, pp. 55–6.

<sup>6</sup> See Diogenes Laertius 1.12.

<sup>7</sup> Engels, *Die sieben Weisen*, 92–3.

<sup>8</sup> Kurke, *Aesopic Conversations*, 102–15.

<sup>9</sup> See G. E. R. Lloyd, *The Revolutions of Wisdom: Studies in the Claims and Practice of Ancient Greek Science* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), 93; H. Tell, *Plato's Counterfeit Sophists* (Cambridge, MA/London: Center for Hellenic Studies, 2011), 19.

<sup>10</sup> Note the Roman traditions regarding the seven sages: e.g. Cicero, *De or.* 3.137; *Resp.* 1.80; *Amic.* 7; *Fin.* 2.3.7; *Parad.* 1.8. For discussion, see Engels, *Die sieben Weisen*, 26–9.

religious ethics of the Mediterranean educated urban elites.<sup>11</sup> This study will explore the harmonious understanding of one's self and the gods inculcated by the Delphic canon to the students of the preparatory school and the young men of the gymnasium (the *epheboi*, and their alumni, the *neoi*). How did the Delphic canon address the wide array of social relations that impacted upon the household and the polis, with a view to resolving conflicts therein for the sake of social cohesion? How did one shelter oneself from the unexpected vicissitudes of Fortune and still cultivate the finely tuned balance of indifference and responsibility that was requisite for social order and personal happiness? We turn to the documentary evidence confirming the widespread dissemination of Sosiades' collection of the sayings of the seven sages.<sup>12</sup>

### *1. The documentary evidence regarding the transmission of the Delphic canon*

Many of the Delphic maxims from Sosiades' collection have been found inscribed – with minor variations – at (probably) the gymnasium at Miletropolis in the Hellespont (*I. Kyzikos* II 2 Cols. 1 and 2 [fourth–third century BC]). Another version of the Delphic canon has been found at the gymnasium of the ephebes at Thera (*IG XII*[3] 1020: fourth century BC), though the Therean version is more fragmentary. Thus the ethics of the Delphic canon had spread throughout the eastern Mediterranean gymnasia. The widespread dissemination of the Delphic maxims and the meticulous care taken in their transmission can be gauged from their presence at Egypt (*P. Ath. Univ. inv.* 2782 [third century BC]).<sup>13</sup> The original editor of the papyrus suggested that

<sup>11</sup> See, however, the brief coverage in D. E. Aune, 'Septem Sapientium Convivium', in *Plutarch's Ethical Writings and Early Christian Literature* (ed. D. Betz; Leiden: Brill, 1978), 51–105; J. R. Harrison, 'Paul and the Gymnasiarchs: Two Approaches to Pastoral Formation in Antiquity', in *Paul: Jew, Greek, and Roman*. (ed. S. E. Porter; PAST 5; Leiden: Brill, 2008), 141–78; E. A. Judge, *Jerusalem and Athens: Cultural Transformation in Antiquity* (ed. J. R. Harrison; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 281–314.

<sup>12</sup> For translations of Sosiades' 147 maxims, along with the documentary remains, see Oikonomides, 'Records of the "Commandments"', 71–2, 75–6; Judge, *Jerusalem and Athens*, 305–9, with commentary on 288–96. I will refer to individual maxims from Sosiades' collection only by number, noting the documentary evidence only if the maxim is not present in Sosiades, or is a variant upon Sosiades' rendering.

<sup>13</sup> A. N. Oikonomides, 'The Lost Delphic Inscription with the Commandments of the Seven and *P. Univ. Athen* 2782', *ZPE* 37 (1980): 179–83.



it represented a ‘school-exercise’.<sup>14</sup> This has been confirmed by the find of a teacher’s handbook displaying select Delphic maxims as a model for student handwriting in an Oxyrhynchus papyrus (P. Oxy 4099).<sup>15</sup> Two second/third century AD ostraka have Delphic maxims inscribed on them, probably exercises in student alphabet training.<sup>16</sup> Thus a clear pedagogic intention underlies the collection of Sosiades, with its ethical curriculum being taught from the preparatory school to the gymnasium, spanning the period from the fourth century BC right through to the third century AD. Presuming the widespread familiarity with the Delphic canon from preparatory school onwards, we will focus on its role in the moral formation of the *epheboi* and *neoi* at the gymnasium.

In the case of the Ai-Khanum stele on the Oxus (Afghanistan), Clearchus (of Soli?) had erected the stone in the tomb-shrine of the sanctuary of the city’s founder, Cineas, from a copy that he had personally inscribed while at Delphi.<sup>17</sup> Although not placed in a gymnasium in this instance, the antiquity and hallowed status of the text is underscored by its prestigious placement in the city. Consequently, its foundational importance for the continuing civic life of the polis is ensured. Only the base of the original stele remains, as well as another small fragment of the stele, with the last five of Sosiades’ maxims squeezed on the right side of the base, because, as Robert argued,<sup>18</sup> they were not able to be fitted on the stele above. Robert identifies the peripatetic philosopher Clearchus as the famous pupil of Aristotle, mentioned in Josephus, *Ap.* 1.22.<sup>19</sup> This suggestion would raise the possibility, as we will argue, that the Aristotelian ethical ‘mean’ is a useful construct for understanding the Delphic canon’s pedagogic intent.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Oikonomides, the editor of the papyrus, changed his mind regarding its dating, abandoning his initial suggestion (first/second century AD: ‘The Lost Delphic Inscription’, 181) for the earlier third century BC (‘Records of the “Commandments of the Seven Wise Men”’).

<sup>15</sup> M. Huys, ‘P. Oxy. 61.4099: A Combination of Mythographic Lists with Sentences of the Seven Wise Men’, *ZPE* 113 (1996): 205–12.

<sup>16</sup> R. Pintaudi – Pieter J. Sijpesteijn, ‘Ostraka di contenuto scolastico provenienti da Narmuthis’, *ZPE* 76 (1989): 85–92, nos. 5, 6. I am indebted to Assistant Professor G. B. Bazanna, Harvard Divinity School, for this and the previous reference.

<sup>17</sup> See Robert, ‘De Delphes à l’Oxus’.

<sup>18</sup> Robert, ‘De Delphes à l’Oxus’, 429–30.

<sup>19</sup> Robert, ‘De Delphes à l’Oxus’, 442–54.

<sup>20</sup> J. Lerner (‘Correcting the Early History of Ay Kanom’, *Archäologische Mitteilungen aus Iran und Turan* 35/36 [2003/2004], 372–410, esp. 393–4, reported in SEG 54[1567]) has challenged Robert’s construct. He argues for a later dating of the Ai-Khanum maxims (210–170 BC) than Robert, who famously proposed 300–275 BC. Instead, Lerner posits that Clearchus was a citizen of Ai-Khanum

The remains of the Ai-Khanum inscription are as follows:

Text of Sosiades	Ai-Khanum base, right	
143 παῖς ὦν κόσμιος ἴσθι	1. παῖς ὦν κόσμιος γίνου	As a child be well behaved,
144 ἥβων ἐκρατής	2. ἥβων ἐκρατής	in youth restrained,
145 μέσος δίκαιος	3. μέσος δίκαιος	in middle life just,
146 πρεσβύτης εὐλογος	4. πρεσβύτης εὐλογος	in old age reasonable/ prudent
147 τελευτῶν ἄλυπος	5. τελευτῶν ἄλυπος	at the end not worrying.

Ai-Khanum base, front, epigram

Ἐνδρῶν τοι ταῦτα παλαιότερων ἀνάκει[τα]ι  
 ῥήματα ἀριγνώτων Πυθοῖ ἐν ἡγαθείᾳ  
 ἔνφεν ταῦ[α] Κλέαρχος ἐπιφραδέως ἀναγράψας  
 εἶσατο τηλαυγῇ Κινέου ἐν τεμένει

These wise words of men of long ago are dedicated  
 as sayings of the famous in most holy Pytho,  
 where Clearchus carefully wrote them out,  
 putting them up to shine afar in the sanctuary of Cineas.

Small fragment of the inscription found 1 metre away from the Ai-Khanum base

[...]

S[peak well of everyone]

[Be] a lover of wisd[om] (or [Take up] philosop[hy])

[...]

The final fragment above, heavily restored, confirms that the entire stele was inscribed with Sosiades' collection, with maxims 47 and 48 remaining on the stone, if Robert's identification is correct. Elsewhere in the Eastern

who, having gone to Delphi and copied down the maxims, returned to his city and 'had them set up at the temenos upon his return in the waning years of the third century. or in the first quarter of the 2nd century. BC'.

Mediterranean basin, as we have seen, Sosiades' collection is at the centre of the ethical and social ephebic curriculum of the gymnasium, even penetrating the humble writing-exercises of school children.

In sum, although no clearly discernible organizational principle underlies the Delphic canon,<sup>21</sup> with the documentary evidence varying minimally Sosiades' order or adding new sayings to his collection, it is geographically the most widely taught ethical curriculum in the Hellenistic and early imperial age, inculcating an intentional holistic transformation for its elite recipients. What was the moral agenda of the Delphic canon?

## 2. Case studies in the ethical curriculum of the Delphic canon

### 2.1. Acknowledging the gods and providence

A prayerful sensitivity to and acceptance of the interventions of providence is advocated in the Delphic canon (τίμα πρόνοιαν: 'honour providence' [18]; 'consider fortune' [68; 'pray for good fortune' [76]; 'be content with fortune' [77]), with sympathy being extended to those whom Fortune strikes down ('sympathise with misfortune' [135]), and, conversely, with due acknowledgement of its fickleness ('don't trust fortune' [142]). Consequently, *hubris* is an inappropriate character trait for those familiar with the vagaries of fortune (41: 'Hate arrogance' [ὕβριν μίσει]; 83: 'Guard against arrogance' [ὕβριν ἀμύνου]; 130: 'Don't begin raging' [μὴ ἄρχε ὑβριζειν]).<sup>22</sup> Shame is therefore to be respected (74) and risks to be taken reasonably (120).

In the case of the god/gods, oracular phenomena are endorsed at a general level ('admire oracles': 123 [χρησμοὺς θαύμαζε]), thereby legitimizing the

<sup>21</sup> However, there is common terminology throughout the Delphic canon, unifying the maxims to some degree (e.g. the language of 'friendship' and 'grace', see Harrison, 'Paul and the Gymnasiarchs', 169–72, among other motifs). Further, there is a widespread mnemonic use of 'doublets'. This is where two maxims focus on a motif, with the second maxim qualifying, expanding or providing a thematic contrast to the first maxim. The intriguing interrelation of the two maxims forces the reader to consider the overall social and personal consequences of the moral ethic promoted. E.g. being teachable: 6, 7. Responsible self-interest: 33, 34. The right use of time: 39, 40. Benefaction rituals: 58, 59. Prayer and providence: 76, 77. Gracious speech: 81, 82. Household relations: 94, 95. Intergenerational relations: 126, 127. On the documentary differences and additions to Sosiades' collection, see Judge, *Jerusalem and Athens*, 290–1.

<sup>22</sup> See N. R. E. Fisher, *Hybris: A Study in the Values of Honour and Shame in Ancient Greece* (Warminster: Aris & Phillips, 1992).

oracles of Zeus at Dodona, Apollo at Delphi, and the various other oracular sites of antiquity. Presumably more popular eastern Mediterranean expressions of the oracular mentality would have also been included under this rubric (e.g. Acts 16.16a: ἔχουσιν πνεῦμα πύθωνα; 16.16b: αὐτῆς μαντευομένη) and, in early imperial times, the oracles given in honour of the Julian house.<sup>23</sup> More generally, the Delphic canon highlights the necessity of honouring the deity/deities by a series of imperatives: τίμα ('honour the hearth' [13]), σέβου ('worship the gods' [3]) and προσκύνει ('worship the divinity' [I *Kyzikos* II 2 Col. 2 no. 20]).

However, prayer is deeply conservative in the Delphic canon, being constrained in its expectation (52: 'Pray for what is possible' [εὔχου δυνατά]), in sharp contrast to the open-ended expectation of Paul (Eph. 3.20: ποιῆσαι ὑπερεκπερισσοῦ ὧν αἰτούμεθα ἢ νοοῦμεν).<sup>24</sup> The god/gods, therefore, are the foundation of the hierarchical world view of the Delphic canon, even if the correlations between the divine realm and the human society are articulated in different ways to the literature of Second Temple Judaism and early Christianity.

## 2.2. Ruling the household

The hierarchy of the divine realm is reflected within the household relations of the Delphic canon. Parents should be honoured (4), but wives are to be ruled by their husbands (95: γυναικὸς ἄρχε).<sup>25</sup> Sons are to be trained by (presumably) their fathers (44: υἱοὺς παίδευε), but neither should sons be cursed (94: υἱοῖς μὴ καταρῶ; cf. Eph. 6.4; Col. 3.21). More positively, the Delphic canon commands the *neoi* to 'love those you rear' (124: οὓς τρέφεις ἀγάπα). The twin concerns of social status and family wealth emerge in the advice given to the *epeheboi* and *neoi* regarding marriage. Above all, they

<sup>23</sup> For an oracle in honour of Augustus, see S. R. Llewelyn, 'Faithful Words', *New Docs* 9 (2002): §5.

<sup>24</sup> On prayer in Graeco-Roman antiquity, see H. S. Versnel, 'Religious Mentality in Ancient Prayer', in *Faith, Hope and Worship: Aspects of Religious Mentality in the Ancient World* (ed. H. S. Versnel; *Studies in Greek and Roman Religion* 2; Leiden: Brill, 1981), 1–64; P. W. van der Horst, 'Silent Prayer in Antiquity', *Numen* 41/1 (1994): 1–25; P. W. van der Horst and G. Sterling, *Prayer in Antiquity: Greco-Roman, Jewish and Christian Prayers* (Notre-Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2000); S. Pulleyn, *Prayer in Greek Religion* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1997); P. W. van der Horst and J. H. Newman, *Early Jewish Prayers in Greek* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2008).

<sup>25</sup> For discussion of the maxim *Sosiades* 95, see Harrison, 'Paul and the Gymnasiarchs', 172–7.

should intend to marry (9: γαμεῖν μέλλε).<sup>26</sup> Further, they were to produce sons of the ‘well-born’ (138: ἐξ εὐγενῶν γέννα). Elite families faced the very real challenge of transmitting intergenerational wealth, status and power, which was constantly put under threat by the high infant and childhood mortality of antiquity. Thus it was strategic to establish elite marriage alliances, producing a son to leave the estate to and a daughter through whose elite marriage the family could acquire a substantial dowry.<sup>27</sup>

Last, weddings are to be kept in check (67: γάμους κράτει [alternatively: ‘master wedding-feasts’, or ‘control your liaisons’]), though the precise social background of the maxim is uncertain. Here we are confronted by the problem of the changing conventions regarding marriage, family status and dowries spanning the classical era to the early Roman period: how do we determine the original life-situation of the saying under the seven sages and the changed life-situation of its redactors?<sup>28</sup> Which meaning, if recoverable, has priority? The one constant in this scenario is the elitist perspective evinced. Is the maxim advising the son to be careful regarding the unwise multiplication of marriage, either via remarriage upon the death or the divorce of his spouse, with the consequent possibility of dowry disputes,<sup>29</sup> or, alternatively, the divisive issues aroused by differences of social status? Or is the point of concern the control of the wedding-feast itself, with its subtle cultural issues now lost to us? We simply do not know. Either way, the ritual

<sup>26</sup> Note the proverbial Delphic ‘ambiguity’ in *Sosiades* 9 (cf. Plato, *Charm.* 164e; *Apol.* 21b3–4; Plutarch, *Mor.* 385C; 386E–F): the Greek γαμεῖν μέλλε can also mean ‘hesitate to marry’.

<sup>27</sup> A. Zuiderhoek, ‘Oligarchs and Benefactors: Elite Demography and Euergetism in the Greek East of the Roman Empire’, in *Political Culture in the Greek City after the Classical Age* (eds. O. M. van Nijf and R. Alston; Leuven/Paris/Walpole: Peeters, 2011), 185–96, esp. 186–7.

<sup>28</sup> The evidence of Theognis (sixth century BC) perhaps helps us to see the original context of *Sosiades*’ maxim (67). Some elite families, faced with the threat of non-elite social climbers (*Work and Days* 53–8), faced impoverishment because of this new challenge to their traditional public role (173–8, 667–70). Such families sought to salvage their influence by marriages with the wealthy non-elites (183–96, 1109–14). Is this the type of marriage that, according to the Delphic canon (67), has to be kept in check because it dilutes the aristocracy? See K. A. Raaflaub, ‘Poets, Lawgivers, and the Beginnings of Political Reflection in Archaic Greece’, in *The Cambridge History of Greek and Roman Political Thought* (eds. C. J. Rowe and M. Schofield; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 23–9, esp. 38–9. In a Roman context, the Augustan marriage laws, so A. Wallace-Hadrill argues (‘Family and Inheritance in the Augustan Marriage Laws’, *PCPS* 27 [1981]: 58–80), were designed to stabilize the transmission of property and social status. See also S. Dixon, ‘The Marriage Alliance in the Roman Elite’, *Journal of Family History* 10 (1985): 353–78.

<sup>29</sup> For dowry disputes in the papyri and Roman law codes, see M. R. Lefkowitz and M. B. Fant, *Women’s Life in Greece and Rome: A Source Book in Translation* (3rd ed.; London: Duckworth, 2005), §§104–6, 137, 149–150. On social status and marriage in the Roman law codes, see §§128–9.

of marriage can be problematical when elite families are involved, requiring careful supervision by fathers and sons.

### 2.3. Maintaining indifference by the cultivation of self

How, then, were the *epheboi* and *neoi* to maintain an unruffled indifference to the blows of fortune, while pursuing a lifestyle of commitment to the welfare of polis commensurate with the provincial elites to whom they belonged? The Delphic answer is found conceptually in a triad of self, summed up in three σεαυτόν maxims. These congregate around the motifs of self-knowledge, self-control and self-interest.<sup>30</sup> By means of a careful consideration of the σεαυτόν maxims, the character of the *ephebos* and *neos* is imbued with integrity (54: ‘Test character’ [ἦθος δοκίμαζε]; ‘Be ashamed of falsehood’: *I Kyzikos* II 2 Col. 2 no. 27), prudence (17) and wisdom (23, 53). The cultivation of Delphic indifference is seen in the absence of worry (90, 133, 137) and envy (60) or, alternatively, the praise (or deprecation?) of hope (62) and not suspecting anyone (56).

First, the famous Delphic maxim, ‘Know/Recognise yourself’ (8: σεαυτόν ἴσθι [*IG* XII 3.1020, no. 4: γνώθ[ι] σεαυτόν]), is given ethical expression through the language of ‘knowledge’: ‘Know that you are a stranger’ (12), ‘Act on knowledge’ (50) and ‘Speak when you know’ (88). In each case, an accurate self-knowledge does not lead to self-absorption but rather to an astute self-awareness that expresses itself in informed actions and speech.

Second, the famous Delphic maxims, ‘Control yourself’ (14: ἄρχε σεαυτοῦ) and ‘Nothing to excess’ (38: μηδὲν ἄγαν), find a series of ethical applications within the wider canon. Thus, in terms of self-control, the wise man keeps his temper (16), subdues pleasure (*I Kyzikos* II 2 Col. 1 no. 5), envies no one (60), controls his expenses (72), is satisfied with what he has (73), controls his eye (102), keeps secrets (108) and, last, fears what controls him (109). Intriguing, too, is the way the Delphic canon articulates the progressive loss of self-control if self-discipline is not brought to bear in each instance: anger (16), enmity (29), violence (89) and murder (51). Finally, the link between the two famous Delphic maxims (14, 38), noted above, is crucial. Self-control provides the restraint required for the

<sup>30</sup> Aristotle, *Eth. nic.* 9.8.7 (cf. 9.8.11): ‘Therefore the good man ought to be a lover of self (φιλαυτον)’.

avoidance of moral excess, whether that is a myopic quest for virtue that leads to disaster – such as the unrestrained quest for glory – or a reckless plunge into moral dissolution.

Third, another important σεαυτόν maxim from the Delphic canon is ‘Look after yourself’ (96: σεαυτόν εὖ ποίει). The ‘self-interest’ underlying the Delphic canon is the final strut to the ‘triad of self’. As such, a considered focus on the self allows the *epheboi* and *neoi* to develop the internal resilience required in order to avoid the extremes of vices and virtues that would divert them from the ethical mean. Thus they are to look for advantage (110), avoid any commitment or pledge because they will pay for it (69), look after their own things (33), accept their opportunity (111) and take care (61).

#### 2.4. Engaging in social relations in the polis

The Delphic canon, despite its relentless singular Greek imperatives and concentration upon the virtues of the self, is nevertheless interested in how ethics are lived out in social relations, especially within the context of the ancient polis. At the outset, it is important to realize that there are clear indications of social elitism in the Delphic canon. The *ephebes* are encouraged to cultivate the powerful elites by various strategies. They are to obey and honour the good man (P. Athen.Univ. inv. 2782 no. 2: τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ πείθου; 65: ἀγαθοὺς τίμα),<sup>31</sup> compliment a gentleman (24: καλὸν εὖ λέγε; alternatively, ‘praise what is fine’), mix with the wise (53: σοφοῖς χρωῶ), cultivate nobility (30: εὐγένειαν ἄσκει) and get sons of the well-born (138: ἐξ εὐγενῶν γέννα). This ‘elite consciousness’ points to the social constituency of the students being educated for leadership within the cities of the eastern Mediterranean basin. Expressed in another way, the *epheboi* and *neoi* were to stick to their social lot (71). But what other motifs appear in the Delphic maxims that would equip the *ephebos* and *neos* for his civic context?

First, honorific culture, with its relentless quest for glory, features prominently in the ethical maxims. τίμα (‘honour’) is an important leitmotiv in the Delphic canon, whether it is honouring the hearth (13), providence (18), benefactions (59), or the ‘good ones’ (65). The forefathers of the city are also

<sup>31</sup> See F. W. Danker, *Benefactor: Epigraphic Study of a Graeco-Roman and New Testament Semantic Field* (St Louis: Clayton Publishing House, 1982), 318–20.

to be crowned (131), the standard honorific award in the eulogistic inscriptions.<sup>32</sup> Also the quest for glory features throughout the Delphic canon (22: 'Pursue glory'; 99: 'Toil gloriously'). The glory accrued is either to be military (132: 'Die for your country') or personal (118: 'Don't let your reputation go'). Precisely because glory is passed from generation to generation, the dead should not be mocked (134).

Second, an interesting emphasis within the canon is on the relationship between the generations. A doublet captures the teaching well: 'Respect the elder' (126); 'Teach the younger' (127). However, given that the inscriptional copies of the Delphic canon were erected in the gymnasia, the pedagogic culture of the gymnasium that is to be instilled in the young men is of intrinsic interest to the Delphic canon. Hence, in highly traditional terms, they are to hold to training (21: παιδείας ἀντέχου) and take up philosophy (48).

Third, avoiding civic and personal strife is another important moral emphasis to be instilled in the *epheboi* and *neoi*. The Delphic canon features the well-known motif of *homonoia* ('Practise/Pursue consensus': 107 [ὁμόνοιαν δίωκε]; *I Kyzikos* II 2 Col. 2 no. 14, [ὁμόνοι[αν] ἄσκει]), a word employed by the popular philosophers in discussing intercity rivalries (Dio Chrysostom, *Or.* 37-41).<sup>33</sup> Another word unveiling the destructive rivalries present within the civic context is *eris* ('Hate strife': 80 [ἔριν μίσει]). Hesiod attributes a positive and a negative role to *eris* in his *Works and Days* (*ll.* 14-23), either referring to a competitive striving which is beneficial for the welfare of the community, or, conversely, to a negative striving that results in war and contention. Clearly the original sage responsible for the maxim opted for the negative connotation of the word.

Fourth, the traditional benefaction system, with its rituals of reciprocity,<sup>34</sup> is endorsed in the Delphic canon through the language of grace (χάρις

<sup>32</sup> See J. R. Harrison, '“The Fading Crown”: Divine Honour and the Early Christians', *JTS* 54/2 (2003): 493–529.

<sup>33</sup> See H. C. Baldry, *The Unity of Mankind in Greek Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965); A. R. R. Sheppard, 'Homonoia in the Greek Cities of the Roman Empire', *Anc.Soc.* 15–17 (1984–6): 229–52; D. B. Martin, *The Corinthian Body* (Chelsea: Yale University Press, 1995), 38–68. On the Concordia-Homonoia cult, see G. Thériault, *Le culte d'Homonoia dans les cités grecques* (Lyon-Québec: Collection Maison de l'Orient 26, série épigraphique 3, 1996). On the *homonoia* coinage of Asia Minor, see J. P. Lotz, 'The "Homonoia" Coins of Asia Minor and Ephesians 1:21', *TynBul* 50/2 (1999): 173–88.

<sup>34</sup> See J. R. Harrison, *Paul's Language of Grace in Its Graeco-Roman Context* (WUNT 2.172; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003).



and cognates): 37 ('Favour a friend'), 45 ('Do a favour when you can'), 75 ('Return a favour' [*I Kyzikos* II 2 Col. 1 no. 14]) and 136 ('Favour without harming').<sup>35</sup> The last maxim is revealing because of its acknowledgement of how easily benefaction rituals can go astray if they are not handled with care.<sup>36</sup> The maxim 'Give what you mean to' (58) carries considerable social force when one remembers Dio Chrysostom's public shame (*Or.* 40.3-4) over not providing promptly enough the public works that he had promised to his native city Prusa (139: 'Make no-one a promise').<sup>37</sup> Conversely, the language of 'honour' (τιμάω) is linked to reciprocity rituals in the return of honour for benefactions (58: 'Honour benefactions'; cf. 55: 'Give back what you take/receive' [λαβῶν ἀπόδος]). Therefore *pistis*, on behalf of the benefactor and the recipient, is paramount if the reciprocity system is to work smoothly (*I Kyzikos* II 2 Col. 2 no. 29: 'Don't [give up?] trusting [πιστεύων μὴ α[-]).<sup>38</sup>

In the benefaction system, however, there is to be 'respect' or 'pity' for supplicants (42: ἰκέτας αἰδοῦ). We should not confuse here the Christian concept of 'mercy' with Graeco-Roman 'mercy' and 'pity': 'mercy' (*clementia*), as Seneca informs us, was to be extended to suppliants, not 'pity' (*miseri-cordia*). The wise man, guided by *clementia*, has a serenity that is not clouded – in the viewpoint of the Stoics – by the plight of others, or by strong emotions such as sorrow (Seneca, *Clem.* 2.4-5; 2.7.1, 3).<sup>39</sup> Thus Sosiades' version, articulating 'respect' for suppliants, is preferred to the Kyzikos' inscriptional rendering of 'pity', given the several occurrences of 'respect' in the Delphic canon (4, 126, 129).

Furthermore, attention to the duties of friendship (φιλία, φιλοφρονέομαι) is a constant refrain throughout the Delphic canon (15 ['Help your friends'], 20 ['Love friendship'], 28 ['Goodwill for friends'], 37 ['Favour a friend'], 93 ['Look kindly on all'], 105 ['Guard friendship']), undoubtedly because 'friendship' relations forms a central part of the Graeco-Roman reciprocity system.<sup>40</sup>

<sup>35</sup> Aristotle (*Eth. nic.* 5.5.7) refers to the shrine of the Graces being placed in a public place as a perpetual reminder to return a kindness.

<sup>36</sup> Harrison, *Paul's Language of Grace*, 68–72, 78.

<sup>37</sup> Harrison, *Paul's Language of Grace*, 312–13.

<sup>38</sup> B. Cueto, *Paul's Understanding of pistis in Its Graeco-Roman Context* (unpub. PhD diss., Dallas Theological Seminary, 2012, forthcoming Paternoster, 2016).

<sup>39</sup> For discussion, see Harrison, *Paul and the Imperial Authorities*, 297–9. Additionally, see D. Konstan, *Pity Transformed* (London: Duckworth, 2001).

<sup>40</sup> See D. Konstan, *Friendship in the Classical World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

Fifth, the Delphic canon sponsors a lifestyle of social engagement through the *epheboi* and *neoi* learning to pause and listen to those he encounters (7: 'Listen and learn'; 35: 'Always listen'; 78: 'Look and listen'), as well as being sociable (32), approachable (97), fitting in with everyone (43) and considerate (106).

Sixth, in view of the prominence of public oaths in civic rituals in antiquity,<sup>41</sup> the maxim 'Use no oath' (19) is perhaps surprising. The maxim may well be limited to the sphere of personal relations, being in harmony with 'Make no-one a promise' (139). More likely, however, the saying is a terse reminder about the drastic consequences of the divine curses invoked upon those who violate their oaths, as the loyalty oaths to the early imperial rulers illustrate.<sup>42</sup> In such a context, it is better to make no oath at all if one is reluctant to make full commitment to its agreed terms.

### *2.5. Virtue as the median point between behavioural extremes*

How are these diverse motifs integrated within the lifestyle of those committed to the ethical paradigms of the Delphic canon? In my opinion, the seven sages anticipate in their thought, to some degree, the 'ethical mean' of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* (2.2.1–2.9.9). Most probably, the redactors of the Delphic canon would possibly have been familiar with Aristotle's moral theory in this regard, and in what follows I will point to areas of Aristotelian intersection throughout.<sup>43</sup> Consequently, we have to negotiate the ethical paradoxes within the Delphic maxims. A few examples will suffice. In terms of finances, one

<sup>41</sup> C. G. Williamson, "As God is my witness": Civic Oaths in Ritual Space as a Means Towards Rational Cooperation in the Hellenistic Polis', in *Cults, Creeds and Identities in the Greek City after the Classical Age* (ed. R. Alston; Leuven: Peeters, 2013), 119–74.

<sup>42</sup> See Harrison, *Paul's Language of Grace*, 238–41.

<sup>43</sup> Gray ('Philosophy of Education', 248–53) argues that late Hellenistic benefactors of gymnasia and *paideia* reflected the impact of Aristotle's thought in their emphasis upon preserving and promoting civic solidarity. As, Gray ('Philosophy of Education', 253) concludes, '... it is a result of shared culture and possible diffusion of philosophical ideas'. I am proposing that Aristotelian influences also shaped the pedagogical intentions of the early Hellenistic redactors of the Delphic canon as they related its ethics to civic and personal life. The later Hellenistic readers of the canon, too, would probably have understood its diverse teaching in light of the Aristotelian ethical 'mean'. Differences, however, must be respected. The Delphic canon does not nominate specific virtues for the 'mean' and specific vices for the 'deficit' and 'excess' in the same way that Aristotle does. Rather the contradictory maxims in the Delphic canon function as 'boundary markers', charting a safe route to the unspecified ethical mean. However, Aristotle does speak on one occasion of the 'unnamed' ethical mean: 'Such is the middle character, although it has no name' (*Eth. nic.* 4.6.9). It is likely that the redactors of the Delphic canon thought about its impact in this more general way.

maxim (72) advises ‘Control expenses’, while another (85) stipulates ‘Use your money’. Regarding the issue of personal trust, one maxim warns the reader to fear a trap (46) whereas the advice of another is to suspect no one (56). In a couplet that highlights a contradictory contrast, one maxim stipulates ‘Don’t regret your action’ (100), whereas the subsequent maxim commands ‘If you err, turn back’ (101: ἀμαρτάνων μετανόει). Finally, in another couplet, the considered maxim ‘Deliberate in time’ (103; cf. 10: ‘Pick your time’) finds a much more pressing alternative in ‘Act promptly’ (104).

How do we handle such ‘contradictory’ advice, given that there is no recoverable context for understanding each maxim? Is it simply a case of ‘situation’ ethics where each maxim is appropriate for its life-context, to be applied to the particular circumstances that providence allots? Or did the later redactors, well aware of the contradictions, leave them in the Delphic canon unaltered, knowing that the context for the seven sages’ sayings was not retrievable? Either option is possible, but I suspect that the redactors subscribed to the Aristotelian idea of an ‘ethical mean’, which, in view of the self-discipline promoted by the σεαυτόν sayings, meant that the ‘contradictory’ maxims provided ‘boundary markers’ by which the *epheboi* and *neoi* were to live responsibly (Aristotle, *Eth. nic.* 3.11.8; 4.3.26-28). Thus, diverted from the excesses of virtue and vice by these ‘contradictory’ maxims, the *epheboi* and *neoi* charted their course confidently in morally difficult times.

This suggestion, I propose, is confirmed by other data within Sosiades’ maxims. Within the Delphic canon there are warnings against behavioural extremes negating self-control,<sup>44</sup> whereas there are also exhortations of obedience to behavioural norms enhancing self-control.<sup>45</sup> Clearly, in Aristotle’s ethics, a disciplined life steers between the extremes of behavior,<sup>46</sup> lest a vice becomes an accustomed habit, or a virtue deteriorates into excessive behaviour. A disciplined life, lived out under providence and exhibiting piety towards the god(s), fosters lasting harmony within the household and the

<sup>44</sup> E.g. arrogance: 41; 83; 130. Worry: 137. Envy: 60. Despising others: *I Kyzikos* II 2 Col. 2 no. 15. Temper: 94; *I Kyzikos* II 2 Col. 1 no. 2. Enmity, hatred and murder: 29; 51; 112; 116; 125. Slander: 63. Strife: 80.

<sup>45</sup> E.g. ‘Attest as is holy’ and ‘Judge as is holy’: *I Kyzikos* II 2 Col. 1 no. 4; 49. Justice: *I Kyzikos* II 2 Col. 1 no. 3; 27; 64; 66; 84. Repentance: 101. Prudence: 17. Wisdom: 23; 53. Testing character: 54. Praising hope and virtue: 62; 26. Shame: 74. Being considerate and sociable: 106; 32.

<sup>46</sup> Aristotle, *Eth. nic.* 2.2.7; 2.6.12-14, 20; 2.7.4; 2.9.1; 3.7.13; 4.1.1, 24; 4.4.4-5; 4.5.1, 15; 4.8.5; 5.1.1-2; 5.3.1, 12; 5.4.7.

polis. By heeding this ethical curriculum, the *epheboi* and *neoi* would develop into the elite leaders of the polis, ensuring thereby the perpetuation of the divinely ordained hierarchy of the ‘best’.

Last, we might ask what the Delphic canon expected of the *epheboi* and *neoi* beyond their life in the gymnasium? Perhaps it could be summed up in two propositions: maintain the training of the gymnasium (21, 44, 48, 121) and, in light of that precious deposit, learn to age graciously as a mortal (11, *I Kyzikos* II 2 Col. 2 no. 18, 141, 143-147, 21; cf. Aristotle, *Eth. nic.* 6.11.7; 9.2.8-9).

What intersection does the Delphic ethical curriculum of the preparatory school and gymnasium have with the moral transformation of the Body of Christ?<sup>47</sup> Only several brief suggestions can be made.

### *3. The Delphic canon and the ethical ‘curriculum’ of early Christianity*

Historians of religion in antiquity often look for similarities between differing ethical traditions. In this regard, there are moral commonplaces in the Delphic canon and early Christianity: oath-taking (19; cf. Mt. 5.33-37); well-timed speech (98; cf. Col. 4.5-6); repentance (101, though without Paul’s God-centred focus [Rom. 2.4; 2 Cor. 7.9, 10; 12.21; 2 Tim. 2.25]). Paul deems virtue as praiseworthy (Phil. 4.8: ἀρετή) in a manner reminiscent of the Delphic canon (26 [ἐπαίνει ἀρετήν: ‘Praise virtue’]). Avoidance of evil (31 [‘Keep way from evil’]: cf. Rom. 12.9; cf. 12.21; cf. 1 Thess. 5.21), hatred of arrogance (41 [‘Hate arrogance’]; cf. Rom. 12.10b, 16b), and faithfulness to agreements (*I. Kyzikos* II 2 Col. 2 no. 31 [‘(Stick by) agreements’]; cf. 2 Cor. 1.17-23) are also consonant with Paul’s ethical concerns.

The Delphic insistence upon breaking up enmities or a quarrel (112; cf. 29 [‘Hold off your enemies’]) finds profound theological expression in Paul when he explains how God has extinguished the hostility of Jew and Gentile through the cross (Eph. 2.14). But Paul also draws upon the Jesus tradition to underscore love of the enemy and the principle of non-retaliation (Rom. 12.14-15, 19-21; cf. Mt. 5.38-48; cf. *I. Kyzikos* II 2 Col. 2 no. 13 [‘Met out justice’]). In the Delphic canon, by contrast, there is no sense of a divinely

<sup>47</sup> V. Raben, *The Holy Spirit and Ethics in Paul: Transformation and Empowering for Religious-Ethical Life* (2nd ed.; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2013).

transformed community that will break down social divisions through the reconciliation of antagonists.

However, the differences between early Christian ethics and the Delphic canon are even more intriguing. The shame of the cross and God's dismissal of human status (Mk 10.35-45; Jn 13.12-16; 1 Cor. 1.18-29; 4.8-13; 12.22-25; Gal. 3.13; 5:11b; Phil. 2.5-8; Jas 1.9-11) overturns Delphic social elitism. The condemnation of idolatry in Second Temple Judaism (e.g. Isa. 44.9-20; 46.5-7 etc.) and in early Christianity ensures the rejection of Delphic idolatry (Rom. 1.18-31; 1 Cor. 10.7, 14-22; 12.1-2; 2 Cor. 6.16; Eph. 5.5; 1 Jn 5.21), along with all the other Graeco-Roman versions, but Paul's christologically modified monotheism moves well beyond Jewish boundaries in its critique (1 Cor. 8.5-6). Paul pinpricks the inflated cult of 'Self' in the Delphic canon, advocating instead a cruciform denial of personal rights (1 Cor. 8.11-13; 9.1-8; 10.33; 13.1-13; 2 Cor. 4.11-12; 5.15) and an incarnational identification with the 'weak' and 'foolish' over against the 'strong' and 'wise' (1 Cor. 1.27-28; 2 Cor. 6.10; 8.9; 11.16-21:10; 13.4). The strongly hierarchical understanding of marriage is also reconfigured with a soteriological ethic (95; Eph. 5.25-33).<sup>48</sup> Finally, Paul attacks the misplaced value on 'wise' speech in the Delphic canon (47, 70, 91) and Graeco-Roman rhetoric generally (1 Cor 1.20; 2.1-5; 3.18-23; 4.6-8, 20; 2 Cor 10.10; 11.6).<sup>49</sup>

Paul and the apostles, therefore, rejected many of the central values of the ancient gymnasium *paideia*, which, Dutch argues,<sup>50</sup> had infected the Corinthian elites, including believers in the city. The difference between the ubiquitous ethics of the Delphic canon and the newness of the Spirit (Rom 7.6b) would have been obvious to all.

<sup>48</sup> R. S. Dutch, *The Educated Elite in 1 Corinthians: Education and Community Conflict in Graeco-Roman Context* (JSNT 271; London and New York: T&T Clark, 2005).

<sup>49</sup> D. Litfin, *St. Paul's Theology of Proclamation: 1 Corinthians 1-4 and Graeco-Roman Rhetoric* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); C. Mihaila, *The Paul-Apollos Relationship and Paul's Stance toward Graeco-Roman Rhetoric* (LNTS 402; London: T&T Clark, 2009).

<sup>50</sup> See Harrison, 'Paul and the Gymnasiarchs', 176-7.

Part Two

# Early Christian Appropriations



# Fabulous Parables: The Storytelling Tradition in the Synoptic Gospels

Matthew Ryan Hauge

*'Awaiting his death in prison, Socrates composed his own versions of the fables of Aesop.'*

Plato, *Phaed.* 60d

## 1. Introduction

According to Irenaeus, the second-century Christian theologian, proper interpretation of the parables should yield a 'like interpretation from all' (*Haer.* 2.27). And yet, a brief survey of his own writings on the parables as well as Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Augustine and other Church fathers reveals this is simply not the case.<sup>1</sup> Contrary to the opinion of Irenaeus, the diverse and complex explanations of these simple narratives reflect the allegorical interpretive trajectory established by the Second Evangelist in the parable of the Sower in Mark 4.1-20. The only other narrative designated as a parable in the Gospel of Mark is the Wicked Tenants in 12.1-12, but an allegorical explanation is replaced by a different interpretive strategy provided by a well-known genre throughout the Mediterranean world – the Greek *μῦθος* (Lat. *fabula*).<sup>2</sup>

The Greek fable figured prominently in ancient educational curricula. Every student in antiquity learned their alpha-beta-gammas by reading, copying and

<sup>1</sup> For early allegorical interpretations of the parables, see Warren S. Kissinger, *The Parables of Jesus: A History of Interpretation and Bibliography* (ATLA Bibliography Series 4; Metuchen, NJ: The Scarecrow Press, 1979), 1–33; Robert H. Stein, *An Introduction to the Parables of Jesus* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1981), 42–7; and Lane C. McGaughey, 'A Short History of Parable Interpretation (Part I)', *Forum* 8:3-4 (1995): 229–45.

<sup>2</sup> Macrobius, for example, renders the Greek *μῦθος* as the Latin *fabula* (*Commentary on the Dream of Scipio*, 1.2.7-11).



composing fables, which according to the earliest known collection of preliminary exercises (or προγυμνάσματα) by Aelius Theon was a ‘fictitious story giving an image of truth.’<sup>3</sup> This chapter will carefully examine the problem of genre that has plagued parable research for well over a century and explore the fable as a potentially fruitful category for interpreting the short fictional narratives typical of the Jesus tradition in the Synoptic Gospels.

## 2. The problem of ‘parable’

The term ‘parable’ is popularly applied to the short fictional narratives typical of the Jesus tradition in the Synoptic Gospels.<sup>4</sup> The English word ‘parable’ is a transliteration of the Greek word παραβολή, which is a combination of the verb βάλλειν, ‘to throw’, and the preposition παρά, ‘beside’. Simply put, the term παραβολή denotes throwing something beside something else, which has led many scholars to conclude the parables are a type of comparison.<sup>5</sup>

Unfortunately, there is no consensus among the evangelists on what exactly the term παραβολή designates.<sup>6</sup> All three of the Synoptic Gospels identify the Sower (Mt. 13.3, 10, 18; Mk. 4.2, 10, 13, 33-34; Lk. 8.4, 9-10), the Wicked Tenants (Mt. 21.33, 45; Mk. 12.1, 12; Lk. 20.9, 19) and the Fig Tree (Mt. 24.32; Mk 13.28; Lk. 21.29) as parables.<sup>7</sup> Mark and Matthew both designate the Mustard Seed as a parable as well (Mk. 4.30-32; Mt. 13.31), but Luke does not.

The situation becomes increasingly muddled in Q and the special material. Luke introduces the Lost Sheep (Lk. 15.3) and the Entrusted Money (Lk.

<sup>3</sup> George A. Kennedy, *Progymnasmata: Greek Textbooks of Prose Composition and Rhetoric* (Writings from the Greco-Roman World, no. 10; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003), 23.

<sup>4</sup> Portions of this chapter are adapted from Matthew Ryan Hauge, *The Biblical Tour of Hell* (LNTS 485; London: T&T Clark, 2013), and are included with the permission of Bloomsbury Publishing. The Gospel of John does not use the Greek term παραβολή or include any of the narrative parables that are typical of the Synoptic Jesus. John does make frequent use of figurative language, but he prefers to designate this imagery as παροιμία. For example, see the figures of the sheepfold (10.1-5, 7-10), the good shepherd (10.11-18), and the vine and the branches (15.1-8). Apart from the Synoptic Gospels, the non-canonical *Gos. Thom.* and the *Ap. John* are the only other sources of the parables of Jesus. For more information concerning their use of the parable tradition, see Bernard Brandon Scott, *Re-Imagine the World: An Introduction to the Parables of Jesus* (Sonoma, CA: Polebridge Press, 2001), 22–5. Within the New Testament, the only occurrence of παραβολή outside of the Synoptic Gospels appears in the book of Hebrews (9.9; 11.19).

<sup>5</sup> E.g. Scott, *Re-Imagine*, p. 15.

<sup>6</sup> Charles W. Hedrick, *Parables as Poetic Fictions: The Creative Voice of Jesus* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1994), 13–25.

<sup>7</sup> Among these parables, the Fig Tree is not a story; it is simply an image lacking characters, plot and setting.

19.11) as parables, but Matthew does not. Matthew describes the Leaven (Mt. 13.33) and the Feast (Mt. 22.1) as parables, but Luke does not. They do both agree that the Unclean Spirit, On Settling Out of Court, and the Two Houses are not parables. The Matthean material introduces the Good Seed and Weeds (Mt. 13.24) as a parable; the classification of the Hid Treasure (Mt. 13.44), a Merchant in Search of Pearls (Mt. 13.45), and a Net Thrown into the Sea (Mt. 13.47-48) is unclear, but the broader literary frame (Mt. 13.53) suggests that they are parables as well. The Lukan material designates the Rich Fool (Lk. 12.16), the Barren Fig Tree (Lk. 13.6), the Unjust Judge (Lk. 18.1), and the Pharisee and the Tax Collector (Lk. 18.9) as parables. The Sprouting Seed in the Markan material is not identified as a parable, but once again, the larger literary framework (Mk. 4.2, 33-34) implies that it is a parable.

In addition, the evangelists employ the term παραβολή not only for short fictional narratives, but also for aphorisms, proverbs, simple images and even discourse. The image of the householder is designated as a parable by Luke (Lk. 12.41), but not by Matthew (Mt. 24.43). Matthew (Mt. 15.10-20) and Mark (rk 7.15-17) describe the aphorism about defilement as a parable; they (Mt. 24.32; Mk 13.28; Lk. 21.29-30) all agree the image of the fig tree is a parable. Luke (Lk. 6.39) identifies the aphorism about the blind leading the blind as a parable, but Matthew (Mt. 15.10-20) does not. They each (Mt. 9.16-17; Mk 2.21-22; Lk. 5.36-38) include the twin aphorisms of the new patch on an old garment and new wine in old wineskins, but only Luke regards them as a parable. The Beelzebul controversy and the appended aphorisms are designated as parables in the Gospel of Mark (Mk. 3.23-29), but Matthew (Mt. 12.25-32) and Luke (Lk. 11.17-23) do not agree.

The inconsistent use of the term παραβολή and its broad semantic range within the Synoptic tradition is problematic. Together, they render the literary classification, and subsequently, the proper interpretation of the parables an alluring mystery, one which modern critics have attempted to solve.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> For a detailed discussion of the trajectory of modern parable studies, see: David B. Gowler, *What Are They Saying About Parables?* (New York: Paulist, 2000), 3–40; Norman Perrin, *Jesus and the Language of the Kingdom* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1976), 89–205; William A. Beardslee, 'Recent Literary Criticism', in *The New Testament and Its Modern Interpreters* (eds Eldon Jay Epp and George W. McRae; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1989), 175–89; Craig L. Blomberg, *Interpreting the Parables* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1990), 29–167; Klyne Snodgrass, 'Modern Approaches to the Parables', in *The Face of New Testament Studies: A Survey of Recent Research* (eds. Scot McKnight and Grant Osborne; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004), 177–90.

### 3. Modern parable studies

The birth of modern parable studies took place in 1886 with the publication of *Die Gleichnisreden Jesu* by Adolf Jülicher.<sup>9</sup> In this seminal examination of the Synoptic parables, Jülicher sternly rejected the allegorical method and instead posited the parables express a single moral point.<sup>10</sup> Furthermore, he drew a distinction between the parables of the historical Jesus and the parables as they are found in the Synoptic Gospels. The parables have been reshaped with allegorical flourishes that must be removed in order to uncover the true meaning of these powerful stories.<sup>11</sup> As support for his radical new approach, he employed Aristotelian rhetoric to define and classify the Synoptic parables.<sup>12</sup> In their original form, the parables were agents of comparisons (i.e. similes), which he divided into three forms: *Gleichnisse* ('similitudes'), *Parabeln* ('parables') and *Beispiel Erzählungen* ('example stories').<sup>13</sup>

The most significant voice after Jülicher was C. H. Dodd; in 1935, he published his Schaffer lectures given at Yale Divinity School under the title *The Parables of the Kingdom*.<sup>14</sup> By far, his most lasting contribution was a working definition of the parable: 'At its simplest the parable is a metaphor or simile drawn from nature or common life, arresting the hearer by its vividness or strangeness, and leaving the mind in sufficient doubt about its

<sup>9</sup> Originally, his examination of the parables spanned two volumes; the later edition combines both volumes in their original, untranslated form (Adolf Jülicher, *Die Gleichnisreden Jesu* [Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1969]).

<sup>10</sup> Although his rejection of the allegorical method has been widely embraced, there have been some reappraisals of the value of allegory in parable studies in the past 50 years. See: Raymond E. Brown, 'Parable and Allegory Reconsidered,' *NovT* 5 (1962): 36–45; Matthew Black, 'The Parables as Allegory,' *BJRL* 42 (1959–60): 273–87; John Drury, 'The Sower, the Vineyard, and the Place of Allegory in the Interpretation of the Parables,' *JTS* 24 (1973): 367–70; and Hans-Josef Klauck, *Allegorie und Allegorese in synoptischen Gleichnistexten* (Münster: Aschendorf, 1978).

<sup>11</sup> Jülicher was especially concerned with avoiding an allegorical reading of the parables, which led him to carefully distinguish between simile and metaphor. A metaphor is indirect speech that says one thing but means another; he considered this too much like an allegory. A simile, however, is direct speech that is simple and self-explanatory (Jülicher, *Gleichnisreden*, I.52–8).

<sup>12</sup> Aristotle, *Rhetoric* (trans. John Henry Freese; LCL; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1926).

<sup>13</sup> The similitude (e.g. the parable of the Children Playing in the Market in Mt. 11.16–19; Lk. 7.31–34) describes an occurrence from daily life and calls upon the interpreter to discover the point of comparison. The parable proper (e.g. the parable of the Sower in Mt. 13.1–9; Mk 4.1–9; Lk. 8.4–8) is an imaginary story that takes place in the past, but functions the same way as the similitude and has all of its attributes (Jülicher, *Gleichnisreden*, I.112–15).

<sup>14</sup> C. H. Dodd, *The Parables of the Kingdom* (London: Nisbet & Company, 1935). He largely follows in the footsteps of Jülicher; however, he shifts the debate from a single moral point to a 'realized eschatology'. The primary purpose of the parables is to proclaim the presence of the kingdom of God.

precise application to tease it into active thought.<sup>15</sup> His definition emphasized the realism of the parables. A parable is not an allegory, but a ‘natural expression of a mind that sees truth in concrete pictures rather than conceives it in abstractions.’<sup>16</sup> Thus, the parables faithfully represent peasant life in the first-century Mediterranean world and a proper interpretation must take into account their *Sitz im Leben*.<sup>17</sup>

The post-World War II German parable scholar, Joachim Jeremias, openly acknowledges his debt to the work of Dodd, particularly his emphasis upon the *Sitz im Leben* of the parables.<sup>18</sup> He grew up in Palestine under missionary parents, which gave him a particularly vivid understanding of Palestinian life. He was also heavily influenced by the emerging work of form critics, especially Rudolf Bultmann. The form critics had been working on the pre-literary tradition of the parables, developing a framework for a discussion concerning the transmission of the parables through oral tradition.

In 1954, Jeremias published his own work on the parables, *The Parables of the Kingdom*, which he divided into two sections. Part one explores the ways in which the early Church altered the parables and part two describes the various themes of the parables in the context of the ministry of Jesus.<sup>19</sup> He was primarily concerned with the original words of the historical Jesus; fortunately, the methods by which the early Church reshaped the parables of Jesus were not random, but orderly. Thus, the earliest attainable form of the parables could be recovered if these laws, or ‘principles of transformation’, could be described.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>15</sup> Dodd, *Parables*, 16.

<sup>16</sup> Dodd suggests the parables of Jesus are similar to the rabbinic parables, which were often used by Jewish teachers for illustrative purposes. In a Hellenistic environment, however, the parables of Jesus were largely misunderstood. The widespread use of allegorical interpretations of well-known myths as ‘vehicles of esoteric doctrine’ led the early Christian community down the wrong interpretive path (*Parables*, 15).

<sup>17</sup> Dodd, *Parables*, 20–1.

<sup>18</sup> Joachim Jeremias, *The Parables of Jesus* (trans. S. H. Hooke; London: SCM Press, 1972), 23.

<sup>19</sup> Jeremias also published an examination of the parables for a more popular audience (*Rediscovering the Parables* [New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1966]).

<sup>20</sup> The ‘principles of transformation’ include allegorization (e.g. the parable of the Sower in Mk 4.1-9), allegorizing touches (e.g. the parable of the Great Supper in Lk. 14.15-24), moralizing conclusions (e.g. the parable of the Unjust Steward in Lk. 16.1-13) and providing setting (e.g. the parable of the Good Samaritan in Lk. 10.25-37). After trimming the parables of these later additions, the heart of their message clearly emerges: the kingdom of God is in the process of realization in the ministry of Jesus. He further divides the parables into thematic categories related to the kingdom of God: ‘The Great Assurance’, ‘Now Is the Day of Assurance’, ‘God’s Mercy for Sinners’, ‘The Imminence of Catastrophe’, ‘The Challenge of the Crisis’, ‘Realized Discipleship’, ‘The Via Dolorosa of the Son of Man’, ‘The Consummation’ and ‘Parabolic Actions’ (*Parables*, 23–114).

#### 4. *The American shift*

After World War II, American scholars led the way in parable studies. In the 1960s and 1970s parable scholarship, which had centred on historical criticism and the quest for the historical Jesus, shifted to a concern for their literary qualities. This shift was due in large part to the work of three men: Amos Wilder, Robert W. Funk and Dan O. Via, Jr.

In 1964, Amos Wilder lambasted the severely historical approach of his predecessors and peers and introduced the function of the imagination into the study of biblical literature in his 18-page chapter on the parables in *The Language of the Gospel: Early Christian Rhetoric*.<sup>21</sup> In contrast to Dodd, he rejected the use of the term 'parable' because it misleads one to assume there is a 'single pattern'.<sup>22</sup> The parables are not mere windows into the ancient world; they are literary works of art and as works of art, their purpose is not to exemplify, but to reveal.<sup>23</sup> Wilder argued that the parables must be extricated from their Gospel contexts and their original form must be reconstructed, although he does not describe how this is to be done.<sup>24</sup> In the original context of the ministry of Jesus, the real authority and power of the parables emerge: 'Faith and expectation are identified with daily life and with God's operation there.'<sup>25</sup>

In a similar vein, Funk argued that the parable was not a direct form of communication, but a language event that reshaped the world. His essay, 'The Parable as Metaphor', published in 1966 in his book, *Language, Hermeneutic, and Word of God*, represented a decisive contribution to understanding metaphor as the essential element in the parables of Jesus.<sup>26</sup> The parables in

<sup>21</sup> Amos N. Wilder, *The Language of the Gospel: Early Christian Rhetoric* (New York: Harper & Row, 1964). He never wrote a book dedicated exclusively to parables, but he did publish a collection of his seminal essays devoted to recovering the imaginative and symbolic depth of the parables (*Jesus' Parables and the War of Myths* [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1982]).

<sup>22</sup> Wilder, *Language*, 81.

<sup>23</sup> Wilder emphasized the metaphoric element of the parables; through the powers of metaphor, the parable shocks the imagination of the hearer with its own vision of reality. And although he considered the parables metaphoric language, he stressed their vivid realism. In fact, the parables of Jesus are *sui generis* only in so far as they perfectly unite the extraordinary with the ordinary (*Language*, 80, 81, 84).

<sup>24</sup> Wilder, *Language*, 90.

<sup>25</sup> Wilder, *Language*, 93.

<sup>26</sup> Robert W. Funk, *Language, Hermeneutic, and Word of God* (New York: Harper & Row, 1966). See also Robert W. Funk, *Parables and Presence: Forms of the New Testament Tradition* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1982).

their original form did not include applications – there is a tendency within the Synoptic tradition to provide generalizing conclusions to stabilize the interpretive tradition.<sup>27</sup> As Dodd correctly identified, ‘it is not possible to specify once and for all what the parables mean.’<sup>28</sup> The open-ended nature of the parables is due, in part, to their metaphoric quality, which reveals ‘the mystery of kaleidoscopic reality directly apprehended.’<sup>29</sup> As a metaphor, the parable draws the listener into participating in the story. Each participant creates a unique meaning, whether a member of the early Christian community, one of the evangelists, or a modern reader.<sup>30</sup> For the first time, the dynamic that occurs between a parable and the reader was raised as a significant interpretive reality.

In 1967, working concurrently but independently of Funk, Via redefined the parable as an ‘aesthetic object’, attempting to overcome the limitations of historical criticism as practised by Jeremias and Dodd in *The Parables: Their Literary and Existential Dimensions*.<sup>31</sup> In particular, he offered a compelling critique of a ‘severely historical approach’: (1) the Gospels are ‘non-biographical’ in nature, so one cannot determine in exactly what concrete situations parables were originally uttered; (2) the historical approach ignores the basic human element in the parables and underestimates the problem of translation; (3) the historical approach threatens to render the parables irrelevant for the present; and (4) the historical approach ignores the aesthetic function of parables as literary works of art.<sup>32</sup> Via concluded it was impossible to determine the *Sitz im Leben* of any of the parables and that ‘the only important consideration is the internal meaning of the work itself.’<sup>33</sup>

<sup>27</sup> Funk, *Language*, 134.

<sup>28</sup> Funk, *Language*, 135.

<sup>29</sup> Funk, *Language*, 140. Unlike a simile, which clarifies the lesser known by the better known, a metaphor juxtaposes two discrete and not entirely compatible elements. The ‘hermeneutical power’ of the parable lay in its resistance to interpretive reduction (*Language*, 136, 152).

<sup>30</sup> Funk, *Language*, p. 162. For a classic treatment of this approach, see Mary Ann Tolbert, *Perspectives on the Parables: An Approach to Multiple Interpretations* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979).

<sup>31</sup> Dan O. Via, Jr, *The Parables: Their Literary and Existential Dimension* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1967); see also ‘Parable and Example Story: A Literary-Structuralist Approach’, *Semeia* 1 (1974): 105–33.

<sup>32</sup> Via, *Parables*, 21–4.

<sup>33</sup> Via, *Parables*, 77. He supported his classification of the parables as aesthetic objects by adopting a standard twofold division of basic plot movements (i.e. tragedy and comedy) from modern literary criticism. In a tragic parable the plot falls towards catastrophe and the protagonist becomes isolated from society (e.g. the parable of the Talents in Mt. 25.14-30), while in the comic parable there is an upward movement towards well-being and the inclusion of the protagonist in a renewed society (e.g. the parable of the Prodigal Son in Lk. 15.11-32). In their original context, these tragic and

John Dominic Crossan made the contributions of Wilder, Funk and Via accessible to a wider audience in 1973 with the publication of his book, *In Parables: The Challenge of the Historical Jesus*.<sup>34</sup> In this creative exploration of the 'historical Jesus', Crossan explicitly states he is not interested in the faith or self-consciousness of Jesus, but rather the language of Jesus through 'the reconstructed parabolic complex'.<sup>35</sup> In his estimation, the Synoptic parables originated with the historical Jesus.<sup>36</sup> Crossan divided the parables into three modes reflecting the temporality of the kingdom of God: advent, reversal and action.<sup>37</sup>

In 1989, Bernard Brandon Scott followed in the tradition of Wilder, Funk, Via and Crossan in his work, *Hear Then the Parable: A Commentary on the Parables of Jesus*.<sup>38</sup> Scott began by defining the parable as 'a *mashal* [משל] that employs a short narrative fiction to reference a transcendent symbol'.<sup>39</sup> Scott was certainly not the first (nor the last) to argue the Semitic *mashal* provides the essential background for interpreting the Synoptic parables, but he was the first to examine the parables systematically and comprehensively within this literary context.<sup>40</sup>

comic fictions were powerful language events; the 'purpose of interpreting them is that that event might occur once more in the exposition' (*Parables*, 52, 95–6, 110, 145).

<sup>34</sup> John Dominic Crossan, *In Parables: The Challenge of the Historical Jesus* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1973). Following in the footsteps of Funk, Crossan juxtaposes sayings of Jesus and the Argentine author Jorge Luis Borges, demonstrating that both are literary iconoclasts (*Raid on the Articulate: Cosmic Eschatology in Jesus and Borges* [New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1976]).

<sup>35</sup> Crossan, *In Parables*, p. xiii. He carefully distinguishes between allegory and parable; an allegory can be explained, but parables are metaphoric language that expresses the inexpressible. Crossan shares the viewpoint of Derrida that all language is metaphoric, which creates a void of meaning (*In Parables*, 8–10).

<sup>36</sup> John Dominic Crossan, *The Historical Jesus: The Life of a Mediterranean Jewish Peasant* (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1993), 434–50 in Appendix I.

<sup>37</sup> Crossan, *In Parables*, 37–52, 53–78, 79–120. The kingdom of God and its parables manifest the advent of a radical new world (e.g. the parable of the Sower in Mk. 4.3–8; Mt. 13.3–8; Lk. 8.5–8; *Gos. Thom.* 9), a reversal of expectations (e.g. the parable of the Good Samaritan in Luke 10.30–37) and a call to action as the expression of a new world (e.g. the parable of the Wicked Husbandmen in Mk 12.1–12; Mt. 21.33–46; Lk. 20.9–19; *Gos. Thom.* 65).

<sup>38</sup> Bernard Brandon Scott, *Hear Then the Parable: A Commentary on the Parables of Jesus* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1989).

<sup>39</sup> Scott, *Hear Then*, 8.

<sup>40</sup> Throughout the history of modern parable studies, it has been widely assumed the Hebrew Bible and rabbinic literature provide the only appropriate material for comparison with the Synoptic parables. E.g. see: Paul Fiebig, *Altjüdische Gleichnisse und die Gleichnisse Jesu* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1904) and *Die Gleichnisreden Jesu im Lichte der rabbinischen Gleichnisse des neutestamentlichen Zeitalters* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1912); Bultmann, *Synoptic Tradition*, 166; Jeremias, *Parables*, 20; Thomas W. Manson, *The Teaching of Jesus: Studies of its Form and Content* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963), 64–6; Robert H. Stein, *An Introduction to the Parables of Jesus* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1981), 16–18; Kenneth E. Bailey, *Poet and Peasants* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976) and *Through Peasant Eyes* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980); Madeleine I.



The Hebrew noun, מָשָׁל, has an even broader range of application than παραβολή in the Synoptic Gospels; it is used to describe narratives (e.g. Ezek. 17.2-10), brief figures (e.g. Ezek. 24.3-5), traditional proverbs (e.g. Jer. 23.28), lamentations (e.g. Ezek. 19.1-9, 10-14) and sayings (e.g. Hab. 2.6).<sup>41</sup> According to Scott, *mashal* appears to describe any dark saying whose meaning is not readily apparent.<sup>42</sup> As a result, he carefully distinguishes the parable from other forms of the *meshalim*, like proverbs and riddles.<sup>43</sup> These short fictional narratives participate in the *mashal* tradition, but reference the kingdom of God; together, the narrative and the kingdom 'create parable'.<sup>44</sup>

Drawing upon methods from social science, he divided the Synoptic parables into three categories of first-century Mediterranean life. The parables of family (e.g. the parable of the Prodigal Son in Luke 15.11-32), village (e.g. the parable of the Rich Fool in Lk. 12.16-20; *Gos. Thom.* 63) and city (e.g. the parable of the Unjust Judge in Lk. 18.2-5) make use of horizontal aspects of society. 'Masters and servants' is divided into parables of departure and return (e.g. the parable of the Wicked Husbandmen in Mk 12.1-12; Mt. 21.33-46; Lk. 20.9-19; *Gos. Thom.* 65) and parables of accounting (e.g. the parable of the Unjust Steward in Lk. 16.1-8a); they draw upon the dynamic patron-client relationship that dominated the Mediterranean mindset. And lastly, the parables of home (e.g. the parable of the Yeast in Mt. 13.33; Lk. 13.20-21) and farm (e.g. the parable of the Mustard Seed in Mk 4.30-32; Mt. 24.32; Lk 13.18-19; *Gos. Thom.* 9) explicitly employ the semiotic sign itself.<sup>45</sup>

With regard to parable interpretation, he offered a three-step analysis: (1) redaction; (2) reading; and (3) the kingdom of God.<sup>46</sup> First, Scott examines

Boucher, *The Mysterious Parable: A Literary Study* (Washington, DC: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1977), 11-13; and John Drury, *The Parables in the Gospels: History and Allegory* (New York: Crossroad, 1985), 7-20.

<sup>41</sup> Charles W. Hedrick, *Many Things in Parables: Jesus and His Modern Critics* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2004), 17.

<sup>42</sup> For a detailed discussion of the *mashal* in Hebrew literature, see David Stern, *Parables in Midrash: Narrative and Exegesis in Rabbinic Literature* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994).

<sup>43</sup> Scott, *Hear Then*, 8-19.

<sup>44</sup> Scott, *Hear Then*, 51-62. In his first book, Scott analysed the underlying narrative structure of the parables and identified five theses that form a consistent horizon of parable. Utilizing these five theses and two models (the structuralist *actantiel* model of Greimas for narrative parables and the structuralist model of Levi-Strauss for one-liners), he constructed a unified model in which the 'Kingdom of God' is at one end and 'The Accepted' is at the other as a semantic axis that generates the arrangement of images in the parables (*Jesus, Symbol-Maker for the Kingdom* [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1981]).

<sup>45</sup> (Scott, *Hear Then*, 79-98, 205-15, 301-19.

<sup>46</sup> Scott, *Hear Then*, 74-6.



the function of the parable in its present context(s) in the Synoptic Gospels and the *Gospel of Thomas*. The surface structure, which can be identified as mnemonic features of oral language (e.g. formulas, chiasmus and word plays), forms a bridge between the 'performance' of the evangelist and the 'originating structure'. Second, he reads the parables as fictive narratives that generate two levels of meaning independent of their *Sitz im Leben*: situational meaning (i.e. 'real reader') and the second level of literary meaning (i.e. 'implied reader'). In other words, Scott hopes to capture the dynamic by which the text seeks to structure itself while being structured by the response of the reader. And third, he explores the parabolic effect that emerges from the juxtaposition of the story and the kingdom.

### 5. Recasting the comparative net

In the interest of maintaining the uniqueness of the historical Jesus, many early modern historical-critical parable scholars after Jülicher insisted on distinguishing the teaching of Jesus from the rabbis; the Synoptic parables were popularly considered *sui generis*. The shift in parable studies, from historical-critical to literary-critical, over the past fifty years led many to reconsider the wider literary context of antiquity for interpreting the parables, especially the Jewish *meshalim*.<sup>47</sup>

*Mashal* is often translated as παραβολή in the Septuagint (twenty-eight of forty occurrences), a fact that certainly lends weight to the interpretive relevance of the *meshalim* for parable studies.<sup>48</sup> The historical Jesus and early Christian literature were undoubtedly influenced by Jewish Scripture and the rabbinic tradition, but there are two significant hurdles.<sup>49</sup> First, there are few narratives in the Hebrew Bible that resemble the short fictional narratives of the Jesus tradition in Gospel literature.<sup>50</sup> Second, rabbinic parables

<sup>47</sup> E.g. see Lawrence Boadt, 'Understanding the *Mashal* and Its Value for the Jewish-Christian Dialogue in a Narrative Theology', in *Parable and Story in Judaism and Christianity* (eds. Clemens Thoma and Michael Wyschogrod; New York: Paulist Press, 1989), 159–85.

<sup>48</sup> Klyne Snodgrass, *Stories with Intent: A Comprehensive Guide to the Parables of Jesus* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 10.

<sup>49</sup> E.g. a recent article identifies nearly all of the sayings of Jesus as *meshalim*, dividing them into aphoristic *meshalim* and narrative *meshalim* (B. Gerhardtsson, 'The Secret of the Transmission of the Unwritten Jesus Tradition', *NTS* 51 [2005]: 1–18).

<sup>50</sup> Cf. Ezek. 17.2-21; 19.1-9, 10-14; Judg. 9.8-15; 2 Sam. 12.1-4; 14:5-7; Eccl. 9.14-16.

do not appear until long after the emergence of the Synoptic tradition. For example, the *Mishnah*, the earliest collection of rabbinic material (c. 200 CE), contains only one parable.<sup>51</sup> The rabbinic parables that are typically used for comparison with the Synoptic parables do not appear until the fifth century.<sup>52</sup> Furthermore, they occur in a set form in which the parable illustrates the proper exegesis of the Torah; the Synoptic parables do not appear in this form nor do they perform this function.<sup>53</sup>

Scott and many others locate the Synoptic parables within the *maschal* tradition despite the late dating of rabbinic parables.<sup>54</sup> His justification is revealing: ‘There is no contemporaneous evidence of parable tellers at the time of Jesus. We should probably conclude that Jesus is at the beginning of the common folk tradition of the parable and for that reason his parables are not as stereotyped in form as those of the later rabbis.’<sup>55</sup> Given the strict boundaries of his comparative net, Scott is forced to posit the historical Jesus was participating in the birth of a new storytelling tradition. Fortunately, there are more immediate parallels in antiquity, but they lie beyond the traditionally legitimate context for interpreting the parables.

<sup>51</sup> Scott, *Re-Imagine the World*, 15.

<sup>52</sup> For a collection of rabbinic parables, see Harvey K. McArthur and Robert M. Johnston, *They Also Taught In Parables* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990). For a more detailed discussion of the use of parables in rabbinic literature, see Clemens Thoma, ‘Literary and Theological Aspects of the Rabbinic Parables’, in *Parable and Story in Judaism and Christianity* (eds Clemens Thoma and Michael Wyschogrod; New York: Paulist Press, 1989), 26–41.

<sup>53</sup> Günther Borkamm comments on this fact, ‘The rabbis also relate parables in abundance, to clarify a point in their teaching and explain the sense of a written passage, but always as an aid to the teaching and an instrument in the exegesis of an authoritatively prescribed text. But that is just what they are not in the mouth of Jesus, although they often come very close to those of the Jewish teachers in their content, and though Jesus makes free use of traditional and familiar topics. Here the parables are the preaching itself and are not merely serving the purpose of a lesson which is quite independent of them’ (*Jesus of Nazareth* [New York: Harper & Row, 1960], 69).

<sup>54</sup> See also: Paul Fiebig, *Altjüdische Gleichnisse und die Gleichnisse Jesu* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1904) and *Die Gleichnisreden Jesu im Lichte der rabbinischen Gleichnisse des neutestamentlichen Zeitalters* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1912); W. O. E. Oesterley, *The Gospel Parables in the Light of their Jewish Background* (London: SPCK, 1936); Thomas W. Manson, *The Teaching of Jesus: Studies of its Form and Content* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963), 64–6; Bultmann, *History*, 166; Jeremias, *Parables*, 20; Norman Perrin, *The Kingdom of God in the Teaching of Jesus* (London: S. C. M. Press, 1975), 80–9, 110–14, 116–21; Bailey, *Poet and Through Peasant Eyes*; Boucher, *Mysterious Parable*, pp. 11–13; Stein, *Introduction*, 16–18; Drury, *Parables*, 7–20; Brad H. Young, *Jesus and His Jewish Parables: Rediscovering the Roots of Jesus’ Teachings* (New York: Paulist Press, 1989), *The Parables: Jewish Tradition and Christian Interpretation* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1998), and *Meet the Rabbis: Rabbinic Thought and the Teachings of Jesus* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2007); and David Stern, ‘“Jesus” Parables from the Perspective of Rabbinic Literature: The Example of the Wicked Husbandmen’, in *Parable and Story in Judaism and Christianity* (eds. Clemens Thoma and Michael Wyschogrod; New York: Paulist Press, 1989), 42–80.

<sup>55</sup> Scott, *Re-Imagine the World*, 15.

How far can we legitimately cast our comparative net? As we have seen thus far, parable scholars predominantly turn to Palestinian Jewish materials as an interpretive aid, but Ronald F. Hock encourages an expansion of the comparative net, particularly in the direction of Greco-Roman literature, which is rarely considered. Why is an entire body of contemporaneous literature largely ignored? For Hock, there are at least three reasons.<sup>56</sup> The first is theological: scholars imagine the teachings of Jesus as a unique revelation, unaffected by and superior to his immediate context. The second is sociological: a Galilean peasant would have had little if any contact with Greco-Roman intellectuals. The third is disciplinary: parable scholars are trained in institutions that are more familiar with Judaism than they are the broader Greco-Roman environment.

In his watershed publication, Jülicher adapted a system of literary classification for the Synoptic parables from Aristotelian rhetoric (i.e. similitudes, parables and example stories).<sup>57</sup> With regard to the parable proper, he noted, 'Die Mehrzahl der *parabolai* Jesu, die erzählende Form tragen, sind Fabeln, wie die des Stesichoros und des Aesop.'<sup>58</sup> In his own work, he avoided the designation *Fabel* (Lat. *fabula*, 'story') because of its association with animal stories; instead, he used the term *Parabel*.

The availability of the Aesopic tradition and the growing interest in Greek and Latin literature, however, has revived the significance of Jülicher's observation in 1886.<sup>59</sup> On the interpretive relevance of the fable, Charles W. Hedrick commented,

The *fabula* is a very old and distinguished form in wisdom literature and is at least as promising a venue for contextualizing the parables of Jesus as the rabbinic literature and Hebrew Bible, if not more so, because of the dating problems with rabbinic literature. No problems exist with dating the fable, as it antedates Jesus. No problems exist with accessibility of fables to first-century Palestine, since they were widespread throughout the early Roman Empire.<sup>60</sup>

<sup>56</sup> Ronald F. Hock, 'Lazarus and Micylus: Greco-Roman Backgrounds to Luke 16:19-31', *JBL* 106 (1987): 455.

<sup>57</sup> Aristotle uses the word παραβολή to describe the fable (*Rhet.* 2.20.2-3). On the relationship between parable and fable, see Klaus Berger, 'Hellenistische Gattungen im Neuen Testament', *ANRW* II.25.2 (1989): 1110-24.

<sup>58</sup> Jülicher, *Gleichnisreden*, I.98.

<sup>59</sup> For more information on the fables, see *Aesop without Morals* (trans. Loyd W. Daly; New York: Thomas Yoseloff, 1961).

<sup>60</sup> Hedrick, *Many Things*, 20.

In support of this observation, Hedrick identified two Aesopic fables that were attributed to Jesus in the *Gospel of Thomas*; clearly, this is evidence of a shared tradition.<sup>61</sup>

The Greek fables, which figure prominently in all stages of ancient curricula, have traditionally been attributed to Aesop, who according to Herodotus was a sixth-century Phrygian slave from Samos (*Hist.* 2.134).<sup>62</sup> Along with maxims and χρεῖαι, the γραμματιστής taught primary students elementary composition through the process of hearing, reciting and writing these fables.<sup>63</sup> For example, Quintilian recommended that his students ‘should learn to paraphrase Aesop’s fables, the natural successors of the fairy stories of the nursery in simple and restrained language and subsequently to set down this paraphrase in writing with the same simplicity of style’ (*Inst.* 1.9.1 [Butler, LCL]).

Beyond simple paraphrasing, the γραμματικός taught the fundamentals of grammar through the manipulation of fables, much like the grammatical exercises performed on the χρεῖαι.<sup>64</sup> The fable was also present in the προγυμνάσματα; Aphthonius, for example, includes the μῦθος as the first of fourteen pre-rhetorical exercises. According to the rhetorician Demetrius, the malleability of the fables made them particularly suitable for integration into larger literary compositions, especially oratorical declamations (*Eloc.* 3.157).<sup>65</sup>

The ubiquitous presence of the Greek παιδεία in the Hellenistic Age and throughout the Roman Empire ensured a hitherto unknown cross-cultural fertilization. On this point, Mary Ann Beavis observes,

The similarities between Greek and Semitic stories, especially between parables and fables, is traceable to their common origins, and to the ‘fabulization’ of Semitic *meshalim* by Greek-educated writers and storytellers in the Hellenistic

<sup>61</sup> Cf. *Gosp. Thom.* 8 and Babrius 4; and *Gos. Thom.* 102 and Perry, *Babrius and Phaedrus*, 9–10, no. 4 and 597, no. 702. Aesopic fables were also employed by the satirist Lucian (cf. *Fug.* 13; *Pseudol.* 5).

<sup>62</sup> Pre-Aesopic fables are found in Homer, Hesiod and Archilochus as well and collections of fables were made by Demetrius of Phaleron (fourth century BCE), Phaedrus (late first century BCE) and Babrius (early second century CE). See further, W. M. Edwards, ‘Fable’, *OCD*: 584.

<sup>63</sup> Henry Irénée Marrou, *A History of Education in Antiquity* (trans. George Lamb; New York: Sheed & Ward, 1956), 173.

<sup>64</sup> Ronald F. Hock and Edward N. O’Neil, *The Chreia in Ancient Rhetoric. Volume I: The Progymnasmata* (SBLTT 27; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1986), 72–3.

<sup>65</sup> Aristotle describes the fable as an invented example (παράδειγμα); as such, they were far more flexible for argumentation than examples taken from actual events (cf. *Rhet.* 2.20.2–3). According to Jülicher, there are four ‘example stories’ in the Synoptic Gospels: the Good Samaritan (Lk. 10.30–35), the Foolish Rich Man (Lk. 12.16–20), the Rich Man and Lazarus (Lk. 16.19–31), and the Pharisee and the Tax Collector (Lk. 18.9–14).

period. Modern interpreters have not, of course, entirely overlooked the literary history of parables; nor has the relevance of Greco-Roman *paideia* for study of the NT gone uncanvassed, especially in recent years. The Aesopic fables have, however, continued to be inaccurately stereotyped as animal tales teaching prudential lessons, of little direct interest to parable interpreters.<sup>66</sup>

In fact, a small portion of the fables in the Aesopic tradition involve human activities or the relations between humans and the gods.<sup>67</sup>

These particular fables have been completely ignored by parable scholars; even a cursory comparison reveals their remarkable similarities. They both largely conform to the rhetorical definition of παραβολή in antiquity: a literary form with unnamed characters and rich depiction of everyday life (John Doxapatres, *Hom. In Aphthon.* 3 [Walz 1835: 2.273]).<sup>68</sup> Furthermore, the fables that narrate the relations between humans and the gods often include an element of reversal, a character trait Crossan emphasizes in his classification of the Synoptic parables.<sup>69</sup> Crossan is one of the few modern parable scholars to examine Greek folklore, particularly the Aesopic tradition, as a literary backdrop, but he does not fully explore the potential interpretive significance of this tradition.<sup>70</sup>

In addition to similarities in content, they both feature secondary morals or applications as well. Most of the fables that resemble the narrative parables have morals attached to the beginning (προμύθιον) or appended at the conclusion (ἐπιμύθιον).<sup>71</sup> These moralizing additions are secondary and are not always seamlessly attached, much like the aphoristic 'explanations' that often introduce or conclude the parables in the Synoptic Gospels.<sup>72</sup>

<sup>66</sup> 'Parable and Fable', *CBQ* 52 (1990): 478.

<sup>67</sup> According to a cursory survey done by Beavis, 17 per cent of Babrius' anthology of 143 fables; 30 per cent of Phaedrus' collection of 127; and 16 per cent of ancient fables preserved in prose paraphrase. See Beavis, 'Parable and Fable', 479.

<sup>68</sup> See Ronald F. Hock, 'Romancing the Parables of Jesus', *PRSt* 29 (2001): 12–13; and 'The Parable of the Foolish Rich Man (Luke 12:16–20) and Graeco-Roman Conventions of Thought and Behavior', in *Early Christianity and Classical Culture: Comparative Studies in Honor of Abraham J. Malherbe* (eds. John T. Fitzgerald, Thomas H. Olbricht and L. Michael White; Leiden: Brill, 2003), 185 n. 17. The two exceptions in the Synoptic Gospels, the Foolish Rich Man (Lk. 12.16–20) and the Rich Man and Lazarus (Lk. 16.19–31), both feature the supernatural and the latter two proper names.

<sup>69</sup> Crossan, *In Parables*, 53–78.

<sup>70</sup> John Dominc Crossan, 'Hidden Treasure Parables in Late Antiquity', *SBLSP* 10 (1976): 359–80.

<sup>71</sup> Beavis, 'Parable and Fable', 481.

<sup>72</sup> The following stories in the Synoptic Gospels have either a προμύθιον or a ἐπιμύθιον, or both: the Wicked Tenants (Mk 12.1–11; Mt. 21.33–45; Lk. 20.9–18), the Unmerciful Servant (Mt. 18.23–35); the Labourers in the Vineyard (Mt. 20.1–16); the Two Sons (Mt. 21.28–32); the Wedding

This use of morals to summarize a story is characteristic of a genre familiar to all throughout the Mediterranean world – the aforementioned *μῦθος*.<sup>73</sup> On the relationship between the moral and the fable, Doxapatres says, ‘Just as the task of the introduction is to make the audience attentive to what will be said in the narrative, so the task of (composing) a *μῦθος* is to prepare the audience for accepting the *ἐπιμύθιον*, or moral, of the *μῦθος*.’<sup>74</sup> Furthermore, the fables often include summarizing commentary from the main character – the *γνώμη* – a literary device employed by several of the narrative parables.<sup>75</sup>

In short, the Synoptic parables and the Greek fables share similarities in narrative structure and content, convey religious and ethical themes, contain an element of surprise and include secondary applications. Unfortunately, despite their prominence within ancient curricula and obvious interpretive relevance, the fables have largely been neglected in modern parable scholarship.

### 6. *Markan parable theory*

In Mark 4.10-12, Jesus offers this explanation of his storytelling technique, ‘To you has been given the secret of the kingdom of God, but for those outside, everything comes in parables; in order that “they may indeed look, but not perceive, and may indeed listen, but not understand; so that they may not turn again and be forgiven”.’<sup>76</sup> Mark’s ‘theory of parables’

Feast (Mt. 22.2-14); the Ten Maidens (Mt. 25.1-13); the Talents (Mt. 25.14-30); the Foolish Rich Man (Lk. 12.15-21); the Unjust Steward (Lk. 16.1-9); the Persistent Widow (Lk. 18.1-8); and the Pharisee and the Tax Collector (Lk. 18.9-14). These morals are considered by many to be secondary; for a discussion of free-floating sayings of Jesus that were later attached to stories by the evangelists, see Eta Linnemann, *Parables of Jesus: Introduction and Exposition* (London: SPCK, 1966), 16–18.

<sup>73</sup> George A. Kennedy, *Greek Rhetoric under Christian Emperors* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), 60–1; and Madeleine I. Boucher, *The Parables* (Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, 1981), 11. For the definitive treatment of the fable in antiquity, see Francisco Rodríguez Adrados, *History of the Graeco-Latin Fable* (trans. Leslie A. Ray and F. Rojas Del Canto; 3 vols; Leiden: Brill 1999–2003).

<sup>74</sup> Doxapatres 2.125, 15-19 (Walz); see further, Hock, ‘Foolish’, 194–5.

<sup>75</sup> Kennedy, *Greek Rhetoric*, 61–2. Concluding commentary from a main character is a common feature in many of the Matthean and Lukan parables (e.g. Mt. 18.32-33; 20.13-15; 25.12, 26-28; Lk. 12.20; 13.8-9; 15.31-32; 16.30; 18.4-5).

<sup>76</sup> Unless otherwise noted, the Scripture quotations contained herein are from the New Revised Standard Version Bible, copyright © 1989 National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

certainly coincides nicely with the *mashal* – a dark saying whose meaning is not readily apparent – the parables function as ciphers whose secrets are intended only for the ‘insiders’.

There are only two stories identified in the Gospel of Mark as parables: the Sower in Mark 4.1-9 and the Wicked Tenants in Mark 12.1-11. While the meaning of the Sower is reserved for the insiders, the Wicked Tenants concludes with an *ἐπιμύθια*, revealing the secret of the kingdom to those outside – the chief priests, scribes and elders – who afterwards desire to arrest him. Curiously, the secrecy motif as it pertains to parables is not applicable in this instance.

The Sower and Mark’s ‘theory of parables’ can also be found in Matthew and Luke, albeit in a softened form (Mt. 13.10-13; Lk. 8.10), but it is the moralizing addition appended to the story of the Wicked Tenants that had a greater impact upon the first interpreters of the Gospel of Mark.<sup>77</sup> Along with their retelling of the Wicked Tenants, Matthew and Luke include *προμύθια* and *ἐπιμύθια* in many of the stories in their special material, notably the Unmerciful Servant (Mt. 18.23-35), the Labourers in the Vineyard (Mt. 20.1-16), the Two Sons (Mt. 21.28-32), the Ten Maidens (Mt. 25.1-13), the Foolish Rich Man (Lk 12.15-21), the Unjust Steward (Lk 16.1-9), the Persistent Widow (Lk. 18.1-8), and the Pharisee and the Tax Collector (Lk. 18.9-14). This use of summarizing ‘morals’ cannot be found in the Jewish *meshalim*, but it corresponds exactly with the Greco-Roman treatment of the Aesopic tradition.

The fable was an old, established form of wisdom literature well known throughout the Greco-Roman world. The early Christian communities were certainly familiar with them and, unlike the rabbinic parables, they easily predate the composition of the Synoptic Gospels. Everyone in antiquity who learned to read and write in Greek, including the authors of the Gospels of Mark, Matthew and Luke, were repeatedly exposed to the fables throughout their educational experience. Although a summarizing moral occurs only once in the Gospel of Mark, the increased presence of secondary applications in the storytelling tradition in Matthew and Luke suggest his predecessors interpreted the parables through the lens of the Greek *μῦθος*. The complex

<sup>77</sup> This argument assumes Markan priority.

allegorical interpretations of the early Church fathers follow in the footsteps of the Sower in the Gospel of Mark, but they stand in stark contrast to the method employed by the earliest interpreters of the evangelist, Matthew and Luke.





## The Origins of Greek Mimesis and the Gospel of Mark: Genre as a Potential Constraint in Assessing Markan Imitation

Andrew W. Pitts

Isocrates, one of the ten canonized orators, rigorously implemented imitation as a Homeric pedagogical technique within the early Athenian schools, a literary feature that would eventually ensure the emulation of literary models as the programmatic and dominating feature of the entire *paideia*. After deep and thorough refinement in the Greek schools, starting with Plato, mimesis begins to develop along diverse trajectories, taking on very different – sometimes even contradictory – meanings. In the past several decades, numerous biblical interpreters have attempted to mine Hellenistic mimesis for its relevance to New Testament studies, but these investigations often emerge without proper consideration for the unique and varied development of imitation in Greco-Roman antiquity. MacDonald and his followers assume a highly variable version of mimesis familiar within ancient poetics, conceived almost purely in terms of invention as recreative art.<sup>1</sup> The more Jewish oriented approaches of Brodie and Thompson<sup>2</sup> ignore the reception of mimesis into Hellenistic Judaism in the form of the so-called rewritten Bible, where imitation does not involve anywhere near the levels of invention these models require.<sup>3</sup> O’Leary’s study, essentially a mimetic account of source criticism, conflates the radically different notions of imitation in Plato and

<sup>1</sup> Dennis R. MacDonald, *The Homeric Epics and the Gospel of Mark* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000).

<sup>2</sup> Thomas L. Brodie, *The Birthing of the New Testament: The Intertextual Development of the New Testament Writings* (NTM 1; Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2004); Thomas L. Thompson, *The Messiah Myth: The Near Eastern Roots of Jesus and David* (London: Pimlico, 2007), 23–6.

<sup>3</sup> See A. W. Pitts, ‘The Use and Non-Use of Prophetic Literature in Hellenistic Jewish Historiography’, in *Prophets and Prophecy in Ancient Israelite Historiography* (eds. Mark J. Boda and Lissa Wray Beal; BCP; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2012), 229–52.

Quintilian as the basis for her model – a methodology quite underdeveloped theoretically.<sup>4</sup> Watts coalesces Plato and Aristotle (two conflicting views), along with the Stoics and the rhetorical theory of Quintilian, into a model for analysis of mimesis in Mark.<sup>5</sup> Although Baban treats the multifaceted use of imitation in Greco-Roman antiquity, continental philosophy and contemporary literary criticism,<sup>6</sup> he fuses the various uses into a single theory,<sup>7</sup> capitulating to what Barr called illegitimate totality transfer – importing a term's varied uses into a single instance.<sup>8</sup>

Classicists attempt to avoid these confusions by proposing taxonomical accounts to explain the varied usages that tend on most theories to orient towards specific definitions and functions in three distinct domains of classical literature and theory: poetics, philosophy and rhetoric. Before considering an appropriate taxonomy of mimesis and its relevance for historiographic mimesis specifically, we must plot the origination of creative imitation in the Hellenistic schools. After tracing the origin and diverse trajectories of mimesis, we can then locate the form of mimesis distinct to Greek historical discourse within its specific literary environment and then finally plot out the potential implications this may have for understanding mimesis in a document such as Mark's Gospel (and the mimetic reception of tradition in early Christianity more broadly). The chapter in other words seeks to further explore the potential relationship between mimesis and genre and to ask what, if any, implications this might have for assessing mimesis in Mark's Gospel since this document has been given the most attention by mimetic critics.

<sup>4</sup> Anne M. O'Leary, *Matthew's Judaization of Mark Examined in the Context of the Use of Sources in Graeco-Roman Antiquity* (LNTS 323; London: T&T Clark, 2006), 13–18.

<sup>5</sup> Joel L. Watts, *Mimetic Criticism and the Gospel of Mark: An Introduction and Commentary* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2013), 23–30.

<sup>6</sup> Octavian D. Baban, *On the Road Encounters in Luke-Acts: Hellenistic Mimesis and Luke's Theology of the Way* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2006), 73–140.

<sup>7</sup> Baban, *On the Road*, 118, amalgamates these varied uses into 'cultural, literary, and historical mimesis' (emphasis his) and claims that Luke utilizes all of them, with no reference point for how these varied uses were taken up into differing literary contexts – even if, as Baban claims, Luke's journey motif resembles elements from the ancient novel that will necessarily restrict other realizations for mimesis that regarded tradition less invariably.

<sup>8</sup> James Barr, *The Semantics of Biblical Language* (London: Oxford University Press, 1961).

### 1. Mimesis in the Hellenistic schools

Mimesis begins its evolution as the basic axiom of Greek education. Traditionally, classicists formulate this school system according to three stages: (1) the elementary school (basic literacy); (2) the grammatical school (literature); and (3) advanced education (rhetoric and/or philosophy).<sup>9</sup> A more recent model suggests a two-track framework, nuanced according to social status and location.<sup>10</sup> On this – I believe more adequate approach – the first phase in essence combines the first two stages of the classical model with the *grammaticus* (γραμματικός) (the teacher of a grammatical or liberal school in the second stage) functioning as the primary teacher of a student in the first major phase of their education. The same teacher would often teach children within families of economic means both literacy and the basic curriculum of the grammatical school. Upon completing their literacy-literature studies with the *grammaticus*, students in the Greco-Roman world would traditionally advance on to the higher institutions of Hellenistic rhetoric and philosophy.

Working in tandem with memorization (cf. Quintilian, *Inst.* 2.7.2-4), mimesis or imitation functioned as the single most critical factor in this instructional process, from the beginning phases to the end.<sup>11</sup> Quintilian insists that the culturing of imitation begins with the infant and his nurse, since if the nurse does not speak properly, the child will imitate the nurse's crude speech so that he must unlearn his imitation of the wrong model later (Quintilian, *Inst.* 1.1.5). The parents then took on a crucial role in the

<sup>9</sup> E.g. H. I. Marrou, *A History of Education in Antiquity* (trans. George Lamb; London: Sheed and Ward, 1956) is the standard work on the subject that takes this view. See also: Aubrey Gwynn, *Roman Education: From Cicero to Quintilian* (New York: Russell & Russell, 1964; orig. 1926); S. F. Bonner, *Education in Ancient Rome: From the elder Cato to the Younger Pliny* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1977); D. L. Clark, *Rhetoric in Greco-Roman Education* (Morningside Heights, NY: Columbia University Press, 1957), 60; W. V. Harris, *Ancient Literacy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989), esp. 130–46; R. Cribiore, *Writing, Teachers, and Students in Graeco-Roman Egypt* (American Studies in Papyrology 36; Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1996).

<sup>10</sup> See A. D. Booth, 'Elementary and Secondary Education in the Roman Empire', *Florilegium* 1 (1979): 1–14; A. D. Booth, 'The Schooling of Slaves in First Century Rome', *TAPA* 109 (1979): 11–19; R. A. Kaster, 'Notes on "Primary" and "Secondary" Schools in Late Antiquity', *TAPA* 113 (1983): 323–46; cf. also: P. J. J. Botha, 'Greco-Roman Literacy as Setting for New Testament Writings', *Neot* 26 (1992): pp. 195–215; R. A. Kaster, *Guardians of Language: The Grammarian and Society in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1988), 447–52.

<sup>11</sup> cf. Teresa Morgan, *Literate Education in the Hellenistic and Roman Worlds* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 352; on the function of imitation in advanced levels of education, see Raffaella Cribiore, *Gymnastics of the Mind: Greek Education in Hellenistic and Roman Egypt* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001), 220–44.

instructing through mimesis in the child's early development. A particularly popular schooltext, as indicated by frequent references in the papyri, was the collection of ethical advice from Isocrates to Demonikos, a friend of Isocrates who is receiving his education. Isocrates urges Demonikos not to forget his first teacher, his father: 'striving to imitate and emulate his excellence' (Isocrates, *Ad Dem.* 9-11).<sup>12</sup> Imitation thus saturated the *enkyklios paideia*, starting with the most elementary levels and the roles of parent and teacher were virtually fused at these stages.<sup>13</sup> After learning to imitate Greek letters and glosses (Quintilian, *Inst.* 1.1.35), exercises using imitation would typically involve rewriting one of the poets (Quintilian, *Inst.* 1.8.8-9), most often Homer (Quintilian, *Inst.* 1.8.5; Plato, *Prot.* 325E-26A; Lucian, *Men.* 3-4; cf. Plato, *Resp.* 606E). But the teacher himself was also to be imitated throughout the literacy and grammatical stages of education as they created material for their pupils (Quintilian, *Inst.* 1.12.12).<sup>14</sup> Imitation in this context had a moral dimension. Quintilian suggests that children's exercises of copying the words and thoughts of admirable men would teach them moral lessons and contribute to character formation (*Inst.* 2.1.35-36; cf. Seneca, *Ep.* 6.56; 108.23; Dionysius, *Isoc.* 5.61.10-12). 'For however many models for imitation he may give them from the authors they are reading, it will still be found that fuller nourishment is provided by the living voice' (Quintilian, *Inst.* 2.2.8; cf. Quintilian, *Inst.* 1.8.5; 2.2.1-8; Horace, *Ars* 333-40; *Carm.* 3.3.1-4; Diodorus Siculus, 12.13.2). Hellenistic teachers functioned much like parents, providing moral models for children (their pupils) to emulate.

The later stages of education with a *grammaticus* focused on elementary rhetorical and compositional exercises. Although formal curricula for the *progymnasmata* may not have been fully standardized by the beginning of

<sup>12</sup> As Criore, *Gymnastics*, 106, concludes, '[E]ducation in its simplest form was a son's imitation of the excellence and conduct of his own father'. By the time the adolescent had reached the age to begin his or her primary education, 'The two figures, the father and the teacher, had joined their efforts, and their images blended'. Quintilian, *Inst.* 1.2, devotes an entire chapter to developing the role of the parent in the formation of the child's education.

<sup>13</sup> cf. Morgan, *Literate Education*, 120-51; C. Skidmore, *Practical Ethics for Roman Gentlemen: The Work of Valerius Maximus* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1996), 22.

<sup>14</sup> Criore, *Gymnastics*, 133, mentions the following example: '[A] tablet from the second to third century C.E. discovered in the Roman cemetery of the village of Tebtunis was the prized possession of a boy or girl whose penmanship needed improvement. On top of the tablet, a teacher had written a model with a hexameter line: 'Begin, good hand, beautiful letters, and a straight line', which was completed by the exhortation, "Now, you imitate it!" - one of the few times which the voice of an ancient teacher rings loud.'

the first century AD, the use of preparatory rhetorical exercises are attested in the Greek schools as early as the fourth century BC (the first mention of the *progymnasmata* is found in the *Rhetoric for Alexander*).<sup>15</sup> Aelius Theon (first century CE) compiled the first extant compositional handbook, but Hermogenes (second century CE), Libanius (fourth century CE), Aphthonius (fourth century CE) and Nicolaus (fifth century CE) followed soon after. Imitation significantly factored into the implementation of the *progymnasmata* at several levels. The *progymnasmata* provide an especially useful source for tracking the diverse trajectories of mimesis and its use in the transmission of tradition and its transformation into literary mediums since – unlike the advanced rhetorical handbooks – these compositional exercises were not only intended to educate ‘those who hope to be orators, but also if a person wants to be a poet or prose-writer’ (Theon, *Progymn.* 3.140-43) and thus they allude to composition techniques to be implemented in a vast array of classical literature. So the *progymnasmata* provide a suitable starting point for the analysis of mimesis in the diverse literary locations that we find it surfacing with differing meanings in the Greco-Roman world.

In the first chapter of Theon’s *Progymnasmata*, mimesis provides an essential practice for preparing the student for and advancing them to higher levels of education – in rhetoric and beyond. Theon’s purpose in providing his elementary rhetorical exercises is that ‘by having our soul moulded by proper example, we shall also imitate [μιμησόμεθα] the finest’ (*Progymn.* 1.82-83; cf. Plutarch, *Mor.* 14A-37B).<sup>16</sup> This implies that his examples intend to enforce the proper way not to duplicate but to rework the object of imitation. Theon clarifies this point within the context, by affirming that the duplicating of the oratory of great writers of the past is useless unless the student ‘practices writing every day *for himself* through learning to paraphrase these great authors (*Progymn.* 1.91-103). He emphasizes the point that both the ‘poets and historians’ as well as all the ancients make ‘excellent use of the paraphrase [παραφράσει] in reshaping not only their own words, but also those of one another’ (*Progymn.* 1.104-05; cf. also Hermogenes, *Progymn.* 3;

<sup>15</sup> G. A. Kennedy, *Progymnasmata: Greek Textbooks of Prose Composition and Rhetoric* (SBLWGRW; Leiden: Brill, 2003), xi.

<sup>16</sup> And again: the teacher’s role according to Theon is to ‘instruct his young students to recite [the classical authors], so that once they have been moulded in accordance with the treatment of those, they can imitate them’ (*Progymn.* 2.147-49).

Galen, 17.2.258). The goal is not only to memorize and recite a passage but to 'make it attractive to the mind of the listeners' (Theon, *Progymn.* 2.175-76). Theon, in fact, traces the transformation of *Odys.* 18.136-37 in Archilochos (Frag. 70) and *Ill.* 9.593-94 in Demosthenes (*De F. Leg.* 65) as these two Greek icons imitate Homer via παράφρασις. Some details get more or less specific, details are added or omitted, and the language certainly changes, but the core tradition is preserved in both cases. Quintilian confirms this basic picture of παράφρασις in his discussion of elementary rhetorical exercises:

Their pupils should learn to paraphrase Aesop's fables, the natural successors of the fairy stories of the nursery, in simple and restrained language and subsequently to set down this paraphrase in writing with the same simplicity of style: they should begin by analysing each verse, then give its meaning in different language, and finally proceed to a freer paraphrase in which they will be permitted now to abridge and now to embellish the original, so far as this may be done without losing the poet's meaning. This is no easy task even for the expert instructor, and the pupil who handles it successfully will be capable of learning everything. (Quintilian, *Inst.* 1.9.2-3) (LCL; Butler)

So a pupil learns first to simply place the model in different language. As they advance, they can begin to shorten and change the original – even significantly – so as not to lose the poet's meaning. The student's capability for mimetic παράφρασις, once mastered, will then empower his remaining learning.

Students must memorize examples from classical literature that embody the essence of each literary form outlined by Theon (*Progymn.* 2.8-112). Historians, particularly Herodotus, Thucydides and Theopompus provide excellent examples for imitation of factual narratives (*Progymn.* 2.46-71). After his insistence upon the student's impression in literary models, Theon returns to the point that παράφρασις functions as a critical dimension of this process (*Progymn.* 2.113-14). The student must not only learn to repeat but to rework their models. An application of this mimetic methodology is found in Theon's treatment of the *chreiai* (an anecdotal saying, action or both – cf. *Progymn.* 3.22-26), which may take several forms within a new composition: (1) Recitation in the same or in different words than the author (3.43); (2) Inflexion: change of grammatical number, e.g. from pl. to sing. (3.146-57) or change in grammatical case (e.g. accusative to dative) requiring certain

additions with the shift in case form (3.163-201). Although Theon does not mention it, we may imagine process-participant patterns undergoing imitative transformation in this way as well.

So we find in Theon an emphasis upon imitating prior classical models but not as a mere reproductive exercise (as in the learning of letters, words and short Homeric passages) but in order to paraphrase and elaborate the model into a new a form, a form that embodies the core of the original, but in a reworked performance that pleases educated listeners. As Teresa Morgan remarks, ‘by [the student] casting his first articulations in the form of paraphrases of other authors, he places himself in a cultural tradition, while rearticulating the tradition for his own time and place.’<sup>17</sup>

Imitation not only figured as the basis of the curriculum for study with the *grammaticus*, it represents the governing principle for a student’s advanced rhetorical education<sup>18</sup> as well (e.g. Isocrates, *Pan.* 10; Quintilian, *Inst.* 3.5.3; Cicero, *De or.* 2.21.88-89; 2.22-23.92-96; Pliny, *Ep.* 2.3). As far back as Demosthenes, Lucian tells us, we find the orator copying Thucydides’ *Peloponnesian War*, not once the entire way through, but eight times (Lucian, *Ind.* 1)! The entire discipline of oratory, according to Quintilian, advances through the imitation of useful features of speech and the avoidance of useless ones (Quintilian, *Inst.* 3.2.3; cf. *Ad Herrenium* 243). Dionysius’s composition of a three-volume manual on mimesis, designed for use in the rhetorical schools (*On Imitation*), immediately suggests its importance to the first-century expression of the discipline.<sup>19</sup> The rhetorical theorists not only recommend the imitation of the writers of the past (cf. Horace’s *exemplaria Graeca* [*Ars* 268-69] or Dionysius’s τὰ βιβλία [*Rhet.* 298.1]) but also contemporary figures, including actors and other orators (Cicero, *De or.* 1.34.156). Models for imitation not only exist outside of the classroom,<sup>20</sup> but also within, as the teacher becomes the living oral model for his students, what Quintilian refers to as the ‘living voice’ (Quintilian, *Inst.* 2.2.8).<sup>21</sup> As in the *progymnasmata*, so

<sup>17</sup> Morgan, *Literate Education*, 145.

<sup>18</sup> See J. W. H. Atkins, *Literary Criticism in Antiquity: A Sketch of its Development* (Gloucester, MA: Peter Amith, 1961), 127–9.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. S. F. Bonner, *The Literary Treatises of Dionysius of Halicarnassus. A Study in the Development of Critical Method* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1939), 39.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. Clark, *Rhetoric*, 151.

<sup>21</sup> As Clark, *Rhetoric*, 162, remarks regarding this passage, within the rhetorical classroom, ‘The teacher not only analyzes the model; he is the model.’



also in advanced rhetorical theory, paraphrase, not merely repetition, surfaces as a first-order value. Cicero speaks of Crassus (*De or.* 1.154), who would memorize a speech and then put it into his own words as quickly as possible (see also Pliny, *Ep.* 7.9). The perfect orator must not, in their mimesis, confine themselves to imitating ‘merely [the] words’ of his model but should adapt and/or improve on the language where possible, while preserving the essence of the original (Quintilian, *Inst.* 10.2.27-28). ‘Thus the goal of ancient composition was not to strike out boldly ... but rather to be incrementally innovative within a tradition, by embracing the best in previous performers and adding something of one’s own marked with an individual stamp.’<sup>22</sup>

## 2. *Diverse trajectories of mimesis in antiquity*

After its systematic pedagogical application in the Greek schools, mimesis took on a number of different meanings and functions in antiquity – not always appreciated by biblical scholars – that tend to distract some scholars from its literary origins within Greek rhetorical education. As Donald Clark notices, several authors in antiquity, including Plato, Aristotle and Plutarch employ the term mimesis, but these metaphysical conceptions have virtually nothing to do with rhetorical imitation. ‘Specifically, imitation as a guide to speakers and writers, is concerned not with the speaker’s or writer’s matter, but with his manner of speaking or writing.’<sup>23</sup> So to ask what constitutes mimesis or imitation represents a fundamental misunderstanding of the concept. As Gunter Gebauer aptly notes, ‘posing such a question leads to error’ since it ‘presupposes that mimesis is a largely homogeneous concept that undergoes continuous development in a historical space.’<sup>24</sup> Similarly, Elaine Fantham argues that the notion of mimesis as ‘denoting the relationship between literary representation and reality belongs to the criticism of creative literature, not rhetoric.’<sup>25</sup>

<sup>22</sup> John Marincola, *Authority and Tradition in Ancient Historiography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 14.

<sup>23</sup> Clark, *Rhetoric*, 145.

<sup>24</sup> Gunter Gebauer and Christoph Wulf, *Mimesis: Culture, Art, Society* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 309.

<sup>25</sup> Elaine Fantham, ‘Imitation and Evolution: The Discussion of Rhetorical Imitation in Cicero *De Oratore* 2.87–97 and Some Related Problems of Ciceronian Theory’, *Classical Philology* 73 (1978): 1–16 (1); cf. also Richard McKeon, ‘Literary Criticism and the Concept of Imitation in Antiquity’,

Most classical theories of mimesis triangulate a taxonomy that can account for its varied usages in ancient scholarship. Kennedy posits: (1) dramatic (imitation of an action/person); (2) artistic (imitation of life or nature); and (3) metaphysical mimesis (the physical world's imitation of the metaphysical ideal).<sup>26</sup> Corbett (following McKeon) distinguishes between (1) Platonic (the image-making faculty that produces extensions of the physical world), (2) Aristotelian (representation of human actions), and (3) rhetorical (copying, paraphrasing and emulating models) mimesis.<sup>27</sup> Rowe identifies (1) slavish copying of a model, (2) copying a model but transforming it to the imitator's own personality and situation, and (3) competing with a model to improve upon it or create a better literary production – all, incidentally, forms of mimesis related to rhetoric.<sup>28</sup>

According to Muckelbauer, such formulations, based upon the object of imitation, fail to capture the multidisciplinary dimensions of mimesis. He suggests configuring mimesis instead along an axis of repetition and variation or, in ancient terms, imitation and invention – analysis should focus, in other words, on the relation of the object to subject (between the model and the copy) rather than just the object.<sup>29</sup> He posits three states of mimesis in relation to invention: (1) reproduction; (2) variation (recreation – including poetic mimesis and paraphrase); and (3) inspiration (imitation through revelation, usually from spirits or gods). I find these categories artificial, for a few reasons. The intention of reproduction in antiquity was to reach the ultimate goal of paraphrase or to have literary models and supplied language for original creations, as we see clearly from an analysis of imitation in the Hellenistic

in *Critics and Criticism: Ancient and Modern* (ed. R. S. Crane; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968), 147–75 (148), who likewise notes that the term, imitation 'is vague, inadequate, primitive, and its use involves a play on words when it does not lead to self-contradiction'. Similarly, D. A. Russell, 'De Imitatione', in *Creative Imitation and Latin Literature* (eds. David West and Tony Woodman; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 1–16 (4), emphasizes: 'Now it is, I suspect, natural to think that the sense of mimesis in which philosophers tried to use it to describe the kind of human activity of which literature is an instance has nothing to do with the imitation of one author by another.'

<sup>26</sup> George A. Kennedy, *Classical Rhetoric and Its Christian and Secular Tradition from Ancient to Modern Times* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1980), 116–17.

<sup>27</sup> Edward P. J. Corbett, 'The Theory and Practice of Imitation in Classical Rhetoric', *College Composition and Communication* 22 (1971): 243–51.

<sup>28</sup> George Rowe, *Distinguishing Jonson: Imitation, Rivalry, and the Direction of a Dramatic Career* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1988), 13–15.

<sup>29</sup> He follows Terryl Givens, 'Aristotle's Critique of Mimesis: The Romantic Prelude', *Comparative Literature Studies* 28 (1991): 121–35 (14–15).

schools. Thus, Aristotle's theory of poetic transformation hardly functions in the same way as Quintilian's notion for the perfect orator who 'adds his own qualities' (*Inst.* 10.2.28), as Muckelbauer insists.

Muckelbauer does, however, offer an important insight, from which we may proceed – that the most helpful analysis of ancient mimetic theory and practice will assess the subject-object *relation* rather than circumscribing analysis exclusively to the object. But these relations still seem most clearly explained in terms of discipline – rhetoric, philosophy and literature – which the vast majority of the currently available taxonomies recognize. Having already developed the theory of rhetorical mimesis as it emerged within the Hellenistic schools (which is the mimetic form of interest for this study), in rhetoric, I will also give limited attention to philosophical and literary mimesis, primarily to show the forms of ancient mimesis that historical imitation is not. Neither will later developments and trajectories of mimesis into the Romantic period and beyond occupy attention, as they too are not germane to our understanding of Greek historical mimesis.

### 2.1. *Mimesis as repetition: Rhetoric*

The rhetorical definition of mimesis continues from the pedagogical context and thus preserves the original contours of its meaning as developed in the curricula used in the schools of the *grammaticus* and the *rhetor*.<sup>30</sup> Models were repeated verbatim in the early phases of training, with the goal of intuitive emulation of the model's structure and language in a new literary production or to repeat the essence of the model with reworked style and language (cf. Quintilian, *Inst.* 1.8.8-9). Thus we have two axes, an external style-language axis and an internal content axis based on a repetition-variation relation. Rhetoricians may either imitate the internal axis and introduce variation

<sup>30</sup> Ekaterina V. Haskins, "Mimesis" between Poetics and Rhetoric: Performance Culture and Civic Education in Plato, Isocrates, and Aristotle, *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 30 (2000): 7-33 (7), traces the rhetorical usage back to Isocrates and argues 'that the genealogy of the schism between poetics and rhetoric can be understood best by contrasting the attitudes of Plato and Aristotle towards the social impact of the poetic tradition with those of Isocrates. Plato seeks to discipline the process of poetic and political enculturation by splitting mimesis as representation from mimesis as performative imitation and audience identification. Aristotle completes Plato's utopian project by constructing a hierarchy wherein representational mimesis of the tragic plot in the Poetics is central to a philosophical life, while mimesis as performative imitation of style in the Rhetoric is of marginal utility. In so doing, he counters Isocrates' performative conception of speech education, according to which identification and performance both activate and sustain one's civic identity.'

along the external axis (internal mimesis) or they may invert this relation (external mimesis). Memorization and paraphrasing of literary models facilitated both, although the use of a written exemplar may also be employed. As Fantham notices: ‘The self-conscious aspect of imitation – analyzing, memorizing, paraphrasing – has to be followed for a time by the less self-conscious activities of the brain before the models will begin to act upon the literary personality of the new artist.’<sup>31</sup>

The goal of mimesis in this setting is to repeat the essence of the model along one of these two axes – although many models may function within the same text, creating a web of intersecting mimetic material projected onto both axes. Along the external axis, a rhetor might imitate the arrangement, diction, vocabulary or syntax of a predecessor while inserting their own original content. Debate ensued over whether a student of oratory should (externally) imitate the style of one model (Cicero, *De or.* 2.21.90-92) or several (Quintilian, *Inst.* 10.2.26; Dionysius, *Prom.* 3-5 and *Ant. or.* list many historical and rhetorical models). Along the internal axis, they will rework the style but preserve the basic content through rhetorical device *παράφρασις*. In its more advanced form, as Quintilian observed (*Inst.* 1.9.2-3), authors may take considerable liberties with the language so long as it does not result in the loss of meaning for the original. They must avoid at all costs the tendency to create a verbatim copy (cf. Horace, *Ars* 132). We find then a stable core that the rhetor is responsible to transmit, with modification of the form not only encouraged but required for a good orator engaging in internal imitation. Rhetorical invention becomes irrelevant along the external axis since the goal is not to adopt content, but internal content-mimesis does not rule out the potential for rhetorical invention. Invention often occurs as a side-effect of modification along the external axis of the model.<sup>32</sup> The need for increased oratory adornment, especially through competition with the model (Quintilian, *Inst.* 10.2.27-28), may create pressure towards invention, in other words.

<sup>31</sup> Elaine Fantham, *Roman Readings: Roman Response to Greek Literature from Plautus to Statius and Quintilian* (Beiträge zur Altertumskunde, Bd. 277; Berlin: De Gruyter, 2011), 276.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. John Muckelbauer, ‘Imitation and Invention in Antiquity: An Historical-Theoretical Revision’, *Rhetorica* 61 (2003): 61–88 (84).

## 2.2. *Mimesis as representation: Philosophy*

The philosophical account of mimesis goes back to Plato's theory of image-making in art. For him, the 'doctrine of artistic imitation is based on the conception of art as an interpretation of reality', according to Verdenius.<sup>33</sup> Plato insists that in art, one must attempt to transform reality by capturing ideals in its imitation that may be unconnected to the forms represented within reality, but one will still never be able to imitate what is beyond the forms and, therefore, all imitation remains a counterfeit in significant ways (*Resp.* 497e). A poet may be able to get at the ideals by seeking to imitate them as they are represented in the forms (*Resp.* 603c), but they will never be able to fully move beyond the forms. Mimesis then consists fundamentally in the attempt of the artist to represent reality, however distorted that representation may end up being. This leads Plato to provide a fundamentally negative account of mimesis since mimesis is only capable of capturing the forms in image-making, although his positive remarks have led some scholars to locate two theories of mimesis in Plato's writings.<sup>34</sup> Platonic mimesis on either account, nevertheless, differs drastically from the mimetic theory of the rhetoricians and its later reception in historiography.

## 2.3. *Mimesis as recreation: Poetics*

Aristotle parts ways with Plato and attempts to develop a more positive account of mimesis. In the first part of section 1 of his *Poetics*, he states:<sup>35</sup>

<sup>33</sup> On the Platonic theory of mimesis, see: J. Tate, 'Imitation in Plato's *Republic*', *CQ* 22 (1928): 16–23; J. Tate, 'Plato and Imitation', *CQ* 26 (1932): 161–8; W. J. Verdenius, *Mimesis: Plato's Doctrine of Artistic Imitation and Its Meaning to Us* (Philosophia Antiqua 3; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1949), 36; H. Koller, *Die Mimesis in der Antike* (Bern: Francke, 1954); G. Else, "Imitation" in the Fifth Century', *CP* 53 (1958): 73–90; O. B. Hardison, 'Epigone: An Aristotelian Imitation', in *Aristotle's Poetics* (eds. L. Golden and O. B. Hardison; Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1968), 281–96; L. Golden, 'Plato's Concept of *Mimesis*', *British Journal of Aesthetics* 15 (1975–6): 118–31; Eva C. Keuls, *Plato and Greek Painting* (Columbia Studies in the Classical Tradition 5; Leiden: Brill, 1978), 9–32; E. Belfiore, 'A Theory of Imitation in Plato's *Republic*', *TAPA* 114 (1984): 121–46; Gunter Gebauer and Christoph Wulf, *Mimesis*, 31–44; Arne Melberg, *Theories of Mimesis* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 10–50; A. Nehamas, 'Plato on Imitation and Poetry in *Republic* 10', in *Plato: Critical Assessments*. Vol. III: *Plato's Middle Period: Psychology and Value Theory* (ed. N. D. Smith; London and New York: Routledge, 1998), 323; D. Thomas Benediktson, *Literature and the Visual Arts in Ancient Greece and Rome* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2000), 41–53; Paul Smith and Carolyn Wilde, *A Companion to Art Theory* (Blackwell Companions in Cultural Studies 5; Oxford: Blackwell, 2002), 19–28; Stephen Halliwell, *The Aesthetics of Mimesis Ancient Texts and Modern Problems* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), 37–71.

<sup>34</sup> P. Woodruff, 'Aristotle on Mīmēsis', in *Essays on Aristotle's Poetics* (ed. A. Rorty; Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992), 73–95 (74).

<sup>35</sup> Peter Simpson, 'Aristotle on Poetry and Imitation', *Hermes* 116 (1988): 279–91 (279). On Aristotle's doctrine of mimesis, see O. B. Hardison, 'Epigone: An Aristotelian Imitation', in

‘There is another art which imitates by means of language alone, and that either in prose or verse – which verse, again, may either combine different meters or consist of but one kind – but this has hitherto been without a name.’ He contends with the notion that a work composed in metre distinguishes poetry from other writings: ‘as if it were not the imitation that makes the poet, but the verse that entitles them all to the name.’ A poet may use a variety of metres, but in final analysis, it is imitative, recreative art that distinguishes poetry from other genres. Aristotle further distinguishes poetry from history on this basis. Poetry is mimetic while history is not. That poetry is mimetic in a way that defies history immediately clues us off that what Aristotle calls mimesis remains fundamentally different than what the rhetoricians meant by this term. There are other kinds of imitation besides poetry, of course: music, dancing, dialogue. But what distinguishes poetry among the arts, for Aristotle, is its recreative artistry in imitation of language, rhythm and harmony. It is fundamentally about aesthetics not concerned primarily with the transmission of tradition.

### 3. *Mimesis in the development of Greek historiography*

Where does this leave Greek historiography within our taxonomy of mimesis? Our analysis so far has shown that the meaning of mimesis in any given context will be highly contingent upon its disciplinary location within the ancient world. Greek historiography functions as a branch of rhetoric (see Pliny, *Ep.* 5.8.9-10; Cicero, *De leg.* 1.5; Cicero, *Brut.* 42-43) and so we begin with this basic framework and see how mimesis develops within Greek historiography. Surprisingly, very little work has been done in this area so far.<sup>36</sup> As Gray notices, by the end of the first century BCE at the latest, history was being described as imitative art and yet the function of mimesis still ‘needs to be more widely recognized as a technical

*Aristotle's Poetics* (eds. L. Golden and O. B. Hardison; Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1968), 281-96; L. Golden, *Aristotle on Tragic and Comic Mimesis* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992); Benediktson, *Literature*, 53-86. On the debate between the Platonic and Aristotelian view, see esp. Bo Earle, ‘Plato, Aristotle, and the Imitation of Reason’, *Philosophy and Literature* 27 (2003): 382-401.

<sup>36</sup> Cf. Marincola, *Authority*, 79.

term in ancient historical theory and its meaning needs to be more precisely defined by proper assemblage of the most relevant evidence.<sup>37</sup>

As with ancient rhetoric, in Greek historiography, complete or partial originality was never the expectation, at least not in the way that we typically think of it – Perry speaks of an aversion towards the ‘exact copy’ in creative imitation.<sup>38</sup> On the one hand, historians took over the essential core of material from their predecessors and moderately adapted it for their purposes through internal mimesis;<sup>39</sup> while on the other hand, they adopted the style, arrangement, language and diction of their predecessors to frame their own history through external mimesis. As Marincola’s analysis shows: historical compositions were quite unoriginal, based primarily upon imitation of previous works, seeking to only make gradual advances within and alterations upon the prevailing tradition.<sup>40</sup> At the most basic level, historical mimesis proceeds from the fact that the literary predecessors of a given historian would provide the major pool of background material that helped give shape to their own narrative. ‘In the basic narrative, however, the narrator who was intrusive called attention to himself in a way that might reveal his prejudice, a less intrusive approach would have a greater chance of success.’<sup>41</sup> Our analysis below will reveal that the pool of data would be drawn upon for informational (internal content mimesis) or artistic (external style-language mimesis) purposes and that the formal changes to source material are consistent with the rhetorical form that emerged in connection with rhetorical imitation theory. The types of sources imitated and the level of integration was in many ways dependent upon the time/location of the author, the object of investigation, and the communities the historian had access to (and their principle methods of tradition transmission). Herodotus obviously did not have the same rich historical tradition to draw upon as, say, Diodorus. This led him to draw more heavily from the lyrical poetic tradition.<sup>42</sup>

<sup>37</sup> V. Gray, ‘Mimesis in Greek Historical Theory’, *AJP* 8 (1987): 467–86 (468).

<sup>38</sup> E. Perry, ‘Rhetoric, Literary Criticism, and the Roman Aesthetics of Imitation’, in *The Ancient Art of Emulation: Studies in Artistic Originality and Tradition from the Present to Classical Antiquity* (ed. E. K. Gazda; Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome, Supplementary Volume 1; Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2002), 153–71 (158–60).

<sup>39</sup> See C. J. Kraemer, ‘Imitation and Originality’, *The Classical Weekly* 20 (1927): 135–6.

<sup>40</sup> Marincola, *Authority*, 14.

<sup>41</sup> Marincola, *Authority*, 174.

<sup>42</sup> At some level, then, dealing with early examples of history, mainly Herodotus, due consideration must be given to the temporal location of the history. The most influential study of

Mimesis takes on a very specific meaning within historical theory, a meaning developed from its original rhetorical context. The historical theorists are uniform in endowing a technical sense to mimesis that involves the adaptation of narratives and speeches to reality. Sound mimetic technique consists in the ability to integrate source material into one's history in an appealing literary fashion but without losing the realism of the events the historian records. The historian walks a balance here between improving upon and/or paraphrasing his predecessors, but without introducing an overly literary or rhetorical or generally unbelievable quality into the narrative.

### 3.1. *Duris of Samus*

Perhaps the most widely discussed historian, who commented on the use of mimesis in Greek historiography is Duris of Samus (third century BCE). He 'regarded imitation as an essential part of the historian's task and criticized prior historians for not engaging in it'.<sup>43</sup> In his *Bibliotheca* (likely an excerpt from his *History*), Duris censures fourth-century BCE historians Ephorus and

the origins of Greek historiography as an independent discipline was undertaken in F. Jacoby, 'Über die Entwicklung der griechischen Historiographie und der Plan einer neuen Sammlung der drieschischen Historiographie und der Plan einer neuen Sammlung der drieschischen Historikerfragmente', *Kilo* 9 (1909): 1–44. Jacoby proposed an evolutionary theory using a method inspired by stemmatic analysis (the dominant text-critical model in classical studies) according to which historiography developed in opposition to the epic tradition. Jacoby proposed a form of source criticism that presupposed that one could trace all the variations of the literary spectrum back to a single genre. Most now consider the method itself to be invalid, but still recognize the importance of noticing significant patterns of intertextuality among the historians and using such patterns to set them in some type of evolutionary relation to one another. See D. S. Potter, *Literary Texts and the Roman Historian* (London: Routledge, 1999), 62–6. Whatever else one may think of his theory, most classical scholars concede Jacoby's fundamental insight that the origins of ancient history can be traced back to the Greek epic tradition, especially Homer and Hesiod. So also around that time, J. B. Bury, *The Ancient Greek Historians (Harvard Lectures)* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1909), 1–35. Historiography distinguished itself from epic in two ways: historians compose in prose and they tend to focus on factual rather than mythical history. Cf. A. Momigliano, 'Greek Historiography', *History and Theory* 17 (1978): 1–28 (2). One of the major cornerstones in setting this movement away from epic into motion was the foundational work of Hecataeus. He did work in geography and wrote a history of Greece. But while he composed in prose style, he had a tendency in his geographical and historical work towards mythologizing. For example, in his *Genealogies*, he attempted to construct something that might look like a history according to later ancient standards, but the methods employed were weak and faulty. And the genealogy he creates traces his family origins back to the mythological pantheon. His literary successors, Charon of Lampsacus and Dionysius of Miletus, imitated the historical trajectory of his research in their histories of Persia. We also know of Xanthus from this period, who wrote a history of Lydia.

<sup>43</sup> F. W. Walbank, *Polybius* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 35. See *FGH* 76; T 12; F 5, 7, 12, 14; F 1 [Phot. *Bibl.* 121a41].



Theopompus for lacking mimesis in their accounts. The passage is unfortunately perplexed by ambiguities:

Ἐφορος δὲ καὶ θεόπομος τῶν γενομένων πλεῖστον ἀπελίφισαν. οὔτε γὰρ μιμήσεως μετέλαβον οὔδε μίμης οὔτε ἡδονῆς ἐν τῷ φράσαι, αὐτοῦ δὲ τοῦ γράφειν μόνον ἐπεμελήθησαν. (FGH 2a 76 F1.2)

Ephorus and Theopompus did not adequately describe the events. They accomplished no mimesis or pleasure in their narrative, but only show interest in writing.

The debate revolves around three terms and their relation to one another: μιμήσεως, ἡδονῆς and τοῦ γράφειν. The ambiguities surround whether ἡδονῆς redefines μιμήσεως or functions as something independent of it, a second fallacy, and how τοῦ γράφειν contrasts with these two terms. Several take this passage to mean that Duris faults his predecessors for a failure to attain to a form of poetic mimesis, as we might expect to find in tragedy or poetry.<sup>44</sup> This reading requires that ἡδονῆς functions as a further enhancement of μιμήσεως and τοῦ γράφειν serves to indicate a type of writing without poetic orientation. Prior assessment tended to locate this sense of mimesis within Aristotle's usage, but this view no longer appears convincing to most, leaving the usage here without an appropriate technical context.<sup>45</sup> Gray has recently shown, however, that ancient historical theory provides just such a context, evidenced by its abundant technical usage of the term (see below). She draws on Demetrius's differentiation (*On Style*, 223–6; cf. Aristotle, *Rhet.* 3.12.1, 6) between contest (natural language, which he calls mimesis) and written (more formal language marked by artificial word order) style, illustrating that the contrast here involves two technical concepts (μιμήσεως and γράφειν).<sup>46</sup> On this reading – which has the most evidence in its favour – Duris criticizes Ephorus and Theopompus for using the artificial word order of the written style (τοῦ γράφειν) rather than composing in the imitative style of natural

<sup>44</sup> E.g. S. Halliwell, *The Aesthetics of Mimesis: Ancient Texts and Modern Problems* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), 290; Baban, *On the Road*, 114–15. For a survey of the various views, see C. W. Fornara, *The Nature of History in Ancient Greece and Rome* (Eidos: Studies in Classical Kinds; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), 124–34.

<sup>45</sup> Cf. Gray, 'Mimesis', 477. Fornara, *Nature*, 122–6, argues for this reading as well. For Duris, he says, mimesis is an 'imitation of the emotions aroused by history'. Similarly, K. Meister, *Historische Kritik bei Polybios* (Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1975), 109–26, understands mimesis as an imitation of reality.

<sup>46</sup> Gray, 'Mimesis', 476–82.

language (μιμήσεως), a reading that accords with the meaning of mimesis in later historical theory.

### 3.2. *Dionysius of Halicarnassus*

Dionysius of Halicarnassus (30 CE) wrote a three-volume (although he did not apparently finish volume 3 – cf. Dionysius, *Pomp.* 3) treatise dealing in great detail with the notion of mimesis in a wide range of literature entitled *On Imitation*. It now only survives in fragments. In addition to a passing reference in *Thuc.* 1, Dionysius's letter *Pomp.* 3-5 preserves an epitome of Volume 2 *On Imitation* that allows us to reconstruct much of his thinking on this issue.<sup>47</sup> The excerpts in the letter prove especially useful for understanding Dionysius's theoretical approach to mimesis in the historians. The Dionysian theory of historical imitation confirms its origins in rhetorical theory, with only modest development. For Dionysius, imitation for the orator involved imitation of the style of the Attic rhetoricians but also imitation of their moral and political theory (Dionysius, *Isoc.* 5.61.10-12), as well as their lives (Dionysius, *Ant. or.* 1). We see this carried over into his historical theory as well. The purpose of Dionysius's history was to provide an account of Roman origins and to supply readers with models to imitate (Dionysius, *Rom. Ant.* 1.6). Jonge draws the connection this way: for Dionysius, rhetorical works concern themselves primarily with 'the imitation of the best classical works', while historical works focus most directly on the 'imitation of the lives of early Romans'.<sup>48</sup> Both, however, involve literary and moral imitation, in practice.

In Dionysius, we observe something close to a formal recognition of the two axes of mimesis – internal content (which Dionysius refers to as 'subject matter') mimesis and external style mimesis, the mimetic altering of subject matter. By subject matter, he has in mind the way source material is brought into the narrative and then arranged stylistically. His concern is to gauge

<sup>47</sup> For complications and discrepancies between the various sources, see K. S. Sacks, 'Historiography in the Rhetorical Works of Dionysius of Halicarnassus', *Athenaeum* 60 (1983): 65–87; M. Heath, 'Dionysius of Halicarnassus "On Imitation"', *Hermes* 117 (1989): 370–3; R. L. Hunter, *Critical Moments in Classical Literature: Studies in the Ancient View of Literature and Its Uses* (Cambridge: Cambridge, 2009), 107–27.

<sup>48</sup> On the relation of Dionysius's rhetorical and historical theories of imitation, see C. Constantijn de Jonge, *Between Grammar and Rhetoric: Dionysius of Halicarnassus on Language, Linguistics and Literature* (Mnemosyne, bibliotheca classica Batava, Supplementum 301; Leiden: Brill, 2008), 18–20.

the ways in which several authors are worthy to be imitated according to these standards. A good historian is expected to handle their subject matter (πραγματικός τόπος) well (internal mimesis) – this was their first responsibility. They are then obliged to frame the subject matter in excellent mimetic style (λεκτικός τόπος). Dionysius assesses appropriate treatment of subject matter according to five criteria, (1) selection of a subject that will please the readers, (2) choosing an appropriate beginning/ending, (3) excellent editing of the content (what to include/omit), (4) proper arrangement of the material into a narrative and, finally, (5) impartial treatment of the content. Dionysius demarcates several components of λεκτικός τόπος as well and evaluates Herodotus and Thucydides thoroughly according to these categories.

Mimetic feature	Analysis
Purity of language	Both are worthy of imitation
Lucidity	Herodotus is better
Brevity	Thucydides is better
Vividness	Both are worthy of imitation
Character portrayal	Thucydides is better at character portrayal
Emotion portrayal	Herodotus is better at emotional portrayal
Magnificence	Both are worthy of imitation
Vigour & power	Thucydides is better
Charm & persuasion	Herodotus is better
Propriety	Herodotus is better

**Figure 1.** Stylistic mimetic analysis of Herodotus and Thucydides in Dionysius, Prom. 4-5

Gray zeros in on the imitation of character and emotion as an indication of Dionysius' as an example of a technical sense imputed to mimesis in historical theory.<sup>49</sup> She then turns to *Thuc.* 44-45, insisting that here we find Thucydides' application of this canon in his criticism of Thucydides for using language that does not fit the occasion. Thus mimesis, for Dionysius, involves the ability to adapt a speaker's language according to how an orator (for example) would speak naturally (i.e. in real life) under the circumstances that the narrative places him in. As with Duris, Dionysius protests over rhetoricizing the language of narrative characters within a history, insisting that such attempts are 'frigid, not

<sup>49</sup> Gray, 'Mimesis', 468.

portraying emotion, but artificiality' (*Thuc.* 48). Thucydides thus fails to imitate the character of Pericles because men afraid for their life (Pericles is appealing to an accusing jury) do not employ sophisticated rhetorical tropes. He makes the same criticisms of those who compose artificial narratives (*Comp.* 136-38). Gray deduces from this a rule of propriety in historical mimesis: 'The meaning of mimesis in history is the recreation of reality ... achieved [by] the observance of the rule of propriety, based on observation of what men do in real life.'<sup>50</sup> This account would prove highly influential in antiquity, and not only in history. The Dionysian formulation of mimesis would subvert the Aristotelian definition, even within literature, into the Roman period, as K. K. Ruthven notes.<sup>51</sup>

### 3.3. Longinus

Longinus, another literary critic and rhetorical theorist, writes a handbook entitled *On the Sublime*, describing what in his view counts as excellent writing. Likely dated in the first century,<sup>52</sup> we are missing at least one-third of the document. Longinus speaks of the way to greatness in literary composition through 'zealous imitation of the great prose writers and poets of the past' (*Subl.* 13). An important factor here involves imagining how the greats would have composed a piece of literature – even picturing them as critics present at the time of composition – and then creating a piece of literature accordingly (cf. Longinus, *Subl.* 14). Longinus's model of mimesis emphasizes 'the universe as represented in a work of literature.'<sup>53</sup> Hyperbaton (dislocation of word order) figures as a central literary device for appropriate mimetic composition here since it helps in establishing events as they occur in reality (Longinus, *Subl.* 22). According to Longinus, these inversions help create effects that imitate reality, in contrast to the more sophisticated literary devices typical of poetry. This attention to reality applied equally to narrative as it did to speeches (*Subl.* 44). We notice, then, a continuity with prevailing historical theory, where mimesis functions as a recreation of reality by moulding one's source material into the narrative with language appropriate

<sup>50</sup> Gray, 'Mimesis', 469–70.

<sup>51</sup> K. K. Ruthven, *Critical Assumptions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 103.

<sup>52</sup> On dating, see G. M. A. Grube, *The Greek and Roman Critics* (London: Methuen, 1965), 341–3.

<sup>53</sup> John O. Hayden, *Polestar of the Ancients: The Aristotelian Tradition in Classical and English Literary Criticism* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1979), 92.

to the character and emotions of the participants, as they would likely respond in real life.<sup>54</sup> Historians must avoid the temptation to present characters with overly rhetoricized language. Instead, they must shape their narratives and the speech of their characters to fit reality.

### 3.4. *Lucian of Samosata*

Lucian writes a famous treatise on composing history entitled, *How to Write History*. He says that the perfect historian embodies two crucial qualities: political insight and rigorous study of the classics (§§34–35). In §15, Lucian refers to the historian Crepereius Calpurnianus of Pompeiopolis, who wrote a history of the war between Parthia and Rome, as ‘a keen emulator of Thucydides’ who lifts ‘the whole thing boldly from the Thucydides – except the Pelasgicum and the Long Walls ...’<sup>55</sup> According to Lucian, it was ‘a pretty common belief [during his time] that you are writing like Thucydides, if you just use his actual words, *mutatis mutandis*’. He refers to another historian as a ‘second Herodotus’ in the same way that Crepereius Calpurnianus was a ‘second Thucydides’ (§18). Yet a different historian still, he says, was ‘more Thucydidean than Thucydides’ (§19). Lucian is not impressed by these historians. Thus, for Lucian, mimesis does not involve sheer repetition of the classical authors, but an intuitive and natural reworking of the style and expression of these authors into one’s own new literary production.<sup>56</sup> History differentiates itself from poetry through its attention to a recreation of reality, as in the other historical theorists. This will entail lessened comparison of men with the gods (§8). When composing narratives, the historian should not allow himself to be constrained towards modifying the history towards flattery, but should portray things as his sources reveal them to have occurred (§38). Imitation, for Lucian, did not merely involve – as some had done before him – taking over phrases from Thucydides and scattering them throughout their narratives, historians who essentially make themselves more compliers of history before them than competent writers of prose narratives.<sup>57</sup>

<sup>54</sup> Hayden, *Polestar*, 92; Gray, ‘Mimesis’, 470–1.

<sup>55</sup> Translations of Lucian are from Lucian of Samosata, *The Works of Lucian of Samosata, Complete with Exceptions Specified in the Preface* (trans. H. W. Fowler and F. G. Fowler; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1905).

<sup>56</sup> Clark, *Rhetoric in Education*, 148.

<sup>57</sup> Grube, *Greek and Roman Critics*, 336.

### 3.5. Conclusions: Implications for the treatment of mimetic tradition in antiquity

Mimesis for the historical theorists represents the background pool of language and source material that they draw from to re-create reality. In its best expressions, it only draws attention to itself through nuance and subtlety. This body of material includes the historian's linguistic repertoire conditioned through education and enculturation to imitate the language of the classics as well as the sources of tradition from which historians draw. At the most basic level, in the process of representing historical reality, a properly mimetic production will be constructed with language that fits the events and speeches of the historical characters it narrates. When this process involves imitation of a prior model or tradition, the same constraints apply. Historians must resist the urge to use overly elevated language which yields the impression of embellishment. There is an expectation that the core historical tradition is preserved but reworked and reshaped stylistically to fit its new literary environment. This can occur in at least two ways. Authors can imitate the external features of a model such as their language or arrangement (e.g. imitating the incident structure of a Homeric episode) or they can seek internal correspondence with a source, where the basic content is adopted but the external, style dimension of the text is subject to reworking or paraphrase. We have referred to these variations of mimesis as internal and external mimesis, respectively.<sup>58</sup>

With the transmission of mimesis from rhetoric into history, the principle of propriety (Gray's term) places limits upon the artistic ornamentation that is appropriate in mimesis, whether a historian is imitating a predecessor

<sup>58</sup> This can be seen very clearly in the description of mimesis provided by Marincola, *Authority*, 16–18. He notes further the various forms that historiographic imitation might take: '[T]he most common type is verbal imitation, which can range from a single word to a phrase to the appropriation of an entire style. The employment of the same or slightly altered phrases from predecessors, especially the great masters, is a feature of almost every ancient history. Sometimes it is the placing of a familiar element into a new context where it is striking because it is appropriate in a different way, while at other times it can be merely verbal ornament. Often it is difficult to determine whether there is any larger meaning in verbal echoes of a predecessor, or whether the ancient audience, with its keen ear for language simply took pleasure in the echoes and adaptations themselves, without any assumption thereby of the aims and intentions of the author. An historian might employ a certain dialect, it was natural to assume some imitation of Herodotus or other early writers. At its worst, as Lucian details it ... phrases were simply taken out wholesale from the masters' works ... Certain types of incidents common in war, such as the capture of a city, or the speech of a commander before battle, were particularly subject to imitation. An historian might also imitate the type of history practiced by a predecessor, and do the same for his own subject ... Historians might imitate the arrangement of their predecessors. Finally, an author might imitate the attitude or disposition (*διάθεσις*, *dispositio*) of a predecessor.'

or imitating the character and emotions appropriate to the narratives and speeches they record.<sup>59</sup> Whereas in rhetoric, there does not seem to be a limit on the levels of improvement that a rhetorician can make as long as the meaning is not lost – indeed the perfect rhetor competes with the language of their model so as to surpass the artistic qualities of its language. However, this competitive pressure creates a mechanism that often results in rhetorical invention as the orator so attempts to alter, update or improve upon the original that the internal correspondence is weakened and invention is introduced as a natural side effect.<sup>60</sup>

The principle of propriety in historiography significantly weakens that mechanism. Various historians are censured by later theorists for over rhetorizing their narratives, placing language in their mouth that was not natural. They were instead to imitate the character and emotions of real men. They were to paraphrase but without so elevating the language as to lose the realism of the historical event. That was Duris' objection, as well as that of Dionysius and Libanius. According to Lucian, the good historian paraphrases his sources but does not allow flattery to alter the meaning. Thucydides expresses similar sentiments, stating that the criterion for good history involves a trajectory away from what is pleasing to the ear and towards conformity to truth (Thucydides, 1.21.1) – at least when these two come into conflict.<sup>61</sup> This should not cause a history to lose its artistic dimension – the artistic dimension is just viewed differently now. As Plutarch observes regarding Thucydides: 'The best historian is the one who by vivid representation of emotions and characters, makes his narrative like a painting' (Plutarch, *De*

<sup>59</sup> F. W. Walbank, *Polybius, Rome, and the Hellenistic World: Essays and Reflections* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 235, endorses this definition of historical mimesis: historical mimesis 'implies that both in his narrative and in reported speeches the historian is using vocabulary, arrangement of words, sentence construction and all the other available stylistic devices in a manner appropriate to each character and each situation, so as to produce a work that is 'true to nature'; the content of such a work would not of course be limited to sensational material.'

<sup>60</sup> Muckelbauer, 'Imitation', 84.

<sup>61</sup> Thus, Polybius (2.56) urges: 'Surely an historian's object should not be to amaze his readers by a series of thrilling anecdotes; nor should he aim at producing speeches which might have been delivered, nor study dramatic propriety in detail like a writer of tragedy: but his function is above all to record with fidelity what was actually said or done, however commonplace it may be. For the purposes of history and of the drama are not the same, but widely opposed to each other. In the former the object is to strike and delight by words as true to nature as possible; in the latter to instruct and convince by genuine words and deeds; in the former the effect is meant to be temporary, in the latter permanent. In the former, again, the power of carrying an audience is the chief excellence, because the object is to create illusion; but in the latter the thing of primary importance is truth, because the object is to benefit the learner.'

*glor. Ath.* 347A). The historian, then, captures the artistic value not through enhanced rhetorical effect and invention but through excellent and vivid imitation of real character and emotion in the historical participants that they describe.

This theoretical analysis of mimesis brings insight to the otherwise notoriously difficult Thucydean passage on speech documentation. When Thucydides says ‘so my habit has been to make the speakers say what was in my opinion demanded of them by the various occasions’ (Thucydides, 1.22.1), he likely does not mean he simply fabricated them. Instead, ancient hearers receptive to the developing theory of mimesis in historiography will have understood that Thucydides was only claiming that he exercised proper mimesis in his documentation of speech material. And competition now occurs not by surpassing predecessors in reaching new literary heights but by seeking to weave previously overlooked traditions into the narrative or by restating previous ones more vividly.<sup>62</sup> This was not to say that the historians did not invent material, including especially speeches, but it did not – at least in its best expressions – enter the narrative via mimesis. This is an important point to make as many biblical scholars typically view mimesis as a primary conduit for invention.

#### *4. Implications for the function of mimesis in Mark’s gospel (and early Christianity)*

Where does all of this leave us with Mark’s Gospel? To begin with, our discussion naturally leads us to raise the question of genre since mimesis appears to be genre constrained. The prevailing view still seems to follow Burridge (and those like Talbert, who went before him) in proposing that Mark is a *βίος* of some sort. Perhaps Mark constitutes something like Quintilian’s third category of Greco-Roman narrative:

Now there are three forms of narrative, without counting the type used in legal cases. First, there is the fictitious narrative as we get it in tragedies and poems,

<sup>62</sup> As T. Rood, *Thucydides: Narrative and Explanation* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 3, observes ‘Plutarch himself claimed at the start of his *Nikias* that he could surpass Thucydides – not at the literary level (“Thucydides is at his most emotive, vivid, and varied in this part of the narrative”), but by collecting new material relevant to *Nikias*’ character.’



which is not merely not true but has little resemblance to truth. Secondly, there is the realistic narrative as presented by comedies, which, though not true, has yet a certain verisimilitude. Thirdly there is the historical narrative, which is an exposition of something done (Et quia narrationum, excepta qua in causis utimur, tres accepimus species, fabulam, que versatur in tragoediis atque carminibus, non a veritate modo sed etiam a forma veritatis remota; argumentum, quod falsum sed vero simile comoediae fingunt; historiam, in qua est gestae rei expositio). (Quintilian, *Inst.* 2.4.2) (Butler, LCL)

This would place Mark within the broadly historical discourse of the ancient world (though not historiography proper). This is probably what Origen means when he refers to the Gospels as histories (ἱστορίαι) (Origen, *Princ.* 3.3.1; cf. 4.2.9), potentially incorporating both βίος and history. Situating Mark here also allows for Collins's proposal that Mark represents a historical monograph, influenced by Israelite historiography.<sup>63</sup> Although apocalyptic drama, Greek tragedy, Hellenistic romance and tragic-comedy have all been proposed as potential literary antecedents for the Gospel of Mark, most still read it as some form of Greco-Roman historical narrative with Jewish function and content.<sup>64</sup>

This chapter has sought to reveal a number of possible parameters for the use of mimesis in the investigation of the origins and transmission of the Gospel tradition. First, mimesis seems to have developed in distinct disciplinary settings (with their associated literary configurations) and came to take on distinct meanings within these environments. Given this potential parameter, the theory of mimesis perpetuated by scholars like MacDonald appears to proceed from a highly poetic *literary* framework for Mark's Gospel, which motivated a poetic imitation of Homer. MacDonald argues that 'the key to Mark's composition has less to do with its genre than with its imitation of texts from a different genre'.<sup>65</sup> For MacDonald, analysis of imitation precedes analysis of genre, it seems. This chapter suggests that genre may perhaps play a larger role in understanding

<sup>63</sup> R. H. Stein, *Mark* (BECNT; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 20, affirms that these are the only real possibilities for the genre of Mark – history or biography. He concludes that the genre of Mark is something like what I have claimed above, broadly historical Greek discourse: 'Attempts to describe Mark as one or the other stumble over the fact that elements of both are present and intermingled without embarrassment, for the biography of Jesus is intimately interwoven in a historical narrative. As a result, it may be best to describe the genre of Mark as 'a historical biography' (21).

<sup>64</sup> W. R. Telford, *Mark* (London; New York: T&T Clark, 1997), 96–100.

<sup>65</sup> MacDonald, *Homeric Epics*, 3.

the relationship of mimesis to a document such as the Gospel of Mark than previously thought. Considerations of genre and literary framework may, then, provide a prior set of parameters for the type of Markan mimesis that we might expect to find, especially as it relates to invention.

Second, and tightly related to previous point, this chapter has hopefully exposed a greater need for further analysis of the genre of Mark (and other early Christian documents) in connection with mimesis. The several proposals that attempt to situate Mark within something other than a broadly historical environment tend fail at the level of disambiguation criteria. As an example, consider Beavis's proposal that Mark's Gospel may reflect structures often used by the tragic poets.<sup>66</sup> She sees the Gospel organized accordingly as: Prologue (1.1-13); Act 1 (1.14-3.35); Teaching Scene 1 (4.1-34); Act 2 (4.35-6.56); Teaching Scene 2 (7.1-23); Act 3 (7.24-9.29); Teaching Scene 3 (9.30-10.45); Act 4 (10.46-12.44); Teaching Scene 4 (13.1-37); Act 5 (14.1-15.47); Epilogue (16.1-8). However, BurrIDGE can show that Mark's structure maps similarly in a biographical setting (cf. his 'allocation of space').<sup>67</sup> So it may turn out that these kinds of structural features have a purpose for detecting a number of genres that have overlapping formal (e.g. structural) features. And on the whole BurrIDGE's proposal has probably been much more convincing (at least to most) than Beavis's and those like it precisely because BurrIDGE has identified so many more commonalities between the Greek βίος and Mark's Gospel than others have between Mark's Gospel and other genres. But in order to solidify (or overturn) BurrIDGE's proposal, what we still seem to need is further research related to where genres diverge from one another with respect to particular formal features. With reference to deepening our understanding of the literary constraints that may be placed upon Markan mimesis, disambiguation criteria should be developed, in particular, with respect to the formal divergence between poetic and historical texts – and then see where Mark fits most comfortably.

Third, if we adopt the consensus view of Mark as some kind of broadly historical (biographical?) Greek discourse and assume with MacDonald that

<sup>66</sup> M. A. Beavis, *Mark's Audience: The Literary and Social History of Mark 4:11-12* (JSNTSup 33; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1989).

<sup>67</sup> Richard A. BurrIDGE, *What Are the Gospels?: A Comparison with Graeco-Roman Biography* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 192.

Mark did imitate Homer, we can imagine a scenario in which Mark's imitations merely involve external mimesis. MacDonald, in assuming a primarily poetic account of mimesis, insists that Mark's Gospel develops its tradition almost exclusively in terms of aesthetics – the vast majority of Mark's Jesus traditions emerge from Mark's imagination not history. However, the Greek historians apparently had much different interests in mind when utilizing mimesis to construct their historical accounts. One may argue that Mark constitutes some kind of poetic discourse, but again, this pushes us back to the question of genre. If Mark operates in a historical environment of some kind, the author may still imitate Homer – though I am not yet convinced that he does – but that does not entail that these imitations require the level of invention that MacDonald suggests – perhaps Mark merely imitates Homer *via* external mimesis.

Take, Xenophon, for example, who seems to recruit external paragraph-level mimesis in taking over the basic event structure of Herodotus's account of the Persian envoys.<sup>68</sup>

Here, we have high-ranking similarities with significant density of parallels in order and volume, without any inversion of order. The most compelling similarity is, of course, the duplication of incident structure for a seemingly strange set of events. Xenophon prefers to map the semantic rather than the lexical profile of his model. Where Xenophon needs lexical resources to describe his own narrative, he seems to intentionally prefer alternative vocabulary from the same semantic domain as his model. Herodotus uses γυναικας εὐμόρφους to describe the beautiful women in his story. Xenophon uses σεμνοτάτας καὶ καλλίστας, dropping the noun altogether, using two adjectives instead of one – neither of which repeat Herodotus's preferred form here. We can track this tendency down through the paragraphs. In spite of using differing word choices, mimesis is still readily detectable through the use of parallel identity chains. While Herodotus does not include conflicting sources at the end of his narrative, he does cite an oral source, and Xenophon's strategy here likely imitates a more local Herodotean formula. The major difference between the two stories is Xenophon's omission of the conversational discourse that takes up so much space in Herodotus's story (omitted

<sup>68</sup> Vivienne Gray, *The Character of Xenophon's Hellenica* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins' University Press, 1989), 65–9, draws attention to this correlation.

Incident Map	Herodotus, 5.18-20	Xenophon, <i>Hell.</i> 5.4.4-7
<i>Stage</i>	The Persians who had been sent as envoys came to	As for Phillidas, since the polemarchs always celebrate
<b>Setting:</b> Context of Celebration	Amyntas and demanded earth and water for Darius the king. He readily gave to them what they asked and invited them to be his guests, preparing a dinner of great splendor and receiving them hospitably. ...	a festival of Aphrodite upon the expiration of their term of office, he was making all the arrangements for them,
<i>Development</i>		
<b>I:</b> Beautiful women brought in to entertain guests	With that, Amyntas sent for the women. Upon being called, the women [γυναῖκας] entered and sat down in a row opposite the Persians. Then the Persians, seeing beautiful women [γυναῖκας εὐμόρφους] before them, spoke to Amyntas and said that there was no sense in what he had done. It would be better if the women had never come at all than that they should come and not sit beside the men, but sit opposite them to torment their eyes. Amyntas, now feeling compelled to do so, bade the women sit beside them.	
	When the women had done as they were bidden, the Persians, flushed as they were with excess of wine [οἰνωμένοι], at once laid hands on the women's breasts, and one or another tried to kiss them.	and in particular, having long ago promised to bring them women [γυναῖκας], and the most stately and beautiful women [σεμνοτάτας καὶ καλλίστας] there were in Thebes, he said he would do so at that time. And they – for they were that sort of men – expected to spend the night very pleasantly.
		Now when they had dined and with his zealous help had quickly become drunk [ἔμεθύσθησαν], after they had long urged him to bring in their mistresses he went out and brought Melon and his followers, having dressed up three of them as matrons and the others as their attendants.

2: Guests become drunk	<p>This Amyntas saw, but held his peace despite his anger because he greatly feared the Persians. Amyntas' son Alexander, however, because of his youth and ignorance of ill deeds, could not bear it longer ... Alexander said to the Persians ... 'I see that you are all completely drunk [ὄρῳ μέθης], allow these women to depart and wash, if this is your desire.' ... When ... the Persians had given their consent, he sent the women out [ἀπέπεμπε] and away to their apartments.</p>	<p>He conducted them all to the anteroom adjoining the treasury of the polemarchs' building, and then came in himself and told Archias and his colleagues that the women said they would not enter if any of the servants were in the room. At that the polemarchs speedily ordered them all to withdraw, while Phillidas gave them wine [οἶνον] and sent them off [ἐξέπεμψεν] to the house of one of their number.</p>
3: Women are removed from the scene	<p>Alexander then took as many beardless men as there were women, dressed them in the women's clothes, and gave them daggers. ... Alexander seated [παρίζει] each of his Macedonians next to a Persian, as though they were women,</p>	<p>Then he led in the supposed courtesans and seated them one beside each man. And the agreement was, that when they were seated [καθίζοιτο], they should unveil themselves and strike at once.</p>
5: Disguised men suddenly kill guests	<p>and when the Persians began to lay hands on them, as one woman said [ὡς γυναῖκα τῷ λόγῳ], they were killed [διεργάζοντο] by the Macedonians.</p>	<p>It was in this way, then, as some tell the story [οὕτω λέγουσιν], that the polemarchs were killed [ἀποθανεῖν],</p>
		<p>while others say that Melon and his followers came in as though they were revellers and killed them.</p>

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above for the purposes of displaying the parallel narrative movements). Xenophon prefers a more concise format. Other alterations occur as a result of Xenophon's differing narrative goals for the story.<sup>69</sup> Proceeding from the model of the historical theorists, this likely represents an example of external mimesis where Xenophon imitates the incident structure of Herodotus to frame his account of Phillidas. That Xenophon framed his Phillidas narrative using Herodotus's account of the Persian envoys does not, on its own, entail invention. In fact, given what we know about mimesis in historical theory, this was one way of preserving and presenting historical tradition.

So in the case of Mark's Gospel, even if the evangelist frames his narrative in light of certain Homeric passages, that on its own does not require that Markan mimesis is purely aesthetic. To show this, we would need *independent evidence* that Mark is some kind of poetic text. So even if MacDonald's theory about Mark's imitation of Homer holds up, this reading does not require the level of invention so often proposed.

Fourth, and finally, the historically configured account of mimesis emerging from rhetoric and eventually making its way into historiography may have implications for understanding the mimetic adaptation of early Christian tradition in Mark's Gospel and beyond. Bailey helpfully distinguished between the Bultmannian understanding of transmission as informal uncontrolled tradition and the formal controlled tradition view of the rabbinic model. The formal/informal distinction has to do with the role – or lack thereof – of the community in the process of transmission. The controlled/uncontrolled distinction refers to the level of fluidity in the tradition, whether it was tightly controlled by the transmitters or not. Bailey criticizes rabbinic models of transmission for being too rigid to account for the shape of the Gospel tradition and form-critical models as being too fluid. Bailey focuses instead on a third school which he calls informal controlled tradition.<sup>70</sup> While I think

<sup>69</sup> Gray, *Character*, 67. Gray, *Character*, 68, notices the following further similarities: 'Both give an abundance of detail about the stratagem employed and the stages of the deception up until the actual blows are struck, but then they avoid the issue. There is no blood or gore, no protracted death scene, only a simple statement that they were killed. The reason for this is not so much an aversion to death scenes, but a desire for effective writing. The building up of suspense throughout the account is suddenly and swiftly broken in a few plain words that leave most to the imagination. Xenophon imitates Herodotus closely at this point ...'

<sup>70</sup> Kenneth E. Bailey, 'Informal Controlled Oral Tradition and the Synoptic Tradition,' *Themelios* 20 (1995): 4–11.

that Bailey's study ultimately fails due to its anachronistic framework, his insight that the Gospels seem to represent some kind of informal controlled tradition seems helpful. If Mark (and for that matter the other evangelists) operates under the assumption of a broadly historical theory of mimesis, where the core content of the Jesus tradition – whether oral or written – was to be 'controlled' through internal mimesis (Dionysius' 'subject matter') but was expected to be shaped and reconfigured through external mimesis as the sayings and deeds of Jesus were imitated in new literary environments (and/or registers), then this would give us a kind of informal controlled perspective on Mark's Jesus traditions and how Greco-Roman literary contexts may have shaped his presentation of these materials.

## Luke and *Progymnasmata*: Rhetorical Handbooks, Rhetorical Sophistication and Genre Selection

Sean A. Adams

In dialogue with the progymnasmatic works of Theon and others, as well as modern studies on Luke, I seek in this chapter to revisit the enigma of Luke's education and the effect of that education on the Lukan writings. Identifying Luke's educational influences is an important endeavour in its own right, as it provides a conceptual background when approaching Luke and Acts. The goal of this article is much more modest in that it seeks to examine the placement of the *progymnasmata* in literary education and its corresponding influence on assertions regarding the genre of Luke and Acts and Luke's rhetorical sophistication. Towards this end, this article will respond to two recent publications in *NTS* that discuss Luke's rhetorical training and competency with a particular eye towards identifying genre.<sup>1</sup>

Overall, this article posits that the progymnastic handbooks in the first century CE were not rigidly assigned to one particular educational tier, but rather were part of both the secondary and tertiary levels. This placement is vital for understanding the possible limits of Luke's rhetorical training, his level of education and his corresponding selection of genre. Second, this article will discuss briefly Luke's use of initial rhetorical features with a particular focus on δὴγγησις and how it is employed in the handbooks. Finally, this article provides an extended challenge to M. W. Martin's claim of Luke's rhetorical sophistication and argues that Luke's use of *synkrisis* is not as advanced as Martin posits nor was it Luke's model for the Third Gospel.

<sup>1</sup> O. Padilla, 'Hellenistic παιδεία and Luke's Education: A Critique of Recent Approaches', *NTS* 55 (2009): 416–37; M. W. Martin, 'Progymnastic Topic Lists: A Compositional Template for Luke and other *Bioi*?', *NTS* 54 (2008): 18–41.



### 1. Education in the ancient world

The standard scholarly configuration of the education system, championed by H. I. Marrou and S. F. Bonner, presents a tripartite model with three tiers of schooling: primary, secondary and tertiary.<sup>2</sup> While a number of scholars still work from this organizational model, there is a growing recognition that rigid divisions between the different levels are unsupportable.<sup>3</sup> Consequently, there is an implicit understanding of variation and nuance between geographic locales and time periods, as is expressed by Raffaella Criore: ‘The picture that emerges is one of great variety. Its outlines depended on several factors: not only educational stages, but also urban education versus education in the country, economic and social status of the pupil, and purely situational circumstances.’<sup>4</sup>

In light of this diversity, Teresa Morgan proposes a holistic ἐγκύκλιος παιδεία education model that is partitioned into ‘core’ and ‘periphery’.<sup>5</sup> According to Morgan, this ἐγκύκλιος παιδεία is the basic outline of education and consists of reading, writing, grammar, literature, geometry, astronomy, music and basic rhetoric, although history, advanced oratory and philosophy are excluded.<sup>6</sup> In this model, those students who have Greek parents or prior access to Greek culture will be able to excel at the core material and be privileged with exposure to a wider range of authors which will assist in later differentiating the lowly educated from the cultural elite.

Morgan bases her theory on papyrological evidence, ‘sociological established preference for competition’, and the means by which a person gained entry into the dominant Greek and Roman cultural elite.<sup>7</sup> While her theory has merit, it lacks supporting evidence of Greco-Roman authors in their discussions of ancient education. Morgan claims that this is due to their lack

<sup>2</sup> H. I. Marrou, *A History of Education in Antiquity* (trans. G. R. Lamb; London: Sheed and Ward, 1956), 142–216; S. F. Bonner, *Education in the Roman World: From the Elder Cato to the Younger Pliny* (Berkeley: University of California, 1977), 34–75; R. Criore, *Gymnastics of the Mind: Greek Education in Hellenistic and Roman Egypt* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 2.

<sup>3</sup> R. A. Kaster, ‘Notes on “Primary” and “Secondary” Schools in Late Antiquity’, *TAPA* 113 (1983): 323–46.

<sup>4</sup> Criore, *Gymnastics*, 18.

<sup>5</sup> T. Morgan, *Literate Education in the Hellenistic and Roman Worlds* (CCS; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 71–3.

<sup>6</sup> Morgan, *Literate Education*, 35–6, 42–3, 190–3.

<sup>7</sup> Morgan, *Literate Education*, 88.

of sociological interest;<sup>8</sup> however, one should not be so quick to dismiss these writers, who not only went through the system, but also influenced later educators in how the system should be developed and maintained.<sup>9</sup>

Within both of these models, the final level of education is the most specialized, with a number of different avenues of study (rhetoric, philosophy, medicine, etc.), typically divided between ‘lower’ *techne* and ‘higher’ literary streams.<sup>10</sup> Even here, our understanding of educational material is slim, particularly regarding medical training, as well as the amount of overlap (if any) between these streams. Though all these fields warrant individual attention, this chapter will focus solely on rhetoric, specifically the *progymnasmata*.

## 2. The location of the Progymnasmata in the education system

One of the initial challenges for understanding rhetorical handbooks is that there is disagreement over when in the educational process these exercises would have been taught. *Progymnasmata*, according to some, are considered the preliminary exercises given to boys between the ages of twelve and fifteen in order to prepare them for the training of declamation in the rhetorical schools, which suggests that they were provided prior to formal rhetorical training.<sup>11</sup> Accordingly, a number of scholars have suggested that it was part of the secondary level of education.<sup>12</sup> Cribiore, Morgan, and Hock and O’Neil, however, suggest that the *progymnasmata* were part of the rhetorical teaching of the tertiary/final level and thus not part of training prior to rhetorical school.<sup>13</sup> A key issue with this debate is that nearly all scholars place the

<sup>8</sup> Morgan, *Literate Education*, 89.

<sup>9</sup> Morgan’s quick dismissal of other possible explanations for the papyrological evidence weakens her position. See Morgan, *Literate Education*, 70.

<sup>10</sup> For example, Seneca, *Ep.* 88; Lucian, *Somm.* 12; Padilla, ‘Hellenistic παιδεία’, 436. On the differentiation between rhetoric and oratory along with educational references, see C. Steel, *Roman Oratory* (NSC 36; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), esp. 64–5.

<sup>11</sup> Kennedy, *Progymnasmata*, x; Cribiore, *Gymnastics*, 56.

<sup>12</sup> ‘The *progymnasmata* were the exercises taught in the second level of education to train students for public discourse’, J. H. Neyrey, ‘Encomium versus Vituperation: Contrasting Portraits of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel’, *JBL* 126 (2007): 529–52, 531.

<sup>13</sup> Cribiore, *Gymnastics*, 56, 221–30; Morgan, *Literate Education*, 190–2; R. F. Hock, ‘The Educational Curriculum in Chariton’s *Callirhoe*’, in *Ancient Fiction: The Matrix of Early Christian and Jewish Narrative* (eds J.-A. A. Brant, C. W. Hedrick and C. Shea; SBLSymS 32; Leiden: Brill, 2005), 15–36, 24; *The Chreia and Ancient Rhetoric: Classroom Exercises* (eds R. F. Hock and E. N. O’Neil; WGRW 2; Atlanta: SBL, 2002), 1; R. Webb, ‘The *Progymnasmata* at Practice’, in *Education in Greek and Roman Antiquity* (ed. Y. L. Too; Leiden: Brill, 2001), 289–316, 297. ‘The *progymnasmata* were a central part of the rhetorical instruction in the curricula of post-secondary education in the Roman

*progymnasmata* exclusively in one educational tier and rarely discuss the possibility that the exercises may not have been exclusively contained in a single level.

The primary exception is Bonner, who suggests that the placement of *progymnasmata* was subject to social pressures.<sup>14</sup> Originally they were a well-established part of tertiary rhetorical training, but that by the first century AD there was disagreement about when the *progymnasmata* would be taught. With the growing prestige and opportunities afforded to rhetoricians there was a downward pressure on providing rhetorical exercises earlier and to younger students. As a result, progymnasmatic exercises began to become part of the grammatical training of the second level.<sup>15</sup>

This perspective parallels discussions among the ancients, particularly Quintilian, for whom the teaching of rhetorical exercises at lower educational levels was not palatable. Rather, Quintilian (*Inst.* 2.1.2-3) believed that this was a disfavour to the rhetorical art and considered it a dereliction of duty on the part of the Roman teachers of rhetoric. Although he could not entirely reverse the trend, Quintilian proposed that not all of the *progymnasmata* be left in the hands of the *grammatici*, but that they could retain only the very preliminary of exercises (*chreia*, maxims, fables and narrative, *Inst.* 1.9.3). A similar trend is lamented by Suetonius who claims that, though grammar and rhetoric have become distinct subjects, some grammarians 'introduce certain kinds of exercises suited to the training of orators, such as problems (*problemata*), paraphrases (*paraphrasis*), addresses (*allocutiones*), character sketches (*ethologias*) and similar things' (*De Gramm.* 4). It is apparent from both of these comments that some rhetorical exercises were practised prior to entering rhetorical school. However, it is also clear from these comments that only select exercises, not the entire handbook, were taught prior to rhetorical education proper.<sup>16</sup>

Along this line of argument, Morgan contends that there is documentary evidence to support the idea that the most basic progymnasmatic exercises

Empire', D. F. Watson, 'Rhetorical Criticism', in *Blackwell Companion to the New Testament* (ed. D. E. Aune; Oxford: Blackwell, 2010), 166–76, 171.

<sup>14</sup> Bonner, *Education in the Roman World*, 250–2.

<sup>15</sup> It is important to note at this point that there were substantial differences between the Latin and Greek educational system. Though in both systems there was pressure to teach the *progymnasmata* to younger and younger students, it was primarily the Latin schools that were most influenced by it.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. Strabo's (*Geog.* 14.1.48) statement that his grammar teacher taught him grammar and some rhetoric.

were incorporated within the primary and secondary education levels.<sup>17</sup> The best example is P. Bouriant 1.141-68 in which five *chreiai* are provided in a format most convenient for beginner readers. Other examples that date back to the first century AD are provided by Hock and O'Neil, which provide further confirmation of more widespread use.<sup>18</sup> However, though *chreiai* were taught at the primary level of education, it is highly unlikely that their rhetorical significance and impact were taught at this time. Rather, as is plain from the format of P. Bouriant 1, it is the form and the words that are in focus at this initial stage; their rhetorical nature was left to discussion at a later date.

Nevertheless, there is evidence that some students did know something of rhetoric prior to commencing rhetorical education proper. This appears to be the case especially in the later Roman Empire as witnessed in Libanius' comments that some students had received rhetorical preparation prior to entering his school. For example, when testing his new students, Libanius found that one had already memorized large quantities of Demosthenes (*Ep.* 1261.2), and another was also familiar with Libanius' own discourses (*Ep.* 768.3). It is important to note, even at this time in which rhetoric and oratory were dominant, that these examples are the exception rather than the norm.

These ancient examples support the idea that rhetoric was not limited solely to tertiary education, but are themselves insufficient to claim that the entire range of rhetorical exercises were taught at an early stage. This suggests that Quintilian's lament should be taken seriously and that some, but not all, of the rhetorical exercises were taught prior to studying under the rhetorician. This leads us to the natural question: If the *progymnasmata* were in fact divided between the second and third levels, which exercises would have been taught prior to entrance into the rhetorical school? Though there is no consistent demarcation from the ancient authors – and it is probable that there was no uniformity in this division – it is most likely that it would be divided around the level of 'refutation'.<sup>19</sup> Such a view is hinted at by Kennedy, who states, 'Up

<sup>17</sup> E.g. gnomic and *chreia*. Morgan, *Literate Education*, 123.

<sup>18</sup> E.g. P.Mich.inv. 25; P.Mich.inv. 41; P.Oslo III 177; P.Berol.inv. 21258V; P.Mil.Vogl. VI 263; SB I 5730; O.Wilck. 1226 and 1330. Hock and O'Neil, *Chreia*, 5–49.

<sup>19</sup> Though this is a natural break within the curriculum, it is complicated by the fact that Theon discusses 'refutation' and 'confirmation' in relationship to 'narrative' (93–6; Patillon 57–61). This, however, is not the case with the other extant *progymnasmata* textbooks, which separate narrative from refutation and confirmation.

to this point, the exercises only required a student to describe, paraphrase, or amplify the material assigned by the teacher.<sup>20</sup> Beginning with refutation, greater responsibility is placed on the students and their ability to think for themselves. Accordingly, with this division the secondary student would have had training in *chreia*, maxim, fable and narrative with possible (although increasingly less likely) exposure to the more advanced exercises.

Understanding the location of the *progymnasmata* within the educational system is fundamentally important for determining the likeliness that Luke (or any other author) had formal rhetorical training. For example, if the *progymnasmata* are completely restricted to the tertiary level of education, then claiming that Luke made extended use of rhetorical devices suggests that he had an advanced education. Conversely, if the *progymnasmata* are not entirely restricted to the third educational tier, but were partially or wholly accessible to a student in the secondary tier, then the level of education claimed for Luke may be more conservative when identifying basic rhetorical forms in a work. Accordingly, authors who only show knowledge of and competence in initial rhetorical exercises and fail to show substantial knowledge of tertiary educational material may be considered to only have received a secondary education; whereas evidence of later rhetorical exercises provides a stronger indication that the author had some tertiary education.<sup>21</sup>

It is necessary, moreover, to differentiate between the possible existence of a rhetorical stratagem within a work and the quality of its use. Just because an author employs a rhetorical device does not mean that it was used well. Even within antiquity ancients recognized gradients of uses among authors. In each case the quality of the author's employment may also indicate the level of education. Excellent employment supports the claim of higher rhetorical training; whereas mediocre employment suggests (but does not guarantee) a less thorough education. This criterion will be further discussed in the critique of Martin below.

Further complicating this picture is the claim by a number of scholars that individuals who did not have a rhetorical education would have developed cultural conceptions about rhetorical discourse owing to its permeation

<sup>20</sup> G. A. Kennedy, *A New History of Classical Rhetoric* (Princeton: Princeton University, 1994), 204.

<sup>21</sup> Naturally this is not a rigid division and so should not be applied uncritically. Rather, variations in location and time force one to use this criterion with discretion.

within the culture.<sup>22</sup> Although the claim that an uneducated audience could identify rhetorical devices or recognize a speech that lacked rhetorical flair is probable (especially within an important metropolis), it is questionable whether a person from that same audience would have the skills to construct a literary work that utilized the same rhetorical tools that they could identify. Accordingly, the identification of rhetorical features within a work lends greater support for that writer's education than to the idea that rhetoric was 'in the air' and was therefore assimilated.<sup>23</sup> There is little doubt that a person could have learned a phrase of Isocrates or Demosthenes by listening to a declaiming sophist. However, the ability to consistently and elegantly utilize such knowledge would have been nearly impossible without a thorough knowledge of classical authors. Moreover, the extreme speciality of rhetoricians, indicated by the amount of extra schooling needed for this profession, mitigates against the idea that a marginally educated person would have been able to use advanced handbook exercises well without training.

Having discussed the possible placement of the *progymnasmata* in the educational timeline and some additional considerations, we now turn our attention to how this might affect recent proposals regarding Luke's use of rhetorical devices and his selection of genre.

### 3. Luke-Acts, rhetoric and genre

One of the most recent studies to evaluate Luke's education in light of his narratives is that of Osvaldo Padilla. Through the evaluation of intertextuality (to classical Greek authors) and elaborate speeches in Acts, Padilla concludes

<sup>22</sup> G. A. Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation through Rhetorical Criticism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1984), 5; M. C. Parsons, *Acts* (Paideia; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008), 19–20; M. C. Parsons, 'Luke and the *Progymnasmata*', in *Contextualizing Acts: Lukan Narrative and Greco-Roman Discourse* (eds. T. Penner and C. Vander Stichele; SBLSymS 20; Atlanta: SBL, 2003), 43–63, 46; K. Maxwell, *Hearing Between the Lines: The Audience as Fellow-Worker in Luke-Acts and its Literary Milieu* (JSNTSS 425; London: T&T Clark, 2010), 126–7.

It is possible that Luke, or any other writer in the ancient world who did not have a full rhetorical education, could have had access to and read the *progymnasmata* and so have gained knowledge of the higher-level exercises. However, there is a notable difference between personal reading and a full formal rhetorical education, as is emphasized by Dionysius (*Comp.* 25–26) and Cicero (*Ad Fam.* 7.19).

<sup>23</sup> This is not to suggest that an ancient could not have learned rhetoric through this manner, but that the writer acquired these tools through formal education is much more likely. For ancients who suggested that all the citizens of a city 'share in the study as by a vapour' and so would have recognized rhetoric, see Libanius, *Or.* 11.192; Aristides, *Panath.* 46.

that the passages in which previous scholars identified rhetorical training for Luke can be better understood in terms of his relationship to Jewish literature and his education in the primary and secondary tiers.<sup>24</sup> As a result, it is not possible to claim that Luke had a rhetorical education as the typical educational markers are absent. Rather, Luke's work exhibits signs of only primary and secondary literary education.<sup>25</sup>

Though I generally agree with Padilla's findings, I would like to nuance and advance his conclusions based on the aforementioned understanding that the *progymnasmata* were not entirely restricted to the tertiary level of education.<sup>26</sup> Padilla's claim that Luke's work does not provide firm evidence that he attended higher literary education is compelling. However, though Luke's work does not exhibit the later stages of progymnasmatic training, it is still possible to identify some of the initial levels, specifically those of *chreia*, fable and narrative.

Although the first two sets of Theon's exercises (*chreia* and fable) have been identified as forming specific parts of the Lukan narratives,<sup>27</sup> it is primarily his comments about narrative that are most intriguing for evaluating Luke's work as a literary whole. In his third section, 'On Narrative', Theon describes a narrative (διήγημα) as 'an account of matters that have happened, or as though they have happened' (78.16-17; Patillon 38).<sup>28</sup> Furthermore, Theon claims that a διήγησις is comprised of six elements (στοιχεῖα): 1) the person; 2) the action done by the person; 3) the place of the action; 4) the time of the action; 5) the manner of the action; and 6) the cause of these things (78.17-21; Patillon 38). This perspective is echoed in the other *progymnasmata*, although there is some disagreement over how the subcategories are to be divided.<sup>29</sup> In later handbooks (e.g. Libanius) examples could be drawn also from fictitious events and characters, not limited exclusively to those based in history.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>24</sup> Padilla, 'Hellenistic παιδεία', 421-34.

<sup>25</sup> Padilla, 'Hellenistic παιδεία', 435.

<sup>26</sup> Although Padilla knows and discusses this formulation, it does not noticeably influence his discussion. Padilla, 'Hellenistic παιδεία', 419.

<sup>27</sup> For examples, see Parsons, 'Luke and the *Progymnasmata*', 48-50.

<sup>28</sup> Although I use the standard Spengel numbering for Theon's *Progymnasmata*, the critical text use is *Aelius Théon: Progymnasmata* (eds. M. Patillon and G. Bolognesi; Budé; Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1997).

<sup>29</sup> For a brief discussion, see *Libanius's Progymnasmata: Model Exercises in Greek Prose Composition and Rhetoric* (ed. C. A. Gibson; SBLWGRW 27; Atlanta: SBL, 2008), 9.

<sup>30</sup> Out of the forty-one examples of διήγησις provided in Libanius' *Progymnasmata*, thirty-seven are mythological, while four are drawn from biographies or histories.

These opening exercises were important for the development of the rhetorician; however, it is clear from their scope that they are too restrictive to influence and function on the macro-level of genre. In fact, when attempting to relate Luke's rhetorical training to the understanding and selection of genre, narrative (διήγημα) is the only one of these initial exercises that could function on this level. This would be potentially helpful in light of Padilla's (and others') view of the genre of Acts as history and the strong relationship between history and rhetorical training.<sup>31</sup>

The debate over determining the genre of (Luke-)Acts, I will argue, is not helped by invoking the rhetorical handbooks. Theon's *Progymnasmata* does not attempt to delineate genre forms or limit generic options, nor does it present the exercises as genre possibilities. Rather, selections from a variety of genres are used as examples for specific rhetorical examples. For instance, Theon first references διήγησις in relationship to 'history' and 'fable' (60.3-4; Patillon 2), stating, 'for the one who has expressed well and in a versatile way a narrative (διήγησιν) and fable will also compose a history (ιστορίαν) well ...' It is clear from this passage that for Theon there is some differentiation between 'narrative' and 'history' with history being a further development of skills gained at previous levels.

There is some confusion, however, as to what Theon is referencing with the term ιστορία. Though it is clear that Theon understands ιστορία as 'the combination of narratives' (60.6; Patillon 2), it is not clear whether Theon understands this word exclusively in terms of historiography. An evaluation of the term ιστορία within Theon's *Progymnasmata* provides some clarity; rather than specifically referencing history proper, Theon's use of ιστορία distinguishes between prose and poetry.<sup>32</sup> Certainly Theon includes history as (at least) a subcategory of ιστορία, but it is not possible to restrict Theon's use of ιστορία to *only* history writing. Accordingly, a greater number of generic options are possible.

<sup>31</sup> Padilla is correct when he notes that prose narrative was taught later in the educational curriculum. However, arguing that Luke did not have a tertiary education undermines some of the confidence we can have that Luke modelled his work on Greek histories. Cf. O. Padilla, *The Speeches of Outsiders in Acts: Poetics, Theology and Historiography* (SNTSMS 144; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 237–40.

<sup>32</sup> The references, conveniently provided by Patillon (p. 199), are: 60.4, 6; 67.4; 70.3, 6, 12; 77.15; 80.17; 81.2, 7; 83.25, 31; 87.23; 91.15; 121.2; 122.30; and 123.1 [17]. Parsons ('Luke and the *Progymnasmata*', 53 n. 30) suggests that ιστορία in Theon is not restricted to history, but rather is used to differentiate prose from poetry.



It appears, moreover, that διήγησις could also be used for almost any type of prose genre.<sup>33</sup> Most importantly for this investigation are the examples provided by Theon, which exhibit a broad genre range, from Homer's *Iliad* (80.4) to Demosthenes's *Against Aristocrats* (81.19-20) and from Thucydides's *History* (84.4) to Palaiphatus the Peripatetic's treatise *On Incredulities* (96.4-6). Similarly, Ps.-Hermogenes (*Prog.* 4) relates διήγησις to Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* (so also Aphthonius, *Prog.* 22) as well as the histories of Thucydides and Herodotus (so also Nicolaus, *Prog.* 12). Especially enlightening for our discussion is the opening remark of Nicolaus that 'After fable should come narrative, as being more argumentative than fable, but simpler than all the other exercises' (*Prog.* 11). That Nicolaus views narrative as being the easiest of the rhetorical exercises is informative and should provide a needed check on Luke's literary claim in Luke 1.1, if in fact Luke is using the handbooks as a literary guide.

This diversity of works associated with διήγησις has led scholars to despondency. L. Alexander states that διήγησις is 'exact but not technical: "narrative" is appropriate for a Gospel ... The word is not found in the scientific prefaces.'<sup>34</sup> Talbert states that, 'The problem with this category is that it is as broad as the modern terms "account" and "narrative" ... A narrative/account could encompass a letter of sorts, a novel, a history, or a biography – maybe more.'<sup>35</sup> As a result, it is not possible for the *progymnasmata* at this point to assist in the selection of genre for Luke-Acts and so we must look elsewhere for answers. Though maxims, fables and *chreiai* are too limited in their scope to shape a work as large as Luke-Acts generically, διήγησις appears to be too broad a term to do anything but limit Luke-Acts to a work of prose narrative; something that was apparent from the beginning.

Overall, recognizing that some of the rhetorical exercises were located in the second tier of education further supports Padilla's argument. This perspective allows for some leniency regarding the occurrence of smaller,

<sup>33</sup> Cf. *Let. Arist.* 1, 8, 322; 2 Macc. 2.32; Sirach 39.2; Lucian, *Hist.* 55; Polybius, *Hist.* 3.36.1, 4; 4.28.4-6; Dionysius Halicarnassus, *Hist.* 2.48.1; Aristotle, *Poet.* 19, 1456b11; Theophrastus, *Char.* 3.1.1; Philo, *Spec.* 2.39 (regarding the Law); 3.49; *Pot.* 133; *Abr.* 20; *Ios.* 28, 94; *Praem.* 61; Plutarch, *Art.* 11.1.

<sup>34</sup> L. C. A. Alexander, *The Preface to Luke's Gospel: Literary Convention and Social Context in Luke 1.1-4 and Acts 1.1* (SNTSMS 78; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 111.

<sup>35</sup> C. H. Talbert, *Reading Luke: A Literary and Theological Commentary on the Third Gospel* (rev. edn; Macon: Smyth and Helwys, 2002), 2. Büchsel (TDNT 2.909) opines that one is not able to provide a specialized meaning for διήγησις.

basic rhetorical features, but undermines their impact in arguing for Luke receiving a full rhetorical education. From this standpoint, Padilla's argument regarding Luke's education is more fully established. The potential challenge with this understanding of Luke's (lack of) education is that it weakens the claim that (Luke-)Acts is a history. The study of history was largely, if not exclusively, limited to the highest educational tier. If Luke did not reach this tier, then it is less likely that ancient Greek historiography would have been his literary model. Other prose genres, such as biography, may, therefore, have provided a more ready genre model.

#### 4. Critique of M. W. Martin's 'Progymnastic Topic Lists'

M. W. Martin, in his article 'Progymnastic Topic Lists,' attributes an advanced form of rhetoric to Luke's genre selection, and attempts to revitalize Shuler's theory that the Gospels show broad similarities to 'encomium biographies' and the topic lists of the *progymnasmata*.<sup>36</sup> With a focused investigation on the *synkrisis* between Jesus and John the Baptist, Martin contrasts Luke's comparative writing with that of Plutarch and Philo to support his claim that Luke fully completed the study of the *progymnasmata* and that he 'employs the skills of describing and comparing a life topically with no less rhetorical sophistication than any of the other biographers surveyed, including Plutarch and Philo'.<sup>37</sup> Martin continues by stating that Luke 'displays more rhetorical sophistication in his handling of *synkrisis* than most of the biographers surveyed, Philo included'.<sup>38</sup>

In claiming that Luke made use of *progymnasmata*, Martin asserts that Luke had a complete, formal training in the rhetorical handbooks, but is silent regarding Luke's possible completion of tertiary education, though his claim of rhetorical sophistication might imply such a perspective. If Luke did utilize formal *synkrisis* for the structure of the Gospel of Luke, then it would be easier to consider Luke to have had greater exposure to the rhetorical handbooks. As discussed above, *synkrisis* occurs later in the rhetorical handbooks and so

<sup>36</sup> Martin, 'Progymnastic,' 18–41; P. L. Shuler, *A Genre for the Gospels: The Biographical Character of Matthew* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1982).

<sup>37</sup> Martin, 'Progymnastic,' 41.

<sup>38</sup> Martin, 'Progymnastic,' 41.

would likely fall in the tertiary level of education. However, Martin's use of later progymnastic exercises, without determining the possibility of Luke's educational level, is potentially problematic. As we will discuss below, it is not just straight comparisons that show rhetorical sophistication, rather, other features are also needed.

First, although Martin compares Luke's Gospel with Plutarch and Philo, it is unclear what his perspective is on the relationship between Luke and Acts. It might be assumed that he understands these two works to be separate, though his citation of Acts 1.6-11 as an important aspect of Luke's portrayal of Jesus blurs this distinction.<sup>39</sup> If Martin's use of the progymnastic topic lists forms the foundation for Luke's portrayal of Jesus, what is to be made of Acts? Or, if Acts is not attached to Luke's Gospel, how can it fulfil the topic of events after Jesus' life, which is an important component of rhetorical encomium? It is possible that Martin could limit his discussion to Luke and have Luke 24 satisfy the 'events after death' category; however, his citations of Acts raise questions.

Another issue with Martin's theory is the relationship asserted to exist between biography and rhetoric. At certain times in the article Martin claims that an author included various biographic topics (such as nurture and training) 'per progymnastic requirements'.<sup>40</sup> More specifically, Martin asserts that 'progymnastic topic lists are employed in *bioi* generally and Luke specifically as a compositional template, guiding the narrative in its overall structure and content'.<sup>41</sup> Statements such as this one imply that biographical features/*topoi* are included in a work because the author is following a predetermined list dictated by rhetorical handbooks. The issue with this claim is that the inclusion of such *topoi* was standard within biography writing *prior* to their incorporation into rhetorical topic lists.<sup>42</sup> Rhetorical handbooks did not gain ascendancy until the latter part of the Hellenistic era, whereas biography and encomium were established genres well before that time.<sup>43</sup> Accordingly,

<sup>39</sup> Martin, 'Progymnastic', 30, 34, 38.

<sup>40</sup> Martin, 'Progymnastic', 26.

<sup>41</sup> Martin, 'Progymnastic', 19-20.

<sup>42</sup> See, for example, the discussion of earlier authors in R. Burrige, *What Are the Gospels? A Comparison with Graeco-Roman Biography* (2nd edn; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004). Cf. also, S. A. Adams, *The Genre of Acts and Collected Biography* (SNTSMS 156; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), Appendix 1.

<sup>43</sup> Adams, *Genre*, 68-115.

Martin's statements that an author includes topics because of rhetorical requirements fails to acknowledge, not only the fact that these topics were standard features within *bioi* apart from rhetorical handbooks, but that it is quite possible that the rhetorical handbooks included these topics in their lists because of their requisite nature in biography.<sup>44</sup> All the examples used by Martin are *bioi*, so it is no wonder why all follow, for the most part, the topic lists. As a result, there is substantial ambiguity regarding where the author derived his topic list, one possibility being that Luke did not consult the handbooks at all.<sup>45</sup> This observation undermines a major pillar of Martin's argument – that the progymnastic topic lists were *the* model for Luke's composition.

Furthermore, even if we were to grant that Luke drew his *topoi* from lists in rhetorical handbooks, this does not speak to his rhetorical sophistication. In this instance Martin's claim that Luke is more rhetorically sophisticated than Philo and equal to Plutarch in his use of *synkrisis* potentially goes too far. Adherence to a list along with the inclusion of comparison/parallelism and needed *topoi* do not in themselves indicate level of rhetorical training or sophistication. Rather, the manner of employment needs to be taken into account to determine whether or not the author adhered to what we understand to be the most important components of syncretic comparison.

Turning to Martin's proposed comparison between Jesus and John it is clear that he is right to identify specific parallels between these two characters. Those of greatest importance are the strong similarities in miraculous birth (complete with angelic foreshadowing, etc.) and certain aspects of their public ministry (time in the desert, gaining and teaching disciples). The issue with these parallels is that they are limited to the first part of the Gospel narrative and so do not work on the macro scale of the work. After Luke 3 the narrative is one-sided; John the Baptist only appears in a small portion of the Gospel and is essentially omitted after Luke 7.<sup>46</sup> So much of the narrative is taken

<sup>44</sup> Martin, 'Progymnastic', 34–5.

<sup>45</sup> This is not to say that there was no connection or overlap between biography and rhetoric, clearly there was, as is evident from the handbooks. The issue in Martin's article is the assumption/insinuation that Luke could *only* have got his topic list from the handbooks and there was not a regularized set of biography genre-features that Luke could have used.

<sup>46</sup> Though John is spoken well of, especially in 7.28, it is clear from the narrative context that Jesus is still the character in primary focus. See also, Lk. 11.1; 16.16; 20.4-7.

up with Jesus' life, ministry and death that by the end of the Gospel narrative John is all but forgotten. He has fulfilled his role and is now offstage.

In addition to this disproportionate presentation, there is no extended, formal *synkrisis* (i.e. comparison) in which the two characters are contrasted; there is no 'parallel *scrutiny* of goods or evils or persons or things' (Nicolaus, *Prog.* 60). True, there is discussion regarding who Jesus is and John the Baptist is proposed as a comparator (Lk. 9.7-8, 19). However, he is not the only option (Elijah, one of the prophets of old), nor is there any extended discussion as to the relationship between the two in which their qualities and actions are evaluated and compared. Rather, this discussion focuses exclusively on Jesus and who he is; John is brushed aside and his execution mentioned only by report (9.9). That Luke completely omits John's death narrative – recounted in detail in the other Synoptics (Mk. 6.14-29; Mt. 14.1-12) – is even more problematic for Martin's case as this would have afforded a golden opportunity for Luke to build the parallelism between Jesus and John. That he intentionally omits John's death narrative suggests that this was not his focus and that Jesus is the only real protagonist of his Gospel.<sup>47</sup>

In fact, evaluating Luke's Gospel in light of Theon's *progymnasmata*, Luke's comparison of Jesus and John the Baptist broke the first and most important rule of *synkrisis*: 'Comparison should be of likes and where we are in doubt which should be preferred because of no evident superiority of one to the other' (112.30-113.2; Patillon 78).<sup>48</sup> In Luke 3.16, immediately before their first interaction, John the Baptist explicitly states that he is not the Christ and that he is inferior to Jesus. Similarly, John is framed throughout the narrative as a great prophet, but always in a subordinate relationship to Jesus (Lk. 3.4-6; 7.20). Though Martin is right that Luke does make multiple comparisons between Jesus and John, it is essentially characterized as a comparison

<sup>47</sup> The inclusion of the death of a minor character was not required in ancient *bioi*; however, the death of the main protagonist was a requisite component of individual biographies. Clearly, Luke did not have to include John's death, but the discussion of the manner of death and how the person faced it was a classic topic of comparison. Cf. Hermogenes, *Prog.* 19.

<sup>48</sup> This statement is not to imply that Theon could not have had a concept of comparison of un-equals in his rhetorical system (although it is not stated), or to be overly rigid about applying this criterion (there was room for variation), but rather that Luke clearly digressed from Theon's suggested approach. Hermogenes (*Prog.* 19) and Nicolaus (*Prog.* 59) are not as rigid and suggest that comparison of those who are unequal can take place.

of un-equals, which fundamentally contradicts Theon's understanding of *synkrisis*.<sup>49</sup>

In contrast, a great example of a sophisticated use of *synkrisis* is that of Plutarch's *Parallel Lives* in which the *synkrisis* forms an important structural component of the *Lives* by providing a clear ending to each pair.<sup>50</sup> This formal feature reinforces the connection between the two lives and indicates to the reader the importance of reading and interpreting these lives in tandem.<sup>51</sup> Accordingly, the interpretation of each life is affected by its close reading with its partner: the first life sets a pattern which is then exploited and varied in the second.

The function and content of the *synkrisis* for Plutarch is distinct as the material in the *Lives* is often re-appropriated by Plutarch in his moral evaluation. An action that was positively interpreted in the *Life* may be reconsidered negatively in the *synkrisis*. For example, Pericles in his *Life* is praised by Plutarch for his building projects on the Acropolis (*Per.* 12.1-13.13); however, this same building programme is denigrated in the *synkrisis* when compared to the real work of a statesman, that of virtue (*Comp. Per. Fab.* 2.1).<sup>52</sup>

Where the narrative allows for multiple interpretations of an event, Plutarch may select only one for the *synkrisis* and exclude all others. Such an action occurs in *Comp. Sol. Pub.* 4.1 where Plutarch, in contradiction to *Sol.* 8.1-11.1, denies Solon any part in the war with Megara. This difference should not be considered ignorance or carelessness on behalf of Plutarch, but rather can be accounted for by the rhetorical demands of the moment which lead him to argue different sides of the same coin.<sup>53</sup> In light of these examples, it is clear that the *synkrisis* are not simply summaries of the preceding narratives, but something more.

The role of the *synkrisis* is also not exclusively to demonstrate the superiority of one character over another. Following Theon's programme for *synkrisis*

<sup>49</sup> It is worth noting that other ancients might not have seen this comparison as clear-cut as Luke did (cf. Clement, *Recognitions*, 1.54).

<sup>50</sup> This is in addition to the general parallelism by which he organized his *Lives*. T. E. Duff, *Plutarch's Lives: Exploring Virtue and Vice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 283.

<sup>51</sup> This formal *synkrisis* is found at the end of all but four pairs: *Themistocles-Camillus*, *Pyrrhus-Marius*, *Phocion-Cato Minor*, and *Alexander-Caesar*.

<sup>52</sup> See also the depiction of Antony's death, which in *Antony* is negatively portrayed against that of Cleopatra (*Ant.* 77.1-4; 85.1-4), whereas in the *synkrisis* it is to be preferred over Demetrius' (*Comp. Dem. Ant.* 4.2).

<sup>53</sup> Duff, *Plutarch's Lives*, 267.

outlined in his *Progymnasmata*, Plutarch generally avoids making particular claims of superiority. Rather, he hedges his statements and allows his readers to come to their own conclusions.<sup>54</sup> The primary role of Plutarch's *synkrisis*, therefore, is to invite the reader's renewed attention to moral questions that have been raised in the *Lives* and to raise new and even more challenging ones. Rather than providing trite moral certitudes, Plutarch reframes moral and ethical questions in ways that challenge culturally assumed answers.<sup>55</sup>

In light of such nuanced applications of *synkrisis* that adhere to Theon's most basic tenet (from a person we know successfully traversed the entirety of literary and rhetorical education), Luke's comparison between Jesus and John seems one-dimensional and abridged. Not only does the Third Gospel lack the nuance of Plutarch's employment of *synkrisis*, it fails to uphold Theon's principle of comparison of equals. Even if we were to grant that some later handbooks allow for comparison of un-equals – moving from the lesser to the greater – this is part of the discussion of *topos* for Theon and is used primarily in an explicit argument (*Prog.* 108). At best, Luke appears to flout Theon's convention and apply it to a new category; at worst, he failed in the most basic component of *synkrisis*. Some might prefer to say 'Luke creatively employed a convention and adapted it to his needs.' This is possible, but it raises a difficult question: how one determines a creative adaptation from a deviation in literary prescription?

All of these challenges (disproportional representation, Luke's *topoi* as taken from biography not rhetorical handbooks, and deviation from Theon's tenet) undermine Martin's claim, not only of Luke's high rhetorical sophistication in his use of *synkrisis*, but also of Luke's use of the handbook as his primary literary model. Rather, it appears that Luke could have solely used existing biographies for his *topoi* and for modelling his instances of comparison. This begs the question: how much comparison is needed to employ the term *synkrisis*? Is there a critical mass needed, or can any comparison assume that label? Martin is no doubt correct when he defends the position that Luke (or any other author) is not required to have a formal,

<sup>54</sup> This equality is epitomized in *Comp. Cim. Luc.* 3.6: 'The result is that, if one looks at all sides of the argument, it is difficult to judge between them ...' Some comparisons, however, are less subtle, cf. *Comp. Thes. Rom.* 6.7.

<sup>55</sup> Duff, *Plutarch's Lives*, 245. cf. also S. Swain, 'Plutarchan Synkrisis', *Eranos* 90 (1992): 101–11, 104–6.

discrete *synkrisis* such as found in Plutarch's *Parallel Lives*.<sup>56</sup> However, removing such a discrete formal feature as a form-determinant creates substantial ambiguity for applying the label of *synkrisis*, especially if the term is absent in the work in question.

### 5. Conclusion

Based on the proposed placement of *progymnasmata* in the educational system of the first century AD, namely that it straddled the gap between the secondary and tertiary tiers, it is likely that Luke would have had preliminary exposure to the initial exercises (e.g. fable, maxim and narrative). However, as my questions of Martin's theory regarding *synkrisis* suggest, it is not certain that Luke would have completed the *progymnasmata* and/or acquired a tertiary education in rhetoric.

When attempting to interpret the genre of Luke(-Acts) in light of these rhetorical exercises, as was attempted by Martin, the most natural pairing would be that of δῆγησις, as the author of the Gospel of Luke appears to indicate (Lk. 1.1). However, it is apparent upon closer inspection that the term δῆγησις, as used by Theon and other rhetoricians/authors, is not restricted to one particular genre, but encompasses nearly the full spectrum of literary prose, history and biography included. Therefore, owing to the pliable nature of δῆγησις it is not possible to provide a specific genre label to Luke's work using this rhetorical category.

In looking forward, there are a number of implications in locating the *progymnasmata* between the second and third levels of schooling. First, it recognizes that the handbooks are not rigidly held together, but were used in a flexible manner which changed over time and between different geographic regions. Second, it limits the availability of formal rhetorical training within the education system to the tertiary level. Third, and most importantly, it highlights that occasional examples of rhetoric use (e.g. *chreia*, maxims) in a work are insufficient for claiming rhetorical training and sophistication for the work's author. It is important to note that this does not eliminate the possibility of using rhetorical tools to evaluate the

<sup>56</sup> Cf. Nicolaus, *Prog.* 62.



Lukan narratives nor negate the insights that rhetorical investigations bring to the interpretation of Luke-Acts. Rather, this chapter suggests that the *progymnasmata* taught in the secondary level do not assist in providing generic boundaries for Luke-Acts as a whole besides the unhelpfully large one of prose narrative.

Finally, this chapter raises important questions regarding the use of the term *synkrisis* (in contrast to comparison and biography) and the way in which it is employed in scholarly works. It highlights the relationship(s) between biography and rhetorical categories and the incorporation of genre-determinative features in the handbooks. This relationship is challenging and requires further investigation.

## Luke's Antetextuality in Light of Ancient Rhetorical Education

Dennis R. MacDonald

For more than a decade I have devoted much of my attention to Luke's use of literary sources and models. These antetexts include, of course, the Septuagint (Jewish Scriptures in Greek; LXX), the Gospel of Mark, and Q (or the *Logoi of Jesus*). I also have proposed that Luke knew the Gospel of Matthew and Papias's *Exposition of Logia about the Lord*, whom he likely included among the 'many' who earlier had written about Jesus.<sup>1</sup> I also am convinced by several interpreters that he made free use of a collection of Paul's letters and perhaps some writings of Josephus.

In *The Gospels and Homer* and *Luke and Vergil*, I argued extensively for his imitations of both Homeric epics, Euripides' *Bacchae* and three Platonic dialogues (the *Republic*, the *Apology* and the *Phaedo*).<sup>2</sup> Other possible Greek antetexts include Aeschylus's *Seven against Thebes* and Xenophon's *Apology*. Furthermore, Luke's imitations of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* often mirror those in the *Aeneid*; so much so that I proposed that Luke wrote his two-volume work to rival Vergil's Latin masterpiece. If this assessment is correct, Luke-Acts appears to be one of the most thoroughly intertextual books to survive from antiquity.

But for many interpreters the legion of possible antetexts from Judaism, classical Greece and first-century Christianity – from epic, tragedy, history, philosophy, Gospels and epistles – raises doubts about the extent of Luke's

<sup>1</sup> See MacDonald, D. R. *Two Shipwrecked Gospels: The Logoi of Jesus and Papias's Exposition of Logia about the Lord* (Society of Biblical Literature, Early Christianity and its Literature 8; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2012).

<sup>2</sup> *The Gospels and Homer: Imitations of Greek Epic in Mark and Luke-Acts* (The New Testament and Greek Literature 1; Lanham MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2014) and *Luke and Vergil: Imitations of Classical Greek Literature* (The New Testament and Greek Literature 2; Lanham MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2014).

intertextual reach back to Greek classics. His citations of and allusions to the LXX and his redactions of earlier Gospels admittedly are clearer than his possible imitations of Homer, Euripides and Plato.

While I was writing *The Gospels and Homer* and *Luke and Vergil* I became increasingly intrigued by book 10 of Quintilian's *Institutio oratoria*, which largely confirmed that even though Luke-Acts was unusual for its dense and sophisticated use of antecedent books, it was compatible with contemporary rhetorical education and literary tastes. Quintilian likely composed the work around 90–100 CE; I agree with scholars who date Luke-Acts somewhat later, around 115–120 CE. The *telos* of the study at hand is quite modest: to comb through the tenth book of the *Institutio* for insights into Luke's composition.<sup>3</sup>

In the first nine books, Quintilian discusses how the grammarian should go about educating younger students and covers grammatical issues, rhetorical genres, strategies of argumentation, eloquence and elocution. Book 10 then turns to the art of composition for more accomplished authors and the literary training of orators, whose primary rhetorical task would be legal advocacy. Books 11 and 12 discuss the advocate's moral integrity, memory, delivery, retirement. The tenth book thus is the most relevant for understanding complex literary creations like Luke-Acts.

Quintilian begins this book asking: which is more important for the training of the orator: writing, reading, or speaking? Although speaking will be the orator's bread and butter, eloquence issues from the practice in writing, and writing, in turn, relies on serious reading of the writings of others. 'Without the models supplied by reading, the whole effort will be adrift, and there will be no one at the helm' (*Inst.* 10.1.2).<sup>4</sup> At first the orator will mechanically imitate useful models, but with enough practice the orator can transform imitation from skilled mimicry to stylistic mimesis. *Imitatio* inspires *inventio*.

<sup>3</sup> This investigation has little in common with Robert Morgenthaller's *Lukas und Quintilian: Rhetorik als Erzählkunst* (Zürich: Gotthelf, 1993). His interest lies primarily in using the *Institutio* to illuminate Luke's rhetorical improvements of his sources, primarily the LXX, Mark and Q. He shows comparatively little interest in Acts and none in Luke's mimesis of Greek literature. With respect to Quintilian, in his overview of the entire work he devotes only four pages to book 10. For the purposes of this study, Morgenthaller's impressive work demonstrates that Luke's rhetorical skill largely conforms to the literary tastes of Greco-Roman elites.

<sup>4</sup> Unless otherwise indicated, all translations of *Institutio oratoria* come from Donald A. Russell's superlative translation *Quintilian: The Orator's Education, Books 9–10* (LCL 127; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001).

Let us go over the text again and work on it. We chew our food and almost liquefy it before we swallow, so as to digest it more easily; similarly, let our reading be made available for memory and imitation, not in an undigested form, but, as it were, softened and reduced to pap by frequent repetition.

For a long time, the only authors to be read should be the best and the least likely to betray our trust, and they should be read thoroughly, with almost as much care as we devote to writing. (10.1.19-20)

Quintilian has in mind the orator's saturation with exemplary declamations but also poetry, especially Homer and Vergil. 'From the poets we can get inspiration in thought, sublimity in language, every kind of emotional effect, and appropriateness in character-drawing; above all, minds jaded by the daily wear and tear of the courts are excellently refreshed by the delightfulness of such things' (10.1.27).

One reason that the orator can learn from genres other than declamation is that, for Quintilian, the membranes between the genres are porous. 'History is very close to the poets. In a sense it is a prose poem, and it is written to tell a story, not to prove a point' (10.1.31). In fact, he begins his must-read list for the training of orators with poetry.

The proper place for us to begin is with Homer. Like his own Ocean, which he says is the source of <every> river and spring, Homer provides the model and the origin of every department of eloquence. No one surely has surpassed him in sublimity in great themes, or in propriety in small. He is at once luxuriant and concise, charming and grave, marvelous in his fullness and in his brevity, supreme not only in poetic but in oratorical excellence. To say nothing of his encomia, exhortations, and consolation, does not Book Nine [of the *Iliad*], containing the embassy to Achilles, or the debate between the chiefs in Book One, or the opinions delivered in Book Two, exhibit all the arts of forensic and deliberative rhetoric? (10.1.46-47)

*The Gospels and Homer* argued that the embassy to Achilles provided Luke with a model for the Jerusalem council in Acts 15 (65-70). The deliberations of Agamemnon and Odysseus informed the episode of Peter and Cornelius in Acts 10, where Cornelius plays the role of Agamemnon and Peter that of Odysseus (33-46).

Again Quintilian: 'And take his Similes, Amplifications, Examples, Digressions, Signs, Arguments, and all other elements of proof and refutation:

<are they not> so numerous that even authors of textbooks have turned to this poet for so many of their examples of these things? What Epilogue can ever equal the prayers of Priam in his supplication to Achilles?’ (10.1.50). I argued for Mark’s imitation of Priam’s request for Hector’s corpse in Joseph’s request to Pilate, which the Gospel of Luke conservatively retains in 23.50-54.<sup>5</sup>

Quintilian then lists an amazing array of other poets whose works his readers should consult. It may be worth noting that in this list he almost never refers to the writings by their titles, only by the names of their authors: Hesiod, Antimachus, Panyasis, Apollonius, Aratus, Theocritus, Pisander, Nicander, Euphion and Tyrtaeus. ‘I am not ignorant ... of poets I am passing over, nor do I necessarily ban them’ (10.1.57). The orator also can learn much from elegy, including Callimachus, Philetas, Archilochus, Pindar, Stesichorus, Alcaeus and Simonides.

Latin literature, too, was thick with bards.

As Homer did among the Greeks, so here Vergil will afford us the most auspicious beginning. There is no doubt that, of all epic poets, Greek or Roman, he comes next after Homer. Let me quote the words I heard from Domitius Afer when I was a young man. I had asked who he thought came nearest to Homer; ‘Vergil is second,’ he replied, ‘but nearer to the first than to the third.’ (10.1.85-86)

After Vergil Quintilian lists Macer, Lucretius, Varro of Atax, Ennius, Ovid, Cornelius Severus, Serranus, Valerius Flaccus, Saleius Bassus, Rabirius, Pedo and Lucan. Once again, one must assume that works by these poets would have been available to at least some of his readers.

The dominance of Homer and Vergil in these lists conforms to what I have proposed in *The Gospels and Homer* and *Luke and Vergil*. The following list presents passages in Luke-Acts for which I proposed Homeric imitations; many of the proposed targeted texts were imitated also by Vergil. Chapter-verse numbers for Mark’s imitations of Homer that reappear in Luke’s writings appear in parentheses.

<sup>5</sup> *Gospels and Homer*, 104–12.

**Gospel of Luke**

2.28-35. Symeon's Prayer for Baby Jesus	<i>Il.</i> 6.266-502, <i>Aen.</i> 12.430-443
4.14-36. Jesus Confronts his Neighbours	<i>Od.</i> 2.143-259
(8.22-25.) Jesus Awakes in a Storm	<i>Od.</i> 10.1-77, <i>Aen.</i> 1.1-147
(8.36-39.) The Demoniac in the Tombs	<i>Od.</i> 10.135-45, <i>Aen.</i> 3.361-691 and 7.10-20
(8.40-56.) Jairus's Daughter and the Haemorrhaging Woman	<i>Il.</i> 16.433-683, <i>Aen.</i> 12.385-419
(9.10-17.) Jesus Feeds Five Thousand	<i>Od.</i> 2.427-3.124, <i>Aen.</i> 8.90-305
(9.28-36.) Jesus' Transfiguration	<i>Od.</i> 16.172-303, <i>Aen.</i> 1.588-613
14.1-6. Jesus Heals a Man with Dropsy	<i>Od.</i> 18.1-123
14.7-15. Inviting the Poor to Dinner	<i>Od.</i> 17.374-18.123
16.19-31. The Rich Man's Torments	<i>Od.</i> 11.465-540 and 582-590, <i>Aen.</i> 6.603-611
(19.28-40.) Jesus Enters Jerusalem	<i>Od.</i> 6.251-7.328, <i>Aen.</i> 1.305-497
23.26-31. The Daughters of Jerusalem	<i>Il.</i> 22.79-89, <i>Aen.</i> 12.385-429
24.13-32. Recognitions of the Risen Jesus	<i>Od.</i> 24.205-347
24.33-43. Jesus Reveals his Identity	<i>Od.</i> 24.358-411
24.36-43. The Flesh and Bones of Jesus	<i>Od.</i> 11.12-224-640, <i>Aen.</i> 2.647-794 and 6.679-901

**Acts of the Apostles**

1.12-26. Casting Lots for Matthias	<i>Il.</i> 7.123-183
5.33-42. Gamaliel's Warning	<i>Od.</i> 16.363-417
9.32-35. The Healing of Aeneas	<i>Il.</i> 5.302-515
10.1-8. Cornelius's Vision	<i>Il.</i> 2.1-335, <i>Aen.</i> 2.199-227, 5.84-103
10.9-23. Peter's Vision of Unclean Animals	<i>Il.</i> 2.1-335
12.1-17. Peter's Escape from Agrippa	<i>Il.</i> 24.443-801, <i>Aen.</i> 4.238-594
14.8-18. Paul and Barnabas Taken for Gods	<i>Od.</i> 16.172-303
15.1-35. The Council at Jerusalem	<i>Il.</i> 9.1-174, <i>Aen.</i> 9.224-313
16.9-12. Paul's First We-Voyage	<i>Od.</i> 9.1-61, <i>Aen.</i> 3.1-12

19.13-20. The Defeat of the Sons of Scevas	<i>Il.</i> 21.139-210, <i>Aen.</i> 12.488-489
20.7-12. Eutychus's Death and Revival	<i>Od.</i> 10.551-574, <i>Aen.</i> 5.835-871, 6.156-371
20.18-38. Paul's Farewell to the Elders	<i>Il.</i> 6.266-502, <i>Aen.</i> 2.647-794, 3.294-380, 12.430-463
27.1-44. Paul's Shipwreck	<i>Od.</i> 5.268-6.245, <i>Aen.</i> 1.1-147
28.1-6. Barbarians' Discovery at the Shore	<i>Od.</i> 6.1-247, <i>Aen.</i> 1.172-176

To be sure, not all of Luke's readers would have been as familiar with Homer as Quintilian's orators, but if they knew any Greek poetry, it would have been the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*.

After discussing Greek poets, Quintilian turns to the Athenian stage. Among writers of comedy he names Aristophanes, Eupolis and Cratinus (10.1.65-66); among tragedians he first names Aeschylus, but more highly recommends Sophocles and especially Euripides: 'What everybody must admit is that Euripides will be much the more useful to persons preparing themselves to plead in court. ... He is marvelous at expressing any emotion, and far and away the supreme master of the power to arouse pity' (10.1.68). Among Roman tragedians Quintilian singled out Accius, Pacuvius, Varius and Pomponius Secundus.

*Luke and Vergil* proposed the following imitations of Athenian tragedians in the Book of Acts; here, as in the *Institutio oratoria*, Euripides reigns:

2.1-11. Pentecost	Euripides, <i>Bacch.</i> 1-166
2.12-13. Accusation of Drunkenness	Euripides, <i>Bacch.</i> 215-431
2.14-40. Peter's Defense of Xenolalia	Euripides, <i>Bacch.</i> 215-431
4.1-7. Religious Leaders as Theomachoi	Euripides, <i>Bacch.</i> 215-431
4.13-14. 'One must Obey God'	Euripides, <i>Bacch.</i> 215-431
4.24-31. Prayer and Earthquake	Euripides, <i>Bacch.</i> 519-801
5.17-33. Apostles' Prison Break	Euripides, <i>Bacch.</i> 432-518
5.29. 'One must Obey God'	Euripides, <i>Bacch.</i> 215-431
8.1-3, 9.1-2. Saul the Theomachos	Euripides, <i>Bacch.</i> 519-801
9.3-19. Saul's Encounter with Jesus	Euripides, <i>Bacch.</i> 802-1392
12.24-13.12. Elymas and Sergius Paulus	Euripides, <i>Bacch.</i> 802-1392
16.13-15. Lydia from Lydia	Euripides, <i>Bacch.</i> 1-166

16.16-40. Paul's Prison Break	Euripides, <i>Bacch.</i> 519-801
23. Death Pact to Kill Paul	Aeschylus, <i>Seven against Thebes</i>

Quintilian next takes up the historians; not surprisingly, among the Greeks he gives first honours to Thucydides and Herodotus (10.1.73). Among the Romans, Livy stands out (10.1.101). Although most New Testament scholars continue to hold that Luke-Acts is a history of some kind, I have found no imitations of Greek historians there, and only remote parallels to Livy, mostly involving his treatment of Romulus, which has intriguing parallels with Luke's Jesus.

It is also not surprising that Quintilian commends aspiring court advocates to become familiar with 'the vast army of orators' (10.1.76), both Greek and Roman. The author of Luke-Acts, however, shows interest in oratory primarily when in the service of philosophy, the next genre discussed by Quintilian. 'As to the philosophers, from whom Cicero confesses that he derived much of his own eloquence, who would doubt that Plato is supreme either for acuteness of argument or for his divine, Homeric gifts of style. He soars high above prose ... and seems to me to be inspired not by human genius, but as it were by the oracle of Delphi. I need hardly mention Xenophon's charm – effortless, but such as no effort could achieve' (10.1.81-82). Aristotle too merits mention. The Roman philosopher par excellence is Cicero, but the orator can also learn much from Seneca (10.1.123-131).

*Luke and Vergil* proposed the following imitations of Plato and Xenophon:

### **Gospel of Luke**

22.15-38. Last Supper	Plato, <i>Phaedo</i>
23.2. Jesus' Crimes and Accusers	Plato, <i>Apology</i> 17a-24c
23.3-25. Pilate Declares Jesus Innocent	Xenophon, <i>Apology</i> , <i>Memorabilia</i>
23.33-34. Jesus Forgives his Executioners	Plato, <i>Phaedo</i>
23.44-49. Death of Jesus	Plato, <i>Phaedo</i>

### **Acts of the Apostles**

2.41-47. All Things Common in Jerusalem	Plato, <i>Resp.</i> 416d-417a
4.32-37. All Things Common in Jerusalem	Plato, <i>Resp.</i> 462c-464c
17.16-34. Paul's Speech in Athens	Plato, <i>Apol.</i> 17a-24c
19.21-20.1. Riot at Ephesus	Xenophon, <i>Apology</i> , <i>Memorabilia</i>
24.1-23. Paul's Apology before Felix	Plato, <i>Apol.</i> 24d-42a, <i>Crito</i>



24.24-27. Paul's Refusal of a Bribe	Plato, <i>Apol.</i> 24d-42a, <i>Crito</i>
25.1–26.32. Paul's Apology before Festus	Plato, <i>Apol.</i> 24d-42a, <i>Crito</i>

A common complaint against mimesis criticism charges that readers of Mark and Luke-Acts would not have been familiar with the proposed antetexts, but this objection works only if one excludes classical Greek literature from the outset. One of the great advantages of book 10 of the *Institutio oratoria* is its prioritizing of authors most worthy of imitation, especially Homer, Aeschylus, Euripides, Plato and Xenophon. Arguably, these texts would have been more familiar to Luke's readers than much of the LXX.

After having identified which authors the budding orator should imitate, Quintilian turns in 10.2 to the process of imitation itself, but he already has revealed important advice about it. In the first place, in his view becoming an orator involves saturation in exemplary literature, beginning with poetry. Second, one should not merely replicate one's models but digest them by repeated readings to make them one's own.

Third, Latin imitations of Greek authors often involved cultural competition, what Tim Whitmarsh dubbed 'the politics of imitation'.<sup>6</sup> Whitmarsh describes this literary rivalry primarily among Greeks in the Roman Empire who imitated classical Greek texts, especially Homer and Plato, to establish their cultural identity vis-à-vis Rome. *Luke and Vergil* argued that this Christian author similarly imitated Homer, Euripides and Plato to establish the cultural identity and legitimacy of the Christian movement. According to Quintilian, although no author excels Homer, 'there is more care and craftsmanship in Vergil, if only because he had to work harder at it' (10.1.86). 'I should have no hesitation in matching [*opponere*] Sallust with Thucydides, nor would Herodotus resent Livy's being thought his equal' (10.1.101). With respect to oratory, 'I would happily pit [*opposuerim*] Cicero against any of the Greeks. ... Cicero, as in everything else, stands out too here too [i.e. in philosophy] as a rival [*aemulus*] to Plato' (10.1.105 and 123).

At the beginning of 10.2, Quintilian expands on these instructions; he repeats the importance of *imitatio*: 'It cannot be doubted that a large part of art consists of imitation' (10.2.1), but is quick to add that 'imitation is not sufficient on its own' (10.2.4). The orator has 'an obligation to compete

<sup>6</sup> *Greek Literature and the Roman Empire: The Politics of Imitation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

[*contendere*] and not lag behind [*sequi*]. The man who tries to win a race may perhaps draw level, even if he does not get into the lead; but no one can draw level with a man in whose footsteps he feels bound to tread. The follower in inevitably always behind' (10.2.9-10).

Even after the orator has chosen an author to imitate, he must use good judgement to determine what excellence in the model to emulate. 'So the first step is for the student to understand what it is that he is going to imitate, and to know why it is good' (10.2.18). Furthermore – and this is perhaps the most important instruction relevant to Luke-Acts – one must avoid imitating only one author even in the composition of the same work. 'The author who is most to be imitated is not also the only author to be imitated. ... [L]et us keep the excellences of a number of authors before our eyes, so that one thing stays in our minds from one of them, and another from another, and we can use each in the appropriate place' (10.2.25). Although Quintilian advises such eclecticism for the purposes of eloquence, when Jewish and Christian authors imitated classical Greek literature, they often did so to contrast their values for those of the ancients, and to do so they often imitated, cited or alluded to biblical texts.

This brief and highly selective discussion of Quintilian's instruction in book 10 of the *Institutio oratoria* has argued for two points to address sceptics about Mimesis Criticism. The first objection is that the Lukan Evangelist and his readers were insufficiently familiar with classical Greek literature to benefit from the emulations in Luke-Acts. *Luke and Vergil*, however, argued for imitations of the Homeric epics, Euripides' *Bacchae* and three of Plato's most celebrated dialogues, and for his awareness of similar imitations in Vergil's *Aeneid*. In other words, I argue for imitations of the authors that Quintilian most admired and commended to his students.

The second objection to mimesis criticism is that the Lukan Evangelist's preoccupation with the Septuagint casts doubt upon his interest in Greek literature. According to Quintilian, Latin imitators of Homer and Plato, for instance, engaged in a cultural rivalry. Furthermore, he advised imitations of both Greek and Latin authors, adopting the best traits of each. *Luke and Vergil* proposed that the author of Luke-Acts borrowed both from Jewish and Greek literature in a rivalry of sorts with both to establish a cultural legacy for the burgeoning Christian movement. Quintilian surely would have recognized this as a common rhetorical project.



## A School of Paul? The Use of Pauline Texts in Early Christian Schooltext Papyri

Jennifer R. Strawbridge

Writing against those he deems ‘heretic’ at the turn of the third century, Tertullian is clear that philosophical methods of enquiry have nothing to do with the teaching and interpretation of Scripture as he notably exclaims, ‘What indeed has Athens to do with Jerusalem? What concord is there between the Academy and the Church?’<sup>1</sup> Tertullian’s questions were not reactions to nor did they engage with the questions of this chapter about third- and fourth-century Christian school exercises and in particular, those containing excerpts from Scripture. Nevertheless, his questions hang in the air as some scholars still today argue that the concord between Scripture and literate education is limited and what we call Christian school exercises do not belong any place except behind the walls of monasteries as examples of pious copying and humble handwriting. Here, Athens and Jerusalem are kept separate.

Moreover, Tertullian’s concern was not only about the accuracy of textual transmission as he writes against those like Marcion but also about hermeneutics and how to interpret the texts aright. So too, early Christian school exercises not only offer evidence of textual transmission and the intersection between early Christians, Scripture and literate education, but also challenge assumptions about hermeneutics and how we might interpret not necessarily the texts but their very existence aright. This chapter, therefore, will explore both the emic and etic implications of Christian school exercises from the first four centuries with a particular focus on exercises that use Pauline texts. An emic and etic approach allows us to assess the texts based on what we know about their context and the community in which they were found and

<sup>1</sup> Tertullian, *Praescr.* 7.9.

thus offers a glimpse of what these oft-neglected exercises might indicate about the intersection between early Christian life, education and Scripture. This approach also enables us to consider the texts from a contemporary perspective and to examine conclusions drawn more generally about ancient Christian schools and the Apostle Paul by scholars today.

### 1. Early Christian school exercises

Within the past century, as many as 11 third- and fourth-century school exercises that explicitly cite what we now call Scripture have been discovered.<sup>2</sup> For the most part, these texts are little known and almost never used in studies of the biblical texts they contain. One scholar, who first introduces and translates one of these exercises in the 1940s, even concludes that ‘the passages quoted are too brief to contribute much of interest’<sup>3</sup> and thus many of these exercises are only known in the pages of journals published over a half century ago.<sup>4</sup>

Furthermore, some textual critics contend that school exercises are not literary papyrological texts even though they contain literary material such as excerpts from Homer and the Psalms. This distinction is important since documentary texts are underutilized in biblical studies and separated from literary texts which make up the growing body of Greco-Roman literature and serve as ‘primary indicators of cultural interests.’<sup>5</sup> As Criboire laments, because

<sup>2</sup> These possible Christian school exercises include *T. Bodl. Gr. Inscr.* 3019; *P. Ant.* II 54; *P. Lit. Lond.* 207; *P. Laur.* IV 140; *P. Beatty ac.* 1390; *P. Yale* 1.3 (or 1543); *P. Mich.* 926; *P. Oxy.* II 209; *Paris Louvre MND* 552; *Paris Louvre MND* 552 E, F; *MPER NS V* 24, as found in R. Criboire, ‘Literary School Exercises’, *ZPE* 116 (1997): 53–60 (60); and Macquarrie University, ‘Papyri from the Rise of Early Christianity in Egypt’. Available online: [https://www.mq.edu.au/research/centres\\_and\\_groups/ancient\\_cultures\\_research\\_centre/research/papyrology/pce/conspectus](https://www.mq.edu.au/research/centres_and_groups/ancient_cultures_research_centre/research/papyrology/pce/conspectus).

<sup>3</sup> E. M. Husselmann, ‘A Bohairic School Text on Papyrus’, *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 6.3 (1947): 129–51 (133).

<sup>4</sup> One exception is AnneMarie Luijendijk and her use of school exercises to discuss early Christianity and the potential use of *nomina sacra* in early Christian educational settings (A. Luijendijk, *Greetings in the Lord: Early Christians and the Oxyrhynchus Papyrus* [HTS 60; Cambridge: Harvard Divinity School, 2008], 69). See also the recent writings of Lincoln Blumell, especially *Lettered Christians: Christians, Letters, and Late Antique Oxyrhynchus* (Leiden: Brill, 2012).

<sup>5</sup> W. Clarysse, ‘Literary Papyri in Documentary Archives’, in *Egypt and the Hellenistic World: Proceedings of the International Colloquium, Leuven, 24–26 May 1982* (eds. E. van’T. Dack, P. van Dessel and W. van Gucht; Lovanii: Orientaliste, 1983), 43–61 (43). See also E. J. Epp, ‘The New Testament Papyrus Manuscripts in Historical Perspective’, in *Perspectives on New Testament Textual Criticism: Collected Essays, 1962–2004* (ed. E. J. Epp; NovTSup 116; Leiden, Brill, 2005), 309–43 (341).

of this these exercises ‘have remained in the grey area that lies between literary and documentary papyrology’ and thus they are rarely ‘thoroughly studied in their own right.’<sup>6</sup> Nevertheless, school exercises containing Scripture represent part of the history of reception of these biblical texts especially within a known educational context, and this crucial element cannot be overlooked.<sup>7</sup> Along these lines, therefore, scholars such as Kraus are clear that early school-texts are ‘fingerprints of a bygone time that had become fixed in individual material, a specific layout, and performance of the writing’ and thus they may help to ‘reach new insights into the lives of early Christians’ and are witnesses to the text and transmission of Scripture and its use.<sup>8</sup>

As a brief excursus, this distinctive type of papyri does not necessarily refer to ‘school’ in the strict sense but, as Criore describes, is determined ‘on the basis of the activity carried on, rather than in terms of the identity of the person teaching, the student–teacher relationship, or the premises where teaching takes place.’<sup>9</sup> In other words, a broad range of formal and information educational environments, from a classical school setting to a monastic or scribal community, are possible settings for these texts. The exercises themselves are made up of ‘students’ work written in school or for school ... [and of] teachers’ preparations for their classes.’<sup>10</sup> They are identified based on writing materials, content, punctuation, handwriting, and within the Christian context, their use of the scribal markers *nomina sacra*.<sup>11</sup> Many schooltexts contain alphabets and word lists, as well as portions of one or

<sup>6</sup> Criore, ‘Literary School Exercises’, 53.

<sup>7</sup> Peter Head argues for the importance of these ‘additional witnesses’ both as a part of the reception history of the biblical texts they contain and for what they might contribute to debates about earliest recoverable texts (see P. Head, ‘Additional Greek Witnesses to the New Testament [Ostraca, Amulets, Inscriptions, and Other Sources]’, in *The Text of the New Testament in Contemporary Research: Essays on the Status Quaestionis* [eds B. D. Ehrman and M. W. Holmes; 2nd edn; NTTSD 42; Leiden: Brill, 2013], 429–60 (442); and S. R. Pickering, ‘The Significance of Non-Continuous New Testament Textual Materials in Papyri’, in *Studies in the Early Text of the Gospels and Acts* [ed. D. G. K. Taylor; TS 3/1; Birmingham: University of Birmingham Press, 1999], 121–41).

<sup>8</sup> T. J. Kraus, ‘Manuscripts with the *Lord’s Prayer*: They are More than Simply Witnesses to That Text Itself’, in *New Testament Manuscripts: Their Texts and Their World* (eds. T. J. Kraus and Tobias Niklas; TENTIS 2; Leiden: Brill, 2006), 227–66 (231). See also Head, ‘Additional Greek Witnesses’, 442, 453.

<sup>9</sup> R. Criore, *Writing, Teachers, and Students in Graeco-Roman Egypt* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996), 6.

<sup>10</sup> R. Criore, ‘Education in the Papyri’, in *The Oxford Handbook of Papyrology* (ed. Roger Bagnall Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 320–37 (321).

<sup>11</sup> Criore, ‘Education’, 321–2. *Nomina sacra* will be discussed in more detail in the next section of this chapter.

more literary texts such as the writings of Homer, Isocrates, the Psalms, or even the Apostle Paul.

### 1.1. Early Christian school exercises and the Pauline Epistles

Of the eleven possible school exercises identified by scholars as Christian and containing excerpts from Scripture, six include selections from six different psalms and one contains an excerpt from Matthew, another from John and one from Acts. This leaves two exercises which stand apart from the others since they are the only early Christian schooltexts to contain identical scriptural passages: excerpts from the beginning of Romans. It is on these two exercises that this chapter will focus. The first is an early fourth-century exercise catalogued as *P. Oxy. II 209* which contains most of the first seven verses of Romans in Greek.<sup>12</sup> Another fourth-century schooltext, catalogued as *P. Mich. 926*, contains most of the first fifteen verses of Paul's Roman epistle in Coptic.<sup>13</sup> To give a sense of the importance of these texts, of the approximately 127 extant New Testament papyrus texts attested in Greek, Coptic and Syriac, these are two of them.<sup>14</sup>

*P. Oxy. II 209* was first identified as a school exercise by Bernard Grenfell and Arthur Hunt at the time of its discovery at Oxyrhynchus where its irregular handwriting, poor spacing and spelling errors were noted.<sup>15</sup> This exercise begins with an *alpha*, contains the first seven verses of Romans and includes two additional cursive lines in another hand, with the name 'Aurelius Paulus' and words such as 'produce' (γενήματος) and 'account' (λογείας). Significantly, *P. Oxy. II 209* contains numerous *nomina sacra*, one of the most widely discussed and debated features of early Christian papyri and considered to be a marker of Christian identity. These scribal abbreviations, of which there are thought to be 15, include words such as Lord, Christ, Jesus and God and are usually contracted in form with a horizontal

<sup>12</sup> B. P. Grenfell and A. S. Hunt, *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri* (London: Egypt Exploration Fund, 1898), 8; Criboire, *Writing*, 247. For the full text see: A. Luijendijk, 'A New Testament Papyrus and Its Documentary Context: An Early Christian Writing Exercise from the Archive of Leonides (*P. Oxy. II 209/P<sup>10</sup>*)', *JBL* 129 (2010): 575–96 (576–7).

<sup>13</sup> Husselmann, 'Bohairic School Text', 130; for the full text, see 148–50.

<sup>14</sup> The only other instance of Rom. 1.1–7 on this list is a papyrus codex from the fifth century, *P. Oxy. XI 1354* (or *P<sup>26</sup>*). See Blumell, *Lettered Christians*, 167.

<sup>15</sup> Grenfell and Hunt, *Oxyrhynchus*, 8.

line placed over the contraction thus visually setting these words apart within the text.<sup>16</sup>

This schooltext is also known as Papyrus 10 and as such it is considered to be one of the most distinguished witnesses to the New Testament, even if its presence on this list has been the source of much debate.<sup>17</sup> Most significantly, this exercise is the only New Testament papyrus text for which we know the owner.<sup>18</sup> *P. Oxy.* II 209 was ‘found tied up with a contract dated in 316 CE and other documents of the same period’<sup>19</sup> which we now know are 13 documents from the archive of a person named Leonides.<sup>20</sup> Thus, as AnneMarie Luijendijk is clear, the importance of this schooltext extends ‘beyond textual technicalities of Romans’ as ‘an artefact that allows us to catch glimpses’ into circles in which this text was produced and the people who owned it.<sup>21</sup>

*P. Mich.* 926 begins with pages of syllables and lists of biblical names before it moves to the text of Romans 1.1–8 and 14–15 followed by the first verse of Job and an alphabet. The few scholars who engage with this text explain the missing verses from Romans by contending that this is due either to inexperienced copying or writing from memory. Purchased from an antiquities dealer near Theadelphia, the exercise contains both Greek and Bohairic Coptic which is significant because Bohairic Coptic papyri are extremely rare.<sup>22</sup> Moreover, this exercise is the first instance of a Coptic text that combines syllabary with more advanced texts such as Romans and Job.

<sup>16</sup> The abbreviation by contraction is one of the features that set these markers apart as unusual in relation to other abbreviations. The purpose, origin and interpretation of *nomina sacra* are much debated since they were first identified by Ludwig Traube. See: L. Traube, *Nomina Sacra: Versuch einer Geschichte der christlichen Kürzung* (Munich: Beck, 1907), 44; C. H. Roberts, *Manuscript, Society, and Belief in Early Christian Egypt* (London: Oxford University Press, 1979), 16–17, 26–7, 44–7; L. Hurtado, *The Earliest Christian Artifacts: Manuscripts and Christian Origins* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 6, 95–134; C. M. Tuckett, “‘Nomina sacra’: yes and no?,” in *Biblical Canons* (eds. J.-M. Auwers and H. J. de Jonge; BETL, 163; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2003), 431–58; Luijendijk, *Greetings*, 57–8, esp. 58 n. 5; K. Haines-Eitzen, *Guardian of Letters: Literacy, Power and the Transmitters of Early Christian Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 92.

<sup>17</sup> See K. Aland and B. Aland, *The Text of the New Testament* (2nd edn; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989), 85.

<sup>18</sup> Luijendijk, ‘New Testament Papyrus’, 575. The only exception might be a third-century fragment of a Psalm with an owner from Karanis, Egypt.

<sup>19</sup> Grenfell and Hunt, *Oxyrhynchus*, p. 8. See Luijendijk, ‘New Testament Papyrus’, 578, and Criboire, *Writing*, 247.

<sup>20</sup> Here ‘archive’ is ‘a group of texts deliberately organized by their ancient users’ often for ‘a specific purpose’ (Luijendijk, ‘New Testament Papyrus’, 578).

<sup>21</sup> Luijendijk, ‘New Testament Papyrus’, 577. Luijendijk offers an excellent and thorough article on the identification of *P. Oxy.* II 209 as part of Leonides’ archive and the significance of this identity.

<sup>22</sup> Husselmann, ‘Bohairic School Text’, 131.



Like *P. Oxy.* II 209 it also contains a number of specific scribal abbreviations, *nomina sacra*.

The setting apart of these two schooltexts because of their use of the same scriptural text is not simply an easy way to narrow down the focus of this chapter but has precedent in the work of scholars of Greco-Roman literate education. Cribiore and Teresa Morgan in their separate studies of literary school exercises have concluded that the proportion of extant schooltexts represents a close estimation of the proportion of literature and authors available in antiquity.<sup>23</sup> Conducting a wide-ranging survey of references to authors such as Homer, Menander and Isocrates in Greco-Roman schooltext papyri, Morgan concludes from this study that a large number of extracts from the works of Homer present an ‘important test-case for our understanding of what literature was taught’ and formed the emerging core of Greco-Roman literate education.<sup>24</sup> More specifically, based on the aforementioned survey of Greco-Roman schooltext papyri, she concludes that Homeric writings and especially excerpts from the *Iliad* profoundly shaped literate education, owing to the proportionately high occurrence of this text.<sup>25</sup>

Morgan’s method does not simply quantify citation but analyses the distribution of passages in schooltext papyri, offering direct evidence of the use of these texts in teaching since each reference is from the hand of a student or teacher. In other words, material evidence such as school exercises can play a crucial role in the reconstruction of ancient education. While we do not have anywhere near the same number of Christian school exercises to draw as precise a conclusion – and in fact with only a handful of school texts any conclusions drawn are necessarily fragile – the nature of these

<sup>23</sup> T. Morgan, *Literate Education in the Hellenistic and Roman Worlds* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 69, 93, 104. This is of course if, as Blumell clarifies, we assume an ‘ironic correlation between what was being thrown out and what was read’ (Blumell, *Lettered Christians*, p. 166). Nevertheless, that there are any surviving educational texts with Scripture suggests that ‘fundamental changes were taking place, especially in the 3rd and 4th centuries, not least of which was the triumph of Christianity and the emergence of Coptic within such settings’, as evidenced by *P. Mich.* 926 (S. Bucking, ‘Christian Educational Texts from Egypt: A Preliminary Inventory’, in *Akten des 21 Internationalen Papyrologenkongresses, Berlin, 13.–19.8. 1995* [eds B. Kramer, W. Luppe, H. Maehler and G. Poethke; *Archiv für Papyrusforschung Beiheft 3*; Stuttgart and Leipzig, 1997], 1.132–8 [132]).

<sup>24</sup> Morgan, *Literate Education*, 105. According to Morgan, within the confines of Greco-Roman literate education, it is possible to determine the emerging core of ‘what most people learned, what they learned first, and in the case of reading, what they went on practising the longest’ (38).

<sup>25</sup> Morgan determines that Books 1 and 2 from Homer’s *Iliad* are the most frequently cited Homeric excerpts in Greco-Roman school exercises (Morgan, *Literate Education*, 106–7).

additional witnesses does mean that the beginning of Romans was potentially meaningful for Christians in an educational setting and may have played a part in some form of Christian education.<sup>26</sup> But whether the *proemium* of Romans is as an exemplar for nascent copyists or a means of pious practice and scriptural study is difficult to determine.

Despite the tenuous nature of the conclusion that the beginning of Romans may have been meaningful and may have played a role in Christian education, this is not the only conclusion that can be drawn from these two school texts. In fact, these two Pauline school exercises also tell us something about early Christian life, education, and even about Paul's Roman letter.

In the short outline that follows, the impact of these school exercises is divided into the two approaches first discussed at the beginning of this chapter: an emic approach and an etic one. An emic approach focuses on the transmission of these texts, their context and identification, and how these elements have practical implications for where, how and by whom these early scriptural texts were being used. How these texts then function in modern scholarship with regard to early Christian education and the writings of Paul is another area to which these school exercises speak as we shift to an etic approach in order to draw wider conclusions about these texts, their existence and what they might contribute to scholarly theories about a School of Paul.

### 1.2. Textual transmission and context

On the most practical level these two school exercises are witnesses to the text and transmission of a portion of Romans within an educational setting and the use of Scripture within everyday life.<sup>27</sup> One must note that these texts do not contribute a great deal to textual criticism of Rom. 1, primarily because of their context and the likelihood that these texts were written by inexperienced copyists and, in the case of *P. Mich.* 926, possibly from memory. Thus textual variants such as Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ instead of Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ found in *P. Oxy.* II 209, is noted by some scholars but not subsequently found in critical editions of the letter.

What is significant, however, is that rarely has it been possible to connect a papyrological literary text with the actual people it encountered, and yet this

<sup>26</sup> Head, 'Additional Greek Witnesses', 432.

<sup>27</sup> Head, 'Additional Greek Witnesses', 453.

is exactly what is possible with a school exercise and especially with *P. Oxy. II 209*. This particular exercise, as part of an archive explored almost exclusively by Luijendijk, offers a glimpse not only into the life and social milieu of early Christians but also into the life of Leonides, the owner of this biblical text. From his archive of thirteen texts, of which this schooltext is a part, we know that he was a literate flax merchant from Oxyrhynchus who was the member of a guild and had connections to a Church reader.<sup>28</sup> This exercise, therefore, enables us to catch a glimpse of the acquaintances, activities and social status of someone potentially engaged in or connected with Christian educational activities.<sup>29</sup>

However, even with this evidence for the owner of one of these school exercises, we do not know that Leonides is the actual author of the schooltext and thus we do not know the exact make-up of the students who created our school exercises, be they children, adults, catechumens, monastic novices, or scribes (all have been suggested of school exercises more generally).<sup>30</sup> A number of scholars assume that school exercises such as these could only be found within a monastic setting since Christians outside that setting would have only used classical authors in their literate studies, copying their Greco-Roman contemporaries.<sup>31</sup> This assumption is supported by the words of Pachomius, who in the early fourth century writes that all members of his community shall learn to read and in particular, they must study, 'the letters, syllables, verbs, and nouns' and 'even if unwilling, he shall be compelled to read'.<sup>32</sup> Moreover, the conclusions of Cornelia Römer must also be considered as she warns scholars against the assumption that all papyrus texts in inexperienced hand

<sup>28</sup> Luijendijk, 'New Testament Papyrus', 575.

<sup>29</sup> Blumell, *Lettered Christians*, 194–5; Luijendijk, 'New Testament Papyrus', 575.

<sup>30</sup> Some argue that this exercise may have been saved by Leonides in a manner similar to how a parent saves a child's schoolwork today. Thus, the 'student' may not have been Leonides but a family member.

<sup>31</sup> Bucking, 'Christian Educational Texts', 134–8.

<sup>32</sup> Pachomius, *Praecepta*, 49 and 139–40 from *Pachomian Koinonia: The Lives, Rules, and Other Writings of Saint Pachomius and His Disciples* (trans. A. Veilleux; Cistercian Studies Series 46; Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 1981), p. 2.166. See also C. Keith, *The Pericope Adulterae, the Gospel of John, and the Literacy of Jesus* (NTTSD 38; Leiden: Brill, 2009), 85. For detailed discussion of the *Praecepta*, its preservation and transmission, see P. Rosseau, *Pachomius: The Making of a Community in Fourth-century Egypt* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), 49–53. One must also note the comment by Bacht that Pachomius only mentions learning to read and never discusses his community learning to write (H. Bacht, *Das Vermächtnis des Ursprungs. Studien zum frühen Mönchtum*, vol. 2: *Pachomius, der Mann und sein Werk* [Würzburg: Echter, 1983], 222).

are school exercises. She argues that only the Psalms were used as school or writing exercises and all other schooltexts with biblical excerpts are examples of pious copying and 'an act of humility'.<sup>33</sup> Furthermore, Römer singles out *P. Oxy. II 209* and maintains, against Cribiore, that this is not the text of a student but a writing of devotion.<sup>34</sup> Even Husselmann in her analysis of *P. Mich. 926* assumes without the need for explanation that this text comes from a monastic community.<sup>35</sup> Nevertheless, these views are difficult to maintain once we see that biblical materials are also found in educational contexts where they are combined with other documentary materials and syllable lists and, in the case of *P. Oxy. II 209*, have an actual owner who is not a member of a monastic community.<sup>36</sup> Thus, these school exercises confirm the suggestion of Luijendijk that the distinction between pious copying and literary education is not necessarily absolute and, in fact, that these activities need not be separated. Furthermore, these exercises challenge contemporary assumptions with the possibility that the setting of these texts is not necessarily a monastic one.<sup>37</sup>

### 1.3. Romans 1 and Nomina Sacra

*P. Oxy. II 209* and *P. Mich. 926*, therefore, tell us something about those associated with a Christian educational setting and challenge conclusions about where this education may have taken place, but what do they tell us about the content of teaching and what difference does the repetition of the Roman *proemium* make? We must acknowledge that there is no obvious reason why Rom. 1.1-7 was chosen for either exercise; nevertheless, these schooltexts offer two distinct possibilities. The first engages the question of the early ordering of the Pauline epistles and the place of the Roman letter at the beginning. Neither text has a title, but *P. Oxy. II 209* does begin with an *alpha* from which Luijendijk concludes that this could be the first page of a text or a codex. The *alpha* therefore could serve as evidence that this excerpt from Romans was not only copied from a template with pagination but that this template begins

<sup>33</sup> C. Römer, 'Ostraka mit christlichen Texten aus der Sammlung Flinders Petrie', *ZPE* 145 (2003): 183–201 (188). See Luijendijk, 'New Testament Papyrus', 591.

<sup>34</sup> Römer, 'Ostraka mit christlichen Texten', 188 n. 22.

<sup>35</sup> Husselmann, 'Bohairic School Text', 133, 135.

<sup>36</sup> Bucking, 'Christian Educational Texts', 134.

<sup>37</sup> Luijendijk, 'New Testament Papyrus', 591. This point was also made by Malcolm Choat in response to a shorter version of this chapter presented at the *Society of Biblical Literature* Conference in 2014.

with the Roman letter. This possible ordering supports the sequence in which the Pauline writings are found in the oldest extant manuscript containing the epistles, P<sup>46</sup>.<sup>38</sup> Thus, the first reason why Romans may have been chosen for these exercises is because this letter falls at the beginning of a collection of Pauline writings. Moreover, that both of these exercises begin with Romans 1 also emphasizes a preference within Christian school exercises to start at the beginning of a work and thus, from the eleven possible schooltexts first discussed, we also find excerpts from the beginning of the Psalms and Job.<sup>39</sup>

The second reason why Rom. 1 may have been chosen for these exercises is because this Pauline text lends to the use of *nomina sacra*, that scribal marker discussed earlier. Luijendijk, in fact, argues that the large number of *nomina sacra* in *P. Oxy. II 209* – and it is equally true for *P. Mich. 926* – suggests that these texts may have been used to teach a student these scribal abbreviations. She is clear that while the papyrological record preserves schooltexts with alphabets, syllabaries and lists of names, none so far exists that preserves the teaching of a student in writing *nomina sacra*.<sup>40</sup> However, the widespread and uniform use of *nomina sacra* throughout early Christian papyrological texts presumes that these abbreviations must have been taught at some basic level of education and even suggests a greater degree of centralization, organization and uniformity among early Christians than is often assumed.<sup>41</sup> In fact, that any uniformity among early institutions, be that religious or educational, can be discerned is a mystery in itself, especially at a time when any concept of a ‘school’ grew out of references to the methods or teachings of a particular teacher.<sup>42</sup> It is therefore significant that in these seven verses of Romans there are up to eighteen contractions for seven different *nomina sacra*, by which

<sup>38</sup> See: S. E. Porter, ‘Paul and the Pauline Letter Collection’, in *Paul and the Second Century* (eds M. F. Bird and J. R. Dodson; LNTS 314; London: T&T Clark, 2011), 19–36 (20–1, 26–7); and H. Y. Gamble, ‘The New Testament Canon: Recent Research and the Status Quaestionis’, in *The Canon Debate* (eds L. M. McDonald and J. A. Sanders; Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2002), 267–94 (282).

<sup>39</sup> *P. Laur. IV 140*, dated to the late third/early fourth century, contains Ps. 1.1–2 with syllable marks. As stated earlier, *P. Mich. 926* contains not only excerpts from Rom. 1, but also Job 1.

<sup>40</sup> Luijendijk, ‘New Testament Papyrus’, 593.

<sup>41</sup> Luijendijk, *Greetings*, 57–8, 67–70. See also: T. C. Skeat, ‘Early Christian Book-Production: Papyri and Manuscripts’, in *The West from the Fathers to the Reformation* (ed. G. W. H. Lampe; The Cambridge History of the Bible 2; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), 54–79 (73); Haines-Eitzen, *Guardian of Letters*, 91; M. Hengel, *Studies in the Gospel of Mark* (London: SCM, 1985), 79.

<sup>42</sup> R. L. Wilken, ‘Alexandria: A School for Training in Virtue’, in *Schools of Thought in the Christian Tradition* (ed. P. Henry; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984), 15–30 (17).

we can show not only that these abbreviations were a part of an educational setting, but also that a massive benefit in copying this Pauline text would have been to learn to recognize and write the contraction of these specific words.<sup>43</sup>

## 2. A School of Paul?

One of the greatest challenges presented by these Pauline schooltexts involves the interpretation and implication of their very existence. For some, a logical connection might be made between the use of a Pauline epistle on a schooltext and the notion of a School of Paul. The idea of a Pauline School, first put forth by Hans Conzelmann half a century ago,<sup>44</sup> is something that gets some scholars very excited when they see a Pauline text being used in an educational setting. It is tempting to suppose that these texts are evidence for a Christian school, even if it is not a School of Paul, similar to other traditional schools at the time. For the scholars who argue for the existence of a Pauline School, such a school helps with questions of pseudopigraphic authorship and places Paul in close association with the teachers of cognate philosophical schools.<sup>45</sup> Furthermore, Stanley Stowers suggests that Romans itself is a protreptic text in the manner of Greco-Roman philosophy and teaching.<sup>46</sup> Thus, one might easily conclude that this is why Romans is the only Pauline text on an extant early Christian school exercise: because it was known to be an educational text in the first place.

<sup>43</sup> Luijendijk, 'New Testament Papyrus', 593–4.

<sup>44</sup> Some argue that the concept of a Pauline 'school' was first put forth by Holtzmann over a half century before Conzelmann (H. J. Holtzmann, *Die Pastoralbriefe* [Leipzig: Wilhelm Engelmann, 1880], 117). See also U. Schnelle, *Apostle Paul: His Life and Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 146–51.

<sup>45</sup> B. D. Ehrman, *Forgery and Counterforgery: The Use of Literary Deceit in Early Christian Polemics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 172–3. See also: H. Conzelmann, 'Paulus und die Weisheit', in *Theologie als Schriftauslegung: Aufsätze zum Neuen Testament* (BEvT 65; Munich: Kaiser, 1974), pp. 177–90; A. Standhartinger, *Studien zur Entstehungsgeschichte und Intention des Kolosserbriefs* (NovTSup 94; Leiden: Brill, 1999), 1–10, 277–89; and T. Schmeller and C. Cebulj, *Schulen im Neuen Testament? Zur Stellung des Urchristentums in der Bildungswelt seiner Zeit* (Freiburg: Herder, 2001), 46–92, 179–82. See also Klauck, who writes against the assumption that a 'school' must be assumed when links can be made between a text (in this case, Hebrews) and the Apostle Paul (H.-J. Klauck, *Die antike Briefliteratur und das Neue Testament: Ein Lehr- und Arbeitsbuch* [Paderborn: F. Schöningh, 1998], 253).

<sup>46</sup> S. Stowers, 'Social Status, Public Speaking and Private Teaching: The Circumstances of Paul's Preaching Activity', *NovT* 26 (1984): 59–82 (p. 72); and S. Stowers, *Letter Writing in Greco-Roman Antiquity* (Library of Early Christianity 5; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1986), 112–14. Campbell challenges Stowers conclusions in D. Campbell, *The Rhetoric of Righteousness in Romans 3.21–26* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992), 327.

Nevertheless, apart from the catechetical school in Alexandria about which we know from Clement of Alexandria and Origen, scholars find little evidence for a Christian school until the fifth or even sixth centuries.<sup>47</sup> This is supported by the challenge of Julian in the mid-fourth century for Christians to provide their children with a Christian education on par with pagan education, a challenge which for Keith suggests that he (Julian) knows of no present Christian education system.<sup>48</sup> Moreover, Choat is clear that catechetical instruction and writing practice may also represent different exercises, which is significant for any understanding of the interpretation of these texts.<sup>49</sup> In this way, a school argument is not obvious or necessary since the evidence of a catechetical school, of a school focused on Paul and his teachings, and that of the school exercises may or may not be connected.

Bart Ehrman argues against the existence of a Pauline School by pointing out that Paul never alludes to the establishment of anything apart from congregations of people. From this evidence – or lack thereof – he concludes that all proclamation, edification and education took place in the context of the Church.<sup>50</sup> Nevertheless, while this conclusion offers a strong argument against the existence of a School of Paul, it is countered in part by school exercises such as *P. Oxy.* II 209 which are found in archives outside the Church, suggesting that education in Scripture is not completely limited to a Church context. Essentially, the most these schooltexts can do is to imply that a school or other pedagogical activity that included Christian elements was a part of the community in which they were found.<sup>51</sup> Moreover, these

<sup>47</sup> Blumell, *Lettered Christians*, 194. For the debate surrounding the origin and makeup of this school in Alexandria, see: Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.10.1 and 6.6.1; A. van den Hoek, 'The "Catechetical" School of early Christian Alexandria and its Philonic heritage', *HTR* 90 (1997): 59–87; R. van den Broek, *Studies in Gnosticism and Alexandrian Christianity* (Nag Hammadi and Manichaean Studies 39; Leiden: Brill, 1996), 197–205; A. Le Boulluec, 'Aux origines, encore, de l'école d'Alexandrie', *Adamantius* 5 (1999): 8–36; E. Osborne, *Clement of Alexandria* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 19–27.

<sup>48</sup> Keith, *Pericope Adulterae*, 81 n. 138. See also Julian, *Adversus Galilaeos*, 229e–230a.

<sup>49</sup> M. Choat and R. Yuen-Collingridge, 'The Egyptian Hermas: The Shepherd in Egypt before Constantine', in *Early Christian Manuscripts: Examples of Applied Method and Approach* (eds. T. J. Kraus and T. Nicklas; TENTS 5; Leiden: Brill, 2010), 191–212 (202). See also Blumell, *Lettered Christians*, 195.

<sup>50</sup> Ehrman, *Forgery*, 173.

<sup>51</sup> E. J. Epp, 'The Papyrus Manuscripts of the New Testament', in *The Text of the New Testament in Contemporary Research: Essays on the Status Quaestionis* (eds. B. D. Ehrman and M. W. Holmes; 2nd edn; NTTSD 42; Leiden: Brill, 2013), 1–40 (11).

exercises also suggest that Christian teachers – who we already know existed from the writings of Clement and Origen – were present in some form by the early fourth century. Beyond this, however, reference to a more established Christian School or School of Paul which produced the pseudopigraphic texts we now find as a part of Scripture is simply not possible to prove.

### 3. Conclusion

Papyrological texts are a ‘vital conduit’ for our understanding of early Christians<sup>52</sup> and school exercises in particular are crucially important for any study of Christian education in antiquity. The history of education and the study of documentary texts and their overlap with literary texts are both relatively ‘young’ topics in early Christian and biblical studies.<sup>53</sup> *P. Oxy.* II 209 and *P. Mich.* 926, therefore, stand as some of the very few examples of the intersection of documentary and literary elements in one papyrus. At the same time, they also offer an extraordinary glimpse, if not a window, into the life and world of Christians engaged in educational activities. By focusing on the only two extant Christian school exercises with a repeated excerpt from Scripture, we have shown that through both an emic and etic understanding of these texts, literary education, early Christians and Scripture are not as separate as one might assume. These two Pauline exercises play an important role in biblical reception as an epistle of Paul is used in an educational context, expanding modern assumptions about the content of Christian education, the role of scribal markers and by whom and where these texts may have been used, not only behind the walls of a monastery but in daily life and even multi-lingual settings. And while the use of Scripture in a school exercise may not ultimately offer proof of an early Christian school, of widespread literacy,<sup>54</sup> or even support any claims for a School of Paul, it does offer evidence of Christian education, Christian teachers and pedagogical activity, possibly even literate education, using the words of a Pauline epistle.

<sup>52</sup> D. G. Martinez, ‘Christianity in the Papyri’, in *The Oxford Handbook of Papyrology* (ed. Roger Bagnall; Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 590–622 (610).

<sup>53</sup> Morgan, *Literate Education*, 8.

<sup>54</sup> Blumell, *Lettered Christians*, 195.





## How Did the ‘Teaching’ Teach? The *Didache* as Catechesis

William Varner

It has long been recognized that the *Didache* was used in ancient times for the instruction of new converts and/or baptismal candidates. Eusebius and Athanasius referred to this use of a book with a similar name before the rediscovery of its ancient text in what is called the Jerusalem Codex (*Hierosolymitanus* 54). When Bryennios published the manuscript in 1883,<sup>1</sup> the reference in 7.1 made such catechetical use evident: ‘After you have reviewed all these things, baptize in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit in running water.’ These words indicate that the first five or possibly six chapters were used in the original *Didache* communities for pre-baptismal catechetical instruction, and continued to do so until at least the end of the fourth century, according to the testimony of Alexandrian fathers.

It is my proposal that by the fourth century an edition of the *Didache* shorter than the one in the Jerusalem Codex was used as a handbook of the Christian faith that was literally placed in the hand of a new convert.<sup>2</sup> The English term for this type of handbook, *enchiridion*, is a transliteration of the Greek term ἐγχειρίδιον.<sup>3</sup> I base my proposal on a re-examination of three

<sup>1</sup> Philotheos Bryennios, *Διδαχή τῶν δώδεκα Ἀποστόλων* (Constantinople: Tupois S.I. Voutyra, 1883).

<sup>2</sup> This chapter develops further the ideas that I first proposed in *The Way of the Didache: The First Christian Handbook* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2007), 14, and elaborated in ‘The *Didache* as a Christian Enchiridion’, in *Christian Origins and Greco-Roman Culture: Social and Literary Contexts for the New Testament* (eds. Stanley E. Porter and Andrew E. Pitts; TENTS 9; ECHC 1; Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2013), 651–61.

<sup>3</sup> *A Patristic Greek Lexicon* (ed. G. W. H. Lampe; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961), 405. LSJ mentions ἐγχειρίδιον as the title of works by ‘Epictetus and others’ (p. 475). The *OED* defines the word: ‘A handbook or manual; a concise treatise serving as a guide or for reference’, and traces the first use of the word in English to Miles Coverdale in 1541.

ancient authors who mention the *Didache* plus the only material evidence of an earlier Greek *Didache*. The three literary texts are the *Stichometry* of Nicephorus, the *Paschal Letter* of Athanasius and the Greek commentaries of Didymus the Blind. The material evidence is that of the two fragments found among the Oxyrhynchus material. My proposal will then address how this *enchiridion* actually worked as a catechetical manual.

Space does not allow a review of the secondary literature that surrounds each of these four literary and material remains. These five total items of evidence stretch chronologically from the first century (the original *Didache*) through the fourth century (Athanasius, Didymus and the fragments) to the ninth century (Nicephorus). I will begin with the last literary source, the *Stichometry* of Nicephorus, and work my way back until finally we examine the text of *Didache* 1-5 itself to see if it justifies its later reception in Christian catechesis. The purpose of this comparison of sources is to uncover how and why the ancient Church utilized this little document for the training of Christian converts, or catechumens as they have been labelled.

### 1. *The Stichometry of Nicephorus*

The *Stichometry* of Nicephorus, Patriarch of Constantinople 806–815, is a canon list that mentions the length of books by the number of *stichoi* that each contains.<sup>4</sup> He lists a number of ‘New Testament Apocrypha’ and among them is a work that he titles ‘Teaching of Apostles’ (Διδαχὴ ἀποστόλων). He lists the number of *stichoi* in the book as 200. The reference to 200 *stichoi* has been noted by writers as early as Bryennios who have called attention to the fact that there are 204 lines in the *Didache*’s five leaves in the Jerusalem Codex. This should not be considered significant, however, for as early as Schaff (1887) scholars have pointed out that the total number of *stichoi* for the Clements in Nicephorus is 2,600, while the total number of lines in those books in the codex is 1,120.<sup>5</sup> This disparity points out two problems. 1. The length of a *stichos* in the codex is different from the *stichos* of antiquity. The standard

<sup>4</sup> PG, 100.

<sup>5</sup> Philip Schaff, *The Oldest Church Manual* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1887), 118.

length most often mentioned is 16 syllables on a line.<sup>6</sup> Using the facsimile transcription published by J. Rendell Harris, I sampled around twelve different lines in the Jerusalem Codex and found that the number of syllables in Leon the scribe's line is usually twenty-four.<sup>7</sup> Clearly the *stichos* used by the scribe of the codex was longer than the one used by Nicephorus. 2. More important for my purposes is the problem of the large difference in respective lengths of the known writings among the 'Apostolic Fathers' and the length of the *Didache* in Nicephorus. Nicephorus lists the 'Epistle of Barnabas' as containing 1,360 *stichoi*. Therefore, the *Didache* mentioned by him (200 *stichoi*) would be 14.7 per cent the size of *Barnabas*. A word count of the Greek texts of each of these works, utilizing the *Didache* text in the codex, indicates that the *Didache* is about 34 per cent the size of *Barnabas* (7,340 to 2,494 words).<sup>8</sup>

In light of the above, I suggest the following exercise. If we remove chapters 7–16 from the *Didache* and then perform a word count, we arrive at a text about 14.4 per cent the size of *Barnabas* (app. 7,340 to 1,060 words). This is very near the relative size of Nicephorus' *Didache* to that of his *Barnabas* (14.7 per cent). It is my proposal, therefore, that by the early ninth century, the *Didache* had been reduced to approximately the content in chapters 1–6. In other words, I believe that we have tangible evidence in the *Stichometry* that a shorter form of the *Didache* was being used at some point prior to 800 CE. It is hoped that a complete study of the Jerusalem Codex someday will help to answer questions like these.<sup>9</sup> For example, we do not know the exact number of lines in the *Barnabas* section of the Jerusalem Codex since Bryennios only published the two *Clements* and *Didache*, and photographs of only these documents were published in the Lightfoot and Harris volumes.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>6</sup> See J. Rendell Harris, *Stichometry* (London: C.J. Clay and Sons, 1893). The *Didache* of Nicephorus was probably written in uncial letters rather than in the miniscule script of the Jerusalem Codex. See Willy Rordorf and André Tuilier, *La doctrine des douze apotres* (2nd edn; Paris: Cerf, 1998), 109.

<sup>7</sup> J. Rendell Harris, *The Teaching of the Apostles* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1887). The transcription of his *Didache* text is on 1–10.

<sup>8</sup> The Greek texts used for *Didache* and *Barnabas* are those in *BibleWorks* 9.0.

<sup>9</sup> After his own examination of the codex David Flusser wrote, 'A closer examination of the Jerusalem Manuscript considered to its full extent will help solve problems about the two-fold title of the *Didache*, its abrupt ending in 16:8, and the quality of the manuscript.' Huub van de Sandt and David Flusser, *The Didache: Its Jewish Sources and Its Place in Early Judaism and Christianity* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2002), 18.

<sup>10</sup> J. B. Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers: Part One, Vol. One, Clement* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House reprint, 1981). Photographic plates of the two *Clements* are on 425–84. Photographic plates of the *Didache* follow 107 in Harris, *The Teaching of the Apostles*. Bryennios hoped to publish *Barnabas*

## 2. Athanasius and Didymus the Blind

Athanasius appointed Didymus as the head of the Alexandrian catechetical school and both describe the role of the *Didache* in similar ways. Athanasius' reference to the book in his famous *Paschal Letter* of 367 CE on the canon has often been noted. On the other hand, Didymus' remarks on the *Didache* have been largely overlooked. Yet they both expressed similar ideas. While Eusebius had mentioned the books he styled *antilegomena*, about which there were doubts, Athanasius seeks to remove all doubt about these books. The ones he mentioned as canonical are those that have comprised the New Testament ever since. Eusebius had mentioned the 'Teachings of the Apostles' as spurious (νόθος), but not heretical as some other works that he condemns.<sup>11</sup> Athanasius specifically mentioned that both *The Shepherd of Hermas* and the *Didache*, although not canonical, were 'appointed by the Fathers to be read by those who are now coming to us and who desire to be instructed in the teaching of godliness.'<sup>12</sup> It is clear from this quotation that some form of the *Didache* was being used in fourth-century Alexandria for catechesis of new converts. Moreover, Athanasius' reference about the 'fathers' commending these books indicates an attitude prevalent for quite some time about the value of *Didache* as a catechetical manual.

What we do not know from this reference is whether the *Didache* to which he referred was the complete *Didache* that has come down to us in the Jerusalem Codex or a shorter form, possibly limited to the 'Two Ways' section embodied in Chapters 1–6. Previously I argued that by Nicephorus' time a shorter form of the *Didache* was being used and was reflected in that form in his *Stichometry*. I suggest that the same situation had developed by the time of Athanasius. The reason for the abbreviated edition would be that by his time the simplicity of the eucharistic prayers in *Did.* 8–9 had been replaced by a far more developed liturgy of the mass. Furthermore, local Church leadership in the hands of 'overseers and deacons' (15.1) had been replaced by a hierarchical Church structure of deacons, presbyter/priests, bishops and

as he did the *Clements* and *Didache*, but was not able to do so before his death in 1914. See Varner, *The Way of the Didache*, 7–9.

<sup>11</sup> Pamphilus Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, 24.15.

<sup>12</sup> Athanasius, 39<sup>th</sup> *Paschal Letter*. The Greek wording does allow the possibility that the book was read to catechumens as well as read by them.

archbishops. Athanasius himself was a monarchical bishop, whose authority was not limited to one Church. Finally, in the fourth century there were no more itinerant apostles and prophets (Chapters 11, 12). Therefore, the later 'ecclesiastical' chapters of *Didache* would not have been of value to young converts and may even have raised uncomfortable questions. The 'Two Ways' teaching in the first part, however, would still be valuable for catechesis.

Additional information from Didymus the Blind confirms a similar function of the *Didache* as reflected in his predecessor, Athanasius. Until the discovery of the 'Toura' manuscripts in 1941 and their subsequent publication, knowledge of Didymus the Blind was based on Latin translations of a few of his works and appreciative comments by such people as Jerome.<sup>13</sup> With the continuing publication of his Greek commentaries on OT books we know more about both his allegorical hermeneutic and also about his citation of various 'Apostolic Fathers'. In his commentaries he refers at least five times to the *Shepherd of Hermas* and once calls it 'the catechetical book, the *Shepherd*'.<sup>14</sup> He also refers twice to the *Didache*, each time using the same word that he applied to the *Shepherd*. Once he cites words in 4.3 ('you will reconcile those who quarrel') and says that the words are found in 'the *Teaching*, the catechetical book'.<sup>15</sup> He also mentions the same expression, 'as it is found in the Teaching of the Apostolic catechesis'.<sup>16</sup> His reference to the *Shepherd* and the *Didache* is consistent with the way his predecessor Athanasius described the function of these two works a generation before.

What can be concluded from these references is that the *Didache* in an abbreviated form was being used to catechize young converts in the same

<sup>13</sup> PG, 186. For the Jerome quotation, see his *Epistola 84, ad Pammachium et Oceanum*. For an account of the discovery and a description of the Toura manuscripts, see *Didyme LAveugle, Sur Zacharie* (ed. Louis Doutreleau; Paris: Cerf, 1962), 21–2.

<sup>14</sup> Cited by Bart D. Ehrman, 'The New Testament Canon of Didymus the Blind', *Vigiliae Christianae* 37 (1983): 12. The following quotations from Didymus, although dependent on the Ehrman article, will be referenced by the name of the OT book on which he comments. The *Shepherd* quotation is found in *Zechariah* 86.24–27.

<sup>15</sup> Didymus, *Psalms* 227.26. In his edition Bryennios divided the Jerusalem Codex into chapters. Harnack later divided the chapters further into the verses that we follow today in modern texts. Adolf von Harnack, *Die Lehre der Zwölf Apostel: Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der Altchristlichen Literatur* (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1886), 2.1–70.

<sup>16</sup> Didymus, *Eccl.* 78.22. I must demur from Ehrman's main conclusion in his article. He argues that Didymus considered *Shepherd of Hermas*, *Barnabas*, *1 Clement* and the *Didache* as part of his NT canon (Ehrman, 'New Testament', 18). However, Didymus applies to both *Shepherd* and *Didache* the expression, 'the catechetical book'. This is the same role assigned to them by his predecessor, Athanasius. This expression actually argues for the fact that they were *not* viewed as being on the same level of the twenty-seven that Athanasius defended as canonical. To both Didymus and Athanasius, the *Shepherd* and *Didache* were *catechetical*, not *canonical* books.

way it had been used in the first century and for nearly 300 years in between. But how specifically was it used in catechesis? Was it the written basis for a teacher's oral instruction or was it used in some other method of catechesis? That question leads us to the last piece of evidence – two fragments of a tiny book found in the trash heap of an ancient town named 'Sharp-Nosed' or Oxyrhynchus.

### 3. *The Oxyrhynchus manuscript*

In 1922, Grenfell and Hunt published a fragment of a vellum codex from Oxyrhynchus that is the only other material remains of a Greek copy of the *Didache*.<sup>17</sup> In addition to Hunt's evaluation of the tiny fragments, Niederwimmer has a thorough discussion of the textual significance of the discovery.<sup>18</sup>

Unlike most of the other material recovered from Oxyrhynchus, the two leaves were written on vellum rather than papyrus and date to the late fourth century. The two leaves were part of a codex rather than a roll, and the two leaves were probably part of separate quires in the codex, although they are now broken at their seam. The leaves are inscribed *recto* and *verso*, so that four 'pages' contain writing. The first folio contains words from *Didache* 1.3 *recto* and words from 1.4 *verso*. The second folio contains 2.7–3.1 *recto* and 3.1, 2 *verso*. Folio 1 contains part of what has been called the *sectio evangelica* – the passage (1.3–2.1) that has been widely regarded as a later Christian gloss. What appears to be a mark to indicate a paragraph break answers to the chapter break Bryennios made at exactly the same point in his published edition.<sup>19</sup>

The significance of these two leaves for the textual history of the *Didache* should not be minimized since they are 650 years older than the Jerusalem Codex. They come from the same time period as Athanasius and Didymus, which was also the period when the author of the *Apostolic Constitutions*

<sup>17</sup> Bernard Grenfell and Arthur Hunt, *Oxyrhynchus Papyri*, Part XV (London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1922), 12–15.

<sup>18</sup> Kurt Niederwimmer, *The Didache* (trans. by Linda Maloney; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998), 21–3. See also: Jean-Paul Audet, *La Didache Instructions des Apôtres* (Paris: Librairie Lecoffre, 1958), 26–8; and Rordorf and Tuilier, *La doctrine*, 111.

<sup>19</sup> Bryennios, Διδαχή, 13.

was copying the *Didache* into chapter seven of his own Church manual.<sup>20</sup> Elsewhere I have published a transcription and comparison of the Jerusalem Codex (H) with the corresponding text in the fragment (O).<sup>21</sup>

What can these few but extremely valuable fragments tell us about how the *Didache* may have been used in fourth century Egyptian Christianity? The spelling and irregular divisions of the words points to a writer of no great culture, certainly not to a professional scribe. The size of the leaves and of the codex of which they were a part is the most striking feature of this discovery. This impression cannot be really received by simply reading the figures about its size – 5.8 x 5 cm and 5.7 x 4.8 cm which can be easily placed inside one's palm.

We cannot know for sure the length of the entire codex, but I offer a conjecture. Suppose that the codex consisted of 1.1–6.2, based on the evidence we have mentioned previously. My ending the first section at precisely 6.2 is based on the appearance in 6.3 of the first of the five Περὶ δὲ constructions in chapters 6–11 (see also 7.1; 9.1, 3; and 11.3). The following chapters are either the second main section of the 'discourse' or possibly comprise a second stage of the *Didache's* composition. According to an electronic text of the *Didache* in BibleWorks 10, there are 932 words in 1.1–6.2. By my visual count, the four 'pages' of the codex contain sixty-four words, or an average of sixteen to a page. If they are representative of the other pages, a simple correlation formula results in a codex whose total length would be fifty-eight pages or twenty-nine leaves. If the number of leaves was much higher than that figure, the relative size of its thickness to its height and breadth would be too bulky a book to handle despite its small size. For example, if the entire 16 chapters of the *Didache* were in this codex, it would be approximately 138 pages long, or around 69 leaves. This would result in a codex whose width and breadth could fit in the palm of one's hand but would be over half the thickness of the later Jerusalem Codex, which contained twelve works! Yet a codex of around thirty leaves containing 1.1–6.2 would still be small enough to be considered as an *enchiridion*.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Bryennios reprinted the Greek text of the *Constitutions* in the 'Prolegomena' of Διδαχή.

<sup>21</sup> Varner, 'The *Didache* as a Christian Enchiridion', 658.

<sup>22</sup> I suggest further that the codex consisted of four quires, each of which contained four bifolia. When folded, these four quires would yield a total of thirty-two individual folia, or leaves. Since it appears that the codex was written recto and verso throughout, this would yield a total codex of fifty-four 'pages'. This would be large enough to accommodate the fifty-eight pages of text I suggested as its



Why *was* this codex so small? Turner lists 45 known manuscripts in the category of a ‘miniature’ codex (breadth less than 10 cm).<sup>23</sup> Only three of these tiny manuscripts are smaller than the *Didache* codex and all of them are of OT texts, one of which is not a codex. Therefore, Oxyrhynchus 1782 is the smallest codex ever found that contained a specifically Christian text. I demur from the suggestion that it was an amulet.<sup>24</sup> Chrysostom did mention later that some Christian women would hang Gospels from their necks.<sup>25</sup> I simply cannot imagine, however, why the *Didache* would be used in this way. There is no evidence that at the time of the fragment, the *Didache* was viewed as a sacred text like the Gospels. Furthermore, where elsewhere is there evidence for such a text like the *Didache* being used as an amulet? I think that there is a practical purpose for the size of the *Didache* codex, a purpose consistent with the evidence deduced thus far for a shortened *Didache* used by this time for the purpose of catechesis.

I propose that the miniature codex from Oxyrhynchus is a tangible example of a Christian *enchiridion* – a little book that was placed in the hand of a catechumen. Perhaps the little codex was given to catechumens at the beginning or at the end of their training. Perhaps an exercise during the instruction was that the catechumen would copy out the *Didache* into his or her own little codex, which might explain the cruder style of the writing. Athanasius’ reference to it being read seems to carry a strong presumption that at least some of the catechumens could read. In any case, even if it could be shown that the book was intended to be read *to*, rather than *by*, the catechumens, it would not seriously rule out its overall role as a Christian *enchiridion*.<sup>26</sup>

length and also would allow more space needed for additional chapter breaks like the one in the fragment. Thus, it appears that the *Didache* mini-codex would be the right size to accommodate the length of what we know today as Chapters 1.1–6.2.

<sup>23</sup> Eric G. Turner, *The Typology of the Early Codex* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1977), 30.

<sup>24</sup> See the early suggestion by L. Amundsen, ‘Christian Papyri from the Oslo Collection’, *Symbolae Osloenses* 24 (1954): 125–47.

<sup>25</sup> John Chrysostom, *Homilies on Matthew*, LXXVII. Chrysostom criticized this practice in his day as being like the Pharisees’ practice of wearing large phylacteries. Even these ‘Gospels’ probably consisted only of the *incipits* of each individual Gospel (Turner, *Typology*, 31).

<sup>26</sup> The evidence for widespread ancient illiteracy based on the work of authors like William Harris, *Ancient Literacy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991), has led to the suggestion that the ‘little handbook’ was used by a catechist rather than a catechumen. Not all scholars, however, have accepted uncritically the proposal that 10–15 per cent of the ancient world was illiterate. For a more nuanced discussion, see Harry Gamble, *Books and Readers in the Early Church: A History of Early*

I propose, therefore, that we have in Oxyrhynchus 1782 tangible evidence that *Didache* 1–5 or 6 served as an *enchiridion* in late fourth-century Egypt. We thus have evidence of 'the catechetical book, the *Didache*' which Didymus described around the same time that someone was copying the words of the *Did.* 1–6 into this *enchiridion* or 'little handbook'.

#### 4. The original function for the *Didache*

Why was the *Didache* used in this way? And was that its original purpose and function? This can only be answered by a survey of its content. Scholars for years have noticed that *Didache* 1–5 develops the theme of the 'two ways'. 1.1 opens with: 'There are two ways: one of **life** and one of **death!** And there is a great difference between the two ways.' Later the author concludes the first part of this section with the summary statement, 'This is the way of life!' (4.14b). He then launches the second section this way: 'And the way of death is this' (5.1, 2). There have been a number of claims that the Didachist adapted an existing Jewish 'two ways' ethical treatise to his 'Jewish Christian' purposes.<sup>27</sup> There has even been an ingenious effort to reconstruct the content of such a proposed Greek 'Two Ways' treatise by utilizing the Latin *Doctrina Apostolorum* as the key to this supposed source.<sup>28</sup> I respect the scholarship of those involved in this reconstruction, but I also am concerned that it rests too much on conjecture than solid evidence. With the publication of the Dead Sea Scrolls, there have also been efforts to find earlier parallels to the thought in the *Didache*, with arguments that the early chapters of *Didache* exhibit reflections of such an ethical treatise in the *Community Rule* of that sect.<sup>29</sup>

I am convinced that this dependence has been greatly overdrawn, because there is no clear example of a Jewish 'two ways' document from the period antedating the *Didache* that has ever been found! A careful *Didache* scholar

*Christian Texts* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 2–10; as well as William A. Johnson and Holt N. Parker, *Ancient Literacies: The Culture of Reading in Greece and Rome* (Oxford University Press, 2009).

<sup>27</sup> See, for example: Jean Paul Audet in *La Didache: Instruction des Apotres* (Paris: J. Lecoffre, 1958); Jean Danielou, *The Theology of Jewish Christianity I* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1964) 28ff., 315ff.

<sup>28</sup> *Matthew and the Didache: Two Documents from the Same Jewish-Christian Milieu?* (ed. Huub van de Sandt; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2005), 238–70.

<sup>29</sup> Jean-Paul Audet, 'Literary and Doctrinal Affinities of the Manual of Discipline', in *The Didache in Modern Research* (ed. Jonathan A. Draper; AGJU 37; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1996), 129–47.

recognized this when he wrote about attempts to make the Qumran material a source for the *Didache*.

One must not lose the unique perspective that the comparison between the *Manual of Discipline* from Qumran and the different forms of the Christian *duae viae* brings concerning the *dualistic framework* (which is absent in the *Didache*!) and concerning the general literary genre of instruction which places side by side a list of virtue and a list of vices; but in the detail of content and vocabulary, resemblances are missing.<sup>30</sup>

I challenge anyone to read the appropriate section in *The Community Rule* (1QS 3:13-4:26) and find anything that would make one think of *Didache* 1-5 if they had not been preconditioned to do so. In my opinion, the only similarity in the two documents is the word 'two'. The Scroll speaks of 'two' angels – one of darkness and one of light and how men are ruled by one of 'two' spirits. This is parallel to the later rabbinic idea of the two inclinations in man – the *yetzer hara* and the *yetzer hatov*.<sup>31</sup> However, it bears very little resemblance to the *Didache* description of the two ways – except again in the word 'two'. Such language about 'two' angels or inclinations also characterizes the similar chapters in *Barnabas* 18-20 and in the *Doctrina Apostolorum*. In my opinion, this elaboration of the simplicity expressed in the *Didache*'s rehearsal of the 'two ways' points to the secondary character of these documents.<sup>32</sup>

It is wiser to look for the antecedents of the 'two ways' genre in other Jewish sources and patterns of teaching. The 'two ways' ethical pattern has deep roots in Jewish canonical writings. Consider Deut. 30.19: 'I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death ...' Psalm One describes the two ways with their contrasting results. The wisdom literature is replete with such contrasts as in Proverbs 1-9 with its comparison of

<sup>30</sup> Willy Rordorf, 'An Aspect of the Judaeo-Christian Ethic: The Two Ways', in *The Didache in Modern Research* (ed. Jonathan A. Draper; AGJU 37; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1996), 151.

<sup>31</sup> For the text in English, see Geza Vermes, *The Complete Dead Sea Scrolls in English* (New York: Penguin, 1997), 101-3.

<sup>32</sup> Some scholars have suggested that the *Didache* may have been composed in two stages. The first could be a version written in the early days of the initial influx of Gentile believers into the Antioch Church, witnessed to in Acts 11.19ff. – probably not much later than 40 CE. That could have been the document that some feel is represented by the *Doctrina Apostolorum* – a document lacking the evangelical section in chapter one and the 'Gospel' references later in the book. Then, when the Greek 'Gospel of the Lord' (referenced in *Did.* 15.3-4) emerged between 45 and 55 CE, the Didachist could have added those 'gospel' references and thus we would have the 'finished' *Didache* by the 60s. If this is the case, we do have evidence of a prior 'two ways' document – within the text of the *Didache* itself.

the 'Way of Wisdom' with the 'Way of Folly'. Jeremiah was sent by the Lord to say to the people: 'Behold I set before you the way of life and the way of death' (21.8). In a later text, the *Apocalypse of Baruch*, the Lord said to the people, 'Behold I have set before you life and death' (19.1). It is not necessary that the *Didache* actually quoted any of these Jewish documents, since he may only have been following a long train of thought and expression. It is even more risky to propose that he Christianized a hypothetical document which we do not have.

It seems more reasonable to see both the *Didache* and the Hebrew Scriptures employing a literary pattern ingrained in pre-Christian Jewish thinking and expression. That same ethical and literary pattern then served as a paradigm for the Didachist to develop in his Jewish Christian ethical treatise. If there was dependence upon a source, it makes much more sense to see it as inspiration derived from another first-century Jewish teacher who was also thoroughly versed in the Hebrew 'two ways' thinking. Since his teaching inspired so much else in the *Didache*, could not these words have inspired the Didachist? 'Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life and those who find it are few' (Mt. 7.13-14).

### 5. Milavec and the *Didache*

One of the most prolific authors on the *Didache* has been Aaron Milavec. In 2003 he published a thousand page commentary which treated the text and many issues related to it.<sup>33</sup> There subsequently appeared a shorter work that was a condensation and summary of the larger work.<sup>34</sup> Milavec argues that the *Didache* is independent of the canonical Gospels and dates them from 50–70 CE. He also offers an origination hypothesis for the *Didache* that affirms the unity of the *Didache* over against the hypotheses of its many sources. He then traces through the book the consistent development of a systematic training

<sup>33</sup> Aaron Milavec, *The Didache: Faith, Hope and Life of the Earliest Christian Communities, 50–70 C.E.* (New York: Newman Press, 2003).

<sup>34</sup> Aaron Milavec, *The Didache: Text, Translation, Analysis, and Commentary* (Collegeville, MI: Liturgical Press, 2003).

programme embodied in its contents. Its purpose was to mould and to shape the life of a convert from paganism into the new faith taught by Jesus and his followers.

Milavec's penchant for unique interpretations should not cause readers to overlook the insights he brings to the meaning of so many debated passages. It is his effort to stress the overall unity of the book that should be welcomed by those sceptical of the results of source criticism. I do not think that Milavec has sealed his case for the original oral character of the document, nor do I think he has proven that it embodies a training programme conducted by one mentor and his disciple. I do think, however, that he has uncovered the book's overall unity – something that has been missing among the atomistic analyses of this and that section of the book.

From the perspective of my own origination hypothesis – that the *Didache* was intended to be a catechetical book and was used that way from its emergence – I find much to welcome in his work. Therefore, with Milavec as an inspiration, I offer the following summary of the way that the Didachist outlines the new life of a believer in God's servant, Jesus.

### 6. *An overall analysis of the Didache*

The *Didache* indicates that it is not simply a pastiche of disjointed elements. The discourse markers that the Didachist employs indicate that his work is divided into two main sections. The first is marked by the expressions 'way of life' in 1.2 and 'way of death' in 5.1-2. Further markers are the words, 'This is the teaching' in 1.3a and 'this is the way of life' in 4.14b. These expressions comprise an *inclusio* framing the first part of the book. Thus, chapters 1–5 are intended to embody a self-contained literary unit containing the teaching that was given to a new believer before their baptism. This is clear from 7.1, 'After you have said all these things beforehand, immerse in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit in flowing water.' 'These things' can only refer to the teaching embodied previously in Chapters 1–5.

The second main section of the book (Chapters 6–16) consists of instructions about how the young believer is to relate to life in the public worship and ministry of the Church. The similar expression 'you will be perfect' in 6.2

and 'unless you are perfected' in 16.2 again serve as an *inclusio* framing the second section. Thus, the last chapter is not simply an eschatological appendix but is deliberately crafted to advance the overall plan of the Didachist. Within that frame in the second section, the Didachist employs the discourse marker 'and concerning' (Περί δὲ) a total of five times, each time to introduce a new topic for the catechumen to learn about and in which to participate. These are: 1. Food to eat and to avoid (6.3); 2. Baptism and how it is administered (7.1); 3. The eucharist (9.1) of cup and bread (9.3); and 4. The role of apostles and prophets (11.3). This discourse marker function of the Περί δὲ appears also in 1 Corinthians (7.1, 25; 8.1, 12.1; 16.1, 12) and 1 Thessalonians (4.9 and 5.1). Since Paul used the occurrences of περί δὲ to enumerate his successive answers to the questions that the Corinthians had asked him in a previous letter (7.1), its use by the Didachist may indicate that the subjects he addresses were ones that local congregations had asked about in previous communications. Thus, Chapters 6–11ff. could be providing guidance by answering queries that had arisen in the churches within the circle of the Didachist's influence.

6.3, therefore, with its mitigated command regarding kosher eating thus would be separate from 1.1–6.2. It also serves, however, as a bridge to the following material owing to its being the first example in the περί δὲ schematic. The Didachist desired that this point of guidance about eating food should be included in the teaching to be given to young believers. The material in 7.1ff., as important as it was to the corporate life of the body, was not part of the individual instruction that was given in chapters 1–6. The final chapter contains an earnest exhortation, therefore, to 'seek what is appropriate for your souls' in light of the coming of the Lord. That which is appropriate would primarily be the pre-baptismal instruction of chapters 1–6 but also include the 'Church' teaching in Chapters 7–15 that would cover post-baptismal experiences. See, for example, the exhortation in 9.5, 'And let no one eat or drink from your thanksgiving meal except those baptized in the name of the Lord.'

### 7. *An overview of Didache 1–6*

Returning to our focus on *Didache* 1–6, the order of the topics is as follows:

- Two Ways of Life (1.1, 2);
- 1. Two Rules of Giving (1.3-6);
- 2. Six New Commandments (2.1-2);
- 3. Five Speech Infractions (2.3-5);
- 4. Five Forbidden Dispositions (2.6-7);
- 5. Five ‘Fences’ (3.1-6);
- 6. Five Positive Virtues (3.7-10);
- 7. Five Congregational Precepts (4.1-4);
- 8. Four Guidelines for Giving (4.5-8);
- 9. Three Household Rules (4.9-11);
- 10. Three Solemn Admonitions (4.12-14);
- 11. Forty Foul Actions (5.1, 2);
- 12. Warning Against Innovators (6.1, 2).

### 8. *The title(s) of the Didache*

It is difficult to affirm with confidence that either of the two titles were part of the first-century work. The short one, ‘The Teaching of the Apostles’, was written with red ink in the Jerusalem manuscript. The longer one, ‘The Teaching of the Lord Through the Twelve Apostles to the Gentiles’, opens the first line of the manuscript. When ‘apostles’ are mentioned in the book, as in 11.3-6, the term refers to wandering charismatics, for it would be difficult to see how any of the Twelve would be limited to two days in their stay (11.5), or would be asking wrongly for money (11.6). The Didachist simply refers to the ‘teaching’ (1.3) as being given by ‘the Lord’ (9.3). ‘The distinct possibility remains, therefore, that “twelve apostles” was introduced only at the point when apostolic authorship was recognized as an absolute necessity for any work seeking inclusion in the canon of approved books.’<sup>35</sup>

<sup>35</sup> Milavec, *The Didache: Text*, 41.

### 9. The Two-Fold Command

While the responsibilities of loving God and loving your fellow man can certainly be found in Judaism, the joining of the two texts, Deuteronomy 6.5 and Leviticus 19:18, as they are joined in 1:2, is not found in non-Christian Jewish texts before this time. The Synoptic Gospels assign such coupling to Jesus (Mt. 22.37-39; Mk 12.30, 31; Lk 10.27). The way that the Didachist employs Deut. 6:5, however, is not in the form familiarly known as the 'Shema'. It mentions 'God', not 'Lord' (see LXX) and the description of Him is as 'the one who made you', not the covenantal language of Deuteronomy 6. This expression, however, would be appropriate for Gentiles, who were not in any covenant relationship to the 'Lord' but were still created by 'God'.

This uniquely 'Christian' language at the beginning of the two ways section points up another of the reasons it is difficult to see Chapters 1-5 as some pre-Christian Jewish 'two ways treatise'. Not only here but in many other places expressions are used that are more familiar in a (Jewish) Christian context than in a Jewish context. Consider 2.7: 'Don't hate anyone, reprove some, pray for some, love some more than your soul.' Can that sentiment be found in pre-Christian Judaism? The accepting of whatever happens to you as 'good' (3.10), although similar to *Sir.* 2:4, differs greatly in the language used. Providence was taught in Judaism, but the accepting of things as 'good' is a Christian expression rather than a Jewish one (cf. Rom. 8:28). The following verses in the *Didache* also seem more suited to Christian than to Jewish 'talk'. 'My child, remember the one who preaches to you the words of God, for where Lordship is proclaimed, there is the Lord' (4.1). 'Seek out the presence of the saints, to find support in their words' (4.2). 'You are sharers in imperishable things, how much more in the perishable?' (4.8b). 'Confess your sins in the assembly (ἐκκλησία) – not in the synagogue!' (4.14). Also, the description of the Holy Spirit preparing people simply sounds more like a Christian than a Jewish expression (4.10).

It is also appropriate to note some important matters that are not discussed in *Did.* 1-5. The absence of these things in a Jewish text intended for Gentile converts simply appears odd. While plenty of commands and rules are issued, there is no explicit mention of the first four commandments. There is no mention of Sabbath observance, circumcision, or the dietary laws. The



absence of the first five commandments and those three prominent badges of Jewish identity would be unthinkable in a Jewish manual intended to introduce Judaism to Gentile proselytes. The fact that the book was intended for Gentile converts (hence the title) explains the lack of emphasis upon those 'badges' while the absence of the first four commandments is explained by the fact that such theological beliefs were assumed. Thus orthodoxy gives way to orthopraxy as the main thrust of the document.

Much has been written about the so-called 'negative' Golden Rule that finds expression in 1:2b, 'As many things as you wish not to happen to you, likewise do not do to another'. Antecedents can be found in *Tob.* 4:15 and also in the famous story of Hillel, Shammai and the Gentile (*Shab.* 31a). While Jesus' famous saying in Matthew 7.12 and Luke 7.31 is expressed positively, Jesus could also have used the other form at times. Possibly it appeared that way in 'The Gospel of the Lord' (see fn. 32).

#### 10. Two rules of giving (1.3, 4; 4.5-8)

The following paragraph (1.3-2.1) is often referred to as the 'evangelical section' since it is very similar to Jesus' teaching in Matthew's 'Sermon on the Mount' (5-7) and in Luke's 'Sermon on the Plain' (6). The initial stress on praying for enemies and turning the cheek may have had reference to the new spiritual 'enemies' that had developed in the young convert's life because of his new faith. The advice was very helpful in maintaining a non-violent reaction to an abusive family situation.<sup>36</sup> The issue of giving is taken up near the beginning and near the end of the initial section of chapters 1-4. The first instruction on giving (1.4)<sup>37</sup> is in the present imperative mode in the Greek. The second command (4.5-8) is presented in the future tense, called an 'imperative future'.<sup>38</sup> Since this use of the imperative is largely confined in the NT to the quotation of OT commands, grammarians tend to think that the imperative future may be more emphatic rather than general. In the *Didache*,

<sup>36</sup> Milavec, *The Didache: Text*, 49-50. As is so often the case, Milavec provides in his longer work more evidence for adopting this interpretation. Milavec, *The Didache: Faith*, 112-16.

<sup>37</sup> For considerations of space, I do not always quote in its entirety the *Didache* text to which I am referring. Readers are requested to consult any of the published translations of the *Didache*.

<sup>38</sup> Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997), 569-70.

the context of the second command on giving is the Church fellowship and the importance of sharing with brothers and sisters in the Lord. Thus the future would express the time when the new convert would be fully accepted in the congregation after his baptism. The first rule for giving expressed in the imperative, however, was intended for immediate implementation. Developing the giving habit of mind in chapter one could then better lead to the more emphatic command in chapter four.

### *11. Six New Commandments (2.1, 2)*

In this section of straightforward commands, the Didachist omits the first five commandments. Some are implied in other commands (1.2; 2.3), while others, like the Sabbath command, had been superseded by the command to gather on the Lord's Day (14.1). Milavec thinks that the omission of the fifth command to honour parents may reflect the familial situation of pagan converts experiencing conflict from parents for their new faith. They were to honour God as their true Father (1.5; 9.2-3; 10.2).<sup>39</sup>

The latter five commands of the Decalogue are reiterated in 2.2, expressed in the familiar negative particle οὐ plus future imperative of the prohibited verb. The Didachist also adds six new ones that appear to be in some ways elaborations of the five. The first two condemn paedophilia and illicit sex: 'you will not corrupt children; you will not have illicit sex'. Paedophilia was so foreign to Jewish practice that it is not even mentioned in the Torah. Yet it was more common in the Gentile world from which these converts came. 'Illicit sex' is the verb form of the noun πορνεία, a general word not limited to fornication. In addition to adultery, all forms of prohibited sexual relations are here proscribed, such as incest and prostitution (Lev 18.6-16; 21.9). The second pair prohibits magic and the making of potions (φαρμακεύσεις), an activity that must have been linked with magic. The last pair pertains to abortion and infanticide: 'you will not murder a child by means of abortion, nor you will kill one that has been born'. This is the earliest reference in Christian literature that explicitly forbids what was implicitly condemned in Scripture. Abortion and infanticide were widely regarded in the pagan world as accepted means

<sup>39</sup> Milavec, *The Didache: Text*, 53.

of ‘family planning’. This firm opposition to accepted practices in the Roman world came to be regarded as one of the chief differences that people noticed in the behaviour of early Christians.

*12. Five speech sins, five evil dispositions and five fences (2.3-3.6)*

In 2.3-5, the Didachist warns against five ‘sins of the tongue’ which echo many of the warnings about the tongue in both the testaments. This is followed by the forbidding of five ‘sins of the attitude’ in 2.6, 7. The command not to hate anyone is followed immediately by some positive counsel that balances the command against hatred: ‘but some you will reprove, and for others you will pray, and some you will love more than your soul’ (2.7b).

This is standard Christian paranesis that can be found in many Christian works, both within and outside of the canon. What follows in chapter three, however, is framed in a way that was familiar to Jews of the Second Temple Period. There are five warnings against certain behaviours that are then followed by actions that the forbidden acts will lead to if they are not forsaken. This is so striking that I quote the entire passage of 3.1-6 in analytical form which will help the reader see the point being made more clearly.

3:1 My child, flee from every evil  
and from everything like it.

3:2 [1] Do not become angry,  
for anger leads to murder;  
nor be envious,  
nor be contentious,  
nor be hot-headed,  
for, from all these, murders are born.

3:3 [2] My child, do not become lustful,  
for lust leads to illicit sex;  
nor use foul speech,  
nor be one who lifts up the eyes,  
for, from all these, adulteries are born.

3:4 [3] My child, do not practice divination,  
since this leads to idolatry;  
nor be an enchanter,

nor be an astrologer,  
 nor be a magician,  
 nor even wish to see nor hear these things,  
 for, from all these, idolatry is born.

3:5 [4] My child, do not become false,  
 since falsehood leads to theft;  
 nor be a lover of money,  
 nor be a seeker of glory,  
 for, from all these, thefts are born.

3:6 [5] My child, do not become a grumbler,  
 since this leads to blasphemy;  
 nor be a self-pleaser,  
 nor be evil-minded,  
 for, from all these, blasphemies are born.<sup>40</sup>

The structure of this passage is fraught with features that would be familiar to Jewish readers. It has already been noted that the repeated addresses to 'my child' (Τέκνον μου) echoes wisdom literature such as Proverbs, where a similar expression appears fifteen times and also in *Sirach*, where exactly the same expression appears nineteen times.

The second characteristic in this passage that finds parallels in Jewish literature is the practice of constructing a fence around the Torah to keep one from coming too close to the commands and break them. For example, in *Avot de Rabbi Nathan* 17a, the rabbis taught that Adam was the first to construct a fence around God's command not to eat from the tree by telling Eve that 'we should not touch it' (see Gen. 3.3). In a later manual for training rabbinic disciples, *Derek Erez Zuta*, a number of additional 'fences' strikingly similar to *Did.* 3:1-6 are offered (*DEZ* 2:7; 3:6). There are other examples of this fence building in the Second Temple *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, especially *T. Jud.* 14:1 and 19:1. There the author employs the same verb, 'leads to' (ὀδηγεῖ) that is used five times in *Did.* 3:2-6.<sup>41</sup>

But we do not need to travel outside the boundaries of Jewish Christian literature to find similar examples of 'building a fence' around the Torah

<sup>40</sup> While the translation is mine, I again acknowledge the influence of Aaron Milavec in this analytical translation.

<sup>41</sup> Van de Sandt and Flusser illustrate this characteristic of 3.1-6 with a wealth of examples from Jewish literature (see *The Didache*, 165-79).

commandments to keep people from breaking them, since a similar approach was taken by Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount. Following his statement that his followers' righteousness should exceed that of the Pharisees (Mt. 5.17, 18), Jesus mentions a number of specific Torah prohibitions, especially those directed against murder and adultery. Jesus warns that these outward sins really are no worse than the corresponding attitudes of anger and lust (Mt. 5.21-30). It is possible that his warnings also could be framed in the following ways.

My child, do not become angry, for anger leads to murder.  
 My child, do not become lustful, for lust leads to illicit sex.  
 (*Didache* 3:2, 3)

### 13. *Five positive virtues (3:7-10)*

The Didachist follows these firm admonitions against destructive deeds with a positive affirmation of good practices to follow. In this way, he follows a time-honoured method of showing what behaviours need to be 'put off' and then what needs to be 'put on' in their place (cf. Eph 4.22-24).

The qualities of meekness, long-suffering, mercy, and gentleness seem to echo Christian language such as that enunciated by Jesus in a number of places. The quotation in 3.8, 'But be meek, since the meek will inherit the earth' is one of the beatitudes in Matthew 5.5. The wording may reflect Psalm 37:11, since no dominical citation formula is used as in the later section of *Didache* (9:5, e.g.). The quotation, however, is slightly closer to the beatitude since the article τῆν is included in both, so this may be evidence that the Didachist is referring to the 'Gospel of the Lord' and simply cites it without a formula since that seems to be his practice in this first part of the *Didache* (cf. 1:3-5).

The words that conclude the verse: '... and one who trembles always at the words that you have heard', most probably are an allusion to Isaiah 66:2. The qualities of meekness and humility that are to replace the 'fenced' behaviour forbidden in 3.1-6 must be indicated by a humble attitude towards the one who speaks the word, anticipating the clear command in 4.1. Note James 1.21: 'Therefore put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness and receive with

meeekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.' This is not the only parallel with James that has been noticed by commentators.<sup>42</sup>

The positive advice in this paragraph culminates in the dramatic affirmation of God's good providential ways in 3.10: 'You will accept (προσδέξῃ) the experiences that happen to you as good things, knowing that nothing happens apart from God'. One thinks of the Pauline affirmation in Rom 8:28, but since the Didachist nowhere clearly refers to Pauline statements in any positive way, it is best to see this as echoing such passages as *Sir.* 2:4: 'Accept (δέξαι) whatever befalls you, and in times of humiliation be patient.'

#### *14. Five congregational precepts (4.1-4)*

Much of the teaching thus far has had an individual focus – the shedding of the convert's old life and the putting on of new attitudes and behaviour patterns. But the convert is joining a new family – a family with brothers and sisters and familial love – and also a family with potential quarrels and strife. So the life of the new believer in the body is stressed over the first few verses of chapter four.

First, his attitude towards the teacher of the word of God should be one of attention and respect (4.1). Taking the book as a whole, this probably has most immediate reference to the 'overseers' (ἐπισκόποι) who have the spiritual oversight of individual congregations (15.1). Milavec views this teacher as the personal mentor of the new convert who takes him through the programme described in Chapters 1–5. While this is possible, in my opinion he has not made a case for this individualism in training. The very next verse stresses the role of the saints as a group that provides the words in which he is to find rest and support. I believe it is best to see a combination of a teacher/overseer plus the congregation who all participate in his training. This seems more like the situation that prevailed before formal catechetical schools under the oversight of a bishop trained new converts (late second century).

With his characteristic realism, the Didachist then reminds the young believer that all may not be sweetness and light in his new family. The Jerusalem manuscript states that 'You will not desire (ποθήσεις) division.'

<sup>42</sup> Schaff, *Oldest Church Manual*, 93.

Many commentators suggest an emendation here as: ‘You will not cause (ποιήσεις) division’ – the difference is only one letter. And the difference does not alter the tone of the command that much. Rather than a division-maker, he is to be a ‘peace-maker’ (4.3), again echoing a beatitude (Mt. 5.9). While this may appear to be a big responsibility for a novice, the command is not that he should serve on an ecclesiastical court, but simply as a brother that contributes to the unity, not to the fracturing, of his new family. The simplicity and love of new believers can be an example to us all.

### 15. *Three household rules (4.9-11)*

After dealing with the sharing of resources (4.5-8), the Didachist sets forth three household rules – the *Haustafeln*, or household code that appears often in the NT (Eph 5.22–6.9; Col 3.18–4.1; 1 Pet 2.18–3.7; 1 Tim 2.8-15; Tit 2.1-10).<sup>43</sup> Taken together, the rules imply that there were at least some adult converts who had children and slaves. Milavec has a good summary of this passage.

In the case of children, they were trained from their earliest years ‘in the fear of God’ (4:9). The *Didache* does not give any guidelines as to when and how such children were to be introduced into the community. No provisions, for example, are made for infant baptisms. ... Since the choice (to join) the community was an adult decision prompted by the Spirit (4:10b), parents were expected to train their underage children in appropriate ways until such time as they came forward, in early adulthood, and asked for admittance.<sup>44</sup>

This passage also provides evidence of the significant social levelling that membership in the Christian family entailed. Here we see both masters and slaves who still maintain that relationship but in an entirely new and different context than was possible in society at large. It is the Spirit’s work that makes this possible (4.10) by preparing both master and slave for their roles in the assembly. This is the first reference to the divine Spirit in the book, but not

<sup>43</sup> An excellent review of the recent scholarly discussion on the *Haustafeln* is provided in a thorough excursus by Harold Hoehner, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002), 720–9.

<sup>44</sup> Milavec, *Text of the Didache*, 60.

the last. 'Holy Spirit' appears in the baptismal formula of 7.1 and 11.7-12 mentions a prophet speaking in the Spirit.

### *16. Solemn final admonitions (4.12-14)*

The new believer is told to hate the things that are not pleasing to the Lord (4.12). This prepares the reader for a list of those very things in the 'Way of Death' in chapter 5. The instruction that has been given is to be carefully guarded and should neither be added to nor detracted from (4.13). This echoes such Torah commands as Deuteronomy 4.2 and 12.32 and points out how serious this 'Way of Life' was to be viewed in the community

The final admonition points to the future when the trained convert will assume his full role as a baptized member of the Church. 'In church (ἐκκλησίᾳ) you will confess your wrongdoings, and you will not go to your place of prayer with an evil conscience' (4.14). The details of the weekly Eucharist have not yet been given (14.1-3), but it will be in the context of that service where this admonition finds its specific focus. For the time being, however, we should know that a guilty conscience is not consistent with participation in his public 'place of prayer' (προσευχὴν – see its similar use in Acts 16.16).

### *17. Summary of the way of life*

Chapter 5 consists of a litany of at least forty attitudes and actions that comprise the 'Way of Death', morbid practices presented in a stark list marked by asyndeton. This least attractive of the sections in the *Didache* always brings to my mind the complaints of students as we translate this chapter of unfamiliar words. The Didachist would want us to hate the sinful practices more than we hate the unfamiliar Greek lexemes!

### *18. Conclusion*

So what *did* the 'Teaching' teach? *Did.* 1–5 is devoted to a teaching programme that served the Church as a catechetical manual at least through the fourth century and perhaps beyond. With the influx of converts from paganism in



that century it probably served other catechetical schools as well as it did in Alexandria, and possibly also as an *enchiridion*. This function may have continued down to the ninth century, when it seems to have passed out of usage, probably because it had been swallowed up in the bosom of the larger *Apostolic Constitutions*. While its overall length may have been shortened (less the sacramental sections), its moral and ethical contents were not to be altered or watered down (4.13). While some issues may have been more relevant to its original Jewish Christian concerns, the training manual as a whole appears to have served a vital purpose as pre-baptismal catechesis for pagan converts to this Messianic form of a new Jewish faith.

If we can draw some 'lesson' from this ancient manual for the modern Church, it may be as follows. The moral tone of the teaching in the *Didache* has much to challenge us about rethinking and retooling modern baptismal or catechumen classes. With the right framework of theology in place, catechumens urgently need instruction in the purity, gentleness, humility and charity that should mark the Christian life. The superior morality of early Christianity carried in it the guarantee of its ultimate victory. *That* was what the 'Teaching' taught.

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