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Wordtrade Reviews: Founding Patterns

Contents

Wordtrade Reviews: 1
  Editorial Appraisals: 3
ONTOLOGY: LAYING THE FOUNDATIONS BY NICOLAI HARTMANN, TRANSLATED KEITH PETERSON [DE GRUYTER, 9783110624366] 4
  Hartmann's Realist Ontology 10
    Hartmann in Context 10
    Summary and Place of Laying the Foundations in Hartmann's Oeuvre 12
    Hartmann and Realism 21
NEW WAYS OF ONTOLOGY by Nicolai Hartmann, Translated by Reinhard C. Kuhn [Praeger, 9780837179896] 26
  The End of the Old Ontology 27
NON-BEING NEW ESSAYS ON THE METAPHYSICS OF NONEXISTENCE edited by Sara Bernstein and Tyron Goldschmidt [Oxford University Press, 9780198846222] 31
  Overview 32
PRAGMATISM AS ANTI-AUTHORITARIANISM by Richard Rorty, edited by Eduardo Mendieta, Foreword by Robert B. Brandom [Belknap Press: An Imprint of Harvard University Press, 9780674248915] 34
    Reviews 35
  Excerpt: Achieving the Enlightenment by Robert B. Brandom 36
PRINCIPLES AND PERSONS THE LEGACY OF DEREK PARFIT edited by Jeff McMahan, Tim Campbell, James Goodrich, and Ketan Ramakrishnan 39
    Chapter Abstracts 43
HIPPOCRATIC COMMENTARIES IN THE GREEK, LATIN, SYRIAC AND ARABIC TRADITIONS: SELECTED PAPERS FROM THE XVTH COLLOQUE HIPPOCRATIQUE, MANCHESTER edited by Peter Pormann [Series: Studies in Ancient Medicine, Brill, 9789004470194] 49
  Reflections on Hippocratic Commentary by Elizabeth Craik 62
    Preamble 62
    Questions of Rationale in the Exegetical Tradition 62
    Typology 68

OLYMPIODORUS OF ALEXANDRIA: EXEGETE, TEACHER, PLATONIC PHILOSOPHER edited by Albert Joosse [Series: Philosophia Antiqua, Brill, 9789004466692] 68

Philosophical Profile 71

Self-Cognition 72

Form of Philosophical Communication 73

Attitude towards Christians 74

Essay: *Olympiodorus and Greco-Alexandrian Alchemy* by Cristina Viano from Olympiodorus of Alexandria 75

The Alchemical Commentators or the Age of Systematisation 75

Olympiodorus and the Commentary on the Book **On Action** 76

Content and Structure of the Commentary 77

Convergences 79

Olympiodorus the Commentator and Alchemy 82

TYCONIUS' BOOK OF RULES: AN ANCIENT INVITATION TO ECCLESIAL HERMENEUTICS by Matthew R. Lynskey [Series: Vigiliae Christianae, Supplements, Brill, 9789004454835] 84

Mottos: 85

SOLOMON AND THE ANT: THE QUR'AN IN CONVERSATION WITH THE BIBLE by David Penchansky [Cascade Books, 9781725288690] 87

Reviews: 87

ISLAMIC CIVILIZATION IN THIRTY LIVES: THE FIRST 1,000 YEARS by Chase F. Robinson [Illustrations: 80 color images, University of California Press, 9780520292987] 96

Reviews 97

A Fascinating Snapshot of Islam through Thirty Brief Biographies 99

'A'isha, wife of the Prophet 99

Al-Biruni, cataloguer of nature and culture 100

Rabi'a al-'Adawiyya was a Muslim saint. 100

DANTE by John Took [Princeton University Press, 9780691154046] 104

In fondo, una serietà terribile 105

A Coruscation of Delight 108

POETICS OF REDEMPTION: DANTE'S DIVINE COMEDY by Andreas Kablitz [De Gruyter, 9783110634099] 110

Poetics of Knowledge in the Paradiso (Paradiso XXVII and XXX) 111

BODY AND SPIRIT IN THE MIDDLE AGES: LITERATURE, PHILOSOPHY, MEDICINE edited by: Gaia Gubbini [Funded by European Research Council (ERC) and Alexander von Humboldt-Stiftung, De Gruyter, 9783110615913] Open Access 124

Excerpt: 'Body and spirit in the Middle Ages': why wonder about this subject today? 125

POETRY, BIBLE AND THEOLOGY FROM LATE ANTIQUITY TO THE MIDDLE AGES edited by Michele Cutino [Series Millennium-Studien / Millennium Studies, De Gruyter, 9783110687194] 132

ROME AND THE NEAR EASTERN KINGDOMS AND PRINCIPALITIES, 44-31 BC: A STUDY OF POLITICAL RELATIONS DURING CIVIL WAR by Hendrikus A.M. van Wijlick [Series: Impact of Empire, Brill, 9789004441743] 136

ARRIAN THE HISTORIAN: WRITING THE GREEK PAST IN THE ROMAN EMPIRE by Daniel W. Leon [University of Texas Press, 9781477321867] 139

JESUS AND JUDAISM by Martin Hengel, Anna Maria Schwemer, translation by Wayne Coppins [Baylor-Mohr Siebeck Studies in Early Christianity, Baylor University Press & Mohr Siebeck, 9783161589201] 141

Reviews 141

Excerpt: The Overall Temporal and Thematic Framework for a History of Early Christianity 144

[As Pertains to the First Volume of the Projected Four Volume Study] 144

CLASSIFYING CHRISTIANS: ETHNOGRAPHY, HERESIOLOGY, AND THE LIMITS OF KNOWLEDGE IN LATE ANTIQUITY by Todd S. Berzon [University of California Press, 9780520284265] 145

Review 145

Excerpt: Writing People, Writing Religion 147

How To Read Heresiology 152

Mapping Christianity: Heresiology, History, And Sectarianism 155

Outlining The Project 158

PATTERNS OF WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP IN EARLY CHRISTIANITY edited by Joan E. Taylor and Ilaria L. E. Ramelli [Oxford University Press, 9780198867067] 161

Editorial Appraisals:

Some qualified reviewers offer their own brief evaluation of the book. Otherwise most of our content represents the authors'-editors' own words as a preview to their approach to the subject, their style and point-of-view. <>

ONTOLOGY: LAYING THE FOUNDATIONS BY NICOLAI HARTMANN, TRANSLATED KEITH PETERSON [DE GRUYTER, 9783110624366]

It is no exaggeration to say that of the early 20th century German philosophers who claimed to establish a new ontology, former neo-Kantian turned realist Nicolai Hartmann is the only one to have actually followed through. "Ontology: Laying the Foundations" deals with "what is insofar as it is," and its four parts tackle traditional ontological assumptions and prejudices and traditional categories such as substance, thing, individual, whole, object, and phenomenon; a novel redefinition of existence and essence in terms of the ontological factors Dasein and Sosein and their interrelations; an analysis of modes of "givenness" and the ontological embeddedness of cognition in affective transcendent acts; and a discussion of the status of ideal being, including mathematical being, phenomenological essences, logical laws, values, and the interconnections between the ideal and real spheres. Hartmann's work offers rich resources for those interested in overcoming the human-centeredness of much 20th century philosophy. Hartmann's work offers rich resources for those interested in overcoming the human-centeredness of much 20th century philosophy.

CONTENTS

Table of Contents
Translator's Introduction: Hartmann's Realist Ontology
Translator's Note
Preface
Preface to the Third Edition
Introduction
1 Habits of Thinking and Bondage to Traditional Forms of Thought
2 Paucity of Problems, Problem Fatigue, and Relativism
3 The Problem of Being in Idealist Systems
4 Ontological Background of Relativism
5 Metaphysical Background of Natural Science
6 The Metaphysics of Organic Life
7 The Metaphysical in Mental Life
8 The Metaphysical in Objective Spirit
9 The Metaphysical in the Logical Sphere
10 The Downfall of the Problem of Knowledge
11 Phenomenology and Metaphysics of Knowledge
12 The Metaphysics of Ethos and of Freedom
13 Metaphysics of Values
14 Metaphysics of Art and of the Beautiful
15 Metaphysics of History
16 The Interlinked Framework of Metaphysical Problems
17 The Ontological Element in Metaphysical Problems
18 The Idea of a New philosophia prima
19 Philosophia prima and philosophia ultima
20 Division and Delimitation of the Presentation
21 Relation of the New to the Old Ontology

Part One: On What Is as Such
Section I: The Concept of What Is and Its Associated Aporias
Chapter 1: The Fundamental Question of Ontology
a) Starting “This Side” of Realism and Idealism
b) Being and What is: Formal Sense of the Basic Question
c) The Aristotelian Conception of the Problem
Chapter 2: Flawed Approach of one Contemporary Investigation
a) Fallacy in the Modified Question of Being
b) The Question of Being and the Question of Meaning
Chapter 3: Stance of Ontological Cognition
a) The Inability to Conceive or Define Being
b) Elementary Principles for Proceeding
c) The Natural and the Reflective Attitude
d) Intentio Recta and Intentio Obliqua
Chapter 4: Status and Deep-Rootedness of the Ontological Problem
a) Natural, Scientific, and Ontological Relation to the World
b) Common Relation to What Is: Natural Realism
c) Unity and Differences of Content in the Field of Objects
d) Neglect of the Given Aspect of What Is
Section II: Traditional Conceptions of Being
Chapter 5: Naïve and Substantialist Concepts of Being
a) What Is as Thing, the Given, Ground of the World
b) The Ontological Motif in the Ancient Idea of Substance
c) What Is as Substrate and as Determinate (Matter and Form)
d) The Identification of ens and bonum
Chapter 6: What Is as Universal and as Singular
a) What Is as Essence (essentia)
b) Individualization of Eidos
c) What Is as What Exists
Chapter 7: What Is as Component Part and as Whole
a) Individuality and Universality, Individuum and Totality
b) What Is as Individuum, Component, Member
c) Limits of the Atomistic Conception of Being
d) What Is as Totality, Wholeness, System
e) The Error in Ontological Holism
Section III: Determinations of What Is Based on Modes of Being
Chapter 8: Actuality, Reality, Degrees of Being
a) What Is as actu ens
b) What Is as Real
c) Ontological Strata, Ontological Levels, and Degrees of Being
d) Critique of Degrees of Being
e) The Ontological Unity of the Real World
Chapter 9: Reflective Conceptions of What Is
a) What Is as Object, Phenomenon, and Ready-to-Hand
b) What Is as Transobjective and Nonrational
c) Subject-based Theories of Being
Chapter 10: The Limits of the Stance “This Side” of Idealism and Realism - 95

a) The Phenomenal Basis of Subjectivist Characterizations
b) The Correlativist Prejudice
c) Being of the Phenomenon and of the Cognitive Relation
Part Two: The Relation between Dasein and Sosein
Section I: The Aporetics of "That" and "What"
Chapter 11: Reality and Existence
a) The Indifference of What Is
b) Inadequacy of the Traditional Concepts
c) Essentia and Ideal Being
d) Ontology of "That" and "What": Quidditas
Chapter 12: The Disjunction between Dasein and Sosein
a) Ontological Sharpening of the Opposition
b) Logical and Gnoseological Arguments
c) Metaphysical Overstatements
d) Mistaken Interpretation of the Concepts "in mente" and "extra mentem"
e) Misapplication of the Kantian Concepts
Chapter 13: Aufhebung of the Disjunction
a) Cognition of Laws and the Existence of Cases
b) The Gnoseologically Vexing Aspect of a priori Cognition
c) The Problematic Criterion of Definability
Chapter 14: The Types of Judgment and their Interconvertability
a) The Special Place of the Existential Judgment and the esse praedicativum
b) Conversion of Judgments of Dasein into Judgments of Sosein
c) Bare and Relational Dasein-assertions
d) Conversion of Judgments of Sosein into Judgments of Dasein
Section II: Ontically Positive Relation between Dasein and Sosein Chapter 15: Aufhebung of Ontological Illusion
a) Ontological Misuse of the Category of Substance
b) The Alleged Indifference and Contingency of Dasein
c) The Meaning of Indifference and its Aufhebung
Chapter 16: The Error in the Modal Argument
a) Fallacious Arguments Concerning Possibility and Actuality
b) Correction of the Error
c) What is Instructive about the Mistaken Arguments
Chapter 17: Conjunctive and Disjunctive Opposition
a) The Concept of Ontically Neutral Sosein
b) The Difference between Spheres as an Opposition between Modes of Dasein
c) Conjunction of Ontological Factors and Disjunction of Ways of Being
d) Analysis and Reduction of the Basic Schema
e) The Role of Neutral Sosein in the Controversy over Universals
f) The Status of Phenomenological "Essences"
Section III: The Inner Relation between Ontological Factors
Chapter 18: The Dasein in Sosein and the Sosein in Dasein
a) Connectivity and Reality in the Relation of Ontological Factors
b) Primary Consciousness of the World: Language and Logical Form
c) Substantive Relativity of "That" and "What"
d) Particular Conversions of Judgments and their Ontological Meaning

Chapter 19: Identity and Divergence between Ontological Factors
a) The Progressively Offset Identity of Dasein and Sosein in the Total Ontological Context
b) Sosein as Dasein of Something "in" Something
c) Scope of the Identity between Sosein and Dasein
d) The Ontic Limit of Identity
e) The Different Directions of Offset Identity
Chapter 20: The Outcome and its Consequences
a) Summary of the Results
b) Outlook on Further Tasks
c) The Illusion of Disjunction and its Ontological Basis
d) The Epistemological Reason for the Disjunction
Chapter 21: Modes of Givenness and Ways of Being
a) Threefold Superposition and Threefold Boundary Relation
b) Correction of the Model: True Position of the Modes of Givenness - 16
c) The Divisive Nature of Cognition and the Illusion of Ontical Disjunction
Part Three: The Givenness of Real Being
Section I: Cognition and its Object
Chapter 22: Gnoseological and Ontological Being-in-itself
a) Aufhebung of Ontological Neutrality
b) Epistemological Background of the Concept of Being-in-itself
c) Aufhebung of Reflection in Ontological Being-in-itself
d) The Law of the Cognitive Object and What Is
Chapter 23: The Transcendence of the Cognitive Act
a) The Skeptical Burden of Proof and the Problem of the Givenness of Reality
b) Conclusions: The Question concerning the "How" of Ontological Givenness
c) Cognition as Transcendent Act
d) The Act of Grasping and its Object
Chapter 24: The Antinomies in the Phenomenon of Cognition
a) Phenomenon and Theory: Natural Realism
b) The Antinomy of Being-in-Itself and Objectified Being
c) The Antinomy of Phenomenal Transcendence
d) The Solution of the Antinomy and its Problematic Remainder
Chapter 25: Transobjectivity
a) Problem-Consciousness and Cognitive Progress
b) The Being-in-Itself of the Transobjective and the Objectified
Chapter 26: The Limits of Cognizability
a) The Emergence of the Gnoseologically Nonrational
b) Concept and Status of the Unknowable "For us"
c) The Ontological Significance of the Infinite Remainder
d) The Being-in-Itself of the Nonrational
Section II: Transcendent Affective Acts
Chapter 27: Receptive Affective Acts
a) Place and Structure of the Ontically Fundamental Acts
b) The Characteristic Quality of Receptive Affective Acts
c) That Which Befalls Us and Being-Affected: The Hardness of the Real and our Being Subjected to It
d) The Idea of Fate: Experience and Cognition

Chapter 28: Gradations of Experience and Unity of Reality
a) Experience of Resistance and the Reality of Things
b) Clarification of the Ontological Concept of Reality
c) Reality and Temporality
d) Cognition and Affective Consciousness of Reality
Chapter 29: Prospective Affective Acts
a) Life in Anticipation and Anticipatory Being-Affected
b) Real Anticipation: Expectation and Readiness
c) Secondary Forms of Presentiment
Chapter 30: Genuine Affective Acts of the Prospective Type
a) Act Transcendence in Selective Affective Anticipation
b) Coming to Terms with Chance
c) What is Illusory in Anticipatory Being-Affected and the Limits of Act Transcendence
d) Metaphysical Delusion and Spurious Argumentation
Chapter 31: Spontaneous Affective Acts
a) Activity and its Type of Act Transcendence
b) Immediate Spontaneity and Mediated Receptivity
c) Reflexive Being-Affected of the Person in their own Action
d) The Reality of Persons for Persons
e) The Apparent Division in Reality: Theoretical Errors
Chapter 32: Inner Activity and Freedom
a) The Characteristic Quality of Interpersonal Ties
b) Primary Givenness in Reaction
c) The Role of the Situation and its Form of Givenness
Section III: Real Life and Cognition of Reality
Chapter 33: The Context of Life as Ontological
a) The Sum Total of Act Transcendence as a Real Mode of Life
b) The Reality in Value References
c) The Practical Givenness of the World of Things
d) The Object of "Care"
Chapter 34: Particular Spheres of Embeddedness in the Real World
a) The Real Phenomenon of "Labor"
b) The Form of Givenness of the wider Real Context
c) Life in the Context of the Cosmos
Chapter 35: Cognition and Affective Givenness
a) Identity of the World and Sectors of Givenness
b) Consequences of the Transcendence of Affective Acts
c) Further Consequences
d) Cognition and the Gradation of Phenomenal Transcendence
Chapter 36: The Special Place of Cognition
a) Homogeneity and Opposition in the Act Context
b) Givenness of Sosein and Dasein in the Multiplicity of Acts
c) Superiority of Cognition and Intellectualist Prejudice
d) Standalone Science and Alienation from Things
e) Phenomenology and Critique of Science
Chapter 37: The Place of Science
a) Methodological Errors and Misunderstandings

b) Embeddedness of Science in the Context of Everyday Life
c) Correction of the Prejudices of Science Critique
d) Ontological Embeddedness of Cognition
Part Four: The Problem and Status of Ideal Being
Section I: The Givenness of Mathematical Being
Chapter 38: Ontological Aporias of Ideality
a) The Primary Aporia and its Consequences
b) Ideal Being and Ideal Cognition
c) Approach to Ontological Givenness in Mathematical Cognition
d) Objections and Criticism of Objections
e) Mathematical Judgment and Mathematical Object
f) Further Examples and Consequences
Chapter 39: Theories and Interpretations
a) Mathematical Subjectivism
b) Mathematical Intuitionism
c) Disastrous Consequences
d) The Basic Epistemological Fallacy
e) Cross-check: Mathematics without Cognition
Chapter 40: Ideal Cognition and Objective Validity
a) Immanent and Transcendent Apriority
b) Ideal Apriority and Necessity
c) Cognitive Necessity and Ontological Necessity
Chapter 41: Ideal Cognition and Real Cognition
a) The Application of Mathematical Cognition to Real Relations
b) A priori Cognition of the Real
c) The Equivocation in the Concept of Ideality
Section II: The Interconnection of Ideal and Real being Chapter 42: The Disappearance of Ideal Objects in the Field of Cognition
a) The Obtrusiveness of the Concept
b) Obtrusiveness and Unobtrusiveness of the Object
c) The Place of the Cognized Entity in Ideal Cognition
d) Two Kinds of Disappearance: Representation and Concept
Chapter 43: The Threefold Relation
a) The Proximity of Ideal Being to Consciousness
b) Nominalism and Realism
c) The Unavoidable Deception
Chapter 44: Relative Independence of Ideal Being
a) Role of Ideality in apriorism Concerning the Real
b) Genuine Autonomy and Spurious Isolation of the Ideal Object
c) Pure and Applied Mathematics
d) The "Contingency" of the Real and the Ideal "Realm of Possibility"
Chapter 45: Indifference and Connection
a) The "Inexactness" of Real Cases
b) Correct and Incorrect Conclusions
c) Meaning and Limits of the Indifference of Ideal Being
Section III: Ideal Being in the Real
Chapter 46: The Phenomenology of Essences

a) Bracketing and Isolation
b) Essence and its Relation to the Real
c) Free Floating and Attached Ideality
d) Unity of Essences and Duality of Access
Chapter 47: Essential Intuition and Evidence
a) The Idea of mathesis universalis
b) Limits of Certainty regarding Content
c) Subjective and Objective Evidentiality
d) Positive Meaning of Evidential Deception
Chapter 48: The Realm of the Logical and its Laws
a) The Dual Lawful Regularity of Thinking
b) Ideal Ontological Character of Logical Lawfulness
c) Relation of Logical to Attached Ideality
d) Logical Laws and the Lawful Regularity of the Real
e) Objective Validity of the Logical and the Possibility of Sciences of the Real
Chapter 49: The Realm of Values and its Way of Being
a) The Special Status of Values among the Essences
b) Consciousness of Value and Cognition of Value
c) Reality of Value Feeling and the Determining Power of Values
d) The Variability of Value Consciousness and the Being of Values
e) Conclusions: An Apparent Contradiction and its Resolution
Chapter 50: Ways of Being and Position of the Spheres
a) Floating of the Spheres and Immanence of Ways of Being
b) The Tenable Meaning of "Floating" of the Spheres
c) The Relation between Ways of Being in the Individual
d) The Nimbus of "Grandeur"
e) Ideal Ontology and Real Ontology
Chapter 51: Proximity to Consciousness and Ideal Transcendence
a) Inner Givenness and Pure Apriority
b) Ideal Transcendence and Real Transcendence
c) The Nonrational in the Realm of Ideal Being

Hartmann's Realist Ontology

Hartmann in Context

Despite an international upsurge of interest in the philosophy of Nicolai Hartmann (1882–1950) in recent years, his work is still almost completely unknown to the English-language philosophical audience. Widely respected during his lifetime, he was roughly the same age as positivists Moritz Schlick and Otto Neu rath, the existentialist Karl Jaspers, Catholic philosopher Jacques Maritain, and the Spaniard Jose Ortega y Gasset. Neo-Kantian Ernst Cassirer and phenomenologist Max Scheler were eight years older than Hartmann, while the philosophic rock stars of the twentieth century, Ludwig Wittgenstein and Martin Heidegger, were seven years younger than him (Harich 2004, 6). In his own era, he was not unknown to those in the English-speaking philosophical landscape with some interest in Continental philosophy. In his 1930 survey of German philosophy, the young Deweyan-Marxist Sidney Hook claimed that Hartmann was“ interesting without being oracular, instructive without pedantry, and profound without being obscure,” and predicted that he “will soon be greeted as Germany’s leading philosopher” (Hook 1930, 156–57).Itis no doubt difficult for readers to imagine that someone so completely unknown today might have been considered by anyone to be a “leading philosopher” of the time.

Hartmann was of Baltic German descent and an independent thinker who decisively struck out on his own in his groundbreaking 1921 Grundzüge einer Metaphysik der Erkenntnis (Basic Features of the Metaphysics of Cognition) where he repudiated the Neo-Kantianism of his former teachers Hermann Cohen and Paul Natorp in Marburg. The fact that he wrote enormous systematic works with an analytical style and with a thorough familiarity with the history of philosophy made him not easily classifiable. While he appreciated and appropriated aspects of the phenomenological approach of the early Edmund Husserl and the Munich circle, phenomenology remained for him one important method for philosophy among others, and most definitely not a philosophy that was complete in itself. Although he admired Max Scheler’s development of a “material value ethics” and his metaphysical vision, he refused to accept any metaphysics that he saw as basically teleological in orientation, and he held controversially that ethics had to be atheistic. While he respected the techniques and findings of historicists like Wilhelm Dilthey, he refused to accept the relativism that they often did, and instead upheld the notion of the gradual historical growth of human knowledge. Are actively conservative bourgeois intellectual of the Weimar republic in the period of his early output, like many of his generation he looked with dismay on the rapidly industrializing, culture-destroying capitalist society of the day. The fact that on the eve of WWII this well-known professor at the University of Berlin refused to begin his seminars with the mandated “Heil Hitler” is testimony to the fact that he did not think much of “the inner truth and greatness” of National Socialism as a solution to this cultural crisis.

One of the most prominent but poorly understood features of early twentieth century Continental philosophy was a renewal of interest in ontology and met physics following the decline of Neo-Kantianism. Hook’s prediction that Hartmann would become Germany’s leading philosopher was never realized, as Hartmann’s impressive work was soon eclipsed by that of his younger contemporary, Martin Heidegger. is good reason to believe that Hartmann, however, was the most significant figure in this revival of ontology, or the “turn of contemporary philosophy to ontology and to realism.” One of the best interpreters of Hartmann’s philosophy and a former student, the late Wolfgang Harich, posed the question “who should be credited with the title ‘founder of the new ontology’ in the twentieth century?” On the basis of the chronology of their publications it looks like Heidegger should get credit for this, since Being and Time was published in Husserl’s Jahrbuch in 1927, while Hartmann’s first major ontological text, translated here as Ontology: Laying the Foundations, did not appear until 1935. Harich points out that this superficial chronology overlooks the fact that the “fundamental ideas for his ontology” already make an appearance in Hartmann’s 1921 Metaphysics of Cognition, and are also“the central theme of his contribution to the Festschrift for Paul Natorp of 1923” (Harich2004, 163). The full title of the essay just referred to reads “How is Critical Ontology Possible? Toward the Foundation of the General Theory of the Categories, Part One, ” and Harich notes that in the subtitle one can see that Hartmann is already dealing with the essential theme of his 1940 Aufbau der realen Welt (The Structure of the Real World), itself subtitled “Outline of General Category Theory.” While Harich does not mention it, we could also add that another essay called “Categorial Laws” and again subtitled “Toward the Foundation of a General Theory of Categories” is published in 1926in the Philosophischer

Anzeiger.4 Even more than the first essay, whose aim is the largely critical task of revealing and correcting errors, the second essay develops what becomes Hartmann's most original contribution to the history of ontology, the description of second-order "categorial laws" or "laws of stratification" that display the overall "structure of the real world." We therefore agree with Harich that Hartmann deserves the credit a "founder of the new ontology." While Hartmann may have followed through on the project of developing a new ontology that could shed new light on problems in all of traditional disciplines more than anyone else at the time, there is no doubt whose so-called "fundamental ontology" became dominant.

We can look to Harich again to get some sense of why Hook might have believed Hartmann was destined for greater renown. Harich claimed that of all his better-known contemporaries listed above, Hartmann's "lifelong achievements are greater and more universal." This is because Hartmann "is the only one of all of them, for the last time in the twentieth century, to have carefully created a systematic philosophy that covered all of the traditional disciplines. If we compare him with historical figures, he comes closest to Aristotle in terms of systematic breadth and depth, or even Hegel in Modern times, and in the feud period, Aquinas" (Harich2004, 6).With regard to his writing and thinking, Hook asserted that "no one can read [Hartmann] without being filled with high excitement, for he develops with astonishing skill the dramatic conflict of principles involved in every genuine philosophical problem" (Hook 1930, 157). Harich described Hartmann as a philosopher "skilled at subtle analyses," with "the capacity to organize an incredibly wide range of material meticulously," as well as someone who "knows how to masterfully deal with traditional ideas and productively take them further." He claimed that the "anxious longing for originality is for eign to him," while "his writing is free of affectation and artificiality, and [...] is eminently clear, elegant, and nevertheless powerful. His books are easy to read despite the fact that they deal with highly complex problems of tremendous scope" (Harich2004, Ibid.). Such high praise should help to motivate readers to tackle Hartmann's texts and reach their own conclusions about Hartmann's place in the history of twentieth century philosophy.

This translation of Ontology: Laying the Foundations adds to the steadily growing body of translations that aim to introduce Hartmann's writing and thinking toa broader audience. The contemporary relevance of this work to recent debates over realism, among other things, will be apparent to all upon reg the text, and I will address some specific aspects of this relevance in the third section of this introduction.6 In the next section, I place this work in the context of Hartmann's voluminous output and summarize its main features. My hope is that the current century will know more of Hartmann's work than the last.

Summary and Place of Laying the Foundations in Hartmann's Oeuvre

While he wrote at length and with significant originality on epistemology, aesthetics, philosophy of history, natural science, and many other topics, Hartmann's central preoccupation was with developing a new ontology adequate to the changed scientific and humanistic intellectual landscape of the early twentieth century. Hartmann deliberately called his approach a "critical ontology," in contrast with existing "critical realism," phenomenological idealisms, inductive metaphysics, and logical or empirical positivism. As already mentioned, he began to develop his ontological approach as early as 1921 and in the subsequent essays of 1924 and 1926. He published his truly imposing, innovative and comprehensive work on Ethics in 1926as well, which includes some extensive remarks on the ontology of values in some core chapters (Hartmann 2002). If we set aside his continued strong output of essay-length work, between 1926 and 1935 his major publications include Volume 2 of his Die Philosophie des deutschen Idealismus (Philosophy of German Idealism) in 1929 (Hartmann 1960), Zum Problem der Realitätsgegebenheit (On the Problem of the Givenness of Reality) in 1931 (Hartung andWunsch2014, 177–264), as well as Das Problem des geistigen Seins: Untersuchungen zur Grundlegung der Geschichtsphilosophie und der Geisteswissenschaften (The Problem of Spiritual Being: Investigations into the Foundations of the Philosophy of History and the Human Sciences) in 1933 (Hartmann 1962).On the Problem of the Givenness of Reality is especially significant not only because itgets folded into Part III of Laying the Foundations, but because it was originally presented to a meeting of the Kant-Gesellschaft in Halle dedicated to the "turn to ontology and realism in contemporary philophy." Both the discussion at the meeting and its publication in issue 32 of the Philosophische Vorträge of theKant-Gesellschaft included responses by a range of noteworthy discussants, including Helmuth Plessner, Moritz Geiger, Heinz Heimsoeth, and Theodor Litt, as well as a closing statement by Hartmann (Hartung and Wunsch 2014, 177–264). After Ontology: Laying the Foundations he steadily churns out there remaining volumes of his ontological work, publishing. Possibility and Actuality in 1938 (Hartmann 2013), Aufbau in 1940 (Hartmann 1940), and completing the fourth volume Philosophy of Nature in 1943 (Hartmann 1980), which was not published until all of the other volumes could be republished in 1948. The Aesthetics, under revision at the time of his death (1950), was later published in 1953 (Hartmann 2014).

Hartmann claims in the first Preface to Laying the Foundations that the book "form[s] the prelude to an ontology that I have been working on for two decades," and he asserts that "[a] new critical ontology has become possible. The task is to make it a reality" (v).Before moving on, we should be clear about the meaning of the term "critique" employed in the phrase "critical ontology." In laying the Foundations, Hartmann insists on a point of departure "this side" of what he calls the explicit metaphysical "standpoints" of idealism and realism. The term "diesseits," "this side," virtually becomes a technical term for him. In his earlier text on Kant, "Diesseits von Idealismus und Realismus," he claims that "whoever says 'this side' is just exercising the epoche [suspension of judgment] against questionable standpoints" and does not adopt either one of them (Hartmann 1924, 21). By"standpoint" he means, roughly, any philosophical approach that has become an"-ism," ora system-building, perspective-fettered, dogmatic philosophy. "critical "philosophy is, in contrast, problem-oriented, principally interested in what is "transhistorical" in philosophical thought,

And reveals the arbitrary (metaphysical) assumptions and presuppositions in tificial standpoints in order to clear the way for productive theoretical work on philosophical problems. The "critical" principle is thus defined in terms of avoiding system-building and advocates following the problems themselves, revealing and rectifying arbitrary metaphysical assumptions wherever they arise (Hartmann 1924, 24–25). This is one way in which his ontology is "critical." In its execution, the ontology aims to keep itself away from "standpoints," but it will ultimately come down on the side of realism, as Hartmann explains in Laying the Foundations.

In an early English-language review of the book in 1935, the author says that Hartmann's Ontology isa book that advances the discipline of ontology in many ways. No one interested in ontology can overlook it. I think, however, that the great value of the book lies not only in the novelty of its results, but in the method through which these numerous results are gained. [...] I know of no one in contemporary philosophy who has as conscientious an analytic as this of Hartmann's in which every fact is followed to its conclusion, eve thematic form grows out of the exact analysis of the facts and the problems (G1935, 714).

"Problems" are in fact the focus of Hartmann's careful "aporetic" methodology, which aims to provide a balanced characterization of the (potentially transhistorical) key philosophical problems in many domains, supported by a type of phenomenological description free of metaphysical prejudices, and supplemented by a constructive "theoretical" attempt to resolve these problems (or to acknowledge their irresolvability). These three methods are skillfully intertwined and enacted in this book as in others.

Hartmann's conception of "transhistorical" problems owes something tohis background in Neo-Kantianism, and it plays a central role in his justification for the project of a new ontology. In response to the question that opens the Introduction, "Why should we really return to ontology at all?, "he explains that we have to engage in ontology because there are unresolved (and irresolvable) "metaphysical problems" in every philosophically relevant domain of inquiry, including the physical sciences, life sciences, psychology, logic, epistemology, philosophy of history, ethics, and aesthetics, and it is the discipline of ontology that has to deal with the manageable ontological features of such problems. The introduction to the book is mostly dedicated to illuminating the unresolved metaphysical problematics in each of these domains of inquiry. Since there is no Conclusion to the book (Part IV simply ends abruptly), the Introduction has to serve to initially orient the reader to the landscape of issues as well as summarize some of the major features of Hartmann's overall position. One issue that threatens to derail the approach from the start is the predominance of relativism. If, according to relativists, problems change in accord with the "spirit of the age," then this also implies that the "world" in which these problems appear is relate veto the "historical spiritual formation" that states and solves problems as well (8). This is not an unfamiliar point of view in our contemporary and theory. In Hartmann's words, "we no longer believe in problems," that is, problems that might be universal and transhistorical (3). If problems are relative, then the ontology that defines them is also relative. However, there is a tacit ontological assumption even in this relativist "standpoint," which is that the reigning "historical spiritual formation," or conceptual framework, is a real one that comes to be and passes away in time in a real world. Even extreme relativism presupposes an ontological foundation, and so is not, in its smug sophistication, somehow beyond the reach of basic ontological questions.

Hartmann explains that all domains of serious human inquiry are beset by metaphysical problems. The physical sciences do not inquire into the most basic ontological categories they use, such as space, time, matter, motion, and causality, and as a result frequently make category mistakes by attempting to reduce qualitative aspects of phenomena to quantitative mathematical relations (7). Organic life remains mysterious to us, and we always try to explain it either in terms of mechanism or of teleology, and neither set of categories is appropriate.

Only an ontological analysis informed by the latest science can determine the appropriate categories. For psychology, the "mode of being of the mental" remains a puzzle (10). Objective spirit or culture hasa kind of existence that is both dependent on but also independent of individuals, and its mode of being (expressed in language, morality, art, religion, science, etc.) is also highly problematic (11). Even the sphere of logic is questionable, in the sense that it is often equivocal whether logical laws are strictly cognitive or whether they have a real ontological aspect (13). The struggle of epistemology with psychologism and logcism is also an example of the problematic status of cognitive categories, and the contested difference between the process of objectification and the thing objectified shows that cognition itself is a metaphysical problem (17). Ethics too is cumbered by problematic features, including the nature of freedom and of values; the values that are expressed in moral principles have an ontological status that is both similar to and different from the ideal being of mathematical

entities or of other essences. Art works reveal a complex "layering" of both real and "irreal" factors; historical investigation is shaped by metaphysical materialist or idealist assumptions relating to the primary determining factors of historical events, while there seems to be no reason to privilege one set of factors over another (24–25). All of the problems that arise in these apparently separate domains are intertwined in a sticky web of metaphysical problems that both facilitates ontological cognition and frustrates it, given our limited cognitive capacities (26). Hartmann answers the original question "why ontology?" by noting that these problems can be characterized in terms of the problematic mode of being, types of determination, structural principles, and categorial for that permeate these respective domains; these ontological features will remain unclear and stifle further research without much needed and disciplined ontological anal (27). In the remainder of this section I touch on some highlights of the four major parts of the book.

The four thematic parts of the book—"being qua being," Dasein and Sosein, the "givenness" of reality, and ideal being—"are consolidated into a unity within which everything is reciprocally conditioned and conditioning. Each part is in its own way, the fundamental one, " according to Hartmann. They clarify the preliminary questions of ontology, and "only when we are done with them can construction begin" (34).Before we can handle questions bearing on the modes of being, types of determination, structural principles, and category forms that these fields entail, we need to free ourselves from inadequate (historical and current) conceptions of ontology itself.

Part I introduces the concept of "being qua being" and defines the ontological stance as an extension of the "natural attitude." Ontology is simply an extension of the natural attitude of everyday life and the sciences, and is to be contrasted with the reflective attitude of epistemology, logic, and psychology (45). This distinction is fundamental to his approach. Hartmann terms these the intentio recta and intentio obliqua, respectively, and defines them this way:

> The natural attitude toward the object— the intentio recta as it were, the being-oriented toward that which the subject encounters, what comes to the fore or offers itself, in short, the orientation toward the world in which it lives and part of which it is—this basic attitude is familiar in our everyday lives, and remains so for our whole life long. By means of it weget our bearings in the world, by virtue of it we are cognitively adapted to the demands of everyday life. However, this is the attitude that is nullified in epistemology, logic, and psychology, and is bent back in a direction oblique to it— an intentio obliqua. This is the attitude of reflection. A philosophy that makes one of these disciplines into a basic science—as many have recently done, and as all nineteenth century philosophical theories di—will be driven of its own accord into such a reflective attitude and will have no way to escape from it. This means that it cannot find its way back to the natural relationship to the world; it results in a criticism, logicism, methodologism, or psychologism estranged from the world (46).

Ontology consists in a “return” to the natural attitude. Failure to adopt the right stance risks committing basic errors that stem from the reflective attitude. For instance, Heidegger’s flawed approach consists precisely in making “what is” relative to a subject by transforming the question of being into one concerning the “meaning of Being.” Since “meaning” is something that only exists fora subject, “being and the [mode of] givenness of being are virtually conflated” and “modes of givenness are presented as if they were ontological modalities” (40–41). The “being” of things is indifferent to whatever things might be “for someone” (42). Adopting a reflective stance in ontology perverts our perspective on “being qua being.” In contrast, “[t]he natural, scientific, and ontological relations to the world are at bottom one and the same” (48). They all exhibit a shared stance toward the world that Hartmann calls “natural realism.” “Natural realism is not a philosophical theory. It belongs to the phenomenon of cognition and [...] is identical with the captivating life-long conviction that the sum total of things sons, occurrences, and relations, in short, the world in which we live and which we make into our object by means of cognizing it, is not first created by our cognizing it, but exists independently of us” (49). If we make some form of reflective approach the basis of our stance, then we can only reach “objects” rather than “what is.”

The subsequent discussions of Part I review and critique both traditional and reflective conceptions of “what is.” Being as “thing,” “givenness” (what is sensibly given),“world-ground” (what is hidden and nonsensible), “substance” (in its independence, unity, persistence), “matter and form” (indeterminacy and determinacy), “essence” (universal),“individuality,” and “existence, “among others, are considered and rejected for various reasons (53–66). Reflective conceptions, including the interpretation of being as “object,” “phenomenon,” and “ready-to-hand” are considered and also disqualified. The basic thesis of reflective views is to consider “what is” to be an “object” subject, and all similar conceptions “create a correlativistic prejudice from the relational character of cognition and attribute to it universal ontological validity.” With many writers Hartmann agrees that cognition isa process of objectification, but they misinterpret this phenomenon and draw the mistaken conclusion “that everything that is, already purely as such, is for this reason an object for a subject” (78). In other words, the basic mistake is that an epistemological limit is transformed into an ontological principle. If we cannot know something in itself the story goes, then an in itself” must not exist. However, “[t]his relativity is the basic error.” Not only does being qua being “without any relation toa subject and before all emergence of subjects in the world, but it encompasses the whole cognitive relation, including the subject and its limits” (75). The distinction between object, phenomenon, etc., and something transcending them has to be preserved (80).

Part II of the book is devoted to Hartmann’s novel treatment of the traditional concepts of essence and existence. About it one early reviewer states that “Hartmann’s treatment of the relation of existence and essence is [...] entirely new” and “original,” and predicts that “his discussion will become decisive for all further investigation of the problem” (G1935, 713). While “what is” may be indifferent to the wide range of historical and current characterization of being discussed above, there are two pairs of terms to which it is not indifferent the contrast between the “ontological factors” of Sosein and Dasein, and the contrast between “ways of being,” namely, ideal being and real being. Much of this second major part of the book involves discussion of the way that the classical opposition between essence and existence, thought to be fundamental for ontology, has been conceived. These terms have never provided an adequate ontology of the real, and a great deal of confusion has resulted from attempts to u them for this purpose. Hartmann proposes replacing these terms with two others, Sosein and Dasein.

There is an aspect of Dasein in everything that is. By this is to be understood the bare fact “that it is at all. ” In everything that is there is an aspect of Sosein as well. To Sosein belongs everything that constitutes something’s determinacy or particularity, everything it has in common with others, or by which it is distinguished from others, in short, every aspect of “what it is.” In contrast to the “that, ”this “what” encompasses its whole content, and even its most individualized differentiation from others. It is the essentia expanded to include the quidditas, in which everything accidental is also included. We might also say that it is essentia “toa lower power,” as it were, brought down from the height of its exclusive universality and ideality into life and the everyday. Its depotentiation implies the rejection of pretentious metaphysical ambitions (Hartmann 1965,85).

This is no trivial substitution of terms, since it has profound implications for tology. The central problem is that essence and existence have been conceived to be utterly separated, and this separation has made it impossible to understand how “universal” aspects of determination play arole in thereal world of particulars. The terms Sosein and Dasein allow us to reconceptualize their disjunction asa conjunction instead, at one stroke overcoming numerous problems concerning the relations between ideal and real entities, as well as between a priori and

a posteriori cognition. This distinction captures our colloquial di tween the “that” and “what” of things, without smuggling in any traditional metaphysical assumptions about the ontological status of universals or particulars.

> This distinction between these two “ontological factors” is usually regarded as an exclusive disjunction by the tradition. There have been ontological, modal, logical, gnoseological, and metaphysical arguments on behalf of conceiving of them as disjunctive. Many of these come down toa misinterpretation of the phenomenon of their “indifference” to one another (e. g., the idea that essence does not entail existence). Hartmann admits that there is something phenomenologically right about this, but when essence is identified with ideal being and existence with real being, things go very wrong. We can preserve their indifference without turning it into a disjunction, and we do so with the concept of “neutral Sosein” (110). To simplify a complex discussion, Hartmann claims that Sosein is neutral towards ideal and real being (“ways of being”). These ways of being are differentiated in terms of their Dasein, not their Sosein. This is “a complex kind of fundamental ontic relation,” obviously more complex than that of essence and existence (112). These two dimensions—ontological factors and ways of being— are perpendicular to each other. If we think about Sosein as the structural description or content of an entity, a triangle for example, we can see this content pertaining both to an ideal triangle or the diagram of a triangle on paper. The content is indifferent to whether it is ideal or real, outside of time or in time

and space. No metaphysical assumptions about ideal being or essence are volved here. Teasing these pairs of terms apart in this way and placing them into a wider ontological context allows us to redefine the relation between Dasein and Sosein as a relation of “progressively offset identity.”

The definition of “offset identity” is initially formulated in the proposition that “every Sosein of something ‘is’ itself also the Dasein of something, and every Dasein of something‘ is ’also the Sosein of something. It is just that the ‘something’ is here not one and the same thing” (122–123). An example will help here.

> The Dasein of the tree in its place “is” itself a Sosein of the forest, and the forest would be different without it; the Dasein of the branch of the tree “is” a Sosein of the tree; the Dasein of the leaf on the branch “is” a Sosein of the branch; the Dasein of the vein in the leaf “is” a Sosein of the leaf. This series may be extended in both directions; Dasein of the one is always at the same time Sosein of another. The converse is also possible: the Sosein of the leaf “is” the Dasein of therein, the Sosein of the branch is the Dasein of the leaf, and so forth. [...] If we only look at an isolated piece of what is, then Sosein and Dasein are separated in it. If we keep the whole ontological context in view, then the Sosein of one is also already the Dasein of another— and ina definite serial order. In this way, the relation between Sosein and Dasein in the whole world approximates an identity. Since this identity deals with a progressive offsetting of the content, we may call it a progressively offset identity.

This “conjunctive” distinction of ontological factors is contrasted with the “disjunctive” opposition interpreted into the phenomena by the old ontology of essence and existence. The consequences of this discussion are far-reaching since they “set ontology on a new foundation.” For instance, the distinction between substance and relation immediately fades in significance for ontology since substances (essences) have no ontological privilege over relations (existence). They equally “are” (130–131). It also means that ontology can go to work considering the structural categories (Sosein) of the world the same way that any empirical science goes about investigating laws of nature—progressively, fallibly, and on the widest phenomenal basis.

Part III covers the ontological side of cognition, its structure and ness in a network of “transcendent affective acts,” as well as in the wider context of everyday life. It is the longest part of the book, and arguably the most important for understanding Hartmann’s position. Its three sections tackle the topic of “givenness,” or the way that human beings perceive, cognize, and come to terms with the real world. The first section deals with the vexingtopic of “being-in-itself” and its relation to cognition; section two covers a wide variety of “transcendent affective acts” in great detail, arguing that they form the context out of which the more limited and ontologically secondary capacity of cognition grows; the third section expands this insight to the whole life context, arguing that complex integrative acts ranging from value feeling and care to scientific investigation and political life in history form the vital context in which cognition takes place. All of these acts often provide better testimony to the reality of the world than does cognition itself.

Reality is “given” through varied and interlinked “transcendent acts.” “Transcendent acts are those which establish a relation between a subject and an entity that itself does not first arise through that act, or, they are acts that make something transobjective into an object” (146). Cognition is one transcende act among others. Cognition is a “grasping” that is primarily receptive, where the subject is affected by something that is; there is also a spontaneity in the cognitive act, but this only consists in the creation of an image, concept, or representation of “what is” (148–149). This interpretation of cognition incorporates

the phenomenon of “natural realism” mentioned above. The Husserlian “law of intentionality” and Hartmann’s “law of transobjectivity” describe two sides of the phenomenon of cognition. The relation of intentionality exists bet the act and the mental image, where consciousness “has” the “object” (but not necessarily “what is”); the relation of “grasping” exists between the act and the being-in-itself that is beyond the act. This distinction between the “object” and “being-in-itself,” however, is a product of the reflective epistemological stance itself, and is not decisive for “natural realism” or for ontology. Where cognition in the momentary, ahistorical individualist intuition of phenomenon can main in doubt about the being-in-itself of what appears, Hartmann believes that we can resolve any doubts about whether the object is or is not an appearance of something real provided we consider a broader range of phenomena that are part of the cognitive process, including “problem-consciousness” and historical “cognitive progress.” Both “problems” and “progress” on them imply the existence of something transobjective beyond the “object” that is objectified during the process of cognition. The transobjective and “trans intelligible” (or “nonrational”) can also be defined with reference to this social-historical conception of cognitive progress and the finitude of our cognitive apparatus in face of permanent insoluble problems. The finitude of our cognitive apparatus demonstrates that there are aspects of reality that we are not equipped to grasp, that there are limits to our ability to objectify, that it is limited by the categories we use to cognize, and that there is only a partial overlap between our cognitive categories and ontological principles (159–160).

In the natural attitude, cognition is integrated into a broader network of receptive, prospective, spontaneous, and reflexive transcendent affective acts that furnish us with a far more striking sense of reality than does cognition in isolation. Receptive affective acts include experiencing, living through, suffering, and enduring, where there isa clear reference to something that “befalls” the subject and reveals the “hardness of the real.” They also illuminate the way that cognition is ontologically secondary.“‘[O]bjects’ first of all are not something that we know, but something that ‘concerns’us practically, something that we ha veto ‘face’ in life and ‘grapple’ with; something with which we have‘todeal,’that we have to utilize, overcome, or endure. Cognition usually limps along behind” (172). Prospective acts include expectation, readiness, presentiment, and a stronger group of acts that includes hope and fear and everything in between as well as reckoning with chance and the feeling of dread. Spontaneous affective acts include willing, doing, and labor in the world. Labor includes aspects of the subject’s self-cultivation, encounter with the resistance of things and learning from the encounter. These everyday interactions and interventions show that person and thing share the same “way of being.” “The real phenomenon of labor is un equivocal evidence that the sphere of the real is homogeneous in itself, i.e., that everything actual in it is ontically at the same level, and constitutes a single unified world in terms of its way of being” (200).Furthermore, in the integrative life context of labor and relations with others where these acts occur, we have the strongest confirmation that we are participants in a real world that preexists us. If we regard ourselves and others as real persons, and our moral deal

and ethos presuppose the existence of real goods and means to accomplish our ends, then we have the strongest evidence of the existence of the real in this context. “With this outcome, the terrain for a realist ontological investigation is now secured”.

Part IV complements the discussion of Sosein in Part II by further exploring the domain of ideal being and giving the reader a clearer conception of the way that the ideal “exists” and determines the real. The basic aporia of ideal being is that we never know in advance whether it even exists independently of our thinking it. The first section deals with this problem, and mathematical cognit provides the first testing ground. Various subjectivist arguments regarding the status of mathematics are considered and rejected, since they do not adequately explain the “phenomenon” of mathematical judgment, which assumes that mathematical objects exist in themselves. We cannot escape the subjectivist theories unless we consider the application of ideal relations in the real. He introduces the examples of the astronomer who predicts the paths of the planetary orbits, the artillery gunner who calculates trajectories according to a ballistic curve, air resistance, spin, rotation of the Earth, etc., and the engineer who calculates the load-bearing capacity of bridges, and he argues that their predictions could not possibly conform to reality if these were merely the regularities of mental acts or thoughts, since nature does not guide itself by our thought.

> [W]e have to see in the mathematical element of natural relations, where we deal with mathematical entities whose laws lie at the basis of the calculability of the real, a rigorous proof for the fact that we are dealing with being-in-itself in the fullest sense of the word. Then we can say that mathematics as a science is not a mere chess game governed by mental laws, but genuine ontological cognition in the sense of transcendent grasp. The universal validity of its contents, its intersubjectivity and necessity for an individual thinkers, does not rest merely on immanent apriority, but on transcendent apriority. That which occurs in the latter is the actual self-showing of objects possessing being-in-itself, which is exhibited in every genuine vision into the thing itself. The possibility of mutual understanding, of persuasion and being convinced, does not rest on the necessity of thinking, but on the identity of the ideal object for every vision that directs itself to it. This object is the mathematical entity itself—number, magnitude, size, space, as well as their relations and lawfulness, in their ideality. These cannot originally be things of thought or of representation, because then they could not be all-pervasive relations and laws of the real (244)

The same reasoning holds for other domains of ideal being. Phenomenology's "essential interconnections," logical laws, and structural relations among values are all subsistent ideal entities, indifferent to whether we know them or not, not entities first created by our thought. The ontological significance of the ideal is revealed when its role in determination of the real becomes manifest. Certainty about whether some isolated structure is ideally existent requires a "conspective" vision or intuition of the whole range of interconnections, as well as the different perspectives offered by various observers, in order to achieve it (273). Moreover, different perspectives teach us that we might be wrong about something, which presupposes that there is a "something" to be wrong about. "In the consciousness of disagreement is then the completely indisputable guarantee for the fact that the essences are themselves something independent of all opinion and all evidentiality, all intuition and cognition. This means that they possess being-in-themselves" (274). Ideal being "exists" unobtrusively, remains indifferent too objectification and to its instantiation in real cases, even as it remains open to different modes of givenness or access (271).

The distinction between intentio recta and intentio obliqua that opens the way to a perspective on being being qua "this side" of metaphysical standpoints; a revised conception of essence and existence in terms of Sosein and Dasein that decouples them from ideal and real being as well as a priori and a posteriori cognition; a conception of cognition that acknowledges its ontological embeddedness in a network of affective acts that structure and confirm its relation to a real world; and the careful specification of the way of being of ideal structures and their relation to the real world are the main features of Hartman's response to the "preliminary questions" of ontology in this book. "On this basis, the analysis can give itself safely over to the categorial specification of 'what is'"(218). Hartmann's subsequent three volumes of careful ontological labor carry over this categorial analysis.

Hartmann and Realism

Without doubt, one of the chief reasons for Hartmann's contemporary relevance stems from his insistence on developing a critical ontology, one that can reveal inadequate metaphysical assumptions in order to carefully build a theory of categories on a realist foundation. As we haveseen, Hartmann is highly critical of various post-Kantian attempts to blur or eliminate the distinction be tween thing-in-itself and phenomenon, putting him into conversation with recent critiques of "correlationism" and the "fallacy of being-knowledge" in speculative realism and "new realism. " Others have pointed out that aspects of his ethics, aesthetics, philosophy of history, philosophical anthropology, philosophy of nature, and epistemology all deserve closer attention. Since we are focusing on Laying the Foundations here, I want to make clear just what features make his position "realist." Following that discussion, I will mention one conventional motivation for anti-realism that becomes moot as soon as we adopt a Hartmannian outlook.

As a former student of Marburg Neo-Kantianism, Hartmann is obliged to pass through anti-realism on his way to a more nuanced form of realism. To define it, it will be helpful to consider Hartmann's stance in light of commonly accepted realist and anti-realist tenets. InA Thing of This World: A History of Continental Anti-Realism, Lee Braver has madea very important contribution to a more careful discussion of realism and anti-realism in contemporary Continental philosophy. He defines realism and anti-realism in terms of a limited set of theses common to realist and anti-realist thinkers. Hartmann frequently and directly confronts the central theses that Braver highlights in his "matrices" (groups of characteristic theses). Characterizing Hartmann's position in terms of them will allow readers to situate his position in the context of recent Continental realisms and the still-dominant anti-realist stance in philosophy and the humanities more broadly.

The "realism matrix" will be familiar to most readers. On Braver's account, it includes six distinct theses (five of which I include here): the first is the "independence" of the world from "the cognitive activities of the mind;" it is the claim that "the world exists independently of the mental." The second isa definition of truth as "correspondence" between "thoughts, ideas, beliefs, words, propositions, sentences, or languages on the one hand, and thin objects, states of affairs, configurations, reality, or experience on the other; that is, b tween something on the side of the mind or language and something on the side of the world". Next, it follows that "[in]reality has a determinate structure independently of us and truth consists in capturing that structure, then there will be one and only one way to do so accurately". This is the idea that there is "one true description of the way the world is," at least possible in principle. These three theses entail another that is not often explicitly recognized but is a necessary presupposition for the others; namely, that cognition is a passive process of reliably and humbly "mirroring" that pre-existing reality in order to be able to provide a description of the world that is as undistorted as possible (Braver2007, 23).I would add that this implies not just a vague "philosophy of mind," but a whole philosophical anthropology that includes substantive theses about the relation between mind and body, the "place of the human in nature," the nature of knowledge production in the social world, etc. Finally, realism about the world entails a realism about the subject who knows the world, and this subject is universally the same, a "fixed ahistorical human nature" (Braver2007, 49). Let me contrast the central tenets of anti realism with these before going on to articulate Hartmann's nuanced response to anti-realism.

The “anti-realism matrix” unsurprisingly consists of the opposites of these theses. In contrast to the mind-independence of the world, Kant and many thinkers influenced by him assert the mind-dependence of the world. Famously for Kant, since we can only talk about the “world” as it appears to us, i. e., in terms of our given sensory and cognitive apparatus, we cannot assume that our minds have a special intimate contact with reality as it is “in itself,” which the dogmatic metaphysicians of all ages have believed. The phenomena are the objects of Newtonian science. Kant’s conception of the phenomenon noumenon distinction significantly complicates this, but the general attitude of most post-Kantians has been that this distinction is simply unnecessary, and in Hegel’s words, “appearance becomes identical with essence” (Hegel, cited in Braver2007, xx). (Recent Continental realists have identified a fallacy in this maneuver that they term “correlationism” or “the fallacy of being-knowledge” characteristic of “philosophies of access.”) This means that a rejection of the correspondence theory of truth is also shared by anti-realists, since if there is nothing independent of the mind for judgments to correspond to, some other count of truth will have to be adopted (e.g., truth as intersubjective agreement,

coherence, or “enhancement of the feeling of power”). Additionally, if there is no independent reality and what we say about it does not correspond to anything “in itself,” then there cannot be “one true description” of the way things are, but there maybe as many “true” descriptions as there are subjects who generate them. Braver calls this an “ontological pluralism” in contrast to the “uniqueness” thesis of realism, but this often simply amounts to relativism rather than pluralism. Kant himself did not fall prey to this slide into relativism because, despite the fact that he is the first to make the counter-thesis of the “active subject” the core feature of his entire approach, all active knowers have exactly the same set of cognitive faculties which lead them to make the same judgments about the phenomena they experience, and so they can arrive at the single true scientific account of the natural world (Braver2007, 49).Active knowers do not simply passively receive data from an independent world, but bring order and regularity into that world as soon as they open their eyes or utter judgment about their perceptions. According to Kant’s Copernican Revolution the “ordering of experience is an autonomic process” that “constantly operates in the background”. The importance of this “active knower” thesis for Kant and post-Kantianism cannot be overestimated and will receive separate discussion below. Finally, in contrast to Kant, many Continental anti-realists do not accept that knowing subjects are everywhere the same, but that perspectives vary across and even within the same subject (“plural subject”).It should be noted that although Kant may be regarded as the founder of anti-realism, his own position reflects a combination of realist and anti-realist theses (as Hartmann also recognized). As Braver summarizes it:” Instead of abandoning realism altogether [...] he retains two important aspects of it: the mind-independent noumenal realm and the realist subject. Although he makes the phenomenal world mind-dependent and changes the passive substantial knower to an active organizer of experience, he must keep the experience-organizing structures universal and unchanging in order to preserve the unique world. ” In light of the overall features of the position developed in Laying the Foundations, we see that Hartmann’s stance also turns out to entail a subtle recombination of these.

First, although Hartmann frequently uses the term “independence” to speak about objects of cognition, he argues that this is actually not the right term to use in an ontological context. “Independence” only makes sense against the background of an already-assumed or potential “dependence” of objects on consciousness in light of skeptical arguments. Hartmann finds that what is usually implied here is that things in relations to subjects are somehow “less in being” than things independent of subjects. The dependence-independence opus thus already an ontologically charged evaluative opposition that misleads us about “what is as such.” Hartmann argues that both the independent and the dependent have the same mode of being; the antiquated idea of “degrees of being” secretly informs the dependence-independence distinction but simply does not apply to “what is.” The better term for designating the “independence” of “what is,” ontologically speaking, is simply “indifference.” “What is,” whether it is dependent or independent, is indifferent to being cognized or related to in any way by anything. This sense of indifference may already be implicit in many statements of the realist thesis, but the term “independence” can lead us astray.

This indifference thesis applies to cognition when Hartmann retains the realist distinction between thing and thought for epistemology: “objects” may be mind-dependent “images,” but the trans-objective “being-in-itself” remains indifferent to thought.

Hartmann believes he is being a true Kantian here, a belief supported by his contrarian reading of Kant’s “supreme principle.” Readers will recall Kant’s principle: “the conditions of the possibility of experience in general must at the same time be the conditions of the possibility of the objects of experience” (Kant, 1998, 283; A 158/B197). In his earlier essay on Kant, Hartmann argued that this expresses a “restricted identity thesis.” The principles or conditions of both are neither completely identical nor completely different. The principle itself is entirely “this side” of the distinction between idealism and realism, as Hartmann rea, and can be interpreted in the direction of placing the conditions of experience inside the subject (Kant’s solution) or both within and beyond the subject in the world. Hartmann claims that Kant’s idealistic answer to the question, which makes these conditions internal to the cognizing subject, results from his own “dogmatic prejudice.” He believes a solution that remains faithful to the phenomenon of cognition can be proposed that places the principles or conditions of experience not within the subject but within the wider reality of which both subject an object are parts. The at least partial identity between subject and object which conditions the possibility of knowledge results from the fact that both subject and object are determined by some shared ontological principles strictly superior to both. These principles are what Hartmann calls categories. Finally, in contrast to the stigmatic and individualist assumptions of Modernist epistemology.

Hartmann argues that problem-consciousness and cognitive progress take place in historical duration ina community of knowers, some of whom may have different perspectives, allowing a progressive correction of our views about the world. This position is substantially supported by showing how the indifference of things is firmly established by noncognitive affective transcendent acts (e.g., suffering and hoping) in the context of which we exercise our cognitive faculties, which do not give as vivid testimony to the “hardness of the real.”

Secondly, his take on “correspondence” is just as nuanced. There is “correspondence” between our models and the world in the restricted sense that there are referents for them, but this relation does not at all imply “mirroring,” resemblance, or similarity. We make models that approximate and somehow conform to the real but do not mirror it. An image, model, judgment, concept, or sentence referring to the food on your plate does not in any way “resemble” the food itself. The terms “fit” or “conformation” might be better to describe this relation, but Hartmann is not more specific about this relation in Laying the Foundations. Thirdly, given this “looser” conception of correspondence, in addition to be acceptance of the two Kantian principles that human finitude does shape the way that reality is “given” and that there are “perennial” metaphysical problems, there can never be a complete and unique description of the world for human knowers. There are things we will simply never know—the nonrational or trans-intelligible elements of reality, permanent problems—and cognition is a collective, but limited, historical process of the growth of knowledge. We could call this a form of realist ontological pluralism.

Fourthly, Hartmann moderates the Kantian “active knower” thesis by regarding knowers as both active and passive at once. They are active in the production of the image, concept, or object of cognition, but also passive in receiving more or less determinate input from the things themselves. There are various modes in which “what is” can be “given” to us, not some single bedrock mode, and it is the noncognitive modes more than cognition itself which guarantees our conviction that we are dealing with a world indifferent to our attempts to know it or to satisfy our desires in it. Finally, on the topic of “perspectivism” (the anti-realist response to the realist thesis of a “fixed ahistorical human nature”), Hartmann neither atomizes descriptions into as many perspectives on the world as we find nor insists on a “fixed ahistorical human nature” or knowing subject. Hartmann’s rejection of artificial standpoints in favor of foregrounding the “problems themselves” leads to the potentially dynamic and progressive conceptions of both subject and world that are open to change while remaining stable, or becoming increasingly “stabilized,” through their historical vicissitudes. We have to distinguish between “standpoints,” which are dogmatic metaphysical commitments, and more modest “perspectives,” which may vary in the sense of a “situated epistemology” but relate to the same real world. For Hartmann it is possible to achieve a standpoint-free (but not necessarily perspective-free) assessment of enduring problems and make informed attempts to resolve them.

There is nothing threatening or disturbing about this modest for of realism. There a question is why sophisticated thinkers continue to resist accept some form of realist ontology and cling instead to the trite anti-realis“nature is nothing but our conception or description of nature.” as I see it, while the specific motivations for different authors may differ given their situated conditions, there has been a shared motivation for anti-realism from Kant to the present. It is humanistic anthropocentrism—the notion that human dignity is somehow insulted by a realist stance. I’ll say a few words about this before closing.

Braver remarked on Kant’s consistency in his emphasis on “autonomy” both in his ethics as well as in his epistemology. A “legislative” mind is at work both in ethics and in cognition. “Rather than humbly following after God’s creation or passively recording the intrinsic structure of the world, we boldly form the phenomena. Deleuze describes this colorfully: ‘The first thing that the Copernican Revolution teaches us is that it is we who are giving the orders’." I suggest that this ethico-political metaphor should not merely be taken as metaphorical. Kant’s conception of freedom as self-legislation (agents “giving the orders” but also “taking orders” only from themselves) is obviously consistent with an epistemology founded on the concept of a real “active knower” who legislates for nature(as a domain of lawful regularity). We have to keep in mind the Enlightenment impulse behind Kant’s desire to free people from their “self-imposed tutelage:” no king or god tells the autonomous agent what to do, although we may very well freely decide that one or the other of them is right in the end. The practical or ethical dimension of human experience is the larger context for the cognitive dimension. Realism (or dogmatism) in epistemology—regarding the world as something to which we must passively conform—has been considered to be dangerous because it may lead to determinism or authoritarianism in ethics and politics. The pervasiveness of a vague assumption like this allows us to make sense of much of the adherence to anti-realism in 20th century European philosophy. Taking the subject to be an active term in the constitution of "experience" makes it far less likely that determinism in ontology and authoritarianism in politics can take hold. Therefore, realism has to be opposed.

This "holistic" conception of human autonomy was one of the chief features of the Neo-Kantianism that Hartmann himself opposed. Neo-Kantianism was not exclusively dedicated to establishing a rational reconstruction of the sciences it sought "to root itself firmly in the total creative work of culture." It not only reflects on the methods of the sciences, but also on practical forms of social order and the life of human dignity for the individual living within these, artistic creation and the aesthetic sculpting of life, and even the most intimate forms of religious life. For [...] it is the generative act which creates all manner of objects. Only humankind builds its own human essence and, by objectivating itself therein, imprint in the deepest and most completely unified manner the character of its spirit onto its world. There is indeed a whole world of such worlds, all of which humankind can ca its own.

These creative acts are an expression of human "spontaneity," and" 'spontaneity' is both law on the one hand, and real fulfillment of spontaneous detection on the other, which receives nothing from the outside". The emphasis on autonomy and creativity builds the humanistic bridge between cognition and action, and reaffirms the famous Kantian "primacy of the practical."

The problem with this kind of approach is that, aside from the fact that it illegitimately identifies realism and determinism, it attempts to resolve ethical and political problems in an a priori fashion by building a specific conception of freedom into the very definition of the human being. Hartmann, for one, rejects this thesis of the Kantian "primacy of the practical" that leads to the precipitous assumption that apparently motivates much anti-realism. On Hartmann's account of cognition and ethics, there is no reason to make this assumption and so there is no reason to attempt to solve political problems through epistemo-ontological means. This continued assumption is problematic not ju because it begs the question, but because the social and political context has changed. Humanistic, anthropocentric anti-realism itself does not provide resources fora solution to real-world problems if it cannot even clearly articulate the structure of the life context in which it is embedded, a context that is often indifferent to whether or not human beings come to understand it.

Anti-realism itself has become dangerous for societies on the verge of environmental collapse, for instance—we cannot rightly research and try to resolve environmental problems and get people to act in response to them if nature is nothing but "our construction." Anti-realism at its worst thus aids and abet anthropocentric humanism and its exploitation of both nature and human "Others" since it claims there is no "real" nature "out there" in the first place. Environmental is required some kind of realism even to get its project of social change off the ground. Capitalism and high technology have only apparently relieved humankind of its radical and asymmetrical dependence on nonhuman nature real relations of dependence are in evidence as we experience the effort of continuing to negligently pump carbon into the atmosphere, pollute the water supply, degrade the soil, and poison ourselves with synthetic chemicals. Liberation projects for nature and of oppressed human groups alike are at a minimum based on the idea of real, actives subjects who recognize the existence of real natural structures and processes as well as real oppressors in a world not of their own making. This minimal kind of realism says nothing about how we collectively choose to respond to real world problems. We can organize for social change in light of higher values, or we can continue to be duped by ideology and experience greater suffering in the long run.

Hartmann's philosophical anthropology and value theory make room for freedom not only in the relation of the subject to natural regularities, but also in relation to cultural and moral values. While ideal, such values do not govern ethical behavior the way that ideal logical laws structure (logical) thinking and nature's essential structures govern real relations. They motivate but do not determine agents to act or realize them. There is thus no threat of determinism in this form of realist ontology because Hartmann rejects the assumption that in order to guarantee political freedom we need a purely active and spontaneous subject somehow exempt from causal laws. These are simply two different issues. Carefully teasing apart the elements of recurring problems, providing more adequate phenomenological descriptions of them, and employ new and innovative categorial distinctions to resolve them are some of the things that Hartmann's works can teach us how to do. Laying the Foundations provides numerous examples of this kind of work, and it will hopefully draw the reader

Into a fresh, rich, and varied philosophical landscape within and beyond it that still remains largely unexplored. <>

NEW WAYS OF ONTOLOGY by Nicolai Hartmann, Translated by Reinhard C. Kuhn [Praeger, 9780837179896]

It goes without saying that in as summary a discussion as the present one we cannot do justice to medieval metaphysics. But here our concern is not with medieval metaphysics but with contemporary issues. For these, it is imperative that we achieve a clear view of certain fundamental traits of the onto logical views which were at the basis of that metaphysics. We must learn from the mistakes of these old ontological views, so that any and every attempt at a new ontology may dissociate itself unambiguously and consciously from all such errors.

The critical epistemology of the modern age from Descartes down to Kant did not succeed in completely replacing the old ontology with a new doctrine of equal value. But it had so thoroughly destroyed its presuppositions that a metaphysics erected on the old basis was no longer possible. The Critique of Pure Reason, in which the work of thorough housecleaning reached its end, marks a historical boundary beyond which ontological thinking all but vanishes. This is noteworthy, be cause the Kantian critique was actually not leveled against the foundations of the old ontology but rather against the specula tive-rational metaphysics which had been built upon it.

TABLE OF CONTENTS
I The End of the Old Ontology
II The Categories of Being
III A New Concept of Reality
IV The New Ontology and the New Anthropology
V The Stratified Structures of the World
VI Old Mistakes and New Critique
VII Modification of the Fundamental Categories
VIII The Strata Laws of the Real World

IX Dependence and Autonomy in the Hierarchy of Strata
X Objections and Prospects
XI The Stratification of the Human Being
XII Determination and Freedom
XIII A New Approach to the Problem of Knowledge

The End of the Old Ontology

Today more than ever before the serious-minded are convinced that philosophy has practical tasks. The life of both the individual and the community is not molded by their mere needs and fortunes but also at all times by the strength of dominant ideas. Ideas are spiritual powers. They belong to the realm of thought. But thought has its own discipline and its own critique—philosophy. Therefore philosophy is called upon to include within its scope the pressing problems of the contemporary world and to co-operate in the work that needs to be done.

Many who feel this make it a condition of their occupation with philosophical matters that they be led on as straight a way as possible to the solution of pressing problems of their own present situation; and if, instead of the straight way, manifold detours become necessary, they turn aside disillusioned, believing that philosophy is nothing more than an ivory-tower game of thought. The impatience of the desire for knowledge does not permit them to achieve that engrossment in the problems which is the beginning of insight. They want to start with the end. Thus with the very first step they unwittingly divorce themselves from philosophy.

It has always been the strength of the German mind that it knew how to master its impatience. By not shying away from the long and arduous approach, even when demands were pressing and the tasks urgent, it found the way of meditation. So it was with Cusanus, Leibniz, Kant, and Hegel. So, in all probability, it is basically still today, although we have behind us times of deviation from this line which brought with them all the dangers of shallowness and one-sidedness. Just when the task is most urgent, genuine philosophy must return to its foundations. There is no other way of conquering a new wealth of thought for a new world situation.

Philosophy cannot enter upon practical tasks without knowledge of being as such. For the tasks themselves grow out of a total datum of existing realities, and these must be understood and penetrated to the root before man can venture to shape them according to his goals. So all technical science builds upon the exact knowledge of the laws of nature, medicine upon biological laws, and politics upon historical knowledge. In philosophy it is no different, even though its object is a universal one embracing both the whole man and the world in which he lives. Therefore, it is less immediately evident at which level of being its basic concepts must be found, and philosophers, time and again, come to think they can go their way without an ontological foundation.

Actually, no philosophy can stand without a fundamental view of being. This holds true regardless of standpoint, tendency, or the general picture of the world which it adopts. The reason why not every philosophy begins with a discussion of being lies in the ease with which in this field ideas are accepted and laid down undiscussed. They are not even noticed, nor does one suspect to what degree they are decisive for all that follows. Even the natural world view, which regards all things as substantial bearers of changing qualities and relations, involves an ontological prejudgment. To a much higher degree, however, this applies to philosophical interpretations of the world, determined as they are by a specific point of view.

Among historically recorded systems of philosophy there is none for which the domain of the problems of being, taken in strict universality, is not essential. The more profound among them have at all times raised the question of being, each of them seeking to answer it in accordance with its particular outlook. According to whether this question is either posed and discussed or ignored, doctrinal systems can be classified as founded or unfounded ones, regardless of their respective points of view or doctrinal tendencies. The more significant accomplishments of all periods, recognizable even to a superficial glance because of their far-reaching effect, are without exception "founded" systems.

In no way does this mean that founded systems are ontologically constructed systems or even realist ones. The great theoretical structures of German idealism illustrate this truth in the most characteristic fashion. When Fichte, in his early Uber den Begriff der Wissenschaftslehre, derives the being of things from creative activities of the Ego, he furnishes an answer to the question as to what the being of things is. His is a basic ontological thesis, and, as such, it is a foundation for all that follows, even down to the truly burning questions with which his Wissenschaftslehre is concerned—questions about man, will, and freedom.

The same holds, mutatis snutandis, for Schelling and Hegel in all phases of their philosophies, no matter whether the ultimate foundation of being be sought in a subconscious intelligence, in the fusion of subject and object, or in Absolute Reason. In fact, the same holds true for Kant and even Berkeley. Fundamentally though the immaterialism of the latter may differ from transcendental idealism, the thesis "esse est percipi" is still as much an ontological proposition as Kant's finely balanced assertion that things in space and time are only phenomena.

By their fundamental theses the idealist systems are no less ontologically constructed than the realist ones. The distinctive mark of the former, as contrasted with the latter, is that their concept of being is a derived one. And therewith they find themselves irreconcilably opposed to the tradition of the Old Ontology. This opposition is a conscious one, deliberately chosen on epistemological and ethical grounds. Further, it is an opposition which, in view of the indifference of the later idealists of the nineteenth century toward fundamental questions, led to the dissolution of the old ontology.

This dissolution marks a decisive step in the history of philosophical theories. Indeed, the dissolution did not first begin with idealism. The way was prepared for it by the typically modern trend toward an epistemological-critical foundation of philosophy, and by the end of the seventeenth century it reached its first high point in Leibniz's philosophy. This philosophy is still, in its own way, the creation of a thoroughly ontological type of thought. Yet in the main Leibniz has already left the tracks of the old ontology.

The question then arises as to what the old ontology actually was. We mean by it that theory of being which was dominant from Aristotle down to the expiration of Scholasticism. Although it produced a multitude of divergent varieties of thought and finally ran out in an incurable division of tendencies, it was uniform in its fundamentals, and to the thinkers of the modern age, who from several sides drew up a concentrated attack upon it, it presented a unified hostile camp.

The old theory of being is based upon the thesis that the universal, crystallized in the essentia as substantial form and comprehensible as concept, is the determining and formative core of things. Besides the world of things, in which man, too, is encased, there is a world of essences which, timeless and immaterial, forms a kingdom of perfection and higher being. The extreme representatives of this doctrine even assigned true reality to the universal essences alone, thereby disparaging the world of time and things. Their successors in the nineteenth century, considering universals only under the form of concepts, called this trend "conceptual realism." The expression is misleading, because it was the point of that theory that universals were not just concepts. Instead, one may well speak of a "realism of universals."

Scholastic ontology, far from being limited to this extreme view, showed the theory of universals in richly varying gradations. It was not necessary to attribute to essences a being "prior to things" or "above" them. They could be conceived also in the Aristotelian manner as substantial forms subsisting "in the things." Thus the difficulties of a duplication of the world were avoided without a surrender of the fundamental conception. Of course, medieval philosophers could not entirely rest content with this, because a speculative, theological interest prompted them to conceive universals as entities preexisting in the intellectus divinus.

Apart from this, the gist of this ontology does not lie in the gradations of the fundamental thesis. Nor does it lie in the speculative-metaphysical tendencies combining with it but solely in the basic view of the nature of the universal itself —in the conviction that the universal is the moving and teleologically determining principle of things. Here an ageold motif of mythical thinking enters: the teleological interpretation of temporal occurrence in analogy to human action. Aristotle gave this idea a philosophical form, linking it closely to a theory of eidos patterned chiefly on organic nature. Ac cording to this view, essence is a substantial form, and, as the end of an evolutionary process, it determines the growth of the organism. This scheme of interpretation was transferred from the organism to the whole world, and, in analogy to the organic, all processes of inorganic nature were considered teleological.

This scheme had the advantage of solving the riddle of the structure of the world in an amazingly simple manner. If only the observer succeeds in grasping the substantial form of a thing, he holds at once the key to all the changes which it suffers. The substantial form, however, is comprehensible by means of the concept, and the methodological tool for this comprehension is the definition. Definition again is a matter of the intellect whose whole business consists in gathering the essential elements of the form from the final stages of the natural processes of growth and in then putting these elements together in an orderly fashion.

This procedure, surely, must not be conceived in the manner of a crude empiricism. The most general traits of essence, that is, those that are shared by many kinds of essentia, cannot simply be gleaned from a survey of things. Here the Aristotelian epistemology did not offer the right lever, and soon Scholasticism espoused the Platonic idea of intuition (intuitio, visio). Philosophers became more and more used to subordinating the intellect to a superior faculty of insight to which they ascribed a direct contact with the highest ontologically determining formal elements.

Herewith the old ontology took on a deductive character. Once human reason feels itself to be in possession of the highest universals it is readily concluded that reason can actually "derive" from these universals all that which it does not know how to extract from experience. In this manner, there arose that neglect of empirical knowledge and that luxuriant growth of a metaphysics deducing its conclusions from pure concepts which was first challenged by the later nominalism and finally defeated by the beginnings of modern natural science.

It goes without saying that in as summary a discussion as the present one we cannot do justice to medieval metaphysics. But here our concern is not with medieval metaphysics but with contemporary issues. For these, it is imperative that we achieve a clear view of certain fundamental traits of the ontological views which were at the basis of that metaphysics. We must learn from the mistakes of these old ontological views, so that any and every attempt at a new ontology may dissociate itself unambiguously and consciously from all such errors.

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In Kant it is above all the deductive mode of procedure which is, done away with. Deductions can be made only from a priori certain principles, and apriorism is here subjected to a searching critique. The a priori is limited to two forms of intuition and a few categories. And even these are considered valid only for phenomena and not for things as they are in themselves. Thus substantial forms are excluded as a matter of course, and along with them the doctrine of essentia is obliterated. More important still is the fact that the Critique of Judgment attacks teleology even on its very home ground, that of organic nature, depriving it of all constitutive significance.

The latter point is perhaps the most important of all. At any rate, it hits the weakest side of the old ontology drifting in the wake of Aristotle. But surely it is the point least understood and valued by Kant's contemporaries and followers. The philosophies of nature of both Schelling and Hegel ignored the critique of teleological judgment and carried on once more in conformity with the Scholastic example. The Kantian critique had been a transcendental one, that is, an epistemological critique of the presuppositions of the theory of organic nature. Rationalist idealism, however, believed itself to be in possession of unassailable universal certainties on the strength of which the enigmatic purposive equipment of living beings—and actually of all nature from the bottom up—is supposed to become amenable to teleological interpretation. <>

NON-BEING NEW ESSAYS ON THE METAPHYSICS OF NONEXISTENCE edited by Sara Bernstein and Tyron Goldschmidt [Oxford University Press, 9780198846222]

Examines some of the most complicated questions about non-being and nonexistence

Considers fundamental questions of non-being; sparse ontologies, including the idea that nothing exists; the influence of negative entities; non-being and modality; language and thought; the intersection of non-being with broadly normative topics

Explores analytic, continental, Buddhist and Jewish philosophical perspectives

Nonexistence is ubiquitous, yet mysterious. This volume explores some of the most puzzling questions about non-being and nonexistence, and offers answers from diverse philosophical perspectives. The contributors draw on analytic, continental, Buddhist, and Jewish philosophical traditions, and the topics range from metaphysics to ethics, from philosophy of science to philosophy of language, and beyond.

We are surrounded by things that exist, like chairs, tables, phones, and people. But we are also surrounded by things that don't exist, like holes, shadows, omissions, and negative properties. We read stories of nonexistent unicorns and magical creatures. We reason about scenarios that don't exist, from the small ('what if I'd have studied an hour longer?') to the large ('what if World War II hadn't occurred?'). We refer to nonexistents ('that paper doesn't exist yet'). And we hold people morally responsible for things that they don't do ('you should have rescued the rabbit!'). Nonexistence is ubiquitous, yet mysterious. This volume of new essays covers some of the trickiest questions about non-being and nonexistence—from Could have been nothing at all? to What are holes?—alongside answers from diverse philosophical traditions. The essays explore analytic, continental, Buddhist and Jewish philosophical perspectives, and range from metaphysics to ethics, from philosophy of science to philosophy of language, and beyond.

CONTENTS

List of Contributors
Introduction, Sara Bernstein and Tyron Goldschmidt
1. Ontological Pluralism about Non-Being, Sara Bernstein
2. Nothingness and the Ground of Reality: Heidegger and Nishida, Graham Priest
3. Thales' Riddle of the Night, Roy Sorensen
4. Something from Nothing: Why Some Negative Existentials are Fundamental, Fatema Amijee
5. Against Gabriel: On the Nonexistence of the World, Filippo Casati and Naoya Fujikawa
6. How Can Buddhists Prove That Non-Existent Things Do Not Exist?, Koji Tanaka
7. How Ordinary Objects Fit into Reality, Bryan Frances
8. The Cosmic Void, Eddy Keming Chen
9. Ballot Ontology, Roberto Casati and Achille Varzi
10. Something out of Nothing: What Zeno Could Have Taught Parmenides, Aaron Segal
11. Ex Nihilo Nihil Fit: An Argument for Anti-Nihilism, Tyron Goldschmidt and Sam Lebens
12. Ostrich Actualism, Craig Warmke
13. Saying Nothing and Thinking Nothing, Lorraine Juliano-Keller and John Keller
14. Why It Matters What Might Have Been, Arif Ahmed
15. Explanatory Relevance and the Doing/Allowing Distinction, Jacob Ross

16. Responsibility and the Metaphysics of Omissions, Carolina Sartorio
17. Death's Shadow Lightened, Daniel Rubio
Index

Overview

We are surrounded by things that exist, like chairs, tables, phones, and people. But we are also surrounded by things that don't exist, like holes, shadows, omissions, and negative properties. We read stories of non-existent unicorns and magical creatures. We reason about scenarios that don't exist, from the small ("what if I'd have studied an hour longer?") to the large ("what if World War II hadn't occurred?"). We refer to non-existents ("that paper doesn't exist yet"). And we hold people morally responsible for things that they don't do ("you should have rescued the rabbit!").

Non-existence is ubiquitous, yet mysterious. This volume of new essays covers some of the trickiest questions about non-being and non-existence—from *Could there have been nothing at all?* to *What are holes?*—alongside answers from diverse philosophical traditions. The essays explore analytic, continental, Buddhist, and Jewish philosophical perspectives, and range from metaphysics to ethics, from philosophy of science to philosophy of language, and beyond. While each essay stands alone, they are organized in the following natural groupings.

The first four essays are about fundamental questions of non-being:

Chapter 1 by Sara Bernstein argues that there are different *modes* of non-being, drawing from the contemporary debate about modes of being. She defends *ontological pluralism about non-being*, the view that there are multiple kinds of non-being, and shows how the view applies to various metaphysical problems—about time, absences and fictional objects.

Chapter 2 by Graham Priest argues that nothingness is fundamental to reality. Drawing on work by Heidegger and Nishida, Priest contends that everything (the totality of all objects) and nothing (the absence of all objects) can each be defined as a certain mereological sum. The absence turns out to be a contradictory object, and this contradictory object is the ground of all reality.

Chapter 3 by Roy Sorensen aims to answer an old riddle of Thales: what is older, day or night? Drawing on early insights about the stability of night and day—as well as Lewis Carroll— Sorensen argues that night is older than day and older than the Earth itself.

Chapter 4 by Fatema Amijee argues that some negative existential facts are fundamental. She argues that totality facts, facts such that their instances exhaust the relevant domain, are fundamental, and that the usual reasons for rejecting negative facts at the fundamental level do not apply to totality facts.

The next four essays concern sparse ontologies, including the idea that nothing exists:

Chapter 5 by Filippo Casati and Naoya Fujikawa respond to Markus Gabriel's view that the world does not exist. They summarize and formalize Gabriel's argument, show how it does not succeed, and engage with Graham Priest's contribution to this volume along the way.

Chapter 6 by Koji Tanaka explores a Buddhist view that denies the existence of all truths and facts, and how Buddhists have supported this doctrine. He clarifies the meaning of the doctrine, objections against it, and how Buddhists can engage with the objections.

Chapter 7 by Bryan Frances argues for a novel view of how ordinary objects reduce to pluralities of pluralities. The predicate ‘is a tree’ fails to apply to reality in the familiar way, as ‘is an electron’ does: ‘is a tree’ is true of reality because, roughly, there are “tree-unified” pluralities of pluralities of tiny bits that make up a tree. But in a sense ‘is a tree’ fails to apply to any object, singular or plural.

Chapter 8 by Eddy Keming Chen argues that there is nothing much in time or space. Drawing from work on time’s arrow and quantum mechanics, he depicts a fundamental cosmic void, makes sense of appearances to the contrary, and answers philosophical and scientific objections along the way.

The next two chapters concern the influence of negative entities:

Chapter 9 by Roberto Casati and Achille Varzi argues that holes are influential immaterial objects. They explore how the US presidential election of 2000 was ultimately decided by criteria for identifying holes—not their material surroundings, which everyone could detect, but the holes themselves.

Chapter 10 by Aaron Segal argues that it’s possible for something to be brought into existence by something that is non-actual. He distinguishes his argument from arguments for causation by omission, and connects the topic to Jewish mystical traditions.

The next two chapters are on non-being and modality:

Chapter 11 by Tyron Goldschmidt and Sam Lebens argues that various modal metaphysics rule out the possibility of there being nothing at all. They conclude that the most prominent pictures of the nature of possibility entail the existence **(p.xiii)** of something, and thus might answer the question of why there is something rather than nothing.

Chapter 12 by Craig Warmke explores the debate over merely possible objects, clarifies the distinction between actualism and possibilism, and reconciles actualism with the reality of possibilities and non-existents. Focusing on late work by Derek Parfit, Warmke proposes and defends an “ostrich actualism” that permits even actualists to quantify over mere possibilities.

The next two chapters focus on language and thought:

Chapter 13 by Lorraine Juliano-Keller and John Keller treats the case of nonsense that appears to make sense. They argue for the existence of what Gareth Evans termed ‘illusions of thought’, and reply to several arguments, with a focus on those of Herman Cappelen.

Chapter 14 by Arif Ahmed is about the meaning and importance of our counterfactual thoughts. Pursuing a Quinean assumption, he explores why we think and care about what might have existed but does not, even while there are no non-existent things.

The final three chapters focus on the intersection of non-being with broadly normative topics:

Chapter 15 by Jacob Ross clarifies the traditional moral distinction between actions and omissions. He levels various objections against counterfactual and causal ways of drawing the distinction, and proposes instead an explanatory view that avoids the objections while capturing our moral judgments about cases.

Chapter 16 by Carolina Sartorio continues on the topic of acts and omissions, and explores whether and how questions about non-existence and ethics get entangled. Focusing on responsibility for omissions, she shows how metaphysics matters morally in some cases, but not others.

Chapter 17 by Daniel Rubio defends Epicurus's famous argument that death cannot harm us because we no longer exist after we die. Focusing on the deprivationist account of the harm of death, Rubio contends that death is not especially harmful in the ways that are often suggested.

The essays bear on each other in ways not captured by their order, and they also bear on a range of other important philosophical topics not within the direct scope of the volume, including causation, action theory, moral responsibility, and logic, to name just a few. Questions about non-existence and non-being are of interest in themselves, and are connected to myriad philosophical debates. We have made much ado about nothing, and we hope that the breadth and depth of the volume will appeal to a wide audience. <>

PRAGMATISM AS ANTI-AUTHORITARIANISM by Richard Rorty, edited by Eduardo Mendieta, Foreword by Robert B. Brandom [Belknap Press: An Imprint of Harvard University Press, 9780674248915]

The last book by the eminent American philosopher and public intellectual Richard Rorty, providing the definitive statement of his mature philosophical and political views.

Richard Rorty's **PRAGMATISM AS ANTI-AUTHORITARIANISM** is a last statement by one of America's foremost philosophers. Here Rorty offers his culminating thoughts on the influential version of pragmatism he began to articulate decades ago in his groundbreaking *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*.

Marking a new stage in the evolution of his thought, Rorty's final masterwork identifies anti-authoritarianism as the principal impulse and virtue of pragmatism. Anti-authoritarianism, on this view, means acknowledging that our cultural inheritance is always open to revision because no authority exists to ascertain the truth, once and for all. If we cannot rely on the unshakable certainties of God or nature, then all we have left to go on—and argue with—are the opinions and ideas of our fellow humans. The test of these ideas, Rorty suggests, is relatively simple: Do they work? Do they produce the peace, freedom, and happiness we desire? To achieve this enlightened pragmatism is not easy, though. Pragmatism demands trust. Pragmatism demands that we think and care about what others think and care about, which further requires that we account for others' doubts of and objections to our own beliefs. After all, our own beliefs are as contestable as anyone else's.

A supple mind who draws on theorists from John Stuart Mill to Annette Baier, Rorty nonetheless is always an apostle of the concrete. No book offers a more accessible account of Rorty's utopia of pragmatism, just as no philosopher has more eloquently challenged the hidebound traditions arrayed against the goals of social justice.

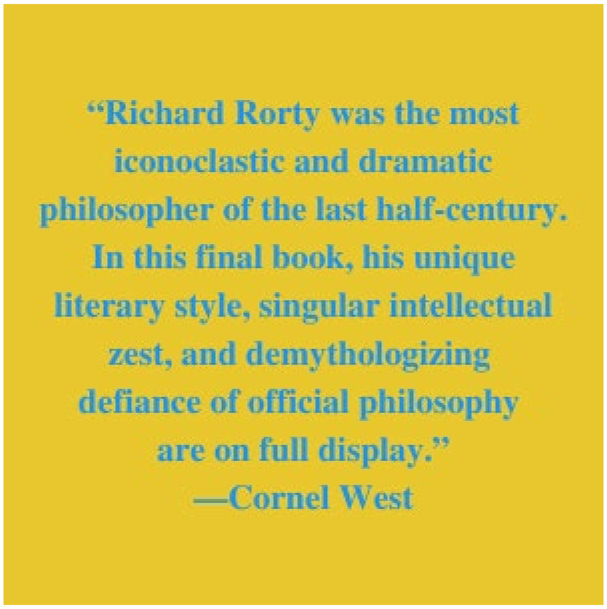
Reviews

"We have perhaps the clearest account of how he understood pragmatist thinking as a political undertaking… Provocative and engaging… The array of urgent questions and crises facing our democracy makes one miss Richard Rorty's voice: insistent, relentlessly questioning, and dedicated to the proposition that we can't afford to let our democracy fail."—Chris Lehmann, New Republic

"Today, there are few philosophers left whose thoughts are inspired by a unifying vision; there are even fewer who can articulate such a view in terms of a ravishing flow of provocative, but sharp and differentiated, arguments. But rarely anyone can compete with Richard Rorty in summarizing the whole of it in a series of brilliant literary lectures like these."—Jürgen Habermas

"Richard Rorty was the most iconoclastic and dramatic philosopher of the last half-century. In this final book, his unique literary style, singular intellectual zest, and demythologizing defiance of official philosophy are on full display."—Cornel West

"A sharp and comprehensive statement of Richard Rorty's distinctive version of pragmatism, presented with all the wit and vitality typical of his writings. Carefully edited by Eduardo Mendieta, with an illuminating foreword by Robert B. Brandom, this book is invaluable reading for anyone interested in Rorty's philosophical vision."—Richard J. Bernstein, Vera List Professor of Philosophy, The New School for Social Research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CONTENTS

Foreword: Achieving the Enlightenment [Robert B. Brandom]
Preface
1. Pragmatism and Religion
2. Pragmatism as Romantic Polytheism
3. & 4. Universality and Truth
5. Pan-Relationalism
6. Against Depth
7. Ethics without Universal Obligations
8. Justice as a Larger Loyalty
9. Is There Anything Worth Saving in Empiricism?
10. McDowell's Version of Empiricism
Epilogue [Eduardo Mendieta]
Notes
Index

Excerpt: Achieving the Enlightenment by Robert B. Brandom

Pragmatism as Anti-Authoritarianism is Richard Rorty's long-lost, last book. Its first English-language publication is an epoch-making event. Written ten years before his death, this volume presents Rorty's final, mature version and vision of his path-breaking pragmatism. Further, it announces a substantially new phase in the development of that view. At its core is a commitment to human self-determination. The principal animating and orienting impulse of pragmatism is now identified as its anti-authoritarianism. Its ultimate goal is our emancipation, both in practice and in theory, from subjection to nonhuman authority. Pragmatism points us at the sort of freedom that consists in humans taking full rational responsibility for our own doings and claimings.

On this conception, pragmatism is an intellectual movement of world-historical significance. Rorty construes pragmatism as aiming at nothing less than a second Enlightenment—as offering what is needed properly to complete the task begun in early modern times by the first Enlightenment. The key to the conceptual division of labor he envisages between the two historical phases of the Enlightenment is the "anti-authoritarianism" of the title—a theoretical and a practical attitude. It is the rejection in both spheres of the traditional understanding of authority and responsibility in terms of subordination and obedience. It is to be replaced by a conception of judging and acting as exercising the authority to undertake commitments that come with a correlative responsibility to justify them, to offer reasons for them that can be assessed by our fellow discursive practitioners.

As Rorty is thinking of it, the great achievement of the original Enlightenment is on the side of ethics. In broadest terms, it is substituting the secular for the sacred in our understanding of the source and nature of our most fundamental obligations. The tradition that the Enlightenment reacted against and recoiled from took normative statuses of authority and responsibility to be independent of the attitudes of those whose statuses they were. Norms were understood as ontologically determined by the objective structure of things, epitomized by the scala natura, the Great Chain of Being. That is a hierarchical ontological structure of superiority and subordination, in which superiors have the authority to command and subordinates the responsibility to obey. (It is what determines "My station and its duties," as the title of F. H. Bradley's essay has it.) It is a natural structure with intrinsically normative significance. In its later Christianized form, it is taken to have been instituted by the supernatural fiat of the ultimate superior and authority, God. Thence derives the "divine right of kings," devolved through the various feudal ranks, bottoming out in the righteousness of man's dominion over the beasts. In both forms, those that take the norms to be read off of the natures of things and those that also take those normatively significant natures to be supernaturally ordained, the ultimate source of our responsibilities and obligations lies outside of us, in something non-human, in the way things anyway are, apart from and independently of our practical activities and attitudes. Our job is to conform our attitudes and practices to these normative statuses of superiority and subordination, authority and responsibility, about which we don't have a say.

From the pragmatist point of view that Rorty sees as prefigured by the Enlightenment, both the natural and the supernatural versions of this traditional picture are fetishistic, in Marx's technical sense. They reify what are in fact the products of human practices and project them into the non-human, merely natural or supernatural, world. By contrast, in its finest flowering in social contract theories of political obligation such as those of Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau, Enlightenment thought grounds normative statuses of authority and responsibility instead in human attitudes and practices of consent, negotiation, and agreement. In seeing this humanizing of the norms governing our practical activity as the core Enlightenment insight, Rorty is at one with Kant's account in his popular essay "*Was Ist Aufklarung?*" For there Kant construes the Enlightenment as announcing the emancipation and coming to maturity of humanity, our casting off our juvenile need for and dependence on normative tutelage from without, in favor of the adult dignity that consists in ourselves taking responsibility for our ultimate commitments.

In the background of this understanding of the message of the Enlightenment is Kant's account of positive freedom: the freedom to do something one could not otherwise do, as opposed to the negative freedom that consists in freedom from some constraint. Kant understands freedom as autonomy: the authority to bind ourselves (autos) by norms (nomos), to acknowledge and undertake commitments, making ourselves responsible by taking ourselves to be responsible. The resulting constraint of commitments is intelligible as distinctively normative constraint (as opposed to the matter-of-factual constraint of compulsion by greater power) just insofar as it is the result of self-binding. This conception radicalizes what Kant learned from Rousseau's dictum that "obedience to a law one has prescribed for oneself is freedom." For Kant turns Rousseau's definition of freedom into a criterion of demarcation of the genuinely normative. By analyzing normativity in terms of autonomy—a distinctive kind of positive freedom—Kant moves decisively beyond the traditional understanding of normativity in terms of subordination and obedience. Here the central inspiration of the Enlightenment achieves its most explicit self-conscious expression. This articulation of the intimate and ineluctable connection between freedom and genuinely normative bindingness underwrites a distinctive liberal, democratic approach to politics. It shows up as having as its implicit telos that everyone who is bound by a law should have a say in imposing that law: the ideal of universal suffrage, in the sense of according all those bound by (responsible to) laws the authority to make them.

The edifying lesson Rorty sees the Enlightenment as teaching is that fear of God and fealty to His authority are to be replaced by human freedom, self-reliance, and solidarity in the form of individual autonomy on the side of ethics, and social commitment to and participation in liberal political practices and institutions, on the side of politics. Our practices are the real source of our commitments and responsibilities, and those practices should be understood as involving no authority beyond what we institute and exercise by engaging in them. Instead of looking outside of human practice for our ultimate commitments, we are to look to what emerges in conducting the human conversation. Liberal political institutions are to structure that conversation procedurally—in effect, to provide the language in which that conversation takes place. This is anti-authoritarianism on the side of our practical activity. The theme of Pragmatism as Anti-Authoritarianism is that pragmatism should be understood as defined by its commitment to bringing about a second Enlightenment. Its task is to broaden the anti-authoritarian lesson of the first Enlightenment beyond the practical sphere, applying it to the theoretical sphere. It is to be applied not only to ethics and politics, but to epistemology.

Rorty admits that the extension he proposes is not one the philosophers of the original Enlightenment envisaged or endorsed. Early in Lecture 2 of this book he tells us

> The anti-authoritarianism which was central to the Enlightenment . . . finds its ultimate expression in the substitution of the kind of fraternal cooperation characteristic of an ideal democratic society for the ideal of redemption from sin. The Enlightenment rationalists

> substituted the idea of redemption from ignorance by Science for this theological idea, but Dewey and James wanted to get rid of that notion too. They wanted to substitute the contrast between a less useful set of beliefs and a more useful set of beliefs for the contrast between ignorance and knowledge. For them, there was no goal called Truth to be aimed at; the only goal was the ever-receding goal of still greater human happiness.

The Enlightenment's critical rejection of religious obedience was complemented by its constructive endorsement of scientific knowledge. But Rorty sees a crucial analogy between the idea of the authority of a non-human God over proprieties of practical conduct (what it is good to do) and the idea of the authority of a non-human Reality over proprieties of theoretical belief (what it is good to think and say). As he says in a different version of the lecture given here as Lecture 1:

> There is a useful analogy to be drawn between the pragmatists' criticism of the idea that truth is a matter of correspondence to the intrinsic nature of reality and the Enlightenment's criticism of the idea that morality is a matter of correspondence to the will of a Divine Being. The pragmatists' anti-representationalist account of belief is, among other things, a protest against the idea that human beings must humble themselves before something non-human, whether the Will of God or the Intrinsic Nature of Reality.

Rorty's idea is that the concept of Reality plays the same invidious role for the pragmatist Enlightenment on the cognitive side that God played for the original Enlightenment on the practical side.

He finds this thought already in the classical American pragmatists. On this conception, their thought is rooted in that of the British Utilitarians of the nineteenth century: Jeremy Bentham, James and John Stuart Mill, and Alexander Bain. The American pragmatists show up as extending their thought from the practical realm, to apply also to the cognitive realm. What is extended is the idea of the relativity of values to human interests—the thought that practical norms are ultimately to be derived from the needs and wants of the desiring beings understood to be subject to those norms. The pragmatists assimilate doxastic, cognitive, theoretical conduct oriented to reality and truth to practical, intentional, value-reflecting conduct oriented to the right and the good, viewing them as different species of a common genus. A bit later in Lecture 1 Rorty tells us that

> what Dewey most disliked about both traditional "realist" epistemology and about traditional religious beliefs is that they discourage us by telling us that somebody or something has authority over us. Both tell us that there is Something Inscrutable, something which claims precedence over our cooperative attempts to avoid pain and obtain pleasure.

At the center of the version of pragmatism Rorty announces in this book is the thought that just as we should be anti-authoritarian in ethics in rejecting the authority of God over the correctness of what we do, we should be anti-authoritarian in epistemology by rejecting the authority of objective reality over the correctness of what we believe. Construed as the non-human locus of this sort of authority, Reality no more exists than God does.

This is a radical idea. It is one thing to emancipate ourselves from practical domination by the patriarchal dictates of what William Blake called "Old Nobodaddy." That is in a certain sense something we can do by coming to suitably redescribe and reconceive ourselves. For what we are freeing ourselves from is a snare powered by a delusion. (Here we can still think of the truth as setting us free.) We have a pretty good idea both of what it is to understand ourselves to live in a God-less world, and even what it is like actually to live in such a world. The same cannot evidently be said about emancipating ourselves from constraint by objective reality.

The ideal of autonomy that sees us as ultimately bound by no moral facts or moral laws we do not ourselves set, or at least acknowledge, is an intelligible and in many ways attractive one. But don't we have to think of ourselves as bound by objective facts and laws of nature whose constraint does not depend at all on our acknowledgment of them? (For Kant, that is the fundamental distinction between constraint by laws, "natural necessity," and constraint by conceptions of laws "practical necessity.") The idea that we could emancipate ourselves from that sort of constraint by any kind of redescription or reconceptualization seems to depend on a kind of magical thinking located somewhere between extremely implausible and just plain crazy.

Of course, that is not the sort of position Rorty is urging on us. Traditionally, the concept of objective reality is called on to play a dual role. As Rorty often says, it is understood to be at once both the cause of sense and the goal of intellect. The first concerns causal relations, the second, normative ones. This fundamental Kantian distinction between norms and causes shapes Rorty's thought throughout his life. He wholeheartedly endorses the idea of reality as causally constraining us. In this regard, his pragmatism is wholly naturalistic. Like classical American pragmatism, it is essentially a Darwinian naturalism rather than a Newtonian naturalism. It construes us as at base animals coping with our environment. Objective reality forces itself upon us by its recalcitrant resistance to our wants and the sometimes surprising and disappointing consequences of our actions, forcing us both to adapt it to our ends and to adapt to it ourselves. It is the physical arena we act in and deal with, setting Deweyan "problems" and framing Deweyan "inquiries" with which creatures like us respond... <>

PRINCIPLES AND PERSONS THE LEGACY OF DEREK PARFIT edited by Jeff McMahan, Tim Campbell, James Goodrich, and Ketan Ramakrishnan

- A distinguished set of contributors engage with the work of Derek Parfit
- New work on some of the deepest issues in moral philosophy
- Includes a paper by the late John Taurek, published for the first time, which responds to Parfit's important work on moral aggregation
- To be followed by two further volumes on **PARFIT: ETHICS AND EXISTENCE** and **LIFE AND THOUGHT**

Derek Parfit, who died in 2017, is widely believed to have been the most significant moral philosopher in well over a century, is author of the 3-volume ethical discussion **ON WHAT MATTERS, 2 VOLUME SET** and **ON WHAT MATTERS VOLUME 3**. The twenty-one new essays in this book have all been inspired by his work. They address issues with which he was concerned in his writing, particularly in his seminal contribution to moral philosophy, **REASONS AND PERSONS** (OUP, 1984). Rather than simply commenting on his work, these essays attempt to make further progress with issues, both moral and prudential, that Parfit believed matter to our lives: issues concerned with how we ought to live, and what we have most reason to do. Topics covered in the book include the nature of personal identity, the basis of self-interested concern about the future, the rationality of our attitudes toward time, what it is for a life to go well or badly, how to evaluate moral theories, the nature of reasons for action, the aggregation of value, how benefits and harms should be distributed among people, and what degree of sacrifice morality requires us to make for the sake of others. These include some of the most important questions of normative ethical theory, as well as fundamental questions about the metaphysics of personhood and personal identity, and the ways in which the answers to these questions bear on what it is rational and moral for us to do.

CONTENTS

Introduction, *Jeff McMahan*
1 Personal Identity, Prudence, and Ethics
1. Special Concern and Personal Identity, *David O. Brink*
2. Separating Persons, *James Goodrich*
3. Personal Identity and Impersonal Ethics, *Tim Campbell*
4. Temporal Neutrality and the Bias toward the Future, *Samuel Scheffler*
5. What is the Opposite of Well-Being?, *Shelly Kagan*
6. Parfit on Love and Partiality, *Roger Crisp*
2 Normative Ethical Theory
7. Individualist Utilitarianism and Converging Theories of Rights, *Elizabeth Ashford*
8. Parfit s Reorientation: From Revisionism to Conciliationism, *Ingmar Persson*
9. Parfit s Final Arguments in Normative Ethics, *Brad Hooker*
10. Parfit on Act Consequentialism, *Katarzyna de Lazari-Radek and Peter Singer*
11. Nonlegislative Justification: Against Legalist Moral Theory, *Liam Murphy*
3 Reasons
12. Doing Right by Wrong, *Stephen Darwall*
13. Giving Reasons and Given Reasons, *John Broome*
4 Moral Mathematics: Aggregation, Overdetermination, and Harm
14. Reply to Parfit's "Innumerate Ethics", *John Taurek*
15. Defence Against Parfit's Torturers, *Jeff McMahan*
16. Overdetermination and Obligation, *Victor Tadros*
17. What is Harming?, *Molly Gardner*
5 Egalitarianism and Prioritarianism
18. Prioritarianism, Risk, and the Gap Between Prudence and Morality, *Nils Holtug*
19. Relational Egalitarianism: Telic and Deontic, *Kasper Lippert-Rasmussen*
6 Supererogation
20. Duties That Become Supererogatory or Forbidden?, *F. M. Kamm*
21. More Supererogatory, *Thomas Hurka and Evangeline Tsagarakis*
Index

When Derek Parfit died early in January 2017, he had for years been widely regarded as the best living moral philosopher. Many regarded him as the best moral philosopher since Sidgwick (whom he described as `my great, drab herd), and I know several distinguished philosophers who believe him to be the best moral philosopher since Kant. He was also greatly beloved by his many former students and colleagues from his years at Oxford, Harvard, New York University (NYU), Princeton, and Rutgers. When he had to be hospitalized in New Jersey in 2014 after coming close to dying, the philosophers who appeared at his bedside were so numerous that a nurse was moved to exclaim, 'Jesus Christ had only twelve disciples, but look at you!'

He was also held in great affection by the many beneficiaries of his legendary generosity in commenting on unpublished philosophical manuscripts. Several philosophers have expressed amazement at having received comments from him that were lengthier than the manuscript itself, often only a day or two after sending it to him. In at least one instance, his comments on a book manuscript were nearly as long as the book itself--though I assume that on this occasion the comments took more than a day or two to prepare.

Although Parfit was well known, admired, and indeed revered in the world of academic philosophy, he was little known outside that small world. He worked obsessively but in comparative obscurity, seldom giving public lectures and almost never writing for popular media. He never sought celebrity; nor did it ever find him. While some philosophers have been awarded dozens of honorary doctorates, Parfit never received a single one. Near the end of his life, he was awarded the prestigious Rolf Schock Prize in Logic and Philosophy; but apart from that, his nominations for the other major prizes for which moral and political philosophers are eligible (Kyoto, Templeton, Berggruen ...) were repeatedly passed over by the selection panels. Perhaps most surprisingly, there was never a Festschrift, or liber amicorum, published in his honour during his lifetime—not even on the occasion of his mandatory retirement from Oxford at the age of 67 in 2010. Nor were there even plans for such a volume when he died unexpectedly seven years later.

There have, of course, been various edited volumes, monographs, and special issues of journals devoted to examinations of Parfit's work.' Although many of these did not appear until after his death, he had, happily, seen the material in most of them. These many published discussions help to explain why his students and friends had not prepared a Festschrift. Because there was so much active discussion of his ideas, and because he remained intensely engaged and productive and seemed to everyone, including his doctors, to be in good health, his students and friends reasonably assumed that there was no urgency about publishing a volume of essays in his honour. But we were wrong.

In December 2017, the philosophy departments at New York University and Rutgers University jointly held a two-day conference in Parfit's memory at which eight papers were presented. In coordination with the organizers of that conference, and with the generous and able assistance of Joseph Carlsmith and Ketan Ramakrishnan, I organized a parallel conference in Oxford. This conference, which was held in May 2018, was larger in scale, spanning three days and featuring twenty-three speakers who all presented full-length papers. I planned the Oxford conference with the explicit aim of publishing revised versions of selected papers in an edited collection in Parfit's honour—the long overdue and sadly posthumous Festschrift.'

The project has, however, become more ambitious since then. The papers from the Oxford conference alone were almost too many for a single volume. And six of the eight speakers at the Rutgers-NYU conference wanted to submit papers for inclusion as well. There were, moreover, a number of other moral philosophers who were unable to present a paper at either conference but wanted to pay tribute to Parfit in some public way and have therefore written essays specifically for the Festschrift. Still others wanted to contribute a piece of a more biographical nature. The material I have gathered has thus increased well beyond the limits of the single volume I had initially envisaged. This book is therefore only the first of three volumes that will appear as memorials to Derek Parfit: two collections of philosophical essays and one volume of intellectual biography and memoir.

In inviting speakers to the Oxford conference, I explicitly urged them not to assume that they should restrict their presentations to commentaries on Parfit's work. While I did not discourage the writing of critical or exegetical work, which was also welcome, I did encourage invitees to address and attempt to advance our understanding of issues that Parfit believed really matter. The result is that, while many of the philosophical essays in this and the forthcoming second volume do in part analyse, criticize, or build on Parfit's ideas and arguments, all are directly engaged with issues in moral philosophy on which Parfit worked, and all seek to make progress with those issues. They are continuations of his efforts to understand the issues and they carry forward his legacy.

In recent years several edited collections have been published in English that contain essays that comment on the first two volumes of the major work of Parfit's later years, **ON WHAT MATTERS**. As these two volumes address issues primarily in metaethics and ethical theory, the essays in the edited collections naturally address the same issues. By contrast, the essays in this book and in the sequel are not much concerned with metaethics. There are various reasons for this, one being that the metaethical issues that were of most concern to Parfit have already been well and thoroughly discussed in the various other edited collections. Another is a matter of geography. Speakers for the larger conference in Oxford were drawn largely from friends and students of Parfit's on this side of the Atlantic, who tended to be concentrated in Oxford and Scandinavia and who, for whatever reason, have in general worked more in normative ethics and population ethics than in metaethics. While some of these philosophers chose to write about issues raised by Parfit's discussions of Kantianism, contractualism, and consequentialism in volume I of **ON WHAT MATTERS**, most chose to write on issues that Parfit addressed in Reasons and Persons or in papers published before **ON WHAT MATTERS**.

Almost half of the contributors of philosophical essays chose to write on topics in population ethics, the area of ethics concerned with issues involving causing people to exist. Although the origin of population ethics as a distinct area of moral philosophy can be traced to a few seminal articles in the late 1960s and early 1970s, the locus classicus of the range of difficult problems and paradoxes in the area is part IV of Reasons and Persons, which remains the best and most important single work in the field.' The second of the three memorial volumes will be devoted entirely to essays in population ethics.

The essays in this first volume are more diverse. Most address issues that Parfit discussed in parts I, II, and III of **REASONS AND PERSONS**, such as personal identity, the basis of rational prudential concern about the future, self-interest and time, the nature of well-being, special relations and partiality, the aggregation of value, the nature of harm, and individual responsibility for causally overdetermined outcomes. Others, as I noted above, discuss the major ethical theories that Parfit argued, in volume i of On What Matters, substantially converge in their implications when they are understood in their most defensible forms. The remaining essays discuss principles and issues that Parfit discussed in essays or in various places in his writings, such as equality, prioritarianism, supererogation, and the nature of reasons. Rather than offer my own summaries of the essays, I have appended the authors' own abstracts below.

With one exception, the essays in this first volume were written either for one of the conferences or specifically for inclusion here. Also with one exception, all are published here for the first time. The one essay that has appeared elsewhere is that by de Lazari-Radek and Singer. Although it was written for the

Rutgers-NYU conference, it has recently been published in a journal.' The essay that was not written as a tribute to Parfit is that by John Taurek. This was written several decades ago. In 1977, Taurek published a celebrated paper called 'Should the Numbers Count?', This paper was perhaps the principal catalyst for discussions in contemporary moral philosophy of issues of aggregation and in particular of the relevance to the evaluation of an act of the number of people harmed or benefited by it. The position Taurek's paper defended is at one end of the spectrum of possible views and is thus quite controversial. In 1978 Parfit published an influential response.' Taurek wrote and presented a reply but soon abandoned philosophy and, to the best of my knowledge, never sought to publish this reply. He died in 2003 and has subsequently become something of a cult figure in philosophy. Frances Kamm preserved a typescript of Taurek's reply and kindly offered to allow me to include it in this book. I have subsequently found a second copy of Taurek's typescript among Parfit's papers. I am most grateful to Taurek's daughter, Davida Taurek, for granting me her permission to publish it and also for securing the permission of her siblings. I am confident that the appearance, after so many years, of Taurek's response to Parfit's criticisms of his view will be a source of excitement and deep interest to many philosophers.

Most of the contributors to this book were once Parfit's students or friends. All have endeavoured to engage with issues that he believed matter and to produce work worthy of serving as a tribute to him, though in the knowledge that each of our pieces could have been better with the benefit of his comments, however hastily written.

Chapter Abstracts

David O. Brink: 'Special Concern and Personal Identity'

As discussed by John Locke, Joseph Butler, and Thomas Reid, prudence involves a concern for the agent's own personal good that she does not have for others. should be a concern for the agent's overall good that is temporally neutral and involves an equal concern for all parts of her life. In this way, prudence involves a combination of agent relativity and temporal neutrality. This asymmetrical treatment of matters of interpersonal and intertemporal distribution might seem arbitrary. Henry Sidgwick raised this worry, and Thomas Nagel and Derek Parfit have endorsed it as reflecting the instability of prudence and related doctrines such as egoism and the self-interest theory. However, Sidgwick thought that the worry was unanswerable only for skeptics about personal identity, such as David Hume. Sidgwick thought that one could defend prudence by appeal to realism about personal identity and a compensation principle. This is one way in which special concern and prudence presuppose personal identity. However, as Jennifer Whiting has argued, special concern displayed in positive affective regard for one's future and personal planning and investment is arguably partly constitutive of personal identity at least on a plausible psychological reductionist conception of personal identity. After explaining both conceptions of the relation between special concern and personal identity, the chapter concludes by exploring what might seem to be the paradoxical character of conjoining them, suggesting that there may be no explanatory priority between the concepts of special concern and personal identity.

James Goodrich: 'Separating Persons'

In Reasons and Persons, Derek Parfit argues for a reductionist view of persons and that our ethical thinking should become more impersonal. While doing so, he argues that we may need to give up some widely shared intuitions about the Separateness of Persons and all of those views which crucially hinge upon it. However, this chapter argues that Parfit was mistaken. His reductionist views of persons and his more general claim that our ethical thinking should become more impersonal are in fact compatible with several plausible interpretations of the Separateness of Persons. Parfit's project in Reasons and Persons should thus be understood not as undermining the Separateness of Persons, but as transforming our understanding of it. The chapter closes by considering the degree to which Parfit had reason by his own lights to accept some version of the Separateness of Persons.

Tim Campbell: 'Personal Identity and Impersonal Ethics'

On the Reductionist View, the fact of a person's existence and that of her identity over time just consist in the holding of certain more particular facts about physical and mental events and the relations between these events. These more particular facts are impersonal—they do not presuppose or entail the existence of any person or mental subject. In Reasons and Persons, Derek Parfit claims that if the Reductionist View is true, then 'it is . . . more plausible to focus, not on persons, but on experiences, and to claim that what matters morally is the nature of these experiences. But why think that the Reductionist View has this implication? As critics such as Robert Adams, David Brink, Mark Johnston, Christine Korsgaard, and Susan Wolf have suggested, it is not dear why the Reductionist View should have any implications regarding the moral importance of persons. This chapter argues that in contrast to Non-reductionist views, Psychological Reductionism, a version of the Reductionist View that assumes a psychological criterion of personal identity, supports the kind of impersonal moral outlook that Parfit describes.

Samuel Scheffler: 'Temporal Neutrality and the Bias Toward the Future'

Many philosophers have held that rationality requires one to have an equal concern for all parts of one's life. In the view of these philosophers, temporal neutrality is a requirement of rationality. Yet Derek Parfit has argued that most of us are not, in fact, temporally neutral. We exhibit a robust bias toward the future. Parfit maintains that this future-bias is bad for us, and that our lives would go better if we were temporally neutral. Like other neutralists, he also believes that the bias is irrational, however widespread and robust it may be. This article assesses these criticisms and offers a qualified defense of the bias toward the future.

Shelly Kagan: 'What Is the Opposite of Well-Being?'

Typically, discussions of the nature of well-being focus only on the positive elements—those things that directly constitute someone's being well off or better off. But an adequate theory of well-being also needs to give an account of ill-being, the negative elements that directly constitute being badly off, or worse off. This chapter asks how to extend a particular nonstandard theory of well-being—according to which well-being consists in the enjoyment of objective goods—so as to cover ill-being as well. In effect, then, it tries to discover the opposite of well-being, according to this nonstandard theory. This chapter tries to answer the question: what is ill-being when well-being is enjoying the good? Graphs are used throughout to illustrate the alternative possibilities, and to help display the surprising complexity of the most plausible answers.

Roger Crisp: `Parfit on Love and Partiality'

It is generally held that in his 1984 book Reasons and Persons Derek Parfit was advocating greater impartiality in ethics. In his later work, On What Matters, he seems more inclined to accept that we have partial reasons, for example, to give priority to those we love. This chapter raises some questions concerning Parfit's arguments for partiality, including whether affection is too contingent to be valuable in itself, and whether partial concern for others, shared histories, or commitments can plausibly be said to ground non-instrumental reasons or value. The paper ends with a discussion of gratitude and an argument based on Parfit's reductionist conception of personal identity.

Elizabeth Ashford: 'Individualist Utilitarianism and Converging Theories of Rights'

The paper develops two core themes of Derek Parfit's philosophy. The first is his goal of unifying the two main rival impartial moral theories, Kantian deontology and consequentialism, therefore reinforcing their claim to pertain to objective moral truths. The second is his focus on the moral significance of the combined effects of many agents' behaviour, and on the challenges this poses to ordinary moral thinking. This is a theme that runs throughout his work, that he returns to at the very end of volume III of On What Matters. Kantianism and consequentialism have been thought to fundamentally diverge on the issue of rights and tradeoffs. The chapter first outlines the version of consequentialism taken to be most plausible, calling it 'individualist utilitarianism, which differs from so-called 'classical utilitarianism' in taking the moral importance of well-being to be grounded on the moral importance of the persons whose well-being it is. This paves the way for a pluralist Kantian and utilitarian account of human rights, grounded on the moral significance both of persons' well-being and their dignity as rational autonomous agents. The chapter then turns to the topic of the threat to access to the means of subsistence, both for the current poor and future generations, posed by global as well as domestic socio-economic structures and anthropogenic climate change. This harm is the combined effect of the ongoing patterns of behaviour of a vast number of agents. The chapter argues that individualist utilitarianism and Kantianism converge on the conclusion that the duty to avoid harms of this kind should be analysed as a shared duty of basic justice, non-fulfilment of which constitutes a structural human rights violation.

Ingmar Persson: `Parfit's Reorientation: From Revisionism to Conciliationism'

This paper aims to show that between Reasons and Persons and On What Matters the orientation of Derek Parfit's philosophy underwent a significant change. The approach of Reasons and Persons is largely revisionist, which is exemplified by his reductionist account of personal identity. This account is omitted in On What Matters apparently because it does not fit in with the conciliationist project of this work. The aim of the first two volumes of that work is to show that, on the basis of a non-naturalist theory of normative reasons, three supposedly irreconcilable moral theories—rule-consequentialism, Kantian and Scanlonian contractualism—could converge to form a single Triple Theory. In the third volume, the conciliationist approach is carried further by Parfit's attempt to show both that his metaethical position is in essential agreement with rivals, such as Gibbard's expressivism, and to reconcile parts of common-sense morality and consequentialism in order to bring them together in the Triple Theory. This chapter argues that the failure of these attempts as well as the fact that the most controversial revisionist claims in Reasons and Persons are left out throw doubt on the feasibility of Parfit's conciliationalist undertaking.

Brad Hooker: `Parfit's Final Arguments in Normative Ethics'

This paper starts by juxtaposing the normative ethics in the final part of Parfit's final book, On What Matters, volume III (2017), with the normative ethics in his earlier books, Reasons and Persons (1984) and On What Matters, volume I (2011). The paper then addresses three questions. The first is, where does the reflective-equilibrium methodology that Parfit endorsed in the first volume of On What Matters lead? The second is, is the Act-involving Act Consequentialism that Parfit considers in the final volume of On What Matters as plausible as Rossian deontology? The third is, how is the new argument that Parfit puts forward for Rule Consequentialism supposed to work?

Katarzyna de Lazari-Radek and Peter Singer: `Parfit on Act Consequentialism'

In the first two volumes of On What Matters, Derek Parfit argues that three major normative theories—Kantianism, Contractualism, and Consequentialism—are, in their most defensible forms, compatible, and can be reconciled as a 'Triple Theory. The form of Consequentialism that Parfit argues is compatible with Kantianism and Contractualism is Rule Consequentialism, This has led many to assume that Parfit does not believe that Act Consequentialism is a defensible form of Consequentialism. We draw on personal correspondence to show that this assumption is incorrect. We then consider how, in On What Matters, volume iii, which Parfit completed shortly before his death, he seeks to narrow the differences between Act Consequentialism and the Triple Theory. One of the ways in which he does this is to suggest that Impartial Rationality may be an external rival to Morality, in much the same way as egoism is an external rival to morality. It is argued that this move undermines morality, as shown by Parfit's own example of the judgements that we may make in the case of terror bombing. We conclude that Parfit's attempts to bridge the gap between Act Consequentialism and Triple Theory meet with only limited success.

Liam Murphy: Nonlegislative Justification'

If moral theorists who otherwise disagree, all approach moral theorizing as a search for a set of desirable moral principles for the general regulation of behavior, then there is a sense in which they are all, as Parfit says, climbing the same mountain. But it is the wrong mountain. Morality should not be understood as hypothetical legislation; it is a mistake to set about constructing morality as if we were making law. Real legislators evaluate possible legal rules by considering the effects they would have. They can do this because enforcement and acceptance of law ensure a high level of compliance. Moral legislators have no reason to assume any particular level of acceptance; the effects of counterfactual acceptance of a principle are not morally relevant. The argument targets rule consequentialism and Scanlon's official version of contractualism. The paper begins in a positive mode by arguing that a nonlegislative version of Scanlon's approach, that seeks justification for conduct of such-and-such a kind in such-and-such circumstances by comparing the reasons in favor and the reasons others have to object, is a very attractive way to think about what we owe to each other.

Stephen Darwall: 'Doing Right by Wrong'

A striking contrast between Reasons and Persons and On What Matters is the vastly different attitude Parfit takes towards Act Consequentialism. Parfit's defense of Act Consequentialism against a battery of criticisms in Reasons and Persons was legendary. In On What Matters, however, Parfit remarks that Sidgwick's act- consequentialist principle of rational benevolence is best regarded, like egoism, as an 'external rival to morality. What lies behind this remarkable change in attitude, if not in view, is Parfit's focus in On What Matters on deontic moral concepts, like wrongness, and their relation to accountability and reactive attitudes like moral blame. This essay explores the details of Parfit's later views, arguing that he did not go far enough in pursuing this line of thought and that doing so is necessary to bring out the distinctive normativity of deontic moral concepts. Parfit's claim that the 'ordinary' concept of wrongness is indefinable threatens to rob the concept of normativity in the 'reason-involving sense'. If, however, we understand wrongness in terms of there being reason to blame, lacking excuse, we can account for its distinctive normative contours.

John Broome: 'Giving Reasons and Given Reasons'

Derek Parfit, as a leader of the 'reasons first' movement, says that the concept of a reason is fundamental and indefinable. But his concept of a reason differs from most philosophers. Most philosophers take a reason to be a fact, whereas Parfit says that reasons are given by facts, not that they are facts. This paper distinguishes Parfit's concept of a reason, which it calls a 'given reason', from the more common one, which it calls a 'giving reason. It argues that, whereas the concept of a giving reason is easily defined, the concept of a given reason is not. Parfit is therefore better placed than most philosophers to defend the claim that the concept of a reason is fundamental and indefinable.

John Taurek: 'Reply to Parfit's "Innurnerate Ethics"'

This is the text of a presentation by Taurek that replies to Parfit's Innumerate Ethics, which is itself a reply to Taurek's 'Should the Numbers Count?: Jeff McMahan: `Defence Against Parfit's Torturers'

In the literature on 'moral mathematics' prompted by the section with that title in Reasons and Persons, one issue is whether, and if so to what extent, it is wrong to cause a negligible harm to each of a large number of people, and in particular whether doing so could ever be as seriously wrong as causing a substantial harm to one person. The topic in this chapter will be the closely related issue of proportionality in defence against those who would inflict only such tiny harms, though on a large number of victims. For example, might a person who would otherwise inflict a tiny harm on each of a large number of people be liable to be killed in defence of those people? The chapter will suggest that such a person seems liable to be killed in some cases but not in others, depending on what other people might be doing or on other facts about the context in which the harms would occur. It will review a range of examples involving the infliction of tiny harms that reveal some surprising facts about the conditions and limits of liability to defensive harm.

Victor Tadros: `Overdetermination and Obligation'

This chapter is concerned with circumstances where a person's act makes no difference to the occurrence of a negative outcome, but is a member of a group of acts that does make such a difference. In the light of an analysis of these circumstances, it argues against two familiar ideas. One is Derek Parfit's view that the wrongness of an act directly depends on the consequences of the group of acts of which it is a member. The other is the view that intentions are irrelevant to permissibility The chapter suggests that wrongness and permissibility, in these cases, is distinguished by the intentions of those who act. It also argues that intentions make a difference to a person's liability to punitive, compensatory, and defensive harm. Finally, it briefly considers cases involving mixed motives.

Molly Gardner: 'What is Harming?'

A complete theory of harming must have both a substantive component and a formal component. The substantive component, which Victor Tadros calls the `currency' of harm, tells us what I interfere with when I harm you. The formal component, which Tadros calls the 'measure' of harm, tells us how the harm to you is related to my action. This chapter surveys the literature on both the currency and the measure of harm. It argues that the currency of harm is well-being and that the measure of harming is best captured by a causal account on which harming is causing a harm. A harm for you is the presence of something intrinsically bad for you or the absence of something intrinsically good for you. Thus, although a counterfactual account of the measure of harm need not distinguish between a harm and a harmful event, the causal account reserves the term 'harm', not for a harmful event, but only for its effect. Finally, the chapter shows how a complete theory of harming can help us to answer questions about whether we can harm people with speech, whether we can harm the dead, and how it is possible to harm future generations.

Nils Holtug: 'Prioritarianism, Risk, and the Gap Between Prudence and Morality'

According to a prominent objection to prioritarianism, it inappropriately implies a gap between prudence and morality, even in single-person cases. Thus, according to prioritarianism, we should sometimes sacrifice an individual's expected welfare in order to protect her from the risk of a worse outcome. The present chapter presents a critical discussion of this objection. It first provides a more precise account of axiological prioritarianism and what it implies for the relation between prudence and morality. Then it provides an account of four prioritarian theories that (unlike axiological prioritarianism) have implications for risky choices, namely ex ante prioritarianism, ex post prioritarianism, pluralist prioritarianism, and factualist prioritarianism. It then presents the objection that prioritarianism implies a gap between prudence and morality in single-person cases in greater detail, which includes explaining the extent to which this objection applies to the four different versions of prioritarianism mentioned above. Finally, the chapter defends the view that the prioritarian gap between prudence and morality is unproblematic, even in single-person cases.

Kasper Lippert-Rasmussen: 'Relational Egalitarianism: Telic and Deontic'

Derek Parfit famously introduced a now commonly adopted distinction between telic and deontic distributive egalitarianism. This chapter argues that we can draw a similar distinction between telic and deontic relational egalitarianism. Interestingly, telic relational egalitarianism might be less vulnerable to the levelling-down objection than telic distributive egalitarianism. However, while some relational egalitarian concerns are best captured by telic relational egalitarianism, other concerns are better captured by deontic relational egalitarianism and yet others relating to intergenerational justice are better captured by telic distributive egalitarianism. Accordingly, insofar as we are egalitarians, we should be pluralist egalitarians in a more thoroughgoing way than Parfit entertained.

F. M. Kamm: 'Duties That Become Supererogatory or Forbidden?'

This chapter first examines certain of Derek Parfit's views in his On What Matters, volume iii on the relation between not harming, aiding, and making personal sacrifices to achieve each. It compares his views with those of the author on two different measures of the stringency of duties and the distinction between supererogation and obligation. The chapter goes on to consider implications of these views for cases in which an agent must choose whether to save many people by either (i) not saving or harming someone else or (ii) suffering some large personal loss himself. The chapter continues by arguing against one way in which Parfit thinks an agent-relative deontological conception of one's duty incorrectly bars our having common aims by requiring each person to minimize the harm he does.

Thomas Hurka and Evangeline Tsagarakis: 'More Supererogatory'

If acts can be supererogatory, presumably some can be more supererogatory than others, or further beyond the call of duty. This paper explains how this is possible within a general account of supererogation that sees it arising when a prima facie duty, for example to promote other people's good, is outweighed by a prima facie permission to promote one's own good. An act is then more supererogatory when the permission outweighs the duty by more, or when the gap between its strength and that of the duty's is larger. The paper contrasts its permission-based account of supererogation with a more common one typified by Parfit in On What Matters, which rests it on a conflict between two 'reasons' that, despite their differing contents, are of the same deontic type and have the same favouring force. Alongside several other weaknesses, Parfit's account doesn't allow differing degrees of supererogation but must treat all supererogatory acts as on a par. <>

HIPPOCRATIC COMMENTARIES IN THE GREEK, LATIN, SYRIAC AND ARABIC TRADITIONS: SELECTED PAPERS FROM THE XVTH COLLOQUE HIPPOCRATIQUE, MANCHESTER edited by Peter Pormann [Series: Studies in Ancient Medicine, Brill, 9789004470194]

This collection of article presents cutting-edge scholarship in Hippocratic studies in English from an international range of experts. It pays special attention to the commentary tradition, notably in Syriac and Arabic, and its relevance to the constitution and interpretation of works in the Hippocratic Corpus. It presents new evidence from hitherto unpublished sources, including Greek papyri and Syriac and Arabic manuscripts. It encompasses not only the classical period (and notably Galen), but also tackles evidence from the medieval and Renaissance periods.

Contributors are: Elizabeth Craik, David Leith, Tommaso Raiola, Jacques Jouanna, Caroline Magdelaine, Jean-Michel Mouton, Peter N. Singer, R. J. Hankinson, Ralph M. Rosen, Daniela Manetti, Mathias Witt, Amneris Roselli, Véronique Boudon-Millot, Sabrina Grimaudo, Giulia Ecca, Kamran I. Karimullah, María Teresa Santamaría Hernández, and Jesús Ángel y Espinós.

CONTENTS

Notes on Contributors
Introduction Author: Peter E. Pormann
Chapter 1 Reflections on Hippocratic Commentary Author: Elizabeth Craik
Chapter 2 Asclepiades of Bithynia as Hippocratic Commentator Author: David Leith
Chapter 3 Sabinus 'the Hippocratic': His Exegetical Method in the Commentaries on Hippocrates Author: Tommaso Raiola
Chapter 4 Galen as Commentator of Commentaries: The Case of the Hippocratic Epidemics 1 and 3 Author: Jacques Jouanna
Chapter 5 New Fragments of a Commentary on the Oath Attributed to Galen Authors: Caroline Magdelaine and Jean-Michel Mouton
Chapter 6 Beyond and behind the Commentary: Galen on Hippocrates on Elements Author: Peter N. Singer
Chapter 7 Galen the Hippocratic: Textual Analysis and the Practice of Commentary Author: R.J. Hankinson
Chapter 8 Galen's Hippocratic 'Commentary' on The Capacities of the Soul Depend on the Mixtures of the Body Author: Ralph M. Rosen

Chapter 9 Commenting beyond the Commentary: Galen's Exegetical Strategies in Difficulties in Breathing Author: Daniela Manetti
Chapter 10 Types of Cranial Injuries in the Hippocratic Wounds in the Head in Light of the Ancient Commentary Tradition Author: Mathias Witt
Chapter 11 Galen's Surgical Commentaries on Hippocrates Author: Amneris Roselli
Chapter 12 Galen and Pseudo-Galen in Conversation: Epidemics 2.3.2 and Aphorisms 4.5 Author: Véronique Boudon-Millot
Chapter 13 Ancient Medicine in the Galenic Corpus: The Story of a Concealment Author: Sabrina Grimaudo
Chapter 14 A New Anonymous Prologue to the Commentary on the Hippocratic Aphorisms in the Harleianus 6295 Author: Giulia Ecca
Chapter 15 On the Authorship of the Syriac Prognostic Author: Kamran I. Karimullah
Chapter 16 The Latin Commentary by Pedro Jaime Esteve on the Second Book of the Hippocratic Epidemics (Valencia, 1551) Author: María Teresa Santamaría Hernández
Chapter 17 The First Complete Renaissance Commentary on the Hippocratic Epidemics Author: Jesús Ángel y Espinós
Bibliography
Indexes

Scholars of ancient medicine and philosophy have come to recognise the role commentaries play in the history of ideas in areas as diverse as logic, physics, metaphysics, cosmology, anthropology, and ethics. In the field of philosophy, the last thirty years saw an increased engagement with the philosophical commentaries of late antiquity, which contain fascinating insights and debates and do not conform to the scholastic images which previous scholars have painted of them. During the same period, medical historians have paid increased attention to the commentaries of late antiquity, which often reflect the teaching in the amphitheatres of Alexandria. Likewise, although the importance of Galen's commentaries on the Hippocratic corpus has long been realised, recent scholarship has brought them into much clearer focus, not least because of their importance for the textual history of the various Hippocratic treatises. And again, although it has long been acknowledged that the so-called 'Oriental' tradition played a crucial role in the transmission of Galenic and other commentaries on Hippocrates, it is only recently that this branch of Hippocratic scholarship has been put onto a firmer footing. Take the *Epidemics* as an example: only in the last decade has the Arabic version been studied in depth and published for the first time (although this remains an ongoing effort). The influence of the Greek commentary tradition is also immense, and equally felt in the Latin and Arabic traditions, both East and West, so to speak. For instance, the Hippocratic *Aphorisms*attracted enormous exegetical attention in Latin, Arabic and Hebrew, not just during the medieval period, but also the Renaissance.

The aim of this volume (and the *colloque Hippocratique* on which it is based) is to bring the whole commentary tradition into clearer focus. Galen, to be sure, was a watershed, not least in our understanding of the development of the Greek exegetical tradition on the Hippocratic Corpus. Yet, his fame obscured the many contributions by earlier and contemporaneous commentators. But we also wanted to capture the richness of the subsequent exegetical tradition, and especially the importance of the Syriac and Arabic translations, as well as Renaissance developments. This variety is reflected in the first paper by Elizabeth Craik, which opens the volume with a panoramic reflection about the nature of commenting on works in the Hippocratic Corpus. Some texts in the Hippocratic Corpus attracted more exegetical attention than others, such as the *Aphorisms*, *Prognostic*, and *Epidemics*. The tradition to write commentaries goes back to early Hellenistic times, with Baccheius (c. 270–200 BC) being one of the earliest proponents. Yet we do not know much about Hippocratic commentaries prior to Galen, as he successfully superseded earlier attempts; in many cases, we only know of earlier commentaries through Galen.

Craik also explores the subject groupings that exist in the commentary tradition, where, for instance, surgery emerges as a separate theme. There is also a strong link between philological work and writing commentaries. For instance, those engaged in editing the Hippocratic Corpus in Alexandria also produced commentaries on various works within it. But this link between editorial and exegetical activity is not only present in Alexandria during the Imperial period, but also in Renaissance Italy, as she shows by surveying the commentary activity of editors of Hippocrates such as Asulanus, Cornarius, and Foesius. Another Renaissance scholar, Theodore Zwinger, comments on more theoretical works and illustrates his commentary with tables.

Hippocrates remains an important reference point in medical debates in the seventeenth century. William Harvey, for instance, quotes him repeatedly, including in his famous work on blood circulation (*De motu cordis*, 1628). The German physician active largely in the Low Countries, Anton Deusing (1612–1666), employs Hippocrates to underpin his own arguments about anatomy and physiology. Many others physicians selected certain passages from the Hippocratic Corpus and reinterpreted them in light of their own conviction. In this way, the exegetical process provided renewed relevance to the works that by then are more than two millennia old.

To return to Antiquity: Craik also distinguished between 'commentary' and 'quasi-commentary', for instance in Galen's oeuvre. His *Method of Healing* 3–6 explains Hippocratic doctrine on surgery; in many cases, Galen first writes quasi-commentaries in the form of monographs on certain subjects which then engage with Hippocratic material quite heavily. And such quasi-commentaries also exist, for instance, in the lecture notes which survive from the early modern period.

One of the pre-Galenic commentators about whom we know relatively little is Asclepiades of Bithynia, who lived in the second century BC and was largely active in Athens and Rome. He adopted an anti-Empiricist viewpoint and stands in contrast to the Alexandrian exegetical tradition. Only a few fragments of his commentaries on the Hippocratic treatises *Surgery*, *Aphorisms* and *Epidemics* 1 survive, and David Leith offers a critical survey of this material in his contribution. He begins with the evidence for Asclepiades' commentary on *Surgery*, for which we have the most evidence, as Galen quotes it repeatedly in his own commentary on this text. Asclepiades' commentary appears to have been a lemmatic commentary, preceded by a discussion of the Hippocratic treatise's title. Asclepiades appears to have been particularly interested in terminology as well as textual problems, and his entries consist of a good deal of analytical paraphrase.

This general picture is confirmed by the only evidence for Asclepiades' commentary on the *Aphorisms* found in Caelius Aurelianus' *On Acute and Chronic Diseases*. There, too, we see him define a technical term, *synánchē*. The newest evidence, however, comes from a recently discovered papyrus fragment. It contains an anonymous commentary on *Epidemics* 1, probably written in the late first century BC, which criticises Asclepiades' ideas. By combining this criticism with Galen's discussion, Leith reconstructs Asclepiades' exegetical approach, showing that he read his own theory of corpuscles (*ónkoi*) and passageways (*póroi*) into the Hippocratic text; and that he refuted the Hippocratic idea of critical days, whilst insisting on the necessity to observe paroxysms closely. Leith concludes by exploring two further pieces of evidence which could suggest that Asclepiades possibly wrote commentaries also on books 3 and 6 of the *Epidemics*, but his findings remain inconclusive.

The next two articles also deal with fragments of earlier commentators, in this case preserved in Galen's *Commentary on Hippocrates' 'Epidemics'*. Yet, the Greek manuscript tradition for this text is particularly poor: Galen wrote commentaries on books 1–3 and 6, but those on book 2 and the last third of book 6 are only extant in Arabic translation. But even where the Greek text is extant, the manuscript tradition is often problematic. That led Ernst Wenkebach, who produced the first critical edition for the *Corpus Medicorum Graecorum*, to consult a German translation of the extant Arabic translation produced by his colleague Franz Pfaff. Where he perceived differences between the Greek and the Arabic, he often followed this German translation and translated it 'back' into what he thought was Galen's Greek. There are two problems, however, with this procedure. First, Pfaff's German translation as reported in Wenkebach's apparatus is sometimes unreliable; occasionally, he simply misunderstood or misread the Arabic. Second, Wenkebach was a child of the early twentieth century when editors would often intervene in the text and rewrite the Greek in order to make it smoother; they were confident that they could reproduce authentic Greek text not attested in the manuscript tradition. The modern reader can easily be misled by Wenkebach's retroversions as printed in the CMG editions: they suggest a confidence and even certainty about the Greek text that is simply misplaced. For it is virtually impossible to translate back the Arabic target text into the Greek source text. Vagelpohl, the editor of Galen's commentary on book 1, highlights the problematic nature of Wenkebach's and Pfaff's collaboration which led, for instance, to 'additions Wenkebach made on the basis of the Pfaff's translation that could not be confirmed or need to be corrected, or some Arabic passages that may well be based on lost sections of the Greek original'.

When editing Raiola's and Jouanna's contributions, I began to check the Arabic translation of Galen's commentary on *Epidemics* 3, and soon realised that Wenkebach's text was in need of correction on a number of occasions. Sometimes, the text of the Greek manuscripts could stand as a *lectio difficilior*; at other times, additions by Wenkebach were simply wrong, owing to a misunderstanding of the Arabic; at others yet, the Arabic helped fill lacunae. Therefore, I have systematically provided the Arabic translation alongside the Greek source text in these two articles (and elsewhere in this volume).

In his contribution, Raiola introduces us to Sabinus, a commentator of various Hippocratic works, including the *Epidemics*. He lived roughly two generations before Galen and was a very keen Hippocratic. After surveying the sources from which we can extract Sabinus' writings, the most prominent being Galen's extant Hippocratic commentaries, Raiola turns to Sabinus' own words and analyses how Galen portrays his writings. Galen criticises Sabinus for his 'chattiness (*perilálēsis*)', as he often employed flowery expressions that lack precision. Yet Raiola cautions against taking Galen's assessment of Sabinus as an objective opinion. By painstakingly going through quotations in Galen, Raiola reconstructs the sometimes complex arguments that Sabinus makes and that appear to have some merit, even if Galen disapproves of them. For instance, Sabinus clearly draws on a wide variety of sources, is interested in aetiology, and pays special attention to the patients' habits, age, and environment. Moreover, his language is often rich in metaphors and recherché expressions, again highlighting the great care that Sabinus took when writing his Hippocratic commentaries.

Jacques Jouanna investigates Galen's commentaries on *Epidemics* 1 and 3. These two Hippocratic books originally formed one continuous work, but in the process of copying, they were later separated by the insertion of what is now book 2. In particular, Jouanna studies Galen's attitude to other commentators as well as his own metadiscourse on his commentary activity. Jouanna's first striking observation is that Galen's attitude when commenting on books 1 and 3 is very different. He hardly ever mentions any previous commentator by name when commenting on book 1 (the exception being Quintus, quoted six times). Yet, when commenting on book 3, Galen names no fewer than fourteen commentators from the third century BC to Galen's own age.

Among the fourteen exegetes whom Galen quotes by name, Sabinus is the most prominent. Jouanna shows that Galen's attitude to his predecessors was largely critical; he inveighs against Sabinus, for instance, on a number of levels, criticising him for not paying close attention to the environment; for drawing false inferences from, and overinterpreting, the text; and for a lack of understanding of Hippocratic diction. Galen even has a whole section on 'inferior commentators' and is particularly concerned with the so-called 'characters (χαρακτῆρες)', signs at the end of the patient records, that have baffled many previous interpreters. Finally, Galen offers also some metadiscourse on his own exegetical activities, reflecting on his methods and justifying his own approach. Therefore, although the Hippocratic *Epidemics* 1 and 3 originally formed a whole, Galen's commentary on them treats them quite differently.

We have already seen the importance of the Arabic evidence for Galen's *Commentary on Hippocrates' 'Epidemics'*, where book 2 and the last third of book 6 are completely lost in Greek, but where the corrupt state of the Greek text for book 3 can also often be improved by taking the Arabic version into consideration. Caroline Magdelaine and Jean-Michel Mouton present here an example of how evidence in Arabic can fill important lacunae in our Greek text. They discovered important textual evidence for a commentary on the Hippocratic *Oath* which was originally written in Greek, and subsequently translated into Arabic and attributed to Galen. According to Galen's own testimony, he never wrote a commentary on the *Oath*, but in the Arabic tradition, Galen is credited with one. Franz Rosenthal had previously collected the quotations from this commentary in later sources, the indirect evidence, so to speak. Magdelaine and Mouton are the first to discover direct evidence for the Arabic translation and, thus, expand our knowledge about this commentary significantly.

The text is preserved in the so-called 'Damascus Papers', discarded material from the medieval period that was found in the Great Mosque of Damascus in the late nineteenth century, and then transferred to Istanbul and studied and photographed in the 1960s by two French scholars; Magdelaine and Mouton rely on these photographs for their study. They briefly argue for an early, possibly ninth-century, date for the manuscript on palaeographical grounds and establish that the text preserved in the 'Damascus Papers' is the same as previously known from the indirect tradition and studied by Rosenthal. The most important part of the extant text comprises ten continuous folios concerned with the ethical part of the *Oath*. Magdelaine and Mouton discuss in detail the topics of abortion and bladder stone surgery mentioned there, editing a number of extracts and establishing parallels with other medical texts, such as Soranus' *Gynaecology*. For instance, the commentary appears to allow therapeutic abortions, even if the *Oath* itself enjoins against 'abortive pessaries'. Magdelaine and Mouton conclude with a discussion of whether Galen was the author of this commentary, and advance arguments both for and against; in the end, this question will have to remain open, at least, for the present.

After this exciting new discovery, the focus moves to the many instances in which Galen comments on Hippocratic treatises in works by him that are not lemmatic commentaries. Singer reflects on these different modes of Hippocratic exegesis in Galen and sets up a number of theoretical dichotomies: a commentary can aim at elucidating the text or the meaning conveyed by it; it can be destined for private use or publication; it can take the form of a lemmatic commentary, going through the text line by line, or be a more systematic exploration of a Hippocratic text. Galen himself discusses these different modes or genres, notably in his 'auto-bibliographic' works, although the lines clearly get blurred in practice when he comments on Hippocrates.

One work that is not a lemmatic commentary but clearly aims at explaining Hippocratic doctrine is Galen's *Elements according to Hippocrates*. In it, Galen refutes some contemporaneous philosophical positions such as monism and atomism, and attributes what Singer calls the 'element-body' theory—that the cosmos is made up of four elements, fire, air, earth, water, which each have two of the four primary qualities, dry and wet, and warm and cold—to Hippocrates. Galen argues, in particular, that this is the underlying theory of *Nature of Man*, which famously sets out the four-humour theory—that health depends on the mixtures of blood, phlegm, yellow bile and black bile, each of which has two of the four primary qualities. Galen's trick is to blur the lines between the four-humour theory and what Singer calls the 'element-quality' theory, the idea that health depends on the mixture of the primary qualities.

Singer then explores the previous doxographical tradition, on which Galen might have drawn, and notably the famous account of medicine contained in an anonymous treatise preserved in a London papyrus, the so-called *Anonymous of London* or *Anonymus Londiniensis*, which comes from an Aristotelian milieu. Ultimately, however, Singer asks the question of whether we should take Galen's interpretation seriously that *Nature of Man* espouses the element-body theory. Singer's crude answer is no: neither the element-body nor the element-quality theories are in evidence there. And yet, Galen was highly successful in persuading scholars across the centuries of two things: a) that the element-quality theory underlies *Nature of Man*; and b) that the element-body theory, to which he adheres, is the same as the four-humour theory expressed in *Nature of Man*. In other words, Galen achieved two things: to reinterpret Hippocrates according to his own doctrine; and to be seen to be a faithful follower of Hippocrates.

In the next article, *Nature of Man* again figures prominently: Jim Hankinson looks at a concrete example of how Galen dealt with the Hippocratic question: to know which writings in the Corpus can be attributed to the historical Hippocrates; which are by other members of his entourage and reflect, at least, Hippocratic doctrine; and which works or parts of works are spurious or interpolated. In doing so, he focusses on *Nature of Man* and how Galen explained it in his lemmatic commentary on this text.

Nature of Man is a very heterogenous text; Galen usefully divided it into three parts: Part 1, consisting of chapters 1–8; Part 2, consisting of chapters 9–15; and Part 3, consisting of chapters 16–22. For Galen, Part 1 exemplified the essence of true Hippocratic doctrine, of what we nowadays label humoral pathology: health is the balance of the four humours: blood, phlegm, yellow bile, and black bile. They, in turn, each have two of the four primary (or cardinal) qualities (hot or cold, and moist or dry), and are thus linked to the four elements, fire, water, earth, and air. Yet Part 2, for instance, contains some anatomy that is patently wrong for Galen and therefore cannot go back to his hero Hippocrates; rather, he argues that it must have been authored by Polybus, a physician in Hippocrates' circle (and possibly his son-in-law).

Through painstaking analysis of key passages taken from the Corpus and Galen's oeuvre, Hankinson shows how Galen reshapes the Hippocratic text in his own image, in order to lend weight to his own medical theory. In the process, Galen refutes many of what Hankinson calls his 'commentatorial opponents'—physicians such as Sabinus who also had penned commentaries on Hippocratic works. And, although Galen is certainly *parti pris* in his exegetical efforts, many of his arguments deserve to be taken seriously.

Next, Ralph M. Rosen gives a concrete example for a Galenic text that represents a quasi- or proto-commentary. He investigates one of the most famous Galenic treatises, *The Capacities of the Soul Depend on the Mixtures of the Body*, known through its abridged Latin title *Quod Animi Mores* (further abridged to *QAM*). Galen has often recast Hippocrates in his own image by interpreting his writings to support his own ideas. This procedure is especially apparent in his Hippocratic commentaries, which are lemmatic, that is, Galen first quotes the text to be explained and then offers his own exegesis. In *Capacities of the Soul*, Galen frequently quotes from the Hippocratic treatise *Airs, Waters, Places*, which in its second part contains a long section on how the environment influences a person's character; for instance, the Hippocratic author famously distinguishes between Asian and European character types, linked to climate and environment. At times, Galen's own discussion somewhat resembles a lemmatic commentary, as the quotations from the Hippocratic source follow in quick succession, punctured by Galen's own explanations.

Rosen investigates these quotations and notes that Galen does not really link them to his main topic, namely to explain the causative link that leads from the mixture of a place (the 'external' mixture) to the mixture of the body (the 'internal' mixture) and thence to character traits. Rosen therefore turns to Galen's *Commentary on Hippocrates' 'Airs, Waters, Places'*. Galen himself connects the *Commentary* to his earlier treatise *Capacities of the Soul*, referring the reader back to it in two places, once directly and once indirectly. It is, however, only later that Galen explains this causal link between environment and character, established through food in particular: foodstuffs specific to certain locations create particular humours and thus influence the mixture of the body, which, in turn, determines character traits.

In another book on a specific topic, we find that Galen engaged with Hippocrates as well, namely in *Difficulties in Breathing*. Manetti first considers the date of this work, arguing for 175, and its audience. Galen himself stated that he wrote it for himself, and not for publication, nor even for circulation among his own friends. He was motivated to write it, because although Hippocrates had touched upon the subject in the *Epidemics*, no one has specifically dealt with it; Galen paints himself as completing Hippocrates' work where others have neglected to do so. Although Galen composed the work for himself, he still employed the same exegetical strategies with which we are familiar from his commentaries written for publication.

At the beginning of the second book of *Difficulties in Breathing*, Galen even went so far as to suggest that the book 'is an explanation of what Hippocrates said about the difficulty of breathing'. He paid homage to previous generations of physicians who wrote on this topic, and of course, none more so than Hippocrates. Manetti then painstakingly shows how Galen interpreted various case histories from *Epidemics* 1 and 3, whilst also drawing on other writings of the Hippocratic Corpus, such as *Prognostic*. Galen contrasted Thucydides with Hippocrates in their approach to describing diseases: whereas the former wrote for laypeople, stating many obvious things but omitting technical details, the latter focussed on things that are normally missed by lay people. Therefore, although *Difficulties in Breathing* is generally considered a work on a specific topic, it often resembles a lemmatic commentary: Galen quotes Hippocratic passages, explains obscure words (and even considers conjectures), and constructs a coherent theory of breathing difficulties on the basis on these quotations, as interpreted by him.

The next two papers tackle Galen's exegesis of Hippocratic texts on surgery. Both explore in particular the close relationship between these surgical works and Galen's *Method of Healing*. Although the *Method of Healing* is not a lemmatic commentary, it still aims at explaining Hippocratic texts, with books 3 and 4 dealing with *Ulcers*; books 5 and the first half of 6 with the lost *Deadly Wounds*; and the second half of book six with *Head Wounds*. Witt offers a classification of different types of cranial injuries, ranging from line fractures with or without depressed margins to depressed fractures, so-called 'ping pong' fractures, and various forms of bottomhole fractures. In particular, he argues that Galen's arrangement of these various types of fractures can help us amend the Hippocratic text, in which the order of these fractures has been disturbed. Moreover, he also adduces cases where the juxtaposition of the Hippocratic and Galenic texts can help solve textual problems in the former.

Amneris Roselli, for her part, compares the material in the *Method of Healing* with that contained in Galen's commentaries on the Hippocratic works *Joints* and *Fractures*. She begins by considering a passage from the *Method of Healing*, in which Galen speaks about the relationship between this work and the commentaries on *Fractures*: since Galen explained the topic at length in the commentary, he can just deal with it briefly in the *Method of Healing*. Apart from the Hippocratic *Head Wounds*, *Joints* and *Fractures*, pre-Galenic works on surgery only survive in quotations, the two most prominent sources being Galen and Celsus.

Roselli therefore argues that the commentaries on *Joints* and *Fractures* are of particular importance, and that they share certain characteristics with monographs: Galen uses the Hippocratic text as a springboard to provide a full discussion of the subject. He does not quote the lemmas in full, but rather focusses on those parts that allow him to make his points. Nor is Galen overly concerned here with explaining rare Hippocratic vocabulary or other philological issues; the surgical content takes centre stage. Moreover, Galen goes to great length to show that his explanations of surgical procedures were already adopted by Hippocrates. Galen's intended audience is twofold: those who have not yet mastered anatomy, and potentially lack the experience of seeing the human skeleton themselves; and those who do have this knowledge and have seen human skeletons. He offers something to both. Roselli also shows how the commentary on the first lemma of *Fractures* serves as a preface or introduction to the topic. Galen insists on the fundamental importance of 'extension', of straightening the fractured limb and holding it in place. Finally, Roselli analyses an allusion to the Platonic idea that if you nourish bad souls, they become worse.

Galen operated in an environment of extreme competitiveness, as Jacques Jouanna already demonstrated in his contribution by highlighting his attempt to criticise earlier and contemporaneous interpreters of Hippocrates. Through painstaking philological work, Véronique Boudon-Millot reveals the author of the treatise *Theriac to Piso* to be one of these competitors. *Theriac to Piso* is generally attributed to Galen, but Boudon-Millot has shown elsewhere that Galen cannot be the author. In her contribution, she looks at how Galen and the author of *Theriac to Piso*, whom she calls Pseudo-Galen, offer different interpretations of two Hippocratic passages relating to drugs. The transmission of the first passage, *Epidemics* 2.3.2, is particularly complicated, as it survives in Greek in the direct manuscript tradition and indirectly in a quotation in Pseudo-Galen; and in Arabic in the lemma quoted in Galen's *Commentary on Hippocrates' 'Epidemics'* as well as the anonymous Arabic translation of *Theriac to Piso*. Boudon-Millot shows that Galen and Pseudo-Galen understood the text differently and favoured different variant readings (some of which were known to both). Her second example, *Aphorisms* 4.5, confirms this picture and underlines the main difference in interpretation between the two: whereas Galen took the terms φἅρμακα and φαρμακεῖαι narrowly to refer to purging drugs, Pseudo-Galen understood them to denotes drugs in general. In this way, Boudon-Millot reconstructed an exegetical debate that is of relevance not only in its own right, but also because it helps us reconstruct the textual history of the Hippocratic text.

Next, Sabrina Grimaudo investigates a silence in Galen's exegetical activity: with one exception, he never mentions the Hippocratic treatise *Ancient Medicine* anywhere in his extant oeuvre. This is all the more surprising, as in modern Hippocratic scholarship, *Ancient Medicine* is often seen as the text within the Hippocratic Corpus that best aligns with what we know about the historical Hippocrates. Émile Littré placed this text at the beginning of his *Complete Works of Hippocrates*, and it has since gained enormous traction among historians not just of Greek medicine, but also of philosophy. At first glance, it is not difficult to see why Galen would reject *Ancient Medicine*, as this treatise argues against explaining health and disease in terms of the four primary qualities—hot and cold, and dry and wet—that underly the doctrine of the four humours as articulated in the Hippocratic treatise *Nature of Man*.

Grimaudo first discusses the one mention of *Ancient Medicine* that Galen did make, namely that contained in his commentary on *Epidemics* 2, extant only in Arabic translation. She highlights the reasons why Galen doubted the authenticity of *Ancient Medicine* and painstakingly reconstructs other interpreters' arguments how the passage in *Epidemics* 2 could be construed as aligning with ideas expressed in *Ancient Medicine*. Grimaudo also shows that Galen must have been intimately familiar with this treatise, and details instances where his own opinions overlap with it. And yet, despite the shared doctrine between *Ancient Medicine* and other Hippocratic texts such as *Regimen*, on which Galen also wrote a commentary, as well as some of Galen's own views, he passes over it in silence. To be sure, there are some lost Galenic treatises in which he may have said more, but the fact remains: Galen deliberately did not mention *Ancient Medicine* in many contexts where he could easily and justifiably have done so.

With the next contribution, we move from Galen to late antiquity. Giulia Ecca studies a hitherto unedited prologue to a commentary on the Hippocratic *Aphorisms* that survives in two medieval manuscripts; the commentary itself is a mixture of commentaries by Galen and Theophilus. She edits, translates, and comments on this prologue, which can be divided into two parts: the first explains the title 'Aphorisms' and gives a two definitions of what medicine is; and the second explains a number of expressions found in the first aphorism ('Life is short, the Art long, …'). The prologue clearly comes from a Christian milieu, as the pious formulae at the beginning demonstrate. It also has strong links to the late antique Alexandrian tradition, and therefore cannot be older than the sixth century AD. Beyond this, however, it is difficult to establish its date: it may go back to the Alexandrian tradition, as there were quite a few Christian commentators active there; but it could also be a Byzantine compilation.

The material compiled here has parallels in Galen's *Commentary on Hippocrates' 'Aphorisms'*, as well as those by Stephen of Alexandria and Palladius, two late antique Alexandrian commentators. More importantly, however, Ecca shows that there is a lot of affinity with explanations found in the philosophical commentary tradition, notably by two Neoplatonic exegetes called David and Elias, who belonged to the school of Olympiodorus and probably lived in the sixth century. Moreover, there is some overlap with Christian authors such as Gregory of Nazianzus (ca. 329–390) and John of Damascus (fl. early eighth century). This confirms Ecca's suspicion that the prologue belongs to the late antique Alexandrian tradition, where medicine and philosophy were often taught in tandem. Other elements also point in this direction, such as the discussion of the title 'Aphorisms'. The title was one of the eight topics (or 'headings [*kephálaia*]') routinely discussed in introductions to medical and philosophical commentaries.

The Greek commentary tradition on the Hippocratic Corpus had a long afterlife in Syriac and Arabic, and it poses numerous scholarly problems, one of which is the textual history of source and target texts. When dealing with the Hippocratic text, one always needs to distinguish the direct and the indirect tradition, that is, the text of Hippocratic texts as transmitted in manuscripts containing these texts; and the text of lemmas and quotations in commentaries and other exegetical works. In the Arabic tradition, Hippocratic texts, even when transmitted on their own, are generally extracted from the lemmas in the Arabic versions of Galenic commentaries. This would suggest that they form part of the indirect tradition. Whilst this is generally true, there are, however, quite a few cases where the translator also drew on the direct tradition, as Jouanna argued for the *Prognostic*, the subject of the next article by Kamran Karimullah.

We also know that Ḥunayn and his school (or 'workshop') often produced Arabic translations based on a previous Syriac translation that they or others produced. This is again the case for the *Prognostic* according to Ḥunayn's *Epistle* (*Risāla*) on his translations of Galen. Jouanna was the first to attempt to establish the place of the Syriac translation of the *Prognostic* as preserved in Paris, Bibliothèque National de France, MS 6734 fonds arabe (henceforth P7) within the stemma.[15] He argues that this Syriac version was produced by Ḥunayn and that it displays similar characteristics to the Arabic translation in drawing both on the direct and the indirect traditions.

In his contribution, Karimullah sounds a note of caution against this first conclusion. His argument begins with a review of the different versions of the account about how the *Prognostic* was translated into Syriac and Arabic in Ḥunayn's *Epistle*, and then moves on to a number of both textual and stylistic considerations. For the *Prognostic*, he arrives at similar conclusions to those of Taro Mimura and Samuel Barry for the *Aphorisms* (also contained in P7), namely that the exemplars of the Syriac and Arabic translations are independent of each other; and that the scribe of P7 attempted to bring the Arabic version in line with the Syriac text. Importantly, Karimullah (again like Mimura and Barry) argues that Ḥunayn was not the translator of the Syriac version as preserved in P7. Although these conclusions are at odds with those at which Jouanna arrived, this does not detract from the fact that the latter was the first to broach the question of how the Syriac *Prognostic* relates to the overall textual tradition.

With the last two articles we turn to the Renaissance, and, in particular, the medical humanism of the Iberian Peninsula. Both articles also deal with the *Epidemics*. María Teresa Santamaría Hernández explores the only Renaissance commentary specifically devoted to *Epidemics*, book 2, written by the Spanish humanist physician Pedro Jaime Esteve (ca. 1500–1556), who was active in Valencia. She shows that Esteve was guided by the same principles as other Renaissance humanists such as Leonard Fuchs. For instance, Esteve endeavoured to improve the Hippocratic text by offering his own conjectures. Some problems involve sentence division. In some, he relied on Galen's *Commentary on Hippocrates' 'Epidemics'*, book 6, which contains a number of parallel passages. He also criticised other Renaissance Latin translations of this text, notably that of Calvus (1525). In one case, for instance, he misread '*nótos* (south wind)' for '*nôtos*(back)'.

Esteve was not only concerned with improving the text, but also with understanding it in the correct way; he wanted to get to the 'truth of the Hippocratic text', the *Hippocratica ueritas*. According to Esteve, this truth was opposed to the medical 'barbarism' that reigned in many parts of Renaissance medical culture. The latter is characterised, for instance, by corrupt or unclassical Latin usage. Some of its exponents are arrogant physicians with little or no regard for their patients. Esteve quotes the case of one individual who would not even take critical days into consideration—although the *Epidemics* clearly shows that it is important to do so. Esteve describes his fight with vivid metaphors: his opponents dive into the dark waters of Styx, whereas he draws pure water from limpid fountains. These opponents are animated by a craving for fame and fortune; they are not just incompetent, but deliberately falsify even the doctrine of their own authorities, chief among them Avicenna. Therefore, Esteve's rhetoric and outlook chime with that of other humanist physicians such as Leonard Fuchs, who virulently inveighed against 'Arab' physicians.

Galen famously only considered books 1–3 and 6 of the *Epidemics* worthy of being commented upon, whilst dismissing books 4, 5 and 7 as spurious. Therefore, it is not difficult to see why Esteve focussed on book 2 (where the Greek text of Galen's commentary is lost and only an Arabic version survives). It was only in 1577 that the Spanish physician Francisco Vallés (1524–1592) produced a commentary on all seven books of the *Epidemics*, and this commentary is the object of the final article by Jesús Ángel y Espinós. Vallés lived under king Philip II and praised the latter's effort to stem the tide of decline in Classical learning, which was partially due to a prohibition to study abroad.

When writing his commentary on the *Epidemics*, Vallés failed to use a number of important sources that would have been available to him in the Escorial library. These include, for instance, an Arabic copy of Galen's commentary on *Epidemics*, book 2 and the last third of book 6, made by the Scottish monk David Colville (c. 1581–1629) at the Escorial; and manuscripts of Greek commentaries from late antiquity. Although Vallés missed some of these opportunities to consult relevant sources, he did draw on others, not least work by other humanists such as Esteve and Leonard Fuchs, as well as other figures from the Iberian peninsula.

This overview shows the richness of the Hippocratic commentary tradition and the importance of considering it in a holistic way. As said above, this was the main aim of the fifteenth *colloque Hippocratique* 'The Hippocratic Corpus and its Commentators: East and West', held in Manchester on 28–30 October 2015. Some papers delivered there are not, however, included here for a variety of reasons. Nathalie Rousseau gave a talk entitled 'Οὐ κυρίως, ἀλλ' ἐκ καταχρήσεως: les méthodes d' analyse du sens des mots dans les commentaires de Galien aux traités hippocratiques', in which she argued that Galen borrowed the technical terms 'κυρίως (properly)' and 'ἐκ καταχρήσεως (through misuse; i.e., improperly)' from the rhetorical tradition and applied them when discussing rare Hippocratic expressions. Stefania Fortuna addressed the delegates on the topic of 'the Medieval Commentaries on the *Hippocratic Law*' and subsequently published her revised paper elsewhere. Robert Alessi broached the fascinating topic of 'Hippocrates' 'Sayings' in Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿaʾ, in which he analysed the roughly fifty pithy sayings attributed to Hippocrates in a highly influential thirteenth-century bio-bibliographical Arabic history, and compared them to those transmitted in other Arabic gnomologies; many of these saying were extracted from the *Aphorisms* and the *Epidemics*. Finally Rocío Martínez Prieto presented on part of her graduate work on 'Hipócrates como fuente en Libro de Theriaca (1575) de Lorenzo Pérez: interpretación de contenidos y empleo de ediciones y comentarios' and subsequently published it elsewhere.

The *colloque Hippocratique* formed part of a much larger project on the 'Arabic commentaries on the Hippocratic *Aphorisms*', funded by the European Research Council. We used this venue to present our project to the delegates during a double slot. Three Ph.D. students, Samuel Barry, Rosalind Batten, and Elaine van Dalen, briefly talked about the topics of their theses, which have all now been completed. Likewise, the postdocs Taro Mimura, Kamran Karimullah, and Nicola Carpentieri presented work-in-progress. We have also published preliminary editions of all the extant Arabic commentaries on the *Aphorisms*, and our editions are freely available under a permissive creative commons licence; the total edited texts contain well over 1.5 m words and therefore similar in size to Kühn's edition of Galen.

For me personally, one of the highlights of the conference was to discover the new evidence for the Arabic commentary on the Hippocratic *Oath*, presented by Magdelaine and Mouton. Yet, my team and I also had a surprise for the delegates. Previously, scholars had accepted the attribution to Palladius of a commentary on the *Aphorisms*that survives only partially in a privately owned Arabic manuscript. Yet during our weekly reading class when we perused this commentary, made available to us through the kindness of Hinrich Biesterfeldt, who shared his preliminary edition with us, we realised that the Arabic text contains misunderstandings that cannot have occurred in Greek and therefore must be an Arabic work incorporating Greek translated material rather than a Greek commentary translated into Arabic. In other words, the commentary is not by Palladius and was not originally written in Greek, even if it incorporates a lot of material from late antique Alexandria.

This volume stands in a long tradition of proceedings of *Colloques Hippocratiques* that have been published over the last 46 years. Yet, the overview above already shows that the present volume differs from previous ones in a number of ways. Perhaps the most notable is that all the papers published here are in English. Previous meetings were organised in many different countries by different colleagues and appeared with different publishers. They all brought some of the best Hippocratic scholarship in multilingual form: articles appeared in French, German, Italian, Spanish, as well as English, and the editors did not try to impose linguistic unity. The approach taken here is a different one. The organising committee of the fifteenth *Hippocratic Colloquium*, consisting of Véronique Boudon-Millot, Philip J. van der Eijk, Jacques Jouanna, David Langslow, Amneris Roselli, and me, met on 10 September 2014 and decided that papers could be given in any language during the oral presentations, but that the publication would be in English. This compromise had been suggested by Jacques Jouanna to accommodate my desire to make this volume as accessible as possible, notably to undergraduate students in Manchester and the wider English-speaking world, many of whom do not read languages other than English. Thus the choice of English was motivated by the target audience: we wanted to reach not just the experts, but also students, and interested scholars from other fields who want to get an impression of what is happening in Hippocratic studies. The foremost authority in the field, Jacques Jouanna, only writes in French, but some of his works have thankfully been translated into English (as well as other languages). Therefore, this choice of English is not motivated by linguistic hegemony, but rather accessibility and practicality.

Moreover, this volume is intended to be a companion to the recent *Cambridge Companion to Hippocrates* (if you forgive the pun). Both the *Cambridge Companion*and the present volume are, in a way, the result of the ERC project on the Arabic commentaries on the Hippocratic *Aphorisms*. Whereas the *Companion* aims at providing and easy access to the topic of Hippocratic studies, the present volume can serve to illustrate some of the best recent scholarship in this area in an accessible format. It is for this reason that I have worked particularly hard at harmonising the style of the contributions and to make them as accessible as possible. To be sure, some contributions will be more difficult for the novice than others, but collectively, they illustrate the kind of scholarly debates that the Hippocratic Corpus provokes today. In the *Companion*, I provided some guidance about style and references, and its conventions have been followed here, as well.

The Manchester *colloque hippocratique*, and the present volume that arises from it, would not have seen the day, were it not for the help and support of many individuals and institutions. The original idea goes back to Jacques Jouanna, who asked me informally during the 2012 Paris meeting whether I would be willing to host the next; I immediately agreed most enthusiastically and the final panel of the meeting voted to hold its fifteenth iteration in Manchester. I would like to record my gratitude to Monsieur Jouanna and the other members of the *comité scientifique*, as well as the authors who contributed papers here. I know full well that things have taken longer than they should have, and the *Cambridge Companion* (to which many of the present authors also contributed) is only a feeble excuse for the delays. The authors also put up with more editorial interference than is customary in these sorts of publications, and again, I thank them for their forbearance.

When organising the conference and editing this volume, I was also able to draw on the help of the *Aphorisms* project team, not least Dr Michelle Magin, the project administrator, who did so much to make the colloquium not just an intellectual, but also a culinary and social success; the then doctoral students and now Drs Rosalind Batten, Elaine van Dalen, and Samuel Barry; and the postdocs Drs Taro Mimura, Kamran Karimullah, and Nicolà Carpentieri. The University of Manchester, the School of Arts, Languages, and Cultures, and especially the Graduate School all provided an extremely congenial institutional environment, and the last also a wonderful space in which to meet. Finally, none of this work would have been possible without the support of our external funders, first and foremost the European Research Council, but also the British Academy and Leverhulme Trust, who supported this meeting through a small grant, as well as the Maison Française d' Oxford, who facilitated the travel of some of the delegates coming from France.

My gratitude also goes out to my commissioning editor at Brill, Giulia Moriconi, and to the editors of the series *Studies in Ancient Medicine*, who accepted this book for publication (as well as my very first book, Pormann 2004a). Moreover, I would like to record my admiration for the superb work done by my production editor at Tat Zetwerk, Arianne Moerland, who had to overcome significant difficulties when typesetting not only the Latin and Greek, but also Syriac, Arabic and Hebrew. Philip J. van der Eijk, the editor in charge of the present project, went through the whole manuscript with great attention to detail and saved me from many an error. He also served on the organising committee of the Manchester colloquium, and I therefore owe him a special debt of gratitude, which I would like to record here.

In 2018, the *colloque hippocratique* took place in Rome, and in October 2021, it will come to Munich, celebrating nearly fifty years of Hippocratic scholarship. The papers published here and the recent surge of publications on all things Hippocratic, including popular culture, show that the interest in Hippocrates and the works attributed to him continues to grow. We can also discern here a trend to take greater account of the 'Eastern' or 'Oriental' legacy of Hippocrates and the Hippocratic corpus, particularly of the Syriac and Arabic evidence that has only recently begun to come into clearer focus. Likewise the field of studying the exegetical modes employed to elucidate the meaning of the Hippocratic text is now firmly established, although much remains to be done—after all, we still do not have critical editions of most of the Galenic commentaries on Hippocrates, not least that on the *Aphorisms*, perhaps the most influential of them all. Therefore, it can only be hoped that the present volume (as well as the 'companion' *Cambridge Companion to Hippocrates*) will open up new areas of research and stimulate scholars to close many of the gaping holes that still remain in our understanding of the intellectual world that is Hippocrates.

***

Reflections on Hippocratic Commentary by Elizabeth Craik

Preamble

This short introductory paper, a lightly revised and slightly extended version of that presented at the colloque, has few pretensions. It ranges very widely but its coverage is uneven in depth. It may, however, serve as an appropriate introduction to the more detailed papers that follow. In the first part of the paper, the rationale of editorial choice is examined, with particular reference to the history of the commentary tradition. In the second part, it is suggested that the distinction between commentary and critique is somewhat artificial and proposed that the new term 'quasi-commentary' may be applied to many works of many periods, not generally classified as commentaries; examples of these are given and, in conclusion, a brief sketch of typology is essayed.

Questions of Rationale in the Exegetical Tradition

The writing of commentary involves a series of choices, foremost being choice of works for exegesis, choice of topics for emphasis, and choice of length or detail in exposition. In all of these, prospective readership is an important determinant and authorial self-presentation tends to play some part. The rationale for choice in the writing of commentaries tends to be taken for granted, rather than examined. We are all conditioned by our own place and time. But all of us who have written commentaries are aware of certain reasons for our own choices, even if we seldom declare them.

(For my part, I remark that I seem to gravitate towards unusual or neglected—and rather difficult—works: I chose Euripides' *Phoenician Women* rather than a more familiar play; then the Hippocratic *Places* *in Man* in preference to *Ancient Medicine*or the ubiquitous *Oath*, followed by the relatively unknown *Anatomy, Vision* and *Glands*. The brevity of these three may have been an attraction (but both *Phoenician Women* and *Places in Man* are unusually long). As to choice of topics for emphasis and choice of length or detail in exposition, my main interest has been language and expression rather than medical content. There is a place for Hippocratic works in the regular Classics syllabus, and at a conference on commentaries it is appropriate to plead that more commentaries be written to make these texts accessible.)

In this paper, commentators' choice of work or works is a recurrent concern; the reasons for and the purposes of writing commentaries are closely related questions. The power of a bandwagon effect is a recurrent topic. The situation is paralleled in attitudes to Greek tragedy. Why are there so many modern productions of Sophocles' *Antigone* and Euripides' *Bacchae*? Of course, these plays are perceived as 'good' or 'important' and viewed as having a perennial 'relevance' to the human condition; but they are also plays that have become popular choices, and so, through general familiarity with previous interpretations, have become easier for directors to produce and stage, and for audiences to appreciate.

Among Hippocratic works, *Aphorisms* has had an enduring popularity over the centuries. *Epidemics* too was long elevated, and its clinical insights valued; an old popular view held that *Epidemics* represented the practice of Hippocrates' prime and *Aphorisms* the reflections of his old age. The veneration accorded *Aphorisms* continued as late as the nineteenth century. This is due primarily to its perceived value as a teaching aid and pithy *vademecum* but it may be asked why this collection (often somewhat allusive and obscure) is valued to the exclusion of the collection *Coan Prognoses* (generally, by contrast, clear and well-organised). In early printed collections of Hippocratic works, *Aphorisms* was sometimes known as *'Lex* (the law)', somewhat confusingly. Incidentally, we may wonder why the Hippocratic *Oath* is so much valued and the comparable *Law* so little. One more example may be given: there is no obvious reason why *Prorrhetic* 2 was traditionally neglected in comparison with the similar and much-studied *Prognostic*.

Then since Littré's influential favour, putting *On Ancient Medicine* at the beginning of his monumental edition, it has had more than its fair share of commentaries. It is evident that there is an enduring imbalance in the tradition: certain Hippocratic texts have been strongly favoured and others largely, or even completely, neglected. To some extent, this bias stems from the perceived importance of certain aspects of medical theory (such as professional ideals) and practice (such as prognostic skills and therapeutic method) on the part of medical commentators writing for a medical readership; but other reasons can be isolated also in different ages. In the early modern period, after the fundamental anatomical and physiological discoveries and insights of Harvey and Aselli, such Hippocratic works as *On Places in Man*, *On Bones* and *On Glands* seemed to acquire a new relevance and appeal, as they put forward theories of fluid components and action in the body (see further below). In more modern times, with the advent of women's studies as an academic subject, there was a new interest in Hippocratic gynaecology; in this the vast body of material in *On Diseases of Women* was rather selectively quarried, while the short tract *On Diseases of Girls* became disproportionately popular.

Hippocratic commentary began early. Thanks to Galen, we know the names of many of his predecessors in a long exegetical tradition. Among them Baccheius (c. 270–200 BC) can be singled out as an important early figure, an éminence grise in the later tradition. According to Galen, Baccheius, well known for his importance in lexicography, made significant contributions to the commentary tradition also; among his works were commentaries on *Aphorisms* and on *Epidemics* 6. In addition, it appears on Galen's authority that he had a serious interest in anatomy: he disseminated views expressed in public lectures (ἀκροάσεις) on the important topic of the pulse, vessels and heart. This type of publication may reflect a didactic activity broadly similar to that of the great early modern pioneers in anatomical and physiological research: like them, Baccheius was operating in a climate of extraordinary scientific research and discovery.

Erotian's Hippocratic lexicon (dated to the age of Nero through its dedication to the imperial physician Andromachus and so about a century before Galen) sketched a classification of the Hippocratic works. In this, *On Fractures*, followed by *On Joints*, was placed at the head of the group comprising surgical works. These highly technical works had already attracted specialised commentators and have long continued to do so. About 100 BC, or a little later, Apollonius of Citium wrote an outstanding commentary on *On Joints*, illustrated by diagrams. Galen's commentary on *On Joints* was his longest and most full. And in the nineteenth century the Hippocratic surgical works still attracted specialist exegetical interest.

Galen has his own peculiar rationale, and his subsequent influence is one significant element, justly recognized by its prominence in the programme and proceedings of this conference. Galen, more perhaps than anyone before or after, had an equally strong motivation in philological and philosophical interests on the one hand and medical exigencies on the other. He knew his Plato and Aristotle as well as his Hippocrates and had a deep understanding of Ionic Greek vocabulary and idiom. Galen's aim to elucidate and to clarify Hippocratic texts is undeniably fulfilled and if he hoped for the notice of posterity, he surely succeeded. But as to contemporary readership, though pupils and colleagues are frequently named we may be sceptical over the common *topos* that a commentary was undertaken in response to the request of a 'friend': Galen is ever self-conscious and self-promoting. Also, much of his commentary is vitiated by personal polemic. There is a marked tendency to superimpose his own ideas on Hippocratic texts; thus he favours works that seem to express humoral theories similar to his own and fancifully identifies expressions of supposed teleological slant, in line with his personal interpretation. Galen's own professed purpose in writing is to interpret obscurities in the Hippocratic account, which he finds not imperfect but merely incomplete, and his averred aim is to follow the Hippocratic method. It is typical of Galen's general view of himself as the supreme Hippocratic heir that he frequently asserts rather than argues his point. Although he does cite some passages to substantiate his stance of adherence to the Hippocratic model, on the whole he takes a uniform and monolithic view of 'Hippocrates' and quotes simply to fit his current purpose. Galen's view of a monolithic Hippocrates prevailed. And in the coincidence between views expressed in the commentaries and views appearing elsewhere we can see the same elements of 'quasi-commentary' as those traced below in early modern writers.

The editorial work of Dioscurides and Artemidorus Capito served as a stimulus to the exegetical activity of Galen and many others. In the same way, the publication of Calvus' translation of all the Hippocratic works into Latin (1525) and the Aldine Greek *editio princeps* of Asulanus (1526) gave an immediate impetus to scholar-physicians seeking to interpret and to better the text of these first works. Here we may note that a careful translation can often itself serve as a rudimentary commentary. Calvus'

Latin translation is frequently illuminating in its renderings, indicative of the text followed as well as the interpretation intended.

Cornarius (1500–1558) claimed in his edition (1538)—preceded by production of individual works, including *Airs, Waters and Places* and *Winds* as well as *Prognostic* and *Aphorisms*—to have improved on the Aldine; it has been demonstrated that he made changes in part by adopting Galenic readings, in part by consultation of additional manuscripts. Cornarius did not offer a translation with his edition (1538) but later added a Latin translation, for the benefit of Greekless doctors (1546). Cornarius innovated in the use of helpful subdivisions in the text, but the full organisation of the text in numbered sections, greatly facilitating ease of reference, was generally accepted only after the work of van der Linden (1665).

Foesius (1528–1596) in the main reprinted Cornarius' text, though with some independent source material, but suggested many changes in translation: whereas Cornarius' main contribution was textual, Foesius' was primarily exegetical. Foesius' unrivalled knowledge of medical Greek, evident already in *Oeconomia* (1588), pervades his editorial work (1595). There are short notes on each text, but Foesius' main commentary, in the form of long and somewhat prolix notes, is printed at the end of his volumes. This labyrinthine format often challenges the orientation of the reader, in a way not unlike that of today's CUF Budé texts, with notes both on the page and at the end of the volume.

Prior to Foesius, Zwinger (1533–1588) was an important and uniquely fascinating commentator (1579). In the first place, he selected twenty-two works for translation and comment. Then the layout of his commentary is remarkable: there are short, frequently exceptionally perceptive, verbal comments. These notes, however, are presented not sequentially but in a diagrammatic format intended to illumine the structure and argument of each work: the commentary is 'illustrated by diagrams (*tabulis illustrata*)'. Zwinger offered a similar analysis of the ten books of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* and the method is perhaps more suited to philosophy than to medicine. Zwinger's choice of works displays his interests in theoretical rather than the practical medical content: *Art*; *Ancient Medicine*; *Law*; *Oath*; *Physician*; *Decorum*; *Precepts*; *Flesh*; *Sevens*; *Generation*; *Nature of the Child*; *Seven-Month Child*; *Eight-Month Child*; *Nature of Man*; *Airs, Waters and Places*; *Winds*; *Nutriment*; *Places in Man*; *Glands*; *Regimen in Acute Diseases* 1–3; *Regimen in Acute Diseases* 4 (*On Dreams*); and *Use of Liquids*. Zwinger was following the 'méthode spatiale' pioneered by Pierre de la Ramée (Petrus Ramus, 1515–1572) in which the arts were methodically analysed with use of summaries and headings and above all with diagrammatic arrangement, rather than simply presented in verbal exposition. Zwinger's method illustrates an alliance between mathematical and medical thinkers, not uncommon in other places and at other times; his work was little emulated but much cited.

The prominence of *Aphorisms* in the early commentary tradition was overwhelming: critics vied to provide further interpretations of the text, frequently in conjunction with the commentary on it by Galen, occasionally with reference to the commentary of Oribasius. There was a longstanding and much repeated convention that with the Hippocratic text was printed the commentary of Galen, or very occasionally that of Oribasius: commentary by proxy was so perpetuated in the long-standing practice of echoing in agreement or disagreement the interpretations of one's predecessors.

A few original contributions may be noted also. John Caius (1510–1573, who had been a friend of Vesalius at Padua) essayed a conjectural reconstruction of a putative lost Hippocratic work on anatomy involving the conjunction of several works transmitted separately: *Anatomy*, *Bones*, *Heart* and *Glands*. In the course of his argument, Caius made pertinent remarks on the common content and expression of these works, annotating in full details of the text. Other doctor-scholars too chose to focus on particular works that engaged their interest. A few early editions with vestigial commentary are here noted: Jean de Gorris (1505–1577) *On Generation* and *On the Nature of the Child* (1545); Adrien L'Alemant (1527–1559) *On Winds* (1557); Étienne Gourmelon (1538–1593) *On Nutriment* (1572); all have a marked philosophical bent. A less slight work, and an important corrective to the protracted focus on *Aphorisms*, is an edition of *Coan Prognoses* produced by Jacques Houllier (d. 1562); later, this was republished considerably augmented by admiring followers (1576).

3 Commentary and Quasi-Commentary

Commentary, regarded now as a distinct genre, was not always so, though anachronistically we tend to forget this. Galen used the descriptive term *hypomnḗmata*('notes') in a wide-ranging way, generally but not always distinct from his use of *syngrámmata* ('connected work', 'treatise'). Paul of Aigina subtly employed exegetical skill in presentation of material, partly straight borrowing more or less verbatim, partly abridgement and only occasionally elaboration; his proem evinces a clear view of his own rationale and achievement. The scholarly physicians of the fifteenth and sixteenth century applied a range of terms interchangeably to works we might regard loosely as commentaries. Title pages announce a contribution as *liber commentariis illustratus*, as *commentaria*, as *expositio*; a work is presented *cum interpretatione et commentariis* or *brevi enarratione* and an author is described as *interprete et enarratore*.[13] But certain aspects and characteristics of the commentary could, then as now, be readily identified.

The canonical form of the commentary is sequential and systematic and the format is governed by the use of the lemma, in that words, phrases, sentences or segments are selected and excerpted for comment. The material selected to serve as lemma varies greatly in length and character. In layout, one of two methods is usually followed: entire commentary follows entire text; or sections of commentary follow sections of text. Similarly, where a translation is given, this may be laid out in its entirety or in sections facing or following the relevant sections of text. Although the basic structure is constant, there is much variation in slant and in style as well as in detail. The simple general intent is to clarify the content of the chosen text.

There is, of course, a distinction to be made between a complete commentary, discussing a complete text sequentially, and a partial commentary, discussing only selected passages from a text. In the reception of Hippocratic texts, however, a major part is played by (as I designate them) 'quasi-commentaries'. Certain pervasive features of these 'quasi-commentaries' replicate regular features of complete commentaries: in content, citation of the views of others, often polemical or with obvious parti pris; in form, extensive use of the lemma. It has been demonstrated that material presented by Galen in his *Therapeutic Method* (books 3–6) is replicated, in closely aligned form, in his subsequent commentaries on Hippocratic surgical texts. It has been argued further that the first represents an informal 'synthetic' type of commentary, directed at beginners, and the second a more formal 'lemmatic' type, intended for advanced learners; and thus that Galen employs two 'steps' of commentary, each having a distinct didactic function.

It is, however, in the seventeenth century that the quasi-commentary really flourished. For several decades as physicians wrestled with the new discoveries relating to body fluids—not merely blood and chyle or lymph but all fluids, ranging from nasal mucus and sweat to semen and breast milk—certain passages in certain Hippocratic texts, viewed as key, became over and over again the subject of comment. Body fluids, like the various 'humours' of Hippocratic physicians, were central in medical theory. The work of William Harvey (1578–1657) on the circulation of the blood (*de motu cordis et circulatione sanguinis exercitatio*, 1628) and that of Gaspare Aselli (ca. 1581–1626) on the lymphatic vessels (*de lactibus sive lacteis venis dissertatio*, 1627) received a quick response from Jean Pecquet (1622–1674), Jean Riolan the younger (ca. 1577–1657) and others, such as Anton Deusing (1612–1666), all attempting from their knowledge of Hippocratic texts to rebut or corroborate the latest anatomical and physiological advances. These dissertations or monographs on medical topics focus closely and repeatedly on particular Hippocratic passages; Riolan's view was that 'Hippocrates conceived, Harvey discovered and he (Riolan) corrected'. The commentator's practice of commenting on predecessors' comments is pervasive. Similarly, the letters of Walaeus (Jan de Wale, 1604–1649) base their response to these fundamental medical questions on Hippocratic analysis.

And in the medical faculties of every prestigious university, professors gave courses of lectures on medical topics based on Hippocratic doctrine and involving close study of particular texts, especially *Aphorisms* and *Prognostic*. Guerner (Werner) Rolfinck (1599–1673), who at Jena made practical innovations in the teaching of anatomy and by introduction of a botanic garden, wrote a commentary on *Aphorisms* (1662) and in his lectures cited Hippocratic texts with immense erudition. In all these activities there was active ongoing interaction in a relatively small intellectual community operating in an increasingly international world. The activity of Baccheius in Alexandria evinces the same impetus from medical research to philological exegesis, the same combination of pedagogy and publicity.

In conclusion, I return to van der Linden (1609–1664). The complete Hippocratic commentary, published posthumously by his son (1665), is well known. In addition, van der Linden displayed an unrivalled mastery of literature relating to the great anatomical and physiological discoveries of the age, both in terms of the original presentations and of subsequent reactions to them. He published magisterial collections of the most seminal papers, notably in a beautiful volume published by Blaeu in Amsterdam (1645). Further, he produced a wide-ranging work of his own on physiology, replete with Hippocratic citation and, tellingly, with appropriate Hippocratic quotation as the starting point of each successive chapter (1653). In all his publications, there was a strong focus on detailed exegesis of Hippocratic texts. There is the same wrestling with philological detail in passages excerpted from texts; the same citation or discussion of, and polemic against, earlier views (frequently those of Zwinger), all in a style close to that of commentary.

Towards the end of his life came an important series of *exercitationes*, professedly the work of students but effectively reflections of the master's doctrine and each concluding with a summation replete with reflections on significant questions: *27 Hippocratic exercises about blood circulation* (*Hippocratis de circuitu sanguinis exercitationes XXVII*) (1659 etc.). The format was a presentation by a named author followed by the master's response; the fourteenth *exercitatio* is the work of one Lucas Walckier. The series was recognised as a standard authority by the immensely erudite doctor-philologist D.W. Triller (1695–1782) in the magisterial *Opuscula medica* (1766–1772).

Finally, I mention *Discussion and Advice on Menstrual Migraine* (*de hemicrania menstrua historia et consilium*) (1660, 2nd ed. 1668), a short piece dedicated to the *serenissima princeps* Sophia Margaretha of

Brandenburg-Solms (1634–1664): an attempt to explain and advise on menstrual headaches affecting sometimes the left sometimes the right side of the head. The *serenissima princeps* was married at the age of eighteen to Albrecht von Brandenburg-Ausbach; she died at the age of twenty-nine, having in the intervening years had five children. Perhaps it is surprising that she was free from pregnancy for long enough to notice menstrual problems. As a dissertation on an aspect of period pain the work is useless; as a collection and exegesis of Hippocratic passages on the character and action of the blood it is remarkably full and authoritative: the quasi-commentary at its best.

Typology

Quasi-commentaries take various forms, most common being dissertations, letters and lectures: monographs with a learned agenda, correspondence notionally personal but in truth open and intended for publication, and sequences of pedagogic instruction for learners. Like Socrates' companions, we may have described characteristics rather than reached a definition of the quasi-commentary. But there is no doubt that an open minded examination of the rich tradition will reveal many further examples. <>

OLYMPIODORUS OF ALEXANDRIA: EXEGETE, TEACHER, PLATONIC PHILOSOPHER edited by Albert Joosse [Series: Philosophia Antiqua, Brill, 9789004466692]

This is the first collected volume dedicated to the work of the 6th-century CE philosopher Olympiodorus of Alexandria. His Platonic commentaries are rare witnesses to ancient views on Plato's Socratic works. As a pagan, Olympiodorus entertained a complex relationship with his predominantly Christian surroundings. The contributors address his profile as a Platonic philosopher, the ways he did and did not adapt his teaching to his Christian audience, his reflections on philosophical exegesis and communication and his thinking on self-cognition. The volume as a whole helps us understand the development of Platonic philosophy at the end of antiquity.

CONTENTS

Acknowledgements
Abbreviations
Notes on Contributors
Chapter 1 Introduction Author: Albert Joosse
Chapter 2 Olympiodorus and Greco-Alexandrian Alchemy Author: Cristina Viano
Chapter 3 The Life of Plato in Introductory Schemes: The Preface to Olympiodorus' Commentary on the First Alcibiades (in Alc. 1.1–3.2) Author: Anna Motta
Chapter 4 Olympiodorus on the Scale of Virtues Author: Michael J. Griffin
Chapter 5 Olympiodorus' Notion of αἴσθησις and Its Historical Context Author: Péter Lautner
Chapter 6 The Virtue of Double Ignorance in Olympiodorus Author: Danielle A. Layne
Chapter 7 Olympiodorus' View of Civic Self-Knowledge Author: Albert Joosse
Chapter 8 The Neoplatonists Hermias and Olympiodorus on Plato's Theory of Rhetoric Author: Bettina Bohle
Chapter 9 Reconciling Philosophy with Poetry: Olympiodorus' Interpretation of the Gorgias Myth Author: François Renaud
Chapter 10 Olympiodorus on Drama Author: Anne Sheppard

Chapter 11 Special Kinds of Platonic Discourse: Does Olympiodorus Have a New Approach? Author: Harold Tarrant
Chapter 12 Olympiodorus, Christianity, and Metensomatosis Author: Simon Fortier
Index Locorum
General Index

Excerpt: About midway the sixth century CE, a student in Alexandria is taking notes. He and his fellow students listen attentively to the Platonist philosopher Olympiodorus, who has just introduced them to the writings of Plato. The student writes:

> Now if it is necessary also for us, who plead Proclus' cause, to bring Damascius into agreement with him, he [Olympiodorus] says that knowing oneself in a civic way is the target [of the *First Alcibiades*] primarily.
> Εἰ δὲ δεῖ καὶ ἡμᾶς τῷ Πρόκλῳ συνηγοροῦντας εἰς σύμβασιν ἄγειν αὐτῷ τὸν Δαμάσκιον, φησὶν ὅτι περὶ μὲν τοῦ πολιτικῶς γνῶναι ἑαυτόν ἐστιν ὁ σκοπὸς προηγουμένως. *in Alc.* 5.17–6.1; tr. Griffin, mod.

This sentence serves as a window onto Olympiodorus' oeuvre, since it features several key elements of his profile as a philosopher. It is part of a commentary that, like all his works that have come down to us, is ἀπὸ φωνῆς, as its title says, i.e. consists of notes taken from lectures he gave. This formal feature of Olympiodorus' work foregrounds the didactic side of his activity, which is also present in frequent references to classroom settings. In the sentence cited above, Olympiodorus appears as a teacher who reflects on the aims of his instruction.

The sentence also takes us to the heart of Olympiodorus' conception of doing philosophy. His expression of intent here is specifically to bring Damascius into agreement with Proclus; this is part of an overall strategy in his work. He bases his philosophy on what his predecessors have said. He comments on Plato, Aristotle and possibly other authorities, seeking close alignment with commentators of previous generations like Proclus and Damascius.

Olympiodorus bases his philosophy on his predecessors' work not only because they provide the material with which to teach and think, but also out of the very desire to bring these predecessors into agreement with each other. Olympiodorus is deeply convinced of the importance of agreement as a criterion for knowledge and as a prerequisite for a happy life. If he can show the underlying unity of his predecessors' views, that will constitute evidence that they are correct and that their views are worth adopting in one's own life. Hence he recommends to his students (δεῖ καὶ ἡμᾶς) that *their* way to approach philosophy too is via a reconciliation of authorities.

The student continues to note that Olympiodorus then offers a position of his own, manifesting another basic element of his philosophical activity. It is of paramount importance to express your own judgement. If this judgement can show the underlying agreement between authorities, so much the better. Your judgement must be based on arguments, as he insists in a passage in the *Gorgias* commentary, even if your authority is Plato himself.

The chapters in this volume seek to flesh out this picture of a philosophical teacher who brings his own judgement to bear on views and arguments from a centuries-old Platonic tradition. In keeping with the focus of the majority of papers at the original Utrecht conference, the volume is devoted to the philosophical profile of Olympiodorus and to his Platonic commentaries.

To varying degrees scholarship has moved away from the view that Olympiodorus espoused a simplified metaphysics compared to his Athenian colleagues, had an attitude of compromise towards the Christian community of Alexandria, and a strong focus on Aristotle rather than Plato—as, in this view, befits a member of the Ammonian school of Alexandrian philosophy.

Of particular value about this earlier approach to Olympiodorus is the focus on the strong continuities between his work and that of his teacher Ammonius, whom Olympiodorus cites approvingly, especially in the *Gorgias* commentary. It is also true that Olympiodorus' work gives us no evidence that his teaching included as complex a metaphysical picture of the world as that of Proclus—though it remains subject to debate whether this applies only to his teaching for a wider audience (from which it seems his commentaries derive) or also to Olympiodorus' convictions and perhaps inner-circle teaching.

In the other respects, however, Olympiodorus does not fit into the picture of the Ammonian school as earlier historiography has presented it. His openness to Christian terminology is arguably not evidence of compromise but of a deep conviction that surface meanings from different traditions stand in different ways for the same underlying truth. On key aspects, moreover, he does not deviate from Platonic views, even where they are repugnant to Christian convictions.

Olympiodorus' treatment of Aristotle, furthermore, clearly does not take precedence over his Platonic teaching. The opening lines of his *Prolegomena* to the *Categories* and of his *Commentary on the First Alcibiades* are programmatic. In the former work, he states:

> Because we wish to benefit from the fount of goodness there is an eagerness among us to cleave to Aristotle's philosophy, which endows life with the source of goodness. *Prol. log.* 1.3–5, tr. Gertz

Olympiodorus refers back to these lines when he starts the *Commentary on the First Alcibiades* by saying:

> Aristotle begins his own *Theology* with the statement that 'all human beings naturally reach out for knowledge; and a sign of this is their love of the senses'. But in beginning Plato's philosophy, I would go a step further and say that all human beings reach out for Plato's philosophy, because all people wish to draw benefit from it; they are eager to be possessed by its streams, and to render themselves full of Plato's inspirations. *in Alc.* 1.3–9, tr. Griffin, mod.

Aristotle's philosophy serves as the source (or starting point, ἀρχή) for making life good, but Plato's philosophy fills us with inspiration. The language of inspiration used here expresses Olympiodorus' conviction that we must turn to Plato for knowledge of higher truths. But he displays an uncritical attitude to Aristotle nor Plato, correcting each if need be.

Rather than focusing on reasons for rejecting an earlier paradigm, however, this volume presents a constructive picture of the Platonic aspects of Olympiodorus' teaching. Recent work on Olympiodorus has already done much towards this aim. The field owes a great deal to the work of Harold Tarrant, who not only collaborated with Robin Jackson and Kimon Lycos on a fully annotated translation of the *Gorgias* commentary over twenty years ago, but has continued to work on the form and arguments of Olympiodorus' commentaries. The Utrecht conference too benefited greatly from his participation. Scholars in this field also owe a large debt to Leendert Westerink (1913–1990), whose editorial and interpretive work on Olympiodorus remains indispensable.

In general terms, Olympiodorus has profited from increased scholarly interest in Late Antiquity and in Late Ancient Philosophy in recent years. We are fortunate to have three excellent recent overviews of his thought and work. (Rather than giving another summary in this introduction, therefore, I will highlight key elements directly pertinent to the chapters in this volume in the sections below.) A number of annotated translations of Olympiodorus' works have appeared in recent years. Interest in the persona of Socrates has stimulated study of his Platonic commentaries, the *Gorgias* and *Alcibiades* commentaries being respectively the only and only complete treatment of these Socratic works in the Neoplatonic curriculum to have come down to us.

The detailed scrutiny of Olympiodorus' work undertaken in this volume roughly revolves around four areas of interest: the profile of the philosopher that we find in Olympiodorus' work; his interest in perception and knowledge of oneself; his concern with the form of philosophical communication; and his position vis-à-vis his Christian surroundings.

Philosophical Profile

The figure of the philosopher appears in two guises in particular in this volume: in what his interests and materials are and in the ideal that he tries to embody. To start with the former, it is probable that Olympiodorus taught more than the core philosophical material conveyed in the Aristotelian and Platonic commentaries. For instance, his commentary on Paulus of Alexandria's Εἰσαγωγικά concerns astrological matters. It is likely that he also taught rhetoric. Scholars have also cautiously suggested that he provided training in medicine. Cristina Viano's contribution concerns his interest in chemistry. This is evident already from the *Meteorology* commentary. But Viano reopens the question of Olympiodorus' possible authorship of the alchemical commentary on a work by Zosimus, *On Action*. Viano agrees with the majority view that this commentary is not the work of Olympiodorus as it stands. The hypothesis she advances here, however, is that the first part of the work does substantially derive from Olympiodorus' pen, as comparisons with the *Meteorology* commentary show. In Viano's view, this layer of the text was updated (much) later by means of interpolations and of an additional second part consisting of citations from other philosophers and alchemical authors.

While Olympiodorus' range of interest was broad, the material he was able to work with was not always as extensive as was the case for, for instance, his contemporary Simplicius. Take the *Alcibiades* commentary, where scholars even doubt whether Olympiodorus had access to Proclus' treatment; and it is fairly clear he did not have access to earlier thinkers. In the commentaries on the *Categories* and the *Gorgias* there is no trace of direct knowledge of authors before Ammonius. Anne Sheppard shows that a similar situation holds for some of the literary works of which we find frequent citations in Olympiodorus. Sheppard finds no evidence that he knew much about the comedies and tragedies he cites. She also argues that the way in which he cites them shows that Olympiodorus did not have much interest in them either (I will return to Sheppard's contribution below on p. 9, in considering Olympiodorus' interest in the formal aspects of philosophical communication).

Working from a material basis that was in many ways restricted, Olympiodorus tried to pursue and to convey an ideal of what it is to be a philosopher. An important instrument for communicating this to his audience is the sketch of Plato's life which we find at the beginning of the *Alcibiades* commentary. Anna Motta argues that this presents a unity of doctrine and biography. The philosopher's biography offers a model of philosophical excellence for students to aspire to (and so as a point on the horizon to guide them through their reading of his work). It specifically turns the students towards themselves, Motta argues, which shows that the presence of the *Life of Plato* at the beginning of the *Commentary on the Alcibiades* is not incidental, but expresses a unity of purpose. But even before serving as a model for the students to aspire towards, the *Life of Plato* presents the ideal in virtue of which the master himself, Olympiodorus, is able to teach Platonism to the next generation.

Key in the portrait of Plato is the range of virtues it incorporates. Olympiodorus adopts from his predecessors an account of the degrees of virtue that ranges from the qualities that we are born with through the conditions of the soul informed by reason to the suprarational virtues in which the human soul is united with the divine. We thus get the series natural—ethical—civic—purificatory—theoretical—paradigmatic—and perhaps hieratic, which features in a number of the chapters in this volume. Michael Griffin highlights the psychological development of the student as he ascends along this series to become a more and more perfect philosopher, or, as Motta points out, more and more like Plato. In the first stages, this is a process of increasing psychological organisation, which paves the way for a liberation that leads to identification with the divine. Griffin emphasizes the inclusive nature of the higher stages of this scale. The philosopher operating at the theoretical level can still engage in civic matters. He also notes that the highest stages still contain specificity. In accordance with the *Phaedrus* (252d–253c) Olympiodorus envisages the philosophical ideal as assuming the character of the particular god to which we severally belong.

Self-Cognition

Crucial to the progress from natural virtue towards philosophical virtue is the turn towards ourselves. It is a main ethical concern for all Neoplatonists to turn us away from concentrating on the sensory dimension of reality, which is merely the product of soul, and to encourage us to identify with the highest aspects in ourselves, this being the route through which we can rejoin our origin. This explains the pivotal role of the *First Alcibiades*, which as the first dialogue of Olympiodorus' Platonic curriculum is the text in which students are encouraged to come to know themselves. It is not only in the commentary on this dialogue, however, that we find Olympiodorus to have a sustained interest and an approach of his own to self-cognition. In his comments in the *Phaedo* commentary, Olympiodorus seems to restrict self-cognition to the rational soul: only it is able to revert to itself. Péter Lautner argues that this makes any kind of awareness of our perceptions that includes ourselves as subjects of that perception the province of the rational soul. Lautner also argues that Olympiodorus advances a rich view of perception in another respect. Unlike his immediate predecessors, he attributes perception of universals to animals.

Olympiodorus also seems to restrict the range of self-knowledge at the other end of the philosopher's development. As Danielle Layne points out, he speaks positively of a kind of ignorance of one's ignorance which besets the soul at the theoretical stage. This double ignorance, which involves the soul's unawareness of its embodiment, is superior to knowledge. Olympiodorus' remarkable conception of ignorance of oneself, Layne argues, involves a kind of reversal between those at the lowest and those at the highest end of the ladder of philosophical development. Alcibiades identifies with his body and reputation. He needs Socrates' method of purification to realize that his desires aim at real power rather than the images of power which he now focuses on. In this process of realizing what he really wants, Alcibiades comes to know his soul. The philosopher described in the *Theaetetus*, on the other hand, knows himself as soul but does not even realize his ignorance of his body and of life in the body.

Alcibiades, it seems, never actually achieves self-knowledge, even if Socrates puts him in the way of it. The aim of Olympiodorus in teaching the *First Alcibiades*, however, is very much for his students to reach civic self-knowledge. Olympiodorus' nuanced presentation of the aim (σκοπός) of the dialogue as civic, rather than theoretical self-knowledge or self-knowledge *simpliciter* raises the question of what distinguishes civic from other types of self-knowledge. My own chapter addresses this question. For Olympiodorus, civic self-knowledge involves embodiment, *metriopatheia*, and ourselves as individuals with particular interests. But even if civic life is responsible for our individuation, civic self-knowledge is not enough to know ourselves *as* individuals. This ambivalence about civic (self-)knowledge surfaces elsewhere: Olympiodorus affirms and denies that the civic knower is a philosopher. This shows, I argue, that Olympiodorus uses 'civic self-knowledge' as a transitional notion, not one that captures one precise stage of knowledge. Cognition and ignorance of oneself, then, are not necessarily fixed notions in Olympiodorus, but can be used at different places in his conceptual scheme.

Form of Philosophical Communication

Like other Neoplatonists before him, Olympiodorus is aware of the importance of formal aspects of philosophical writing and teaching. He works with the interpretive assumption, standard since Iamblichus, that every aspect of a text should contribute to the one target (σκοπός) of that text. That makes him particularly sensitive to literary and dramatic features of Plato's dialogues, which Olympiodorus attempts to explain no less than argumentative elements in one comprehensive view of the respective dialogue. He also has a keen eye for the various ways in which Plato has Socrates adapt his words to the character of his interlocutor. For Olympiodorus, this is part and parcel of the life of the philosopher in the city. For the philosopher who operates at the civic level not only has knowledge of himself as an individual embodied being, but also engages with his fellows, leading them to the good life. As Bettina Bohle shows in her analysis of the *Gorgias* commentary and Hermias' *Commentary on the Phaedrus*, this involves rhetoric. According to both Olympiodorus and Hermias, Plato recognizes a true rhetoric that aims at the good, is able to explain itself, and pitches its message depending on the kind of soul with which it communicates. These high demands mean that true rhetoric is inseparable from philosophy. And in fact, Bohle argues, we would do best to view the rhetorician as the philosopher in his role of persuading, or rather teaching, others. Olympiodorus and Hermias' favoured rhetoric turns out to be the dialogue that Socrates is engaged in with his fellow citizens.

François Renaud zooms in on a specific instrument of communication in the dialogues: myth. Even though, as often, it is hard to gauge Olympiodorus' originality due to the loss of earlier *Gorgias* commentaries, we do find in his commentary a nuanced hermeneutic of myth. Olympiodorus distinguishes between philosophical myths and poetic myths. For both types of myth the important thing is to uncover their deeper meaning. The advantage of philosophical myth, however, is that their surface meaning does not harm those incapable of digging deeper. The temporal aspect of the final myth of the *Gorgias*, for instance, must be taken as part of the surface meaning. When the myth speaks of punishment after death, its deeper meaning concerns the here and now and involves, Renaud argues, the practice of Socratic dialectic. Myth thus has a double function: it stimulates the thought of those capable of unearthing deeper meanings and it appeals to all souls because it is an image of the truth. (I return to Renaud's chapter below, p. 10.)

Anne Sheppard's chapter, which we looked at before, also explores Olympiodorus' reflections on the dramatic form of Plato's works and the ethical function of literature, in relation to the views of his predecessors. In both cases, she argues, Olympiodorus' work helps us understand Neoplatonic views but does not constitute evidence that Olympiodorus' interest in the literary side of philosophy was exceptional.

His interests in the literary aspects of philosophy and the modes of its communication may have led Olympiodorus to find a new use for the idea that Plato employed different registers of writing, as Harold Tarrant suggests. Earlier commentators related the style of discourses in Plato's works to their subject matter (following *Tim*. 29b4–5), weightier styles being used to treat weightier matters, or alternatively simple styles to speak of higher, and more simple, beings. Olympiodorus, Tarrant argues, seems to repurpose the characterization of discourses as 'inspired': it is no longer the subject matter but the divine person who speaks through the mouth of Platonic characters that determines whether a discourse is inspired.

Attitude towards Christians

The attitude which Olympiodorus takes towards his Christian contemporaries may provide an important background to these observations of philosophical style and its interpretation. Olympiodorus may have been the last pagan head of the school of Alexandria, which lends particular interest to the question of his attitude.[21] Moreover, his work features a number of striking passages that present Greek notions in terms that are acceptable to a Christian audience.[22] In view of that background it is remarkable, Tarrant notes, that the figures whose discourses Olympiodorus mentions as inspired at the beginning of the *Alcibiades*commentary do not seem to be very senior (with the exception of the demiurge of the *Timaeus*, harmless in a Christian context). Tarrant suggests that this may point to Olympiodorus' efforts to neutralize any threat a Christian audience may have felt at inspired pagan discourse in Plato's works. As talk of wine and aulos music as having inspirational effects may also indicate, Olympiodorus no longer seems to treat inspiration as very significant. And this, according to Tarrant, is not only a matter of communication but a matter of (a lack of) conviction.

A stronger emphasis on the communicative aspect of Olympiodorus' attitude emerges from François Renaud's analysis of how Olympiodorus characterizes Plato's mode of writing. The prominence of myths in Plato's writing are part of an overall esoteric strategy, which hides the truth from those who cannot understand it and stimulates those who can to search for it. Olympiodorus' own teaching too, Renaud suggests, can profitably be viewed as to some degree esoteric: it combines caution with an exhortation to come closer to the knowledge in ourselves.

There are, however, a number of issues on which Olympiodorus' open adherence to orthodox Platonism has long been recognized. Simon Fortier analyses what is perhaps the most remarkable of these: the doctrine of transmigration. Fortier substantiates the idea that this doctrine was eminently unacceptable to Christians. Olympiodorus' overt exposition of this doctrine is therefore clear evidence of his unwillingness to compromise on his Platonic views and may even have become a trademark of his Platonism for himself and his environment as well.

Some of the chapters assembled here argue that Olympiodorus developed novel ideas and approaches. In others the emphasis is rather on the continuity between his ideas and those of his predecessors. To some extent, this difference is of secondary importance. Olympiodorus is a representative of Neoplatonism precisely because he combines use of and deference to authorities with a strong conviction that arguments must carry the day and with enough independence of thought to offer solutions of his own, to forge new concepts and to put old ones to new purposes.

In these pages Olympiodorus emerges as a thinker interested in the formal aspects of philosophical communication and in issues of self-cognition, a thinker moreover who directs his efforts to finding the best stance between his old and broad tradition and new circumstances. This picture reflects interests in scholarship today. Present-day interests in turn help us see better what concerned Olympiodorus. <>

Essay: *Olympiodorus and Greco-Alexandrian Alchemy* by Cristina Viano from Olympiodorus of Alexandria

The Alchemical Commentators or the Age of Systematisation

The Byzantine period in Egypt starts with the death of Theodosius I in 395 and ends under the reign of Heraclius with the Arab conquest in 640. Byzantine Egypt enjoys a period of peace from the fifth through the seventh century, in the course of which Alexandria finds itself at the centre of intense intellectual and spiritual activity. Philosophical and scientific debates continue, fierce doctrinal disputes emerge around Christian dogmas, in engagement also with gnostic and hermetic doctrines.

In this intellectual cauldron, Greek-language alchemy is at a crucial moment in its development: this period sees an elaboration and definition of its doctrines and operations, as well as the conceptual tools to think about them, to provide the foundations for all successive periods.

For typical of this period is a generation of ‘commentators’ like an ‘Olympiodorus’ (6th century) and a ‘Stephanus’ (7th century). Their writings, intended to clarify the thought of the great figures of previous generations and in particular of pseudo-Democritus and Zosimus, represent the most advanced stage of theorization of ancient alchemy.

The period witnesses a real process of definition and systematization of alchemical doctrine, which takes place by means of the intellectual instruments of philosophy available to these writers. This process, begun by previous authors, now finds its full realization. Thus, the empirical literature of recipes, characteristic of the first phase of alchemy, is integrated through systematic reflection on the causes of operations. And so we find a transition from *historia* to *theôria*. Indeed, these authors lay the groundwork for reflecting on the possibility and nature of alchemy as an autonomous branch of knowledge, insofar as they aim to develop the connections between theory and practice, nature and *technê*, between, on the one hand, the doctrine of transmutation and philosophical theories of matter, and technical methods on the other.

It is also towards the 7th century that the corpus of alchemical writings starts being organized into its very specific form of an anthology, composed basically of extracts. The anthology is thought to have been compiled at Byzantium, in the age of the emperor Heraclius (610–641), by a certain Theodorus, who may also have been the author of its verse introduction. This anthology is found in a large number of manuscripts. The most important of these are the *Marcianus Graecus* 299 (M) (10th–11th century), the oldest and most beautiful, brought from Byzantium by Cardinal Bessarion in the 15th century and currently held in the St Mark's library at Venice; the *Parisinus Graecus* 2325 (B) (13th century); and the *Parisinus Graecus* 2327 (A), copied in 1478.

Historians of alchemy have at a very early stage posed the question of the identity of the 'commentators' Olympiodorus and Stephanus with their Neoplatonic commentator namesakes. Pseudepigraphy is indeed a frequent phenomenon in alchemical literature. Among the alchemical authors in the corpus we find mention of Plato, Aristotle, Democritus and Theophrastus. But from a chronological point of view Olympiodorus and Stephanus constitute limiting cases between these obviously wrong attributions and authentic attributions to well-known figures, such as Psellos (11th century).

In the corpus of the alchemists these two authors are defined, among others, as 'the all-praiseworthy and world-wide masters, the new exegetes of Plato and Aristotle' (CAAG 26.3: οἱ πανεύφημοι καὶ οἰκουμενικοὶ διδάσκαλοι καὶ νέοι ἐξηγηταὶ τοῦ Πλάτωνος καὶ Ἀριστοτέλους). This is one of the main reasons in favour of the attribution of the works of this Olympiodorus and of this Stephanus to their Neoplatonic namesakes, or at least of the original versions of these works. Nevertheless, while recent studies on Stephanus incline more and more toward the hypothesis of identity, in Olympiodorus' case the hypothesis of pseudepigraphy remains the most common among scholars.

Owing to the particularly composite and discontinuous form of Olympiodorus' work, the question of attribution is indeed more complex and delicate than in the case of Stephanus, who by contrast presents a more homogeneous collection of treatises. As we will see, it constitutes an exemplary product of alchemical literature, a literature that in large part is composed using parts that derive from the dismemberment of lost texts.

I would like to advance a new hypothesis about the authorship of the commentary attributed to Olympiodorus and about the fundamental role of Olympiodorus in the process of its composition. In so doing my aim will be to bring to light a new facet of the complex philosophical personality of Olympiodorus.

Olympiodorus and the Commentary on the Book **On Action**

'Olympiodorus' is one of the most interesting authors of the alchemical corpus. The issue of the attribution of the commentary on Zosimus' book *On Action* to his namesake the Neoplatonic commentator touches on two vital questions for understanding Greco-Alexandrian alchemy: the constitution of the treatises in the corpus and the relevance of contemporary philosophy for alchemy.

We know that Olympiodorus the Neoplatonist is a rich source of information about the cultural conditions and the educational methods of 6th-century Alexandria. His commentaries exhibit a very typical form: they are structured by a certain number of lessons (*praxeis*), each containing the general explanation (*theôria*) and the particular explanation (*kata meros* or *kata lexin exêgêsis*) of a section of text from Aristotle or Plato (generally referred to as *lexis*). In keeping with the tradition of the Alexandrian school, Olympiodorus is interested in Aristotle's logic and philosophy of nature. His commentary on the *Meteorology* in particular is a work of the greatest interest for the history of science. In completing and fixing the Aristotelian classifications of meteorological and chemical phenomena, Olympiodorus undertakes a formidable work of systematization of concepts that Aristotle had hardly delineated, such as that of the 'chemical analysis' (*diagnôsis*) of homogeneous bodies of book IV (*in Mete.* 274.25–29). He partakes of debates among commentators about difficult and problematic issues in the *Meteorology*, for instance about the theory of vision, about the manner in which the rays of the sun heat up the air, or about the origin of the sea's salinity. Finally, he provides much information about the state of science and technology of his time, such as mathematics, optics, astronomy, medicine, agriculture and metallurgy. As to the commentary on book IV of the *Meteorology*, the first 'chemical' treatise of antiquity, Olympiodorus' systematic contribution is fundamental: it helps in great measure to constitute a new field of research into the properties, conditions and transformations of sublunary matter. His commentary is the most frequently used not only by Arab and Renaissance authors, but also by Greek and mediaeval alchemists.

It comes as no surprise, therefore, that one of the most 'philosophical' works of the Greek alchemical corpus has come down to us under the name of Olympiodorus. It presents itself as the commentary on a (lost) treatise of Zosimus and on sayings of other ancient alchemists (CAAG 69.12–104.7) In the principal manuscript of the corpus, *Marcianus Graecus* 299 (M) and in its copy (*Parisinus Graecus* 2249 = K), this treatise bears the title: 'Olympiodorus, philosopher of Alexandria, on the *On Action* of Zosimus ⟨and⟩ all that has been said by Hermes and the philosophers' (ΟΛΥΜΠΙΟΔΩΡΟΥ ΦΙΛΟΣΟΦΟΥ ΑΛΕΞΑΝΔΡΕΩΣ ΕΙΣ ΤΟ ΚΑΤ' ΕΝΕΡΓΕΙΑΝ ΖΩΣΙΜΟΥ ⟨ΚΑΙ⟩ ΟΣΑ ΑΠΟ ΕΡΜΟΥ ΚΑΙ ΤΩΝ ΦΙΛΟΣΟΦΩΝ ΗΣΑΝ ΕΙΡΗΜΕΝΑ).

Content and Structure of the Commentary

The author explicitly presents his commentary as both exegetical and doxographical. One of its most characteristic features is its appropriation of Greek philosophy, and particularly of Presocratic philosophy, as the epistemological foundation of the transmutation of metals. Towards the middle of the commentary (CAAG 79.11–85.5; §18–27), Olympiodorus reports the views of nine Presocratic philosophers (Melissus, Parmenides, Thales, Diogenes, Heraclitus, Hippasus, Xenophanes, Anaximenes and Anaximander) on the single principle of all things. He subsequently outlines a comparison between these tenets and those of the principal masters of the art of alchemy (Zosimus, Chymes, Agathodemon and Hermes) on the efficient principle of transmutation, which he refers to as 'divine water' (*theion hudôr*).

Like most texts in the corpus of Greek alchemists, Olympiodorus' commentary has a composite and seemingly unstructured character. The title of M seems composed of two parts but without any sign of punctuation or connecting particle which would allow us to understand their relation. It has no introduction nor conclusion, it starts and ends *ex abrupto*.

We can divide the text into two sections. Only the first (CAAG 69.12–77.14; §1–14) exhibits a coherent structure: the author starts by commenting on a phrase of Zosimus on the operation of extracting gold particles from ore, by means of 'maceration' (*taricheia*) and 'washing' (*plusis*) (§1–7). He does so according to Olympiodorus' typical scheme: first the *lexis*, the phrase from Zosimus that is commented on, then a general explanation (*theôria*), and subsequently the detailed exegesis of terminology (*exêgêsis kata lexin*). The general explanation also introduces the theme of the obscurity (*asapheia*) of the 'ancients', widened to include Plato and Aristotle, which served the double purpose of hiding doctrine from the uninitiated and of exhorting students to investigate for themselves. The text then introduces the 'welding' (*chrysokollê*) of gold (§8–11), which involves the assembly of the acquired gold particles into a homogeneous body. These two specific operations of separation and reunification are interpreted in the text as allegories of the transmutation of metals. Next come the three types of dyeing of ancient alchemists (§11–14): the type which evaporates, that which evaporates slowly, and that which does not evaporate. The third bestows an indelible character onto the metals. In operative terms this means fixing the colouring of a metal in such a way as to give it a persistent character.

The second section—the longest part of the text (77.15–104.7; §15–55)—is composed of an unstructured series of *excerpta* and of digressions accompanied by remarks on the main alchemical operations.

§16 concerns fire, since according to Zosimus, moderate fire has a fundamental role to play in the practice of the art of transmutation, since it is its prime agent. Reflection on fire leads the author to consider the function of the four elements and the views of the Presocratics on the principles. §18 begins the doxographical exposition of Presocratic doctrines concerning the single principle, which extends from §19 through §25. The author subsequently (§25–27) compares the principles just identified to the principles of the ancient alchemists. The second half of the treatise (§28–55) revisits arguments from the first section (§1–14), followed by a description of the stages of transmutation and the theorization of first metallic matter. §28 considers the status of the elements in the ancient alchemists: they constitute dry, hot, cold and wet bodies. §32 takes up the distinction between stable bodies and instable bodies that was outlined in §15. Olympiodorus now distinguishes between corporeal substances and incorporeal substances, i.e. between meltable metallic substances and ores that cannot be treated by fire. Linked to the discussion of ores is a passage of the *Final account* of Zosimus which concerns the role of alchemy among the kings of Egypt (§35). From §36 onwards, focusing on first metallic matter, Olympiodorus relates the dialogue between Synesius and Dioscorus on mercury.[11] After considering the separative function of white and the 'comprehensive' function of black in colouring (§38), Olympiodorus follows Zosimus in identifying first metallic matter with black lead. §43, presents 'divine water' as responsible for transmutation. In §44, Zosimus defines lead by means of the symbol of the philosophical egg composed of the four elements. The subsequent sections discuss the 'powers' of lead and the stages of transmutation, each linked to particular colours (black, white, yellow and red). In §54 we find a consideration of the art of transmutation, which is said to be *eidikê* ('specific') and not *koinê* ('common'). The conclusion (§55) sums up a number of essential notions in the work: substances responsible for transformations, like *chalkomolybdos* and etesian stone, the melting and production of gold, the causal activity of fire in the various stages.

Beyond this appearance of disorder, however, we can detect a rational and coherent design in the way the treatise unfolds, which reveals itself in two factors. The first is the logical sequence that ties together the alchemical operations, the principles and fundamental substances. This sequence exhibits a development through the presentation of the constituent elements of alchemy, from the fundamental operations (grinding, melting, dyeing) to its active and material principles, ending with epistemological considerations on this discipline as a *technê*.

The second factor that renders the work coherent are phrases that one might call 'connective and associative'. Here the author speaks in the first person and marks the transitions between different sections as well as the aim, method and internal organization of his text. His work thus turns out to be an *epitomê*, a summary with protreptic intent, providing a selection of testimonies, with commentary, taken from the writings of the ancient alchemists, but also of philosophers properly speaking, on the basic elements of the art (operations, ingredients, and also its history). It seems to be addressed to a young man of high rank with the aim of providing him with 'an overview of the preliminary general knowledge of the art' (*tês enkukliou technês hê sunopsis*) (§38).

I think that the text we possess is based on a work by Olympiodorus, now lost, composed in a more structured way. The text we possess would be composed of at least two layers: Olympiodorus' commentary on Zosimus' *On Action* and the arrangement of a compiler. The latter copied Olympiodorus up to a point and then added a sequence of remarks on the main alchemical operations, accompanied by *excerpta* from Zosimus and other alchemical authors, organizing the whole work by the double criterion just mentioned.

In other words, I think that the opening sections (§1–7) as well as a sizeable part of the doxography on the Presocratics (§18–27) derives directly from Olympiodorus' commentary on *On Action*. It is also very probable that the compilation has been superimposed on the run of the commentary. That is to say, the compiler has inserted other *excerpta* and digressions but could return to Olympiodorus' commentary on *On Action* and copy and/or paraphrase other parts from it, such as the doxographical part which, in my view and at least as far as the Presocratics are concerned, is the work of Olympiodorus. It is also quite plausible that Zosimus' *On Action* itself was already a doxographical work as far as the opinions of the alchemists are concerned, and that Olympiodorus' commentary added a doxography on the Presocratics, which is structured according to the characteristic scheme of Neoplatonic commentaries.

Convergences

The parts which we can see as deriving directly from Olympiodorus' commentary are, in fact, characterized by formal, terminological and conceptual similarities with the commentary on the *Meteorology* and other works by the Neoplatonic Olympiodorus.

The most striking formal similarities are: the typical commentary structure divided into *lexis, theôria, exêgêsis kata lexin* which one finds at the start of the treatise, and the typically Neoplatonic arrangement of the Presocratic doxography. At the very beginning, furthermore, one encounters the theme of Aristotle's obscurity (*asapheia*) illustrated by the distinction between that which is in a subject (substrate, *en hupokeimenôi*) and that which is not (*ouk en hupokeimenôi*). These terms are used to refer to substances and accidents at the beginning of the *Categories* (1a20–1b9); commentators considered them an instance of Aristotle's obscurity. The issue of obscurity was one of the ten questions that constituted the introduction to the exegesis of Plato and Aristotle and which all Neoplatonic commentaries to the *Categories* featured in their opening pages.

The terminological and doctrinal convergences with the commentary on the *Meteorology* are frequent. I will mention a number of examples. Olympiodorus the alchemist uses the adjective *drastikos* to refer to the fire of Heraclitus (82.18), the same way Olympiodorus the commentator calls active causes *poiotêtai drastikai*(275.33) and speaks of the *drastikê dunamis* of fire (18.14).

Olympiodorus the alchemist defines white and black as extreme colours: white as 'that which dilates' (*diakritikon*) and black as 'that which contracts' (*sunektikon*, 92.5–6); similarly we read in Olympiodorus *in Mete*. 314.25–26 (this is in the course of a discussion of the effect of active qualities on the senses): 'For these things act on our senses: white dilates (*diakrinon*) while black contracts (*sunkrinon*) the organs of sight, and the others similarly act on each sense'.

In our alchemical text, smoke (*kapnos*) and humid vapour (*atmos*) are presented as *metaxu* items between the elements. Now, it is an interpretation of Olympiodorus' to assign to exhalations an intermediate status between the elements. He defines exhalations as 'contiguous' (*prosechê*, 16.15; 40.13) elements, 'intermediate' (*metaxu*), 'half-kinds' (*hêmigenê stoicheia*, 16.17–19), 'analogous' (*analogounta*) to earth and water (314.18). He identifies them with transitory states, manifestations of elements themselves by means of which transformations between elements occur. Humid exhalations, for instance, are an intermediate (*metaxu*) state between water and air, and dry exhalations are intermediate between fire and earth (16.15–22). This interpretation allows Olympiodorus to erase, at least in part, the gap between the meteorological phenomena that result from exhalations in books 1–3 and the return, in book 4 of Aristotle's *Meteorology*, to the elements in their role in transformations of bodies.

In fact we can use a passage from Olympiodorus, *in Mete*. 16.19: 'For vapourous exhalation is intermediate between water and air and smoky exhalation is intermediate between fire and earth' (ἔστι γὰρ ἡ μὲν ἀτμιδώδης μεταξὺ ἀέρος καὶ ὕδατος, ἡ δὲ καπνώδης πυρὸς καὶ γῆς), to correct a passage in the alchemical commentary, rendering it more comprehensible: 'Anaximander said that the principle is the intermediary, referring to the intermediary constituted by vapours or smoke. Vapour is indeed intermediate between ⟨air and water, while smoke is intermediate between⟩ fire and earth. And to put the point in general terms, every intermediary between hot and humid things is vapour. As to the intermediary between hot and dry things, this is smoke.' (Ἀναξίμανδρος δὲ τὸ μεταξὺ ἔλεγεν ἀρχὴν εἶναι · μεταξὺ δὲ λέγω τὸν ἀτμὸν ἢ τὸν καπνόν · ὁ μὲν γὰρ ἀτμὸς μεταξύ ἐστιν ⟨ ἀέρος καὶ ὕδατος, ὁ δὲ καπνός ⟩ πυρὸς καὶ γῆς, καὶ καθόλου δὲ εἰπεῖν, πᾶν τὸ μεταξὺ θερμῶν καὶ ὑγρῶν ἀτμός ἐστι · τὰ δὲ μεταξὺ θερμῶν καὶ ξηρῶν, καπνός, 83.11–14)

Moreover, in the alchemical treatise, double exhalation and so the *metaxu* too, is associated with the dry and humid 'sublimate': 'Smoke is intermediary between the hot and the dry. And here it is the sublimate and all that results from it. Vapour, on the other hand, is intermediary between hot and wet things. It stands for wet sublimates such as come out of alambics and what is similar to them' (ὁ γὰρ καπνὸς μεταξύ ἐστιν θερμοῦ καὶ ξηροῦ · κἀκεῖ μὲν ἡ αἰθάλη, καὶ τὰ δι' αἰθάλης πάντα · ὁ δὲ ἀτμὸς μεταξύ ἐστιν θερμῶν καὶ ὑγρῶν. Καὶ σημαίνει αἰθάλας ὑγρὰς, οἷον τὰ δι' ἀμβίκων καὶ τὰ τούτοις ὅμοια, 85.2–5). Now, the term *aithalê*, which is rare and does not occur in Aristotle, occurs in Olympiodorus' commentary on the *Meteorology* and refers to smoky exhalation (*aithalôdês anathumiasis*) which contains an earthy residue (literally 'soot'). When this has gone up and mixed itself with the humid exhalation, it condenses and precipitates into the sea, producing salinity (160.7; 152.37; 157.15).

As Brisson (1992) has noted, this term *aithalê* also occurs in Olympiodorus in a context that is not specifically meteorological. In the *Commentary on the Phaedo*, the generation of human beings is described as resulting from 'sublimate of vapours' (*ek tôn tês aithalês tôn atmôn*), which are released from the Titans' bodies after they have been struck by Zeus' lightning bolt. Brisson sees this account as using an intentional alchemical metaphor, which would confirm that the author of the alchemical commentary on Zosimus is indeed the Neoplatonist Olympiodorus. In my view, this is not an alchemical metaphor, but rather a term borrowed from the chemico-meteorological vocabulary used to single out a very specific substance that is the result of a process of combustion.

In the alchemical treatise (103.22–23) we find the same list of metals that Olympiodorus establishes in the commentary on the *Meteorology*: gold, silver, copper, iron, lead and tin (cf. for instance 321.1). Furthermore, Olympiodorus also presents a different classification, attributed to Proclus' *Commentary on the Timaeus*, which establishes the following correspondences between metals and planets:

Saturn: lead (heavy, somber, cold)
Jupiter: *êlektron* / *migma* (temperate)
Mars: iron (cutting, sharp)
Sun: gold (light)
Venus: copper (splendour)
Mercury: tin (translucid and bright)
Moon: silver (receives its light from gold)

This list as reported by Olympiodorus (which incidentally is more complete than what we find in Proclus' *Commentary on the Timaeus*) establishes precisely the same correspondences between metals and planets as the (anonymous) list which occurs at the beginning of *Marcianus* 299 (f. 6), the most ancient and important alchemical manuscript:

Sun, gold
Moon, silver
Saturn, bright (*phainon*), lead
Jupiter, radiant (*phaeton*), *electrum*
Mars, enflamed (*puroeis*), iron
Venus, luminous (*phôsphoros*), copper
Mercury, glittery (*stilbôn*), tin

The correspondence between metals and planets is a more ancient doctrine than the commentaries of Proclus and Olympiodorus, probably dating back to the Chaldaeans. But in my view, this exact correspondence constitutes important evidence of the influence exercised by Neoplatonic thought on Greco-Alexandrian alchemical knowledge, or at least of the fact that they occupied common cultural ground.

Now, if my hypothesis about the composition of the commentary on *On Action* is true, we can explain how, subsequently, this text was attributed to Olympiodorus of Alexandria in its entirety, by a kind of 'attraction' of the initial section. We can exclude the possibility that the compiler of the patchwork intended to claim the name of Olympiodorus for himself. If my reconstruction is correct, the title reflects precisely what the work is: the commentary of Olympiodorus on Zosimus *and* a collection of *excerpta*. As to the compiler, we should probably consider the same Theodorus who is said to have assembled the whole collection of alchemical texts at the time of the emperor Heraclius and to have composed the introduction in verse which we find at the beginning of the manuscript *Marcianus Graecus*299 (f. 5v).

Thus the whole debate on the work's authenticity must be seen from a new perspective. The circumstances of this text are not those of a pseudepigraphic text in the ordinary sense but those of a typical product of that *sui generis* scientific literature that is Greco-Alexandrian alchemy.

Olympiodorus the Commentator and Alchemy

We are left with the question, however, of why the Neoplatonic philosopher Olympiodorus, commentator of Plato and Aristotle, would have been interested in alchemy. The question is tricky. Even though we can easily detect the influence of contemporary philosophy in the Greek alchemists, evidence of alchemy is very rare in the writings of philosophers of the period and particularly in Neoplatonic commentators. Likewise, even though the alchemical commentary of Olympiodorus shows many convergences with the *Meteorology* commentary and with other texts of the Neoplatonic Olympiodorus, we would be hard pressed to find explicit references to the art of transmutation in the commentary on the *Meteorology*.

We can escape this impasse by considering that it is very likely that what we nowadays label 'alchemy' would not have been seen the same way in the age of Olympiodorus and Stephanus. When we speak of alchemy, we immediately think of transmutation, of a well-defined branch of knowledge characterized by a particular goal, e.g. the transformation of lead into gold etc. However, while this may be true for the alchemy of the Middle Ages, both in the West and in the Arab world, the boundaries of this knowledge appear to have been much vaguer in the Greco-Roman world.

First of all, the proper name of this knowledge: *al-kîmiyâ* is an Arab term, made up from the article *al* and a Greek term of uncertain etymology: *chêmeia, chumeia*. It is also a late term, used by the Byzantines. The Byzantine lexicon of Suda (10th century) defines *chêmeia* as the craft of producing silver and gold (X.280). The alchemical authors speak rather of 'divine craft', of 'excellent science', of 'philosophy'. Its domain of application is not only the production of gold, of noble metals, or the method of self-transformation, but the first recipes also concern the dyeing of stones and fabrics, and the production of dye pigments. Hence we find in them a whole range of organic and inorganic substances and processes revolving around matter and its transformations. The revolutionary notion—revolutionary in the Greek world—of transmutation is absent in the first 'technical' treatises. It occurs in more philosophical 'authors' like Zosimus (4th century) and subsequently in the 'commentators'. And even in those authors who do mention transmutation, we also find concrete substances and procedures which we can clearly identify and which are in no way mysterious or metaphysical. This holds for the descriptions of distillation devices in Zosimus, including the *ambix* (from which the well-known alembic is derived via the Arabic intermediary *al-anbîq*); for the recipe for the production of 'black bronze' which we find in the Syriac fragments of Zosimus; and for the operation of 'maceration' (*taricheia*), the paradigmatic operation of gold ore, which involves multiple stages, and which we find mentioned in the first lines of Olympiodorus' commentary on *On Action*.

Here, as we have seen, Olympiodorus comments on Zosimus' *lemma* concerning the operation of extracting gold flakes from ores by means of the process of 'maceration' (*taricheia*) and of 'washing' (*plusis*) (§1–7). This is followed by a description of the process of 'welding' (*chrysokollê*) gold (§8–11), which involves the assembly of the acquired gold particles into a homogeneous body. The text interprets these two specific operations of separation and reunification as allegories of the transmutation of metals. In fact, however, and despite a number of obscurities, Olympiodorus' exegesis appears in essence to be technical, with reference to real procedures concerning the stages, times, instruments and phases of the levigation of gold ore.

Now, among the non-alchemical evidence, these technical stages of the extraction of ores and their treatment down to their transformation into gold are described in detail by Agatharchides the geographer, praeceptor of Ptolemy III (2nd C BCE), of whom we have a very vivid account of mining activities in the Eastern desert (cf. Diodorus Siculus 3.12.1–14.5; Strabo XVI.4.5–20 and Photius, *Bibl.* chapter 250). In fact, this evidence is not at all exterior to the alchemical corpus, since we find a summary of it in *Marcianus* 299 (f. 138–141).

Agatharchides' precise descriptions of the four fundamental technical operations of the transformation of ores—crushing, grinding, washing (or levigation) and refining—allow us to confirm that the passage from Olympiodorus refers to actual procedures. These had been established for a long time, and would have constituted the technical basis for theoretical reflection on the part of alchemists, both with respect to the theorization of methodological principles and to allegories of transmutation.

However, we also possess very recent and very concrete evidence of the procedure of extracting and washing gold ore. This is of great importance for us in reconstructing the operations of Greek alchemists. I refer to the findings of a 2013 excavation campaign of the French mission of the Eastern desert in Egypt, which concentrated on auriferous mining sites at Samut dating back to the Ptolemaic era (from the end of the 4th through the middle of the 3rd century BCE).

Clear surface traces reveal installations that testify to the different phases of the process: first the mechanical phase of selection, the crushing of auriferous blocks of quartz, and the transformation into ore powder using millstones, then the washing phase in washing facilities, in order to separate the metallic particles to be melted, and finally the metallurgical phase of on-site refining, evidenced by the presence of an oven.

The evidence from Agatharchides has been essential in interpreting the traces of these installations. The four fundamental technical operations of ore transformation at the end of the mining process, as Agatharchides describes them (crushing, grinding, washing and refining), could indeed be localized on this site.

This helps us to understand that Olympiodorus, commentator on the *Meteorology*, could very well have been interested in the texts which we classify in the category of Greek alchemy, in order to update the Aristotelian material, particularly that concerning artisanal skills found in book 4. Olympiodorus mentions, for instance, glass craftsmen (*in Mete*. 331.1) while Aristotle nowhere mentions artisanal glass. Olympiodorus describes techniques of purification and refining of metal that effect a separation of the metal from its impurities, which are basically earthy in kind, or a separation of one metal from another, as in the case of silver and gold. In particular, he explains the metaphorical 'boiling' of gold of *Mete*. 4.3, 380b29, in terms of a technique that has been identified as 'cupellation' (by which metals are separated by oxidation, during which impurities are absorbed in part by the cupel into which the mixture has been poured) (292.6). It is worth noting that for Olympiodorus each metal forms a different kind. He cites the separation of silver and gold by heat as an example of the principle that heat unites things of the same kind (*homoioeidê*) but separates things of different kinds (*anomoioeidê*) (274.39–275.1).

It is therefore not outlandish to suppose that Olympiodorus, commentator on Aristotle, would have wanted to go further and comment on a work by one of the most eminent authors of this budding science, i.e. the lost *On Action* by Zosimus of Panopolis, which probably was already a doxographical and protreptic work on the foundations of alchemy itself.

For this reason I think that Olympiodorus is an emblematic example of Alexandrian alchemy and constitutes a fundamental stage in the epistemological identification of this knowledge-in-flux and in the transition from the chemistry of the *Meteorology* to alchemy. This transition would subsequently be theorized and rendered official in the Middle Ages by authors like Albertus Magnus, Avicenna and Averroes. <>

TYCONIUS' BOOK OF RULES: AN ANCIENT INVITATION TO ECCLESIAL HERMENEUTICS by Matthew R. Lynskey [Series: Vigiliae Christianae, Supplements, Brill, 9789004454835]

In **TYCONIUS' BOOK OF RULES** Matthew R. Lynskey explores the church-centric interpretation of ancient biblical exegete Tyconius in his hermeneutical treatise *Liber regularum*. Influential within his Donatist tradition and the broader context of early North African Christianity, Tyconius wrote one of the earliest works on exegetical theory and praxis in Latin Christianity.

By investigating five key concepts undergirding Tyconius's theology of church, Lynskey demonstrates how Tyconius' ecclesiology shaped his hermeneutical enterprise. Through careful readings and close analysis of Liber regularum, this study seeks to describe Tyconius' exegesis on its own terms, reflecting on notable historical, theological, formational, and missiological implications of his ecclesial exegesis as it concerns the ancient and contemporary church.

CONTENTS

Dedication
Motto
Preface
Citation Note
Abbreviations
Part I Mapping the Landscape: Reconstructing Tyconius' Mental World
Chapter 1 Introduction
Chapter 2 Grasping Tyconius' Personal Profile, Ecclesiastical Setting, and Literary Prologue
Part 2 Standing at the Crossroads: Assessing the Intersection of Tyconius' Ecclesiology and Hermeneutic
Chapter 3 Bridegroom and Bride: The Church as Body of Christ
Chapter 4 Black and Beautiful: The Church as Bipartite Body
Chapter 5 The Septiform Church: The Church as Spiritual World
Chapter 6 The Living Stone: The Church as Universal People of God
Chapter 7 The Last People: The Church as Eschatological Community
Conclusion
Bibliography
Indexes

Mottos:

When you have understood, you will be delighted by the sweetness of the divine words, but when you begin to preach and work out what you understand, you will experience bitterness.

cum perceperis, oblectaberis eloquii diuini dulcedine, sed amaritudinem senties, cum praedicare et operari coeperis quod intellexeris.

Tyconius, *Expositio Apocalypseos* 3.59.5–7 (CCSL 107A:165), translated by Gumerlock, *Exposition of the Apocalypse*

***

I have no more made my book than my book has made me: ‘tis a book consubstantial with the author, of a peculiar design, a parcel [member] of my life.

Je n’ ay pas plus fait mon livre, que mon livre m’ a fait. Livre consubstantiel à son autheur: d’ une occupation propre: membre de ma vie.

Montaigne, *Essais* 2.18 (Coste 2:400), translated by Cotton, *Michel de Montaigne: Selected Essays*

***

Let those, therefore, who are going to read this book not imitate me when I err, but rather when I progress toward the better. For, perhaps, one who reads my works in the order in which they were written will find out how I progressed while writing.

quapropter quicumque ista lecturi sunt, non me imitentur errantem, sed in melius proficientem. inueniet enim fortasse, quomodo scribendo profecerim, quisquis opscula mea ordine, quo scripta sunt, legerit.

Augustine, *Retractationum*, Preface 3 (CSEL 36:10 [PL 32:586]), translated by Bogan, *The Retractions*

Excerpt: The subject of this work explores the ecclesiological hermeneutic of a little-known theologian from fourth-century North Africa, Tyconius. Intriguing is his focus on the centrality of the church in the exegesis of Scripture. Whereas much research has explored early Christianity’s Christocentric exegesis—an unmistakable dynamic manifestly characteristic of patristic interpretation and also evident in Tyconius’ extant writings—less work has explored the role of the church in scriptural hermeneutics. In this regard, Tyconius has much to say. In retrospect, Tyconius’ own historical, sociopolitical, ecclesiastical, and theological setting explain why the church would occupy a central focus in his thinking, writing, and hermeneutical endeavors. From Tyconius’ own perspective, however, he practiced an ecclesial exegesis precisely as a natural outflow of his understanding of the nature of the church. For Tyconius, the Scriptures themselves illumine the pathway of its own exegesis. The church being central in the sacred biblical text, Tyconius would summon readers to also make the church central in the interpretive process, reading the Bible ecclesiocentrically.

Exploring the ecclesial hermeneutic of Tyconius, this monograph is a revision of my doctoral work completed in 2018 at the University of South Africa. As its original title suggests—“Aspects of the Spirituality of the *Book of Rules* of Tyconius: Bible and Church in Engagement”[1]—the project was conceived as an interdisciplinary effort to explore the intersection of hermeneutics, ecclesiology, Christian spirituality, and missiology through the historical figure of Tyconius. Under the generous supervision of Professor Christo Lombaard, this research specifically targeted Tyconius' *Liber regularum*. Having lived during the fourth century, Tyconius was well-known during his day, but had grown to be an abstruse figure to historical inquiry. This exploration endeavors—alongside other more recent efforts in Tyconian scholarship—to reconstruct the unique ecclesial hermeneutic of this Donatist theologian as he is set in the context of early North African Christianity.

Tyconius' ecclesiological exegesis—and all its intersections of corresponding domains—is relevant to contemporary hermeneutical dialogue. Paul Ricoeur once poignantly wrote that "what must be interpreted in a text is a *proposed world* that I could inhabit." Far from being stale procedural training or an erudite intellectual display, textual interpretation shapes the lives of its readers. Texts have used, and continue to use, their prowess to both change the people who inhabit the world and to transform the world they inhabit. Specifically, when the text being interpreted is the Bible, *hermeneutical inquiry* nurtures *spiritual formation*. Too often, however, even a hermeneutical exploration of the Bible can fall prey to an intellectual oligarchy or can become lost in a myriad of speculative dead-ends. Biblical hermeneutics—as a charter for genuine understanding of divine revelation—was meant to bring the sacred text of Scripture to bear on *actual human lives*. Nevertheless, to receive the time-tested benefits of textual interpretation (and biblical interpretation nonetheless) a hermeneutical renewal must draw nigh. Precisely said, a *spiritual renovation*—personally, communally, and societally—awaits those who have a *hermeneutical starting point*.

Inquiry into biblical hermeneutics opens the door to a variety of corresponding fields of study: theology, exegesis, missiology, history, philosophy, etc. Particularly, biblical hermeneutics itself is uniquely suited for the exploratory task involved in understanding *spiritual formation in the life of the church*. Hermeneutics has a gentle way of setting the stage for both *interdisciplinary* and *interpersonal* dialogue, even among scholarly disciplines and conversation partners who have been long estranged from each other. Being such an intersection of scholarly and relational worlds, hermeneutical dialogue can serve as an aid to reunite the oft-segregated fields of theory and praxis, theology and exegesis, academy and church, and mission and spirituality in the context of community formation. Hermeneutic dialogue can suture the wounds of such ill-fated fragmentation as we begin to (re)envision a world where texts are not only *brought to life* but are seen once again *bringing people to life*.

Specifically, the *hermeneutical voice* of the past has something to say to the *ecclesial present*. As is often the case, voices from antiquity prove to be some of the most fitting remedies to the idiosyncratic maladies of the day. In a small way, such is the goal of this current study. As this study seeks out how one exegete from history, Tyconius, read the sacred text of the Bible, his hermeneutical proposal of *Liber regularum* is offered in the name of *Christian spirituality in the life of the church*. This research ventures toward this goal not with the naive hopes that Tyconius will answer all interpretive questions, resolve every theological quandary, or provide some sort of inspired hermeneutical theory. But, rather, the hope is that Tyconius can lend a fresh word to help better understand the strengths and (sometimes hidden) gaps in the contemporary dialogue of hermeneutics and Christian spirituality. And pastorally, by considering his hermeneutical contribution—a contribution from the distant past—one hopes Tyconius might help the "church-of-the-now" to be further resolved and resourced to anticipate the future and to live faithfully in the present. In other words, by conversing with Tyconius, this research seeks to more appropriately and accurately understand the “proposed world” of the biblical script, the world that its readers are meant to inhabit.

Though a project such as this can make a writer feel, at times, quite solitary, no author completes a work of such scope and profile unescorted. True to the topic of this study, theological reflection, hermeneutical inquiry, and spiritual formation are by their very essence community enterprises. At no point in this research could I claim complete independence. Rather, along the way, the Lord had sovereignly brought the right people at the right time to move my research, thinking, and writing forward. <>

SOLOMON AND THE ANT: THE QUR’AN IN CONVERSATION WITH THE BIBLE by David Penchansky [Cascade Books, 9781725288690]

SOLOMON AND THE ANT, using the Bible as a dialogue partner, examines stories from the Qur’an, their drama, characters, and meaning. Although some qur’anic stories have close biblical parallels, here Penchansky examines stories without biblical precursors. Qur’anic narratives in dialogue with biblical texts enhance understanding. Penchansky chooses biblical stories that address similar questions about the nature of God and God’s interaction with people.

Solomon matches wits with an ant, a bird, and the queen of Sheba. Magical creatures, the jinn, are driven out of heaven by fiery meteors. Moses, on a quest, meets a mysterious stranger. The Bible offers parallels and connections. Genesis, Exodus, Isaiah, Matthew, and other biblical books, contrast with the qur’anic text, comment on the qur’anic story, and supplement it.

- Separated by space and time, the Bible and the Qur’an faced similar issues.
- Both the Bible and the Qur’an adapted material from their surrounding culture while at the same time distinguishing themselves from that culture.
- Rather than addressing this cultural confrontation with rigid certainty, the Bible and the Qur’an are ambiguous and multivocal.
- The Bible and the Qur’an are layered, containing stories within stories, fragments, and structural abnormalities. These features contribute to meaning.

Penchansky’s analysis of these stories makes the Qur’an accessible and compelling to nonspecialists and students.

Reviews:

“This is a conversation between the Qur’an and the Bible as serious as it is simple. Applying a wealth of scholarly experience, Penchansky engages the holy texts both thematically and thoughtfully. Using his mastery of post-biblical and Islamic traditions, the author ensures a robust discussion about how readers wrestle with God through the stories of scripture.”

—EMRAN EL-BADAWI, UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON

“Some of the most obscure Qur’anic passages that seem to discuss fantastical realms, such as the *jinn* or demons, speaking animals, magical worlds of angels or deities, and mystical journeys have no recognizable biblical counterparts. Yet Penchansky is so well-versed in biblical literature that he brings a genuine voice artfully and skillfully mirroring Qur’anic narratives with similitudes in biblical literature. Away from any polemics, this is brilliantly an honest and sympathetic reflection that would undoubtedly enlighten and enrich any reader of the Qur’an.” —ABDULLA GALADARI, KHALIFA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

“This book makes a unique and important contribution to the study of the relationship between the Bible and the Qur’an. Adopting a thematic approach, Penchansky offers a set of insightful and creative studies that explore how the two texts address the topics of polytheism, theodicy, and revelation. Readers will come away with a deeper appreciation of the fascinating interconnections that exist between the scriptures of the monotheistic traditions.” —JOHN KALTNER, RHODES COLLEGE

“The Qur’an’s narrative extension of the biblical tradition has been the subject of much scholarly discussion. While most scholars who engage in this field are trained in Qur’anic studies, Penchansky’s training in the Hebrew Bible makes *Solomon and the Ant* an important and unique contribution. Through a careful analysis of parallel stories in the Bible and the Qur’an, this book demonstrates how the two scriptures share the same cultural milieu, without losing sight of the Qur’an’s theological peculiarity, and it does so with commendable clarity.” —MUN’IM SIRRY, AUTHOR OF *CONTROVERSIES OVER ISLAMIC ORIGINS*

CONTENTS

Introduction
PART 1: THE PROBLEM OF POLYTHEISM
1 Surat-al-Falaq (The Daybreak) and Surat-al-Nas (The People) Q 113 and Q 114—The “Taking Refuge” Suras
2 Surat-al-Najm (The Star Sura) Q 53:19–25—Daughters of Deity
3 Surat-al-Jinn (The Jinn Sura) Q 72:1–19—War in Heaven
PART 2: THE PROBLEM OF THEODICY
4 Surat-al-Masad (The Fiber) Q 111:1–5—Abu Lahab’s Curse
5 Surat-al-Kahf (The Cave Sura) Q 18:60–82—Moses and the Stranger
6 Surat-al-Naml (The Ant Sura) Q 27:15–44—King Solomon and the Ant
PART 3: THE PROBLEM OF REVELATION
7 Surat-al-Kahf (The Cave Sura) Q 18:9–25—Hosea and the Companions of the Cave
8 Surat-al-Najm (The Star Sura) Q 53:1–18—By the Lote Tree
9 Surat-ʿAbasa (He Frowned) Q 80—The Prophet and the Blind Man
Epilogue
Bibliography
Subject and Author Index
Ancient Document Index

Excerpt: What’s so special about the Qur’an? Muslims believe their sacred book consists of the actual words of God in Arabic, dictated to the Prophet Muhammad by the angel Gabriel. How does one examine such a claim, which goes beyond what most Jews and Christians believe about their holy texts? The Qur’an claims that its divine nature will be obvious to anyone who reads it with an open heart. These are some Qur’anic texts that make this claim:

> If you are in doubt about what We have sent down to Our servant, then bring a sura [chapter] like it, and call your witnesses. (Q 2:23)
>
> Or do they say, "He has forged it?" Say: "Then bring ten suras forged like it, and call on whomever you can, other than God, if you are truthful." (Q 11:13)
>
> Say: "If indeed humankind and the jinn joined together to produce something like this Qur'a^n, they would not produce anything like it, even if they were supporters of each other." (Q 17:88)

I, a sympathetic reader, hope to gain access to the excellence and profundity of the Qur'an, I seek evidence of the divine presence Muslims claim emanates from the reading of the book. Notice I said reading of the book. There is one aspect of the Qur'an unavailable in this study. Qur'an means "recitation," and a Muslim's primary relationship to the book is through chanting its contents or listening to its words chanted in Arabic. All I can do here is access that aspect of the Qur'an that one can reach through reading. The Qur'an, like the Bible, consists of many different types of literature, such as laws, prayers, ritual instruction, and apocalyptic visions. However, because I encounter the Qur'an as a relatively new visitor, I begin with narrative. It is an easy place to start because everyone relates to a story.

In what follows, I analyze nine stories from the Qur'an. Although some of these Qur'anic tales involve biblical characters (Moses, Solomon, and the Queen of Sheba), those I have chosen scarcely overlap with the Jewish or Christian Scriptures. However, in many ways these stories bring to mind biblical texts, ones that address similar themes and concerns to those found in the Qur'an. Bringing the Qur'an and Bible together in this way enriches understanding of both. John Kaltner observes, "Revisiting a familiar Bible story with the theme and message of its Qur'an parallel in mind can allow us to notice elements of it that have previously gone unrecognized." This remains true even though my work does not examine Qur'anic parallels to biblical texts, as Kaltner does.

My training is in the Hebrew Bible. I here examine what for me is an alien text, a strange text, and a whole interpretive tradition that had been unfamiliar to me. Why have I strayed so far from my chosen field? At least in part, it was because of the Muslim claim that the sublimity and uniqueness of the Qur'an will be obvious in any serious examination. This drew me. I am curious about the attraction to this book and about its veneration by over a billion people.

I chose the nine Qur'anic passages because they were compelling narratives. I looked for stories with vivid characterization and drama. Also, I looked for passages skirting the edge of orthodoxy. I search out Qur'anic texts that appear to represent the earliest stages of Islamic formation. When the community began fashioning its identity, it was at a time when many pre-Islamic practices and beliefs were being examined and reconsidered by the new community. These passages, then, inhabit the borderland between the Islamic community and the surrounding culture. As I approached each of these stories in turn, certain common themes emerged, and this became the structure of my study.

Now a word about my choice of biblical texts. I did not have any Bible passages in mind when I began to analyze these Qur'anic narratives. None of the Qur'anic texts I have chosen has a biblical parallel, except for mention of the queen of Sheba (Chapter 6). Rather, as my knowledge of these suras grew, they brought to mind particular parts of the Bible that were similar, or which might illumine certain obscurities in the Qur’anic story. I found many surprising similarities as well as revealing differences between the Bible and my chosen passages. Overall, I found that both scriptures asked similar questions and faced comparable issues. Most notably, both the Qur’an and the Bible advocate for exclusive worship of a singular God. The Qur’anic passages I have chosen, and the corresponding biblical texts both make their case as to which parts of the surrounding culture to embrace and which parts to reject in the light of that exclusive worship.

This introduction is not the place to survey the field of qur’anic scholarship. I will, however, briefly situate myself within that vast and creative field. I divide Qur’anic interpretation into these categories, although I realize my divisions grossly oversimplify:

1. Pious interpretations—Islamic commentaries on the Qur’an, called tafsïr, make certain assumptions about the text. They take every single word of the Qur’an as God’s speech, unmediated by human influence. Therefore, the Qur’an must be true in all it affirms. As a result, these interpreters harmonize disparate elements within the Qur’an so that they say the same thing and so they support Islamic orthodox belief. Early Islamic interpretation made reference to the Prophet’s actions and teachings, things not included in the Qur’an. For most subsequent Muslim exegetes, some part of this early post-Qur’anic tradition becomes determinative to later interpretation. Early Muslim interpreters comment on the necessity of these traditions:

   > It is not possible to know the interpretation of a given verse without knowing its history and the causes of its revelation.

   Exploring the cause of revelation is a firm way to understand the meaning of the Qur’an.
2. Orientalist interpretations—Orientalist is a term made famous by Palestinian literary critic Edward Said (1935–2003). Said took the word orientalist from art criticism and used it to describe Western scholars who wrote about the Middle East or North Africa and who regard their subject as quaint and primitive. Western Qur’anic scholars making Orientalist interpretations conclude that the Qur’an is derivative, either from Christianity or Judaism or both. They claim that the Qur’an was unoriginal and uncreative.
3. Contemporary, late twentieth-century and twenty-first-century interpretations—In 2015 I presented an earlier version of Chapter 6 in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, at the State Islamic University, as part of the annual meeting of the International Qur’anic Studies Association (IQSA). It has been my privilege to be present at the birth of this new society, founded in 2012, a community of scholars, Muslim and non-Muslim, global in scope. Having attended and participated in their annual meetings, I have noted the following trends. Most of their research is in the these areas:

   - A concern for history, in which the Qur’an is mined as source material to reconstruct seventh-century Arabia and the conditions that contributed to the birth and early years of Islam.
   - History of transmission—analyzing how various Islamic communities, ancient and modern, read and understood Qur’anic texts.
   - Philological studies—examining the meaning or semantic field of a particular Arabic word or phrase used in the Qur’an and surrounding texts. I include here also discussions of Qur’an translations into English and other languages.

- Thematic studies—what the Qur'an says about a particular topic, such as God, the afterlife, eschatology, and so forth.
- Close reading of Qur'anic texts—I would include myself in this group.

In my work I do not say anything global about the Qur'an or about Islam. I limit the scope of my study to a small sampling of narrative texts. If you picture the Qur'an as a vast mountain (it is!), I am only taking a few teaspoons of matter from the mountain, or perhaps a teacup of water from one of its swift-running streams.

Some of my fellow literary critics, those who engage in close reading of individual suras, often succumb to a harmonizing impulse. When they see a "rough spot" in their passage, a tension or lack of coherence, they find reasons to maintain that if the passage were properly understood, the contradiction or ambiguity would melt away. I contend that the most dynamic parts of these ancient scriptures are located in the spaces between pieces of a text that do not easily fit together. Therefore, my analyses often work against harmony. The disruptions and dissonances in the text are the places where meaning is produced. The passages in the Qur'an that I have chosen are those where these lines of tension, these ruptures, are closest to the surface. Rather than being flaws, these fault lines are the sources of the Qur'an's power. Thus, each section of this book introduces an unresolved problem the Qur'an must address.

The first section of the book explores the challenge of polytheism. Both religions, the Islamic and the Israelite, emerged out of a polytheistic environment8 and to varying degrees defined themselves distinct from and against that context. From the Qur'an I chose three narratives that examine how Muslims regard those who believed in and worshiped multiple gods. Chapter 1 covers two connected suras (chapters), incantations that protect against malevolent spiritual forces. These forces much resemble the gods and goddesses of surrounding culture. Chapter 2 considers three goddesses who are called "the daughters of God." Their continued presence in seventh-century Arabia constitutes a challenge to Islamic monotheism. Chapter 3 concerns the jinn, a supernatural race with a long history of interacting with humans on the Arabian Peninsula. Although the Qur'an rejects the very existence of goddesses (Chapter 2), the Jinn Sura does not question the reality of these supernatural beings.

The second section of the book examines an issue that every monotheistic faith must deal with: the problem of evil, or theodicy. If one believes in a single deity, does that deity then bear the responsibility for all the suffering in the world? Chapter 4 considers divine punishment and its proportionality to the offense. Chapters 5 and 6 through different narratives, consider whether to blame God for human suffering, and if not, why not? These two suras each present a unique figure that serves as proxy for the interrogation of deity. The suras, by exploring the behavior of these unique figures, indirectly reflect upon God's actions. In the Cave Sura (Chapter 5), a figure named in later tradition the Green Man ('al-Khidr) stands for God. He appears to Moses in a sacred place and schools him regarding divine behavior. In Chapter 6, King Solomon himself is God-like when he threatens a community of ants. This narrative device (proxy figures standing for God) provides a less dangerous way for Muslims to consider God's liabilities and other transgressive possibilities when addressing the problem of evil. These stories question divine justice only indirectly.

The final section of the book isolates three texts under the heading of revelation. Chapter 7 considers how the Qur'an, though a fresh revelation, uses older stories to convey its message. Chapter 8 examines a sura in which two revelatory moments jump-start the career of the Prophet. Finally, Chapter 9 examines what effect the behavior and judgments of the Prophet have on the message.

In this book, I primarily focus on the Qur'anic narratives I have assembled. Certain connections or similarities exist between these Qur'anic narratives and portions of the Hebrew Bible. In some cases, I only briefly mention a biblical text. In other chapters, consideration about the Bible constitutes up to half of the chapter. In Chapter 2 for instance, I spend equal time with the Star Sura and Proverbs 8. In each chapter, after the chapter title, I list the relevant biblical passages under a subheading, labeled Texts in Comparison.

These chapters trace how biblical communities dealt with similar issues to those in the Qur'anic stories. The Qur'an and the Hebrew Bible share many strategies as they address these three issues, monotheism, theodicy, and revelation. This is not surprising because they raise questions that are intrinsic to revelatory monotheism, that is, a monotheism whose followers regard their sacred text as heaven-sent. Both the Bible and the Qur'an come from the same rough geographic and cultural milieu, although many centuries apart. Additionally, there is ample evidence that the Arabian people in the seventh century had knowledge of many biblical stories in some form. There are of course significant differences in the way the Bible and the Qur'an approach these issues I have listed, and I explore those differences as well. Differences and tensions between the two provide another rich source of meaning.

Although this book focuses on the actual narratives in the Qur'an itself, I will often refer to post-Qur'anic literature, including the early biographies of the Prophet, Qur'anic commentaries (called tafsïr), and "occasions of revelation" (^asbãb al-Nazül), stories that emerge in the early Islamic community that tell what happened to inspire each revelation. These sources tend to be determinative for pious interpretations. Although sometimes these occasions of revelation and other ancient sources might represent actual historical circumstances when the Prophet received the messages, more commonly they reveal how the first few generations of Muslims understood the Qur'an in the centuries after the time of Muhammad. Qur'anic scholar Patricia Crone (1945–2015) said this:

> There cannot, of course, be any doubt that in the long run the tradition will prove indispensable for an understanding of the Quran, both because it preserves early information and because it embodies a millennium and a half of scholarship by men of great learning and high intelligence on whose shoulders it is good to stand.

These post-Qur'anic writings reveal how early readers understood the Qur'an and the strategies they used to understand difficult and confusing texts. I frequently resort to a "master narrative" of early Islamic history to explicate a sura. The Qur'an is made up of disparate genres with many themes and stories repeated multiple times in different suras. Very soon after the time of the Prophet, the community of interpreters began to piece together a master narrative, a single coherent story. They were able to fit together the disparate suras and parts of suras like pieces of a puzzle. This master narrative features the following elements that may or may not correspond to the actual history of the formation of the Qur'an.

The story begins in the city of Mecca, where the beleaguered community of Muslims was persecuted by the ruling tribe, the Quraysh. Muhammad was himself a member of this tribe. Leading members of the

Quraysh opposed Muhammad and the fledgling Islamic religion for two reasons. First, they objected to Muhammad's teaching of monotheism (tawhid) on principle. Second, they opposed Muhammad's criticism of their idol worship because pilgrimages to the shrine of the Ka`ba were a major source of income for the Qurayshi leaders. By opposing the gods housed in the Ka`ba, Muhammad was damaging their bottom line. At some point, the persecution against the small group of Muslims became so intense that Muhammad had to move the entire community from Mecca to Medina.

I locate many of the Qur'anic narratives I examine within this master narrative. Specifically, subsequent Islamic interpretation sees many of these suras as products of the time of persecution, reflecting the dire situation of the suffering community in Mecca. This becomes a helpful way to understand the suras, seeing them as response to this persecution.

Frequently in these chapters I examine breaks in the text—places where key information is missing or is contradictory or in tension with other parts of the passage. It is a principle of Islamic interpretation (and biblical interpretation, and interpretation in general) that the larger context (in this case other parts of the Qur'an) determines the interpretation of a specific text. That is certainly true to an extent. However, all too often this search for a larger context turns into a desire to harmonize an elusive text, making it fit better with the whole. Early Islamic interpreters force any passage that is an outlier to agree with dominant beliefs and conform to their sense of coherence in the Qur'an. This harmonizing impulse does violence to the Qur'an because it marginalizes troublesome texts and fails to listen to their manifold voices. It is far better to examine these ruptures, explore their contours and textures, because these are the places in the text that produce meaning. As Leonard Cohen sang:

> There's a crack in everything. That's how the light gets in.

***

The Qur'an is neither derivative nor uncreative. It stands with the other major world scriptures in its stature, insight, and beauty. In my ignorance, I had expected the Qur'an to be rigid and authoritarian. I found myself surprised by its humane understanding and challenging ethic. The scope of my study is limited in that I examined only the narrative genre, and a scant nine suras. From this admittedly limited sample of the Qur'an's writing, I offer the following reflections. These stories are characterized by ambiguity and nuance. Such qualities as these are essential for the continued relevance of the Qur'an over time. I noticed a tension between tawhid (monotheism) and the Qur'an's depiction of the crowded realm of the spirit world. The Qur'an never denies God's goodness, but questions about God's goodness are legitimately raised in its pages. Perhaps most significantly, in these stories, God's message to humans is subject to the limitations of human language and human frailty. In its fabric the human and the divine are linked inextricably.

The Qur'an is a human document. This is not to question its divine origin or its divine qualities, but these ancient words are clearly rooted in their time and in the concerns of their human authors. As just one example, Surat-al-Masad was directed toward a single named individual, apparently a contemporary of the Prophet (Abu Lahab, see Chapter 4). The Qur'an is thoroughly human in all its aspects. Just as they do in the Jewish and Christian scriptures, so in the Qur'an the divine qualities of the text shine through this humanity rather than through humanity's absence. In this I respectfully diverge from orthodox Islam, where many claim that the entire Qur'an existed with God before any created thing, similar to how Proverbs 8 describes Chokmah.

I learned that in the Qur'an's portrayal of the Prophet Muhammad, he has much in common with prophets in the Bible. The Qur'an's Muhammad has less congruence with subsequent Islamic understandings of the Prophet's life and teaching, which portray him as flawless.

While the Jewish, Christian, and Islamic religions change and adapt, their scriptures do not change. As a result, there emerges a disparity between the two, the scripture and those in a different time and place who follow the religion. This disparity creates problems for those later believers. When later beliefs conflict with things that their scripture says, that causes conflict. In some cases, what is fragmented and inchoate in the scripture becomes defined and systematized in later eras. For instance, in the Hebrew Bible the path to monotheism was slow and episodic. There are many passages that imply or assume the existence of other gods. Even the first commandment, often regarded as the monotheistic manifesto, says:

> You shall have no other gods before me. (Exod 20:3)

This implies that other gods exist. However, they must not be worshiped alongside Yahweh, the God of Israel. That is a problem for monotheism. In the New Testament, one does not find full-blown expositions of the Holy Trinity or the dual nature of Christ. That creates a problem for Christianity. In a similar way the Qur'an openly questions itself regarding what later Islam says about monotheism (there is only one God), theodicy (all that God does is good; all that God says is true), and prophecy or revelation (the Prophet's message is a "clear book" [Q 27:1], an unmediated message from God).

Pious interpreters embed problematic stories such as the ones I covered here, in larger master narratives of their own creation. They depend on biographies and teachings of the Prophet written later than the Qur'an itself. These master narratives reflect subsequent concerns. By means of these overarching narratives, the interpreters redirect the meaning of the stories in less transgressive directions; alternatively, traditional interpretations marginalize or abrogate offending passages by interpreting them through the lens of less threatening verses. For instance, the innocent jinn listening to the heavenly council in seats reserved for them become "rebellious satans" eavesdropping where they never belonged. (See Chapter 3.) The pious interpreter regards these more conforming passages, those that disparage the jinn, as more authoritative. In another strategy, the interpreters avoid the troublesome texts altogether or only comment on a few pious statements within them while ignoring the import of the wholes.

The Qur'an is best approached by highlighting its ambiguity and the tension it creates. Using a metaphor of sound, we may say that the narratives I chose create dissonance in the mind of the reader. Dissonance is when two sounds clash, irritating to the ear. Elements of the narrative that do not quite cohere together create dissonance in the experience of reading. For example, the three layers in the story of "the Companions of the Cave" do not fit together smoothly. Some of the stories lack beginnings or endings. Sometimes, elements of a narrative conflict with similar accounts in other parts of the Qur'an or conflict with later interpretive traditions. At times a narrative conflicts with a reader's expectation or moral stance. One can harmonize dissonance of sound by supplying a resolving note or chord. When reading the Qur'an, however, I allow the irritant to remain. This shows respect for the actual words of the sura. Understanding the dissonance in these narratives brings the interpreter to the place where meaning is formed. The dissonance itself provides a key to how such meaning is produced and how it affects the reader. Additionally, observing the dissonance allows the interpreter to see traces of an unfiltered (or a less filtered) picture of Islam's first generation.

This journey of discovery has always been a personal one for me. A long time before I began this project, I was introduced to the story of Joseph in the Qur'an (Q 12). This was my first real encounter with Islam's book. Like the Bible's Joseph story, the Joseph Sura is a long, continuous narrative, and it roughly parallels the biblical account.1 There is, however, one incident in the Qur'an's account not found in Genesis, and this incident gave me a first inkling that the Qur'an had qualities I wanted to investigate. It concerns the wife of the high Egyptian official. Her husband is named Potiphar in the Bible, but she remains unnamed in the Qur'an. The woman has become an subject of gossip among the other noblewomen because of her obsession with Joseph. To regain her reputation, she invites them all to a party at her house and provides them food and utensils. At the banquet, she parades Joseph before them. He is so gorgeous that all the women, overwhelmed with passion for the young man, cut themselves accidentally. They tell their hostess that now they can understand and sympathize with her infatuation with her slave.

It is a funny story. Also, it offers multilayered characterization and deep irony, with a narrative voice that winks at the reader, in on the joke. I wondered if perhaps I was wrong. The Qur'an was not the dour writing I had expected.

In the Introduction I wrote of what drew me to the Qur'an. Muslims claim that any open-minded examination of the Qur'an will render its uniqueness apparent and give incontrovertible proof of its divine origin. However, if one reads the Qur'an in translation, beginning with the first sura, the result will be disappointing. One can easily get lost in the details and the strangeness of first encounter. After reading the first sura, a brief prayer, the second sura, Al-Bakara, overwhelms. It is the longest sura of the Qur'an, and it jumps to many different subjects. The eyes of the average reader will likely glaze over and miss the essentials.

Reading the Qur'an in English translation does not seem adequate as a means to access the Qur'an's sublimity. The difference between the Qur'an in translation and the Qur'an in its original Arabic is so profound that Muslims usually do not call an English version a translation but rather an interpretation. The importance of the Qur'an in Arabic to Muslims is much greater than the comparative importance for Jews and Christians of the original languages of their scriptures. So, I learned Arabic. I do not know it well enough to speak, unfortunately, but I can read the Qur'an with a good dictionary. Muslims are indeed correct—The Qur'an in Arabic is nuanced and beautiful. One notices details, features that do not easily translate. As just one example, the last line in a given sura almost always ends in a rhyme. This and much else is lost in English renderings.

However, reading the Qur'an in Arabic was not sufficient. I had to somehow approach the experience of the Qur'an like a Muslim. Reaching for that experience, I memorized Surat-al-Najm and Surat-^Abasa when I began my research on those suras. Having memorized them, I then learned to chant the suras using a program I found on the internet. At first my chanting was halting and difficult, but after a while it became effortless, almost unconscious. I experienced these sacred words flowing freely out of my mouth in the ancient rhythm and cantillation. Then I got it. Or at least I got the beginning of it because I experienced the special power of the Qur'an. The impact of people over the centuries chanting the same verses in communities throughout the world adds weight to the words. When I chanted those verses, I found that I was not alone. I joined a mighty river made up of all the people who chanted the same sura before me and were chanting it even as I did. I was only able to go ankle-deep in that river, but I felt the tug of its current. Chanting the Qur'an greatly enriched my understanding of these suras. I began to notice every turn of phrase, every ambiguity and misdirection. It was meditative. It was prayer.

The Qur'an and the Bible are quite dissimilar. Even though I compare them and find many points of commonality, I am still struck by how different they are from each other in tone, style, and intention. Notwithstanding, they both draw from the same mythic pool, or we might say they drink from the same well. It makes little difference to the Muslim community that I am impressed with their Qur'an. But it means a great deal to me.

And now that I have come to the end of my book, I realize that I have scarcely begun. <>

ISLAMIC CIVILIZATION IN THIRTY LIVES: THE FIRST 1,000 YEARS by Chase F. Robinson [Illustrations: 80 color images, University of California Press, 9780520292987]

Religious thinkers, political leaders, lawmakers, writers, and philosophers have shaped the 1,400-year-long development of the world's second-largest religion. But who were these people? What do we know of their lives and the ways in which they influenced their societies?

In **ISLAMIC CIVILIZATION IN THIRTY LIVES,** the distinguished historian of Islam Chase F. Robinson draws on the long tradition in Muslim scholarship of commemorating in writing the biographies of notable figures, but he weaves these ambitious lives together to create a rich narrative of Islamic civilization, from the Prophet Muhammad in the seventh century to the era of the world conquerer Timur and the Ottoman Sultan Mehmed II in the fifteenth.

Beginning in Islam's heartland, Mecca, and ranging from North Africa and Iberia in the west to Central and East Asia, Robinson not only traces the rise and fall of Islamic states through the biographies of political and military leaders who worked to secure peace or expand their power, but also discusses those who developed Islamic law, scientific thought, and literature. What emerges is a fascinating portrait of rich and diverse Islamic societies. Alongside the famous characters who colored this landscape—including Muhammad's cousin 'Ali; the Crusader-era hero Saladin; and the poet Rumi—are less well-known figures, such as Ibn Fadlan, whose travels in Eurasia brought fascinating first-hand accounts of the Volga Vikings to the Abbasid Caliph; the eleventh-century Karima al-Marwaziyya, a woman scholar of Prophetic traditions; and Abu al-Qasim Ramisht, a twelfth-century merchant millionaire.

An illuminating read for anyone interested in learning more about this often-misunderstood civilization, this book creates a vivid picture of life in all arenas of the pre-modern Muslim world.

Reviews

"An elegant digest of the many colorful, creative and technologically innovative manifestations that the Prophet Muhammad inspired from his seventh-century oases in the Arabian peninsula."—*The Economist*

"Robinson delivers a fascinating snapshot of Islamic history through 30 brief biographies. By including a mixture of the usual suspects (Muhammad, Ali, Saladin) and the unexpected (Ibn Hazm, Ibn Muqla, Abu al-Qasim), the author offers readers a rich variety of lives in pre-Islamic history."—*CHOICE*

"In a survey course covering the period, Robinson's would make an excellent text to use to introduce more in depth and comprehensive material. The engagingly written biographies will make the topic more accessible to students while also drawing out the variety of individuals who made up 'Islamic civilization.' The author's attention to political economy will in simple fashion help students grasp underlying concepts with which they sometimes struggle."—*Al-'Usur al-Wusta: The Journal of Middle East Medievalists*

CONTENTS

Preface
Conventions, abbreviations & equivocations
Introduction

Part 1
Islam & Empire
1. Muhammad the Prophet
2. 'Ali cousin, caliph and forefather of Shi'ism
3. 'A'isha wife of the Prophet
4. 'Abd al-Malik engineer of the caliphate
5. Ibn al-Muqaffa' translator and essayist
6. Rabi'a al-'Adawiyya renunciant and saint
7. al-Ma'mun caliph-patron

Part 2
The Islamic Commonwealth
8. 'Arib courtesan of caliphs
9. al-Hallaj 'the Truth'
10. al-Tabari traditionalist rationalist
11. Abu Bakr al-Razi free-thinking physician
12. Ibn Fadlan intrepid envoy
13. Ibn Muqla vizier, scribe, calligrapher?
14. Mahmud of Ghazna conqueror and patron
15. al-Biruni of nature and culture

Part 3
A Provisional Synthesis
16. Ibn Hazm polemicist, polymath
17. "Karima al-Marwaziyya hadith scholar
18. al-Ghazali 'Renewer' of Islam
19. Abu al-Qasim Ramisht merchant millionaire
20. al-Idrisi cosmopolitan cartographer

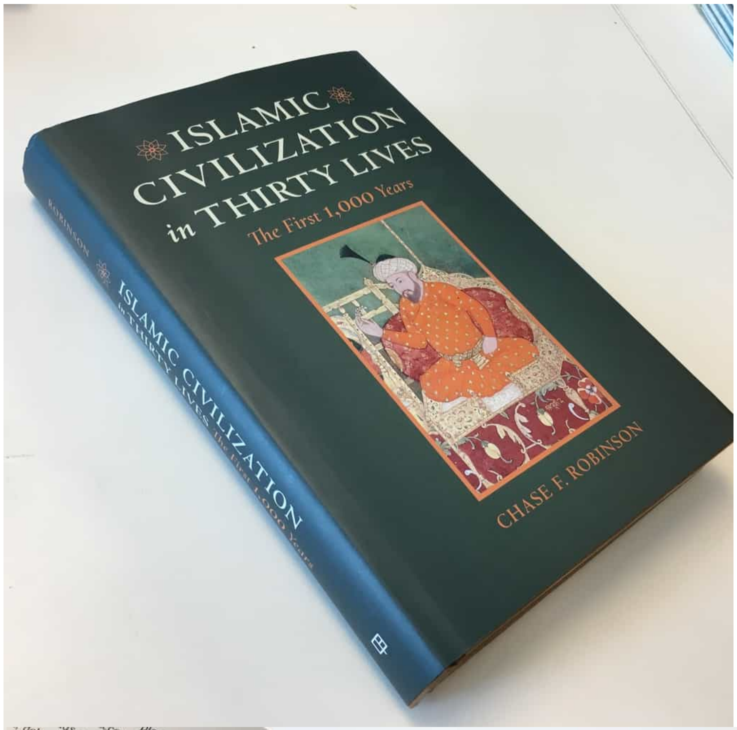
21. Saladin anti-Crusader hero
22. Ibn Rushd (Averroes) Aristotelian monotheist

Part 4
Disruption & Integration
23. Rumi Sufi ‘poet’
24. Rashid al-Din physician, courtier and global historian
25. al-Hilli paragon of Shi‘ism ascendant
26. Ibn Taymiyya stubborn reactionary
27. Timur sheep-rustler, world-conqueror
28. Ibn Khaldun social theorist and historian
29. Mehmed II conqueror and renaissance man
30. Shah Isma‘il esoteric charismatic

Glossary
Suggestions for Further Reading
Notes
Bibliography
Sources of Illustrations
Index

Robinson not only traces the rise and fall of Islamic states through the biographies of political and military leaders, but also discusses those who developed Islamic law, scientific thought, and literature. What emerges is a fascinating portrait of rich and diverse Islamic societies. Alongside the famous characters who colored this landscape—including Muhammad’s cousin ’Ali; the Crusader-era hero Saladin; and the poet Rumi—are less well-known figures, such as Ibn Fadlan, whose travels in Eurasia brought fascinating first-hand accounts of the Volga Vikings to the Abbasid Caliph; the eleventh-century Karima al-Marwaziyya, a woman scholar of Prophetic traditions; and Abu al-Qasim Ramisht, a twelfth-century merchant millionaire.

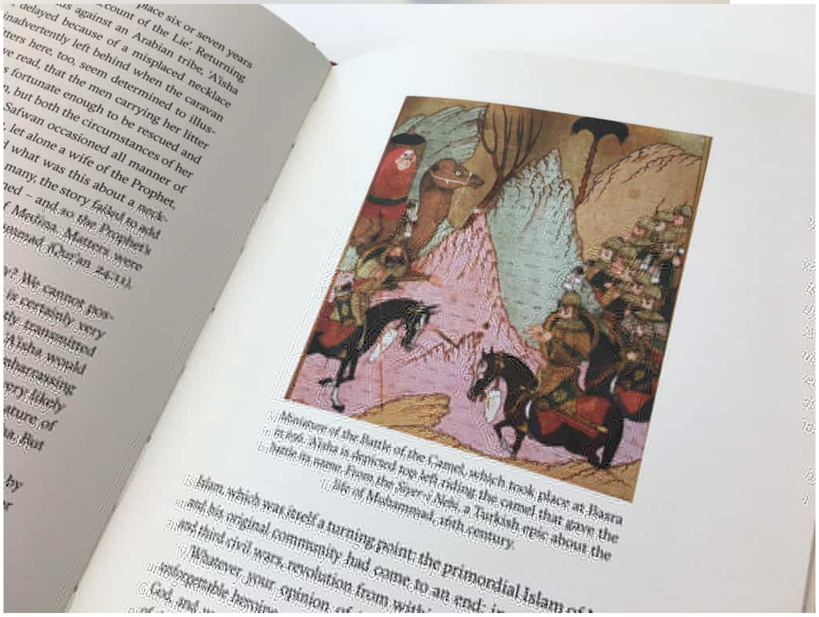
Beautiful images are featured throughout the text, creating a vivid picture of life in all arenas of the pre-modern Muslim world.


ISLAMIC CIVILIZATION in THIRTY LIVES
The First 1,000 Years
CHASE F. ROBINSON
ROBINSON
ISLAMIC CIVILIZATION in THIRTY LIVES The First 1,000 Years

A Fascinating Snapshot of Islam through Thirty Brief Biographies

Happy Ramadan! Celebrate with a look into the lives of thirty notable figures who shaped the world's second-largest religion, from the Prophet Muhammad in the seventh century to the Ottoman Sultan Mehmed II in the fifteenth.

In *Islamic Civilization in Thirty Lives: The First 1,000 Years*, Chase F. Robinson weaves these ambitious lives together to create a rich narrative of Islamic civilization over a millennium while beautiful images throughout vividly depict the pre-modern Muslim world. A few snapshots from the book follow:



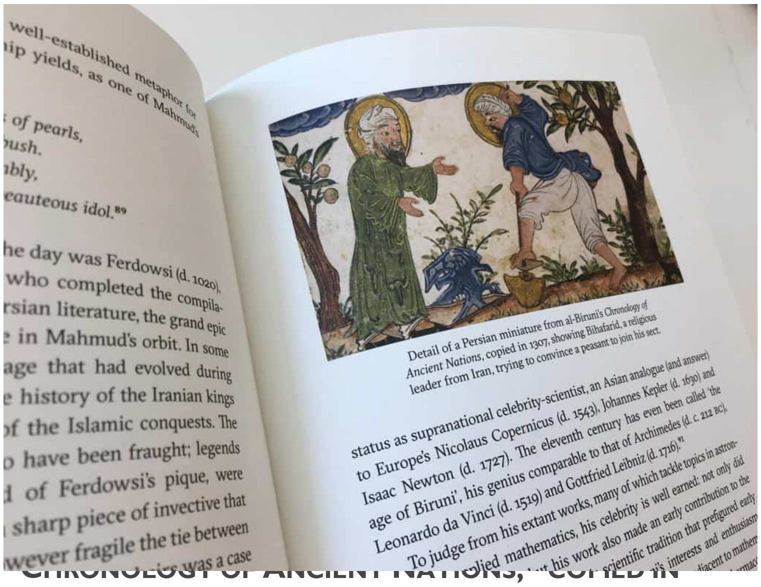
Miniature of the Battle of the Camel, which took place at Basra in 656. 'A'isha is depicted top left riding the camel that gave the battle its name. From the "Siyer-i Nebi," a Turkish epic about the life of Muhammad, 16th century.

'A'isha, wife of the Prophet

'A'isha was a native Meccan, and a daughter of Abu Bakr, one of the earliest converts to Islam. She was also one of the Prophet Muhammad's wives, the third and his favorite, called the "Mother of the Believers." Robinson notes that relatively few accounts exist about her, but each say something interesting about gender. One such account involves her leading a force of 1,000 men to oppose 'Ali, who had come to power as a result of the caliph 'Uthman's assassination. She can be seen as an unforgettable heroine who spoke her mind.

Al-Biruni, cataloguer of nature and culture

As Robinson notes, Al-Biruni's "supranational celebrity-scientist" status is well earned. Not only did he write prolifically, tacking topics in astronomy, applied physics, geography, astrology, and medicine, he was also interested in the humanities, in history, culture, and comparative religion. No other Muslim scholar wrote so widely and authoritatively. His polymathy was staggering, linguistic range extraordinary.



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he day was Ferdowsi (d. 1020),
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Detail of a Persian miniature from al-Biruni's *Chronology of Ancient Nations*, copied in 1307, showing Bihafarid, a religious leader from Iran, trying to convince a peasant to join his sect.

status as supranational celebrity-scientist, an Asian analogue (and answer) to Europe's Nicolaus Copernicus (d. 1543), Johannes Kepler (d. 1630) and Isaac Newton (d. 1727). The eleventh century has even been called 'the age of Biruni', his genius comparable to that of Archimedes (d. c. 212 BC), Leonardo da Vinci (d. 1519) and Gottfried Leibniz (d. 1716).91

To judge from his extant works, many of which tackle topics in astron-
plied mathematics, his celebrity is well earned: not only did
ut his work also made an early contribution to the
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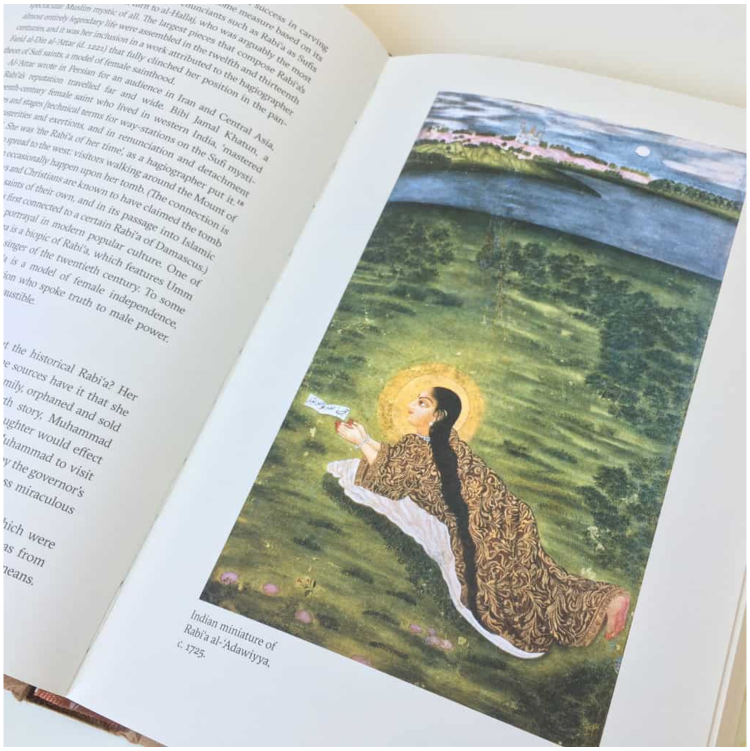
CHRONOLOGY OF ANCIENT NATIONS, COPIED IN 1307, SHOWING BIHAFARID, A RELIGIOUS LEADER FROM IRAN, TRYING TO CONVINCE A PEASANT TO JOIN HIS SECT.

Rabi'a al-'Adawiyya was a Muslim saint.

Her ethnic and social background is contested, but according to the earliest surviving biographical details, which were circulated a generation or two after her death, Rabi'a was from a high-status lineage of the Quraysh tribe and never married. "The marriage knot," she once said, "can only tie one who exists. Where is existence here? I am not my own — I am His and under His command." Known for her piety, she was only one of several female renunciants who made names for themselves in eighth century Basra.



success in carving
me measure based on its
unciants such as Rabi'a as Sufis
turn to al-Hallaj, who was arguably the most
spectacular Muslim mystic of all. The largest pieces that compose Rabi'a's
almost entirely legendary life were assembled in the twelfth and thirteenth
centuries, and it was her inclusion in a work attributed to the hagiographer
Farid al-Din al-'Attar (d. 1221) that fully clinched her position in the pan-
theon of Sufi saints, a model of female sainthood.
Al-'Attar wrote in Persian for an audience in Iran and Central Asia.
Rabi'a's reputation travelled far and wide. Bibi Jamal Khatun, a
enth-century female saint who lived in western India, 'mastered
s and stages (technical terms for way-stations on the Sufi mysti-
sterities and exertions, and in renunciation and detachment
She was 'the Rabi'a of her time', as a hagiographer put it.18
spread to the west: visitors walking around the Mount of
occasionally happen upon her tomb. (The connection is
s and Christians are known to have claimed the tomb
saints of their own, and in its passage into Islamic
first connected to a certain Rabi'a of Damascus.)
portrayal in modern popular culture. One of
a is a biopic of Rabi'a, which features Umm
singer of the twentieth century. To some
a is a model of female independence,
ion who spoke truth to male power.
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Indian miniature of Rabi'a al-'Adawiyya, c. 1725.

INDIAN MINIATURE OF RABI'A AL-'ADAWIYYA, C. 1725.

ISLAMIC CIVILIZATION IN THIRTY LIVES: THE FIRST 1,000 YEARS is an illuminating read for anyone interested in learning more about this often-misunderstood civilization.

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Are the Saracens the Ottomans?
No, the Saracens are the Moors.
The Ottomans are the Turks.
So reads, in its entirety, Lydia Davis's micro-story 'Learning Medieval History'. In conventional (and now obsolete) usage, the 'Saracens' are 'Moors', and the Ottomans, Turks. But learning history is more than assigning labels, as Davis's satire tells us. At least to my mind, history is an exercise in critical imagination, and in the case of the Middle East, this exercise has become all the more important.

This is because the Islamic past has never mattered more than now, what with civil war fracturing societies along Sunni and Shi'ite lines, militants reviving traditions of jihad and donning the mantle of caliphs, and those in and out of power making various - and often wild - claims about what constitutes 'true Islam'. Anyone attentive to events in the contemporary Middle East is likely to intuit that history - both real and imaginary - has an enduring and (perhaps) undue influence upon the politics and culture of the region; misunderstandings of that history also condition Western perceptions of Islam and Muslims. The present is not merely shaped by the past: it is constituted of conflicting claims about the past. As Salman Rushdie put it, we are all 'irradiated' by it.

How is one to judge the claims made about the Islamic past? More specifically, how is one to distinguish between fantasy and myth on the one hand, and genuine history (at least as reconstructed according to modern standards of critical scholarship) on the other? My hope in writing this book is to make available scholarship that is typically specialized and inaccessible, and thereby to offer some answers. According to an oft-transmitted Prophetic tradition, 'When God wishes good for someone, He gives him understanding in religion'. In what follows I hope to address some of the misunderstandings and myths that attach to Davis's schoolboy categories.

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As will become clear, much remains unknown about many of the figures featuring here. For example, childhoods are usually lost to history, and as much as it is the rule that death dates are fairly accurate, birth dates are very rarely so. For most famous people were not born famous; and unless their families or at least their fathers were notable in one way or another, birth dates were usually forgotten. Rumi (d. 1273), whose father was a well-known scholar and mystic, is the exception that proves the rule. Sometimes silence was even filled with legend. We can be fairly certain that Timur died on 17 or 18 February in 1405, but we shall see that his birth date was concocted. I shall therefore dispense with birth dates.

The problems do not end with dates, however. The evidence for these biographies — mainly historical, biographical and literary accounts — is often as misleading as it is exiguous. Because memory and record were often compounded over centuries by legend, myth and misunderstanding, we generally know much more about the afterlives of early Muslims than we do their actual lives. We shall see that Rabi'a al-Adawiyya was an eighth-century ascetic, but the compound portrait constituting her afterlife belongs mainly to the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The later the figure, the fuller and more accurate the historical record tends to be, but even then, fame and infamy meant distortion, as it does now.

And a final qualification: what follows is a work of synthesis and interpretation — with all of the perils that this implies. As Eduard Sachau wrote in his translation of the staggeringly erudite Chronology of Ancient Nations of al-Biruni (see below), '...even in the simplest historical narrative the editor and translator may go lamentably astray in his interpretation, if there is something wrong with the method of his research'. In a work of this range and scope, it would be sheer hubris for me to imagine that I have not gone astray.

***

One of the most striking features of Islamic 'civilization' (we shall turn to a definition in a moment) is the scale and variety of learning. 'Of making many books there is no end', is how Ecclesiastes 12:12 described the problem that learned Muslims would face throughout their history: there was too much to learn in too little time, and for all that books might be summarized, epitomized and condensed, knowledge never stopped growing. Each generation produced ambitious authors with new ideas or original ways of recycling old ones.

Books were of many, many kinds - on topics from agriculture, algebra and alchemy to zodiacs, zoology and Zoroastrian heresy. One of the most distinctive literary genres was the chronologically or alphabetically ordered compendium of capsule biographies, which could number in the hundreds and thousands. Some of these were restricted to specific professions or schools of thought, such as Qur'an reciters, jurists who belonged to a given school of legal thinking, philosophers or Sufis, to mention only a handful of examples. An early example belongs to an Iraqi scholar named Ibn Sa'd (d. 845). His Book of Generations starts with a long biography of Muhammad, and then, in seven volumes, assembles information about Muhammad's contemporaries and followers, most of whom we would call amateur or professional scholars, especially those who transmitted Prophetic traditions - stories, maxims and opinions expressed by or about Muhammad, which were building blocks of Islamic law, ethics and history. Other books were generic, offering to their readers hundreds or thousands of notices of men (and the occasional woman) from the widest variety of professions, occupations and careers - not just scholars, but also poets, rulers, physicians and much more besides. The most celebrated example belongs to a native of Damascus named Ibn Khallikan (d. 1282); his Obituaries of the Notables brings together approximately 5,500 capsule biographies, 'notable' here simply meaning 'famous'. It is not unlike a 'Who's Who'. Coming from nearly all corners of the Islamic world and every century of Islam, these figures shared little besides celebrity.

Beyond showing off their inexhaustible energies, what were the compiler-authors of these compendia trying to achieve? It is not always clear, but at least one goal is frequently made explicit: the lives of highly accomplished Muslims were to be preserved and narrated because they told stories, some inspiring, others humbling and chastening, but all edifying. In other words, exemplary lives offered lessons for Muslims.

My goal is not altogether different. I have composed thirty brief biographies, which can hint at the scale, diversity and creativity of Islamic civilization over about a millennium. I should like to emphasize from the start that diversity and creativity, which were generated in large measure by that scale - not merely the size of polities, cities, wealth, networks of learning, even libraries, but also intellectual and political ambition. We shall see that for some Muslim thinkers, the sky - not God - was the limit. In using the terms diversity and creativity, I aim to capture a wide and inadequately acknowledged spectrum of ideas, social practices and personal styles and commitments. There was legalism and dogmatism, of course; but so too was there hyper-rationalism, scepticism, inventiveness, iconoclasm and eccentric individuality. For the Islamic civilization that I shall be describing here, dynamism, experimentation and risk-taking were the rule. And I stop in the early sixteenth century not because that diversity and creativity dried up or that civilization stultified, but because the underlying economic and political framework of the pre-industrial Middle East began to undergo major changes. As a result, the 'early modern' or 'modern' societies that emerged generated fundamentally different cultural forms.

'Civilisation is a loaded term, of course. It is sometimes used stuffily or polemically by those censorious of non-Western societies and cultures, who sometimes imagine that civilizations are monoliths, adjoining and colliding like tectonic plates, and that 'the West' is distinctive or even unique in its traditions of freedom, rationalism and individuality. This is not how I use the term. What I mean here is the distinctive yield, in lived experience and especially high culture, of the religious and political project undertaken by Muslims over the near millennium that spans from the seventh to the sixteenth centuries. The framing conditions of that project were military, political and economic - and so much will be said in what follows about those who conquered and ruled, especially in introductions to each of the book's four sections.

Moreover, those framing conditions explain why the Muslims described here came overwhelmingly from a tiny numerical minority. This uneven coverage is inevitable. We live in an age of great and growing inequality, but in pre-industrial societies, divided as they were between oceans of poor producers (especially peasants, pastoralists, labourers, serfs, slaves) and small islands of wealthy consumers, it was even more extreme. And so it follows that it was the elite who had the capacity to produce the exemplars, the notables, the stars, the powerful and the influential. Of course there is the occasional figure with the singular genius, intelligence or ambition that empowered him or her to escape a modest background.

But there is no getting around the general rule that families and households of means reinvested and so reinforced their social capital, generation after generation, typically by outfitting their children with education, social connections and wealth. Elite Muslims made contributions to Islamic civilization that were disproportionate to their number because they could draw on such resources.

Readers should also be reminded that the cultural categories once used by Muslims naturally differed from those commonplace nowadays: it made little sense a millennium ago to speak of 'fiction, for example, or 'the humanities' (as opposed to 'science'). For the same reason - the divide between the post-Enlightenment world we know and religion-infused Eurasia of the pre-industrial age - unfamiliar readers may be surprised by the extraordinary pull that religious problems and ideas exercised upon men (and a small handful of women) with great intellectual ability and ambition. Nowadays, such men would be drawn into any number of fields in academia, business or creative arts; in those days, they were attracted just as much to theology and law as they were to disciplines, such as mathematics, astronomy or optics, that we would now categorize as science.

Finally, readers should know that the thirty biographies presented here do not capture a scholarly consensus, a 'Who's Who' in Islam or Islamic history. There is no such consensus and nothing special about the number thirty. Although most of the names will be familiar to specialists, at least some will be new. In a few cases, I have spurned the obvious in favour of the less celebrated. I have also omitted some worthies in order to accentuate some themes, such as the permeability of civilization and the breadth of culture: this book is not a pantheon of Muslim intellectuals. Be this as it may, collectively these thirty figures can offer what I hope to be an accessible introduction to Islamic civilization, which, for all its extraordinary diversity, remains poorly understood in the English-speaking world. <>

DANTE by John Took [Princeton University Press, 9780691154046]

An authoritative and comprehensive intellectual biography of the author of the *Divine Comedy*

For all that has been written about the author of the *Divine Comedy*, Dante Alighieri (1265–1321) remains the best guide to his own life and work. Dante's writings are therefore never far away in this authoritative and comprehensive intellectual biography, which offers a fresh account of the medieval Florentine poet's life and thought before and after his exile in 1302.

Beginning with the often violent circumstances of Dante's life, the book examines his successive works as testimony to the course of his passionate humanity: his lyric poetry through to the *Vita nova* as the great work of his first period; the *Convivio*, *De vulgari eloquentia* and the poems of his early years in exile; and the *Monarchia* and the *Commedia* as the product of his maturity. Describing as it does a journey of the mind, the book confirms the nature of Dante's undertaking as an exploration of what he himself speaks of as "maturity in the flame of love."

The result is an original synthesis of Dante's life and work.

CONTENTS

Abbreviations
Acknowledgements
Preface: In fondo, una serietà terrible
PART I Preliminary Considerations
Chapter I Historical Considerations
    Florence between the Guelphs and Ghibellines (1215-79)
    Florence between the Blacks and the Whites (1279-1302)
    The Descent and Demise of Henry VII (1302-13)
Chapter 2 Biographical Considerations
    Susceptibility and the Significant Encounter (1265-93)
    Care, Conflict and Catastrophe (1293-1302)
    Far-Wandering and the Agony of Exile (1302-21)
PART II The Early Years: From Dante da Maiano to the Vita nova
Chapter I Preliminary Remarks: Love and Love-Intelligence
Chapter 2 Literary Hinterland: From Provencal to the stilo de la loda
Chapter 3 Literary Apprenticeship and a Coming of Age
    Dante guittoniano
    Dante cavalcantiano
    Dante and the Rose: The Fiore and the Detto d'amore
    Dante guinizzelliano
Chapter 4 The Vita nova

- Preliminary Remarks: Antecedent Utterance and an Essay in Authoring
- Love Seeking and Seeking Not Its Own
- Conclusion: New Life and a Commedia a minore

PART III The Middle Years: The Moral and Allegorical *Rime,* the *Convivio,* the *De vulgari eloquentia* and the Post-Exilic *Rime*

Chapter 1 Compassionate Lady of the Casement and a Woman of Stone: The Pre-Exilic *Rime*

Chapter 2 The *Convivio*

- Preliminary Remarks: Magnanimity, Possibility and Impossibility
- Course of the Argument
- Axes of Concern in the *Convivio*
- Language, Form and Function: An Essay in Beauty, Being and Becoming
- Conclusion: Being and Becoming as Yet in Waiting

Chapter 3 *The De vulgari eloquentia:* Language, Literature and the Ontologization of Art

Chapter 4 The Post-Exilic *Rime*

PART IV The Final Years: The *Commedia,* the Political Letters and the *Monarchia,* the *Questio,* Cangrande and the *Eclogues*

Chapter 1 The *Commedia*

- Standing Alone in Respect of That Which Matters Alone: Dante, Cino and the Solitary Way
- The *Commedia à la lettre*
- An Anthropology and Ethic: Love and Love-Harvesting
- The Dialectics of Being: A Difficult Dimensionality
- A Phenomenology of Existence: The Mood as Mediator
- Dante and Significant Journeying
- Immanent Eschatology and the Triumph of the Image

Chapter 2 The *Monarchia* and the Political Letters

Chapter 3 The *Questio de situ ague et terre,* the Letter to Cangrande della Scala and the *Eclogues*

Afterword: A Coruscation of Delight

Select Bibliography

Index of Names

In fondo, una serietà terribile

> The greatest poetic expression of the Existentialist point of view in the Middle Ages is Dante's *Divina Commedia.* It remains, like the religious depth psychology of the monastics, within the framework of the scholastic ontology. But within these limits it enters the deepest places of human self-destruction and despair as well as the highest places of courage and salvation, and gives in poetic symbols an all-embracing existential doctrine of man. PAUL TILLICH [Paul Tillich, *The Courage to Be* (Glasgow: Collins, 1980 [1952]),128]

When it came to great men and great books, T. S. Eliot was inclined in one and the same moment to take away with one hand what he gave with the other; for if indeed it is more satisfactory writing about greater as distinct from lesser men, there being more scope for finding something useful to say about them, then at the same time there is much to be said for leaving the great man in peace, he himself being far and away his own best expositor. On the one hand, then, from the twilight phase of his own meditation on the *Commedia,* Eliot writes:

> What I have written is, as I promised, not an 'introduction' to the study but a brief account of my own introduction to it. In extenuation, it may be observed that to write in this way of men

> like Dante or Shakespeare is really less presumptuous than to write of smaller men. The very vastness of the subject leaves a possibility that one may have something to say worth saying; whereas with smaller men, only minute and special study is likely to justify writing about them at all. [T. S. Eliot, *Dante* (London: Faber and Faber, 1945 [1929), 63-64.]

while from just a little earlier in the same essay we have these lines on starting with Dante himself, together with the books he himself read, as the best way forward:

> The effect of many books about Dante is to give the impression that it is more necessary to read about him than to read what he has written. But the next step after reading Dante again and again should be to read some of the books that he read, rather than modern books about his work and life and times, however good.

But that, alas, is not all, for already established fast by the time of his book on Dante is a sense on Eliot's part of interpretation—the main business, he suggests, of literary criticism—as a matter at best of dubious verifiability and at worst of mere posturing, herein lying its twofold bane and blessing, its lingering on somewhere between truth and untruth:

> There is a large part of critical writing which consists in 'interpreting' an author ... [But] it is difficult to confirm the 'interpretation' by external evidence. To anyone who is skilled in fact on this level there will be evidence enough. But who is to prove his own skill? And for every success in this type of writing there are thousands of impostures. Instead of insight you get fiction. Your test is to apply it again and again to the original, with your view of the original to guide you. But there is no one to guarantee your competence, and once again we find ourselves in a dilemma.

Now none of this makes easy reading for those of us busying ourselves in this sector, for those of us busying ourselves in this sector are busy, precisely, about introduction and interpretation, about forestalling the pristine encounter in all the `terrifying seriousness' thereof. What possible justification, therefore, can there be for imposing yet again upon the reader and for indulging the will to interpretation?

The answer, I think, lies in our insisting, with as much good faith as we can muster, upon the notion that where Dante is concerned, something must be said, Dante himself going out ofhis way to engage the reader as party to the fundamental project, as there for the purposes not merely of discerning his meaning in the text but, by way of his or her role as reader, of helping to generate that meaning in the first place. In the context, then, of what in the case of the Commedia amounts to one of the most writerly of writerly texts in European literature, there can be no passing by on the other side. On the contrary, the reader—Dante's ubiquitous “lettore"—is at every point invited to step up to the mark and to speak on his or her own account to the matter in hand.

But with this we are as yet far from home, for having insisted that where Dante is concerned something has to be said, we have now to decide what that something might be, beginning, perhaps, with what actually matters about him. So what does actually matter about Dante? The depth and intensity of his meditation in any number of areas from theology to philosophy and from linguistics to literary aesthetics? Most certainly. His power and persuasiveness as a mythmaker, as one proceeding by way of a fiction which is, in truth, no fiction at all to confirm an ideal trajectory of the spirit? This too. His faith in the image, as distinct from the idea, as that whereby the human situation stands most completely to be contemplated? Absolutely. His fashioning from the as yet youthful Italian tongue a means of exploring the human situation in the at once sordid and sublime totality thereof? This to be sure. The resourcefulness and refinement both of the prose and of the metrical period as the hallmark of his consummate craftsmanship? No doubt. But over and beyond these things and serving the purpose of something greater than any of them is their commitment to the being and becoming of the otherwise anxious subject, of this or that individual or group of individuals concerned in respect of their properly human presence in the world as creatures of reasonable self-determination. This situation is everywhere discernible in the text and everywhere decisive for our reading and reception of it. It is discernible in the *Vita nova,* where it is a question of right understanding in love as that whereby the poet stands securely in his own presence as a maker of verses in the Italian vernacular, and it is discernible in the *Convivio,* where it is a question of how, in and through a more refined species of philosophical awareness, the 'many men and women in this language of ours burdened by domestic and civic care' might know themselves in their properly human happiness. It is discernible in the first book of the *De vulgari eloquentia,* where it is a question of how a certain group of people at a certain stage of their sociopolitical and cultural development might know themselves and in turn be known in their now recognizably Italian way of being, it is a question of encountering self in its power to self-annihilation *(Hell),* of fashioning self afresh in point of properly human knowing and loving *(Purgatory),* and of rejoicing at last in the now properly speaking transcendent substance of it all *(Paradise).* Throughout, then, the pattern is the same, for throughout it is a question not simply of this or that high-level instance of cultural awareness, be it moral, social, political or linguistic, but of these things as making possible the emergence or coming about either of the individual or of the group of individuals in keeping with all they have it in themselves to be and to become.

Here, then, in what amounts to an honouring of the text by way of a reply in kind, of coming alongside the poet in respect of the leading idea, lies such justification as well as such consistency as this fresh exercise in interpretation possesses. Part 1, then, offers byway of contextualization an account of Florentine history from the early part of the thirteenth century through to the demise of Henry VII in 1313 and of Dante's life before and after his exile in 1302, while part 2 ('The Early Years') traces his activity as a lyric poet through to the *Vita nova* with its now secure sense of love as a principle of self-transcendence, of knowing self in the ecstatic substance of self. Part 3 (`The Middle Years') focuses on those works leading up to and culminating in the *Convivio* as an essay in the ways and means of properly human happiness and on the *De vulgari eloquentia* as a reflection upon language in general and poetic form in particular as a principle of collective identity and—in the case of the latter—of a now soaring spirituality, while part 4 ('The Final Years') gives an account *(a)* of the *Commedia* as, whatever else it is, an essay in significant journeying, *(b)* of the *Monarchia* as a meditation upon the deep reasons of imperial government and *(c)* of the *Questio de situ ague et terre,* the letter to Cangrande della Scala and the *Eclogues* as each in its way testifying to the strength of Dante's still scholastic and romance-vernacular allegiances. Finally, the afterword seeks to confirm yet again the deep seriousness of it all, a seriousness, however, `inmantled' at last by a smile as but its outward aspect. [*See Paradiso 2.0.13-15:* 'O dolce amor the di riso t'ammanti, / quanto parevi ardente in que' flailli, / ch'avieno spirto sol di pensier santi!' (O sweet love that mantles yourself in a smile, how radiant yo showing forth in those flutes filled only with the breath of sacred thoughts). Indebted as I am to the translations noted in the 'Select Bibliography' below, I have from time to time modified them in interest of further precision and readability.]

What, then, of Eliot's misgiving relative to those daring to take up the pen yet again where Dante is concerned? Given that the text is indeed it own best interpreter then deep down we cannot but concur, misgiving at every point rising **up** Leviathan-like from the depths to call into question the entire project. But that thankfully, is probably not how Dante himself would have seen it, for his, everywhere, is an invitation to the feast and, with it, to talk it all over one with another; for rather like those coming down from Jerusalem to Emmaus in the evening hour, we too have witnessed a strange and marvellous thing, talking it all over one with another serving merely to confirm its continuing presence to us as a means of significant self-interpretation.

A Coruscation of Delight

> E the e ridere se non una corruscazione de la dilettazione de l'anima,
> cioe uno lume apparente di fuori secondo sta dentro?

And what is laughter if not a coruscation of the soul's delight, a light bearing witness in its outward aspect to how it stands within?
Convivio 3.8.11

To speak of the smile as but a showing forth of what *is* in the depths is by no means to qualify what in Dante amounts to the terrifying seriousness of it all, the `serieta' terribile' standing both at the beginning and at the end of his every undertaking and sustaining that undertaking at every point along the way. First, then, come the *rime,* busy from the outset about seeing off the levity of a Dante da Maiano in favour of the substance and psychology of loving and loving well. Then there is the *Vita nova,* where it is a question of that same love contemplated under the aspect less now of acquisition than of disposition as the in-and-through-which of new life. Then comes the *Convivio,* the magnanimous *Convivio,* where it is a question of philosophy as but the love of wisdom coeval and consubstantial with the Godhead itself as the way of properly human being and becoming, as that whereby `the many men and women in this language of ours burdened by domestic and civic care' might know themselves in the fullness of their proper humanity. And then, as belonging to much the same moment as the *Convivio,* comes the no less precious *De vulgari eloquentia* with its sense of the *illustre (a)* as that whereby a certain set of people at a certain stage of their sociopolitical and cultural development know themselves in the now consummate character of their presence the world (book 1), and *(b)* as that whereby the would-be poet in the high style confirms and lives out the substance of his own astripetal or star-seeking humanity (book 2). And then there is the *Commedia,* an essay likewise busy at the point of ultimate concern, in the coming home of the pilgrim spirit as hitherto but a wanderer in the region of unlikeness. Seriousness this, therefore, of a high order and all the more so for its reaching out to involve every man—including those perforce 'deeming this time ancient'—in an act of ontological rejoicing, of knowing self in the freedom of self for its proper destiny.

But to speak thus of ontological rejoicing, of delight in (as Dante himself puts it) the butterfly-emergence of the spirit into the fullness of its proper presence in the world, is already to speak of the way in which the truth utterance is for him a smiling utterance, herein—in his ever-deepening commitment to the smile as but the outward aspect of seriousness-lying final confirmation of the seasoned substance of his own humanity; so, for example, the `sorrise parolette' moment of *Paradiso* 1 where it is a question of words, not simply as spoken but as smiled perforce, as irradiated both within and without by their smiling aspect:

> S'io fui del primo dubbio disvestito
> per le sorrise parolette brevi,
> dentro ad un nuovo piii fu' inretito
> e dissi: 'Gia contento *requlevi*
> di grande ammirazion; ma ora ammiro
> com' io trascenda questi corpi levi'.
> *(Paradiso* 1.94-99)
>
> If I was freed from my perplexity by the words she smiled to me I was all the more caught up in a new one, and said: "Content I was for a moment and relieved in respect of a great wonder, but marvel now how I should be rising above these light substances."

or the `ella sorrise alquanto' moment of *Paradiso* 2 where it is a question of the smile as preparing the way for a fresh act of spiritual intelligence:

> Ella sorrise alquanto, e poi `S'elli erra
> l'oppinion, mi disse, `d'i mortali
> dove chiave di senso non diserra,
> certo non ti dovrien punger li strali
> d'ammirazione omai, poi dietro ai sensi
> vedi che la ragione ha corte
> (Paradiso 2.52-57)
>
> 'She smiled a little and then said to me: "If mortal judgement errs where the key of sense fails to 'unlock, surely the shafts of wonder should not prick you henceforth, since following on from the semis reason's wings, as you can see, are short indeed."

or the `sorridendo, ardea ne li occhi santi' moment of Paradiso 3 where it is a question of the smile as testimony to the love-intensity of it all:

> Con quelle altr' ombre pria sorrise un poco;
> da indi mi rispuose tanto lieta,
> ch'arder parea d'amor nel primo foco.
> (Paradiso 3.67-69)
>
> 'With those other shades she first smiled a little, then answered me with the joy of one it seemed, in the first fire of love:

or the `sorridendo facendosi piil mera' moment of Paradiso 3 where it is a question of the smile as-here as throughout—prefacing and pervading the mane than ever ardent utterance:

> E io senti' dentro a quella lumera
> che pria m'avea parlato, sorridendo
> incominciar, faccendosi piu mera.
> 'Cosi com' io del suo raggio resplendo,
> si, riguardando ne la Luce etterna,

> li tuoi pensieri onde cagioni apprendo:
> (Paradiso 11.16-21)

> 'And within that radiance that just addressed me I heard begin as it smiled and grew all the in brightness: "Even as I reflect its beams, so, gazing into the eternal light, I perceive your thoughts and the origin thereof."'

—and all this by way of participation, of an ever more complete sharing in the life of the One who, perfectly self-in-seated, self-understanding and self-loving as he is, knows himself by way only of the self-smiling proper to being in its pure form:

> O Luce etterna the sola in te Sidi,
> sola t'intendi, e da te intelletta
> e intendente te ami e arridi!
> *(Paradiso 33.124-26)*

> 'O Light Eternal that solely abides in yourself, solely knows yourself, and, by yourself alone understood and understanding, loves and smiles upon yourself!'

This, then, for all the seriousness of the text, must constitute the *terminus ad quem* or point of arrival for any account of Dante as spokesman-in-chief for the existential point of view in the Middle Ages; for presupposing as it does the agony of existence in its moment-by-moment unfolding (for there is, in Dante, no speaking as a child, no understanding as a child and no thinking as a child), his withal is an account of the human situation in its properly speaking radiant complexion, in its forever opening out in a rapt coruscation of the spirit. <>

POETICS OF REDEMPTION: DANTE'S DIVINE COMEDY by Andreas Kablitz [De Gruyter, 9783110634099]

The essays on Dante collected in this volume interpret his *Commedia* as the attempt of a renewal of the Christian work of salvation by means of literature. In the view of his author, the *sacro poema* responds to a historical moment of extreme danger, in which nothing less than the redemption of mankind is at stake. The degradation of the medieval Roman Empire and the rise of an early capitalism in his birth town Florence, entailing a pernicious moral depravation for Dante, are to him nothing else but a variety of symptoms of the backfall of the world into its state prior to its salvation by the incarnation of Christ.

Dante presents his journey into the other world as an endeavor to escape these risks. Mobilizing the traditional procedures of literary discourse for this purpose, he aims at writing a text that overcomes the deficiencies of the traditional Book of Revelation that, on its own terms, no longer seems capable of fulfilling his traditional tasks. The immense revaluation of poetry implied in Dante's *Commedia*, thus, contemporarily involves the claim of a substantial weakness of the institutional religious discourse.

CONTENTS

Preface
Lecturae Dantis
Art in the Afterlife or God as Scupltor
Videre – Invidere
Temporality and Eternity in Dante's Purgatorio
The End of the Sacrum Imperium
Poetics of Knowledge in the Paradiso
List of Original Publications
Bibliography

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Poetics of Knowledge in the Paradiso (Paradiso XXVII and XXX)

> "La natura del mondo, che quïeta
> il mezzo e tutto l'altro intomo move,
> quinci comincia come da sua meta;
> e questo cielo non ha altro dove
> che la mente divina, in che s'accende
> l'amor che 'l volge e la virtu ch'ei piove.
> Luce e amor d'un cerchio lui comprende,
> si come questo li altri; e quel precinto
> colui che 'l cinge solamente intende." (Paradiso XXVIII,106 - 110)

These words, which in many ways look so opaque, are spoken to Dante by Beatrice - the woman he once loved in his youth, and who is now guiding him through Paradise - at one of the most difficult points in the Divine Comedy. On their path through the heavenly paradise the Pilgrim and his guide have reached the point at which the material, finite world ends and the intellegible, infinite world begins. It is clear enough that God the infinite, who is free of all fleshly coils, can only have His abode in the realm of infinity. But where theology and philosophy can take refuge in the opposition of these terms, the description of a journey into the life beyond has to make apparent the transition point between the two spheres. Thus, at first sight paradoxically, greater theoretical rigour is demanded of the narrative text of the Commedia than of the theory itself. Theological and philosophical theoria are in a sense taken back to their etymological roots; for, after all, the original meaning of the Greek verb 'theorein' in fact expresses no more and no less than 'to see'. How then does Dante manage to translate the theory into the narrative, into the account of his pilgrimage through Heaven? In our answer to this question, which we shall address by focusing on the lines cited above, we shall also encounter one of the central features of Dante's sacro poems: namely his use of poetic language to create a mode of speech that is on a higher level than all theory and proves able to overcome its own deficits in the face of a transcendental world.

Before we go on to argue this in detail, let us outline the order of heaven that Dante makes the basis of his Paradise. In the Divine Comedy this order is not much different from that posited in Aristotelian and Ptolemaic cosmology. Dante assumes the existence of ten heavens revolving at differing speeds around the Earth, which itself stands still. The highest of these heavens is the empireo: the only heaven which does not revolve, but - like the Earth - is completely at rest. Given that it is to be understood as the place of heavenly paradise, as the abode of angels and the Blest, the assumption of such an Empyreum is what constitutes the specifically Christian contribution to ancient cosmology. That Dante makes the Empyreum no longer a corporeal sphere, but a non-corporeal one, is one of the most important changes in the Divine Comedy vis-à-vis the Christian tradition of cosmology of his time. This change is of great significance for the question that concerns us here, for it shifts the problem of the relationship between the corporeal and non-corporeal world into the realm of the received cosmic order itself. Dante can no longer avoid answering the question as to how each relates to the other, and how it is possible to move from one into the other.

The problem that arises here becomes even more acutely apparent if we simply observe the difficulty of even appropriately formulating this problem. Of course, we have to assume that the non-physical sphere is located outside of time and space. But even this statement points to the inevitable paradoxes that await us here. For 'outside' is of course a spatial category, and such a formulation therefore tacitly repositions in space the sphere that is beyond space. Modern physics' solution to the problem of the relationship between space and infinity is well known: physics has turned space itself into infinite space, and in the century we have just left physics dynamised this relation once more: now, it seems, the universe is constantly expanding space. But these solutions for a modern age will not work for a Christian theory of the universe. For the quality of infinity behooves only God the Creator, and not His creation; for thereby a constitutive characteristic of the divine would, unacceptably, be transferred onto His creation. The assumption of an infinite universe is therefore heretical and unacceptable to the mind of the Christian academic. What solution did Dante find? To reconstruct it, we shall now turn to look more closely at the verses cited.

Where in the order of heaven are Dante and Beatrice at the moment when she, his guide through Paradise, addresses these words to him? They are in the first of the revolving heavens, the biggest and swiftest of the corporeal heavens, which bears the name primo mobile. They are, therefore, at the boundary of the corporeal and simultaneously (we shall return to this in detail) of the natural world. The verses in question comprise the instruction that Beatrice is giving to her pupil. Later it will become clear why precisely this lesson is of special import. It is not his own observations that Dante is describing at this point; rather he puts the discussion of the essence of the primo mobile into the mouth of one of the

Blest. In this respect cognition cannot be separated from instruction. Of course, as the Commedia proceeds, the text reveals that this lesson will quickly bear fruit, for soon Dante himself will be observing the world of the immaterial sphere and simultaneously translating it into language for us. But of that more later. For the moment we shall concern ourselves with the content of Beatrice's instruction.

How, then, does Dante achieve the transition from the corporeal to the noncorporeal sphere in these lines that he puts into the mouth of Beatrice? For her words are concerned with precisely that threshold. We shall see that Dante uses various strategies: some concern the essence of what is being portrayed, and some he derives from the peculiarity of the portrayal. To begin with, we must take account of the ontological status of the boundary that is being described. The boundary of the primo mobile is designated as a circle of light (Paradiso XXVII, 112: "Luce e amor d'un cercio lui comprende"). The nature of light was intensively discussed in contemporary philosophy and theology, and many saw light as the primary, or least corporeal, element in the physical world, while nonetheless assigning it to the sphere of the corporeal. But Thomas Aquinas, who is indubitably the greatest theological authority of Dante's age, maintains quite clearly in his Summa theologiae that light is not corporeal, but non-corporeal: "Lux non est corpus", he posits categorically. Incidentally, one of the arguments that he uses to prove his thesis shows how far his thinking is from the notion, crucial to modern physics, of a speed of light that is invisible to the naked eye. For, he argues, if light were corporeal, it would necessarily be possible to apprehend its movement from one place to another. Dante, even though there is by no means a scholastic consensus on the matter, clearly decides in favour of this interpretation of the nature of light. This emerges quite clearly from the context of the lines. For the circle of light is not only made up of light, but is simultaneously made of love. And how could God's love be anything but noncorporeal? Light and love, therefore, are identified in the same geometric shape: in the shape of a circle, the perfect geometrical form. That clarifies beyond all doubt the status of light, a status which emerges further from hints given by Beatrice. For we are also told that love ignites (s'accende) in God's intellect. So the origin of love, too, is being thought in terms of categories of light, and thereby the real connection between luce and amor emerges. The ed of line 112, which seems almost to separate rather than link the two words, is actually telling us that we are dealing with the same thing. Light is basically nothing other than the form in which love becomes visible. This indicates on the one hand (and this will concern us further) that in this universe physics and ethics are merely two sides of the same coin. The ontological quality of light that we have described, however, also implies that the boundary of the corporeal world is itself already non-corporeal. In this sense light figures as a first point of contact between the two spheres.

Meanwhile the lines cited from Beatrice's lesson on the nature of the universe also engage with the delicate question of spatial relations: specifically the necessarily non spatial relationship of a sphere, that lies and must lie outside of space, to that same space. Basic to our understanding of this are the observations Beatrice makes regarding the relationship between the divine intellect, as the place where the love of the Creator is kindled, and the primo mobile: "e questo cielo non ha altro dove/che la mente divina". Thus the divine intellect is described as the place where the first of the moving heavens, the primo mobile, is located. But the sentence with which I attempt to paraphrase Dante's lines is very inexact; for it does exactly what Dante's own words avoid. Dante himself is speaking here not of any place or space, but using a formula which at first sight looks a little clumsy. On closer inspection, however, its great subtlety becomes apparent. His formula, translated literally, is: "The first heaven has no other 'where?' than the divine intellect." This mente divina is certainly non-corporeal and cannot, therefore, be identified with any particular place. Situating the first heaven in this divine intellect has the consequence of transforming the spatial relation into a relation of cognition, into an intellectual operation. As is befitting to a god-creator, the creation that is heaven becomes a projection of God's intellect; the existence of this heaven relies on its cognition in the intellect of God. Now we can see why Dante here deliberately makes do with an interrogative pronoun. For his retreat into a simple question clearly serves as a signal that the spatial question is unsuitable: it is rejected. In the Empyreum, all that remains of our notions of space - so the text teaches us - is our own, unsuitable, question. The apparently clumsy formula is, then, when we look at it more closely, subtle in the extreme; for it functions precisely as a stimulant to cognition. For the first time here we come across a method that Dante will apply again in varying ways in the lines that concern us. The offence against the prevailing rules of language that is called 'poetic licence' (an expression which articulates an essential feature of all poetic writing) becomes a means of achieving cognition. In other words, poetic praxis becomes theory.

We can put the transformation of spatial relations into cognitive categories to the test in the following lines, 112-114: "Luce e amor d'un cerchio lui cornprendedsi come questo li altri; e quel precinto/colui the '1 cinge solamente in-tende." It is well nigh impossible to translate these lines into a non-romance language. The reason for that is the ambivalence of the two verbs comprendere and intendere. For each verb describes both a spatial and an intellectual relation. To begin with the first of the verbs: of course we can translate comprende in the context of a circle of light as 'embrace' or 'clasp'. This circle of light surrounds (in an initial reading of the line) the first of the moving heavens. But it becomes far more difficult to maintain this spatial sense when we come to the second subject of the sentence, amore. At the point when it is also said of love that it surrounds the primo mobile, the second, non-corporeal meaning of comprendere becomes relevant. For comprendere not only means 'to clasp'; the verb of course also means 'to grasp'. And if in this line the spatial and intellectual meanings of the verb comprendere already merge, that impression is only confirmed in the last of the lines cited. In that line the complementary perspective, so to speak, is described: the sight of the first of the moving heavens, girded with love. Of it is said that it alone understands what girds it, that is, the circle of light that is love. From an etymological point of view there is admittedly a corporeal element in the verb intendere, the notion of a tension that is directed towards something. But in the common semantic usage of this word the corporeal trace has long been replaced by an intellectual content, and intendere means 'to understand', 'to intend' or 'to want'. Here, too, then, we can see how the boundary between the corporeal and the non-corporeal can be removed by the use of words with plural meanings. Spatial relationships again become indistinguishable from intellectual operations; and to effect this transformation Dante uses a method which is frowned on in the language of theory, but extremely widespread and popular in the language of poetry. Dante deliberately and to great effect uses ambivalent formulations: he builds sentences that can be read in different ways and whose ambivalence achieves precisely that mediation between the corporeal and the non-corporeal, between finite and infinite space, that theoria alone cannot achieve. Once again the rhetorical method — here the ambivalence of the verbs used — is turned into an instrument to aid cognition and to help us transcend familiar thought patterns. Again a poetic method becomes a theoretical one. To use the same expression as before: poetic licence, the deviation from the conventional rules of language that is permitted the poet, serves to engender notions which transcend ideas familiar to us.

By the bye: inherent in the double meaning of the verb comprendere, which we have just reconstructed, is yet another connection, which has to do with the relationship of affect and intellect, of amore and mente. To understand is not per se an activity of love, but one of the intellect. But Dante dissolves this difference. Even Paul's first letter to the Corinthians recognises a love that takes on a cognitive role, because even the very highest knowledge fails in the face of love.

Dante, however, unlike Paul, does not play off affect and intellect against each other. Rather, he combines an Aristotelian anthropology, which sees the intellect as the noblest part of all higher beings, with Pauline ethics, which accords the highest rank to caritas; and he combines them in the notion of a mente divina whose thinking (whose manifest form, that is) is love, or, to put it figuratively, the fire of the holy spirit. Out of the combination of these two elements Dante develops his cosmology, in which divine love positions the corporeal world out of the intellect of the Creator into space and time: that love, of which it will be said in the last line of the Commedia: "l'amor che move il sole e l'altre stelle" (Paradiso XXXIII, 145).

In our reconstruction of the double meanings of the verbs comprendere and intendere we have thus far concerned ourselves primarily with the first of the two. But what is that intendere telling us, which in lines 112— 114 describes the relationship of the first of the moving heavens to the origin of its movement? The answer to this question can be gleaned from the first tercet of the lines cited: "La natura del mondo che quieta/il mezzo e tutto l'altro intorno move,/ quinci comincia come da sua meta." The last of these three lines clearly presents a paradox: "comincia da sua meta", it says of the first heaven, the primo mobile: it "begins as if from its goal". For 'meta' means 'goal'. The commentators on the Commedia have struggled with this paradox. In the end they solve the problem by banishing the contradiction and explaining the usage of the word meta differently. Dante, they argue, deviates from normal usage here to mean not a goal but its opposite, the beginning and origin. But this is not the case — indeed, this distortion of the text robs it of its real message. For here, yet again, the superficial paradox reveals itself as a strategy on the path to cognition, and in this case it serves to banish the notion of a corporeal boundary as such.

To be sure that this is the case, one must take account of the fact that beginning and end are simultaneously spatial and temporal ideas, and in the context of the lines in question they really do refer to both simultaneously. For the boundary of corporeal space, the boundary of the primo mobile, the first heavenly sphere, and at the same time the boundary of all nature is also the beginning of all movement, for the Empyreum is completely static. In this, incidentally, it corresponds to the Earth, which is also immobile. For it is said of nature that it halts (quieta) its centre (il mezzo); and in the same way it will later be said of the Empyreum that God's love halts it: "l'amor che queta questo cielo" (Paradiso XXX, 52). So the immobility of the Earth is not originary but secondary. The correspondence that emerges in this way between the mente divina and the central point of creation to that extent makes tangible the patterns of a geocentric world view, but at the same time it exposes the risks posed by that world view. For, while the fact that the empireo is halted marks its difference from the creature and corporeal world, the Earth is at the end of a long chain of ever more slowly moving heavenly bodies, at the point where they come to a stand-still. Thus the Earth is at the centre of God's planetary system, and yet it receives only the smallest share of the movement of divine love — it is at the Earth that this love stops. Thus, as much as the Earth is shown to be the centre of nature, in the order of creation it is nevertheless accorded a rank that is finally inferior, and a position furthest away from divine love. It almost seems as if the drama of the world's fall and redemption is prefigured in this ambivalence regarding the cosmological positioning of the Earth. At the point of maximum distance from the origin of creation it is the most endangered place in the universe; and nonetheless it is at the centre of the story of God the Creator and His creation.

But let us return to the details of how the primo mobile moves. It is clear from line 111 that the movement of this heaven is caused by God's love. But of the same movement line 113 says "e quel precinto/colui the 'I cinge solamente intende". Intendere therefore stands in a number of oppositional relations. On the one hand it stands in opposition to the intellectual understanding with which God's love embraces the universe and sets it in motion; and the image of a circular understanding is a pretty exact figurative rendition of scholastic epistemology, notably the Thomist definition of comprehensio.' Perfect knowledge, which is depicted in the perfect geometric form of the circle, stands opposite the imperfect movement of the intentio, imperfect because it is directed towards something that has not yet been fully grasped' and is therefore a linear movement. But even intentio is not merely an activity of the intellect: it, too, is movement and, according to the lines we are considering here, this movement must be identical with the movement that is caused by God's love. But how do the two things relate to each other? How can this movement be both the result of an outside impulse and intentional self-propulsion? Dante's order of creation, which is here also based on neoplatonic notions, intends us to understand the movement of the heavens as a consequence of their desire to return to their creator. Their movement is nothing other than the physical expression of this desire. God's love, which produces movement in His creations, simultaneously effects in them a desire to return to their origin, and that is why they move. It is precisely the combination of physics and psychology or, to be more precise, ethics, which can explain the paradox inherent in "quinci comincia come da sua meta". It really does become impossible to distinguish beginning from end, because the origin of movement coincides with its goal, the object of desire. But this also demonstrates that spatial concepts will not suffice to decipher the text. With the help of the paradox that makes beginning and end one, Dante is tacitly translating spatial categories into ethical ones. The notion of a spatial boundary thus disappears into the dialectic of love and desire. Once again a rhetorical device — paradox — functions as an aid to understanding. It puts a process of cognition in motion, which will end in our having to bid farewell to the categories that are familiar to us. Once again poetic devices are transformed in their turn into an instrument of theory.

Before I move away from the close reading of Dante's text which has occupied us thus far, I would like to give one last pointer to the poet's methods of transcending spatial categories. The lines in question deal with Beatrice's instruction regarding the nature of the transition between the corporeal and the non-corporeal spheres, which begins when Dante and his companion are still in the primo mobile, that is, in the first of the moving heavens. At the end of the long lesson, which in essence takes in the entire order of the world, Beatrice informs her pupil that they themselves have now arrived in the Empyreum: "Noi siamo usciti fore/del maggior corpo al ciel ch'è Pura luce'" (Paradiso XXX, 38f.). At first this looks like a rather inept attempt to avoid portraying corporeal movement in a place where it can no longer exist, but within the logic of the transposition of corporeal into intellectual movement that we have seen in the text thus far, this kind of construction does make sense. For when Dante reaches the Empyreum, after having been taught by Beatrice about the nature of the universe, he does so in a manner of speaking as the result of what she has taught him. Physical locomotion is replaced by intellectual progress, by cognitive gains —and this fits exactly with the strategies of substituting intellectual activity for physical relations that we have already been able to observe.

Canto XXX of the Paradiso, with which Dante reaches the Empyreum, thus also tells us something about the cognitive progress he has made. For he will now describe his perception of the bliss he encounters there in his own right, no longer needing to rely on the speech of a guide who is superior to him. But how - the question returns - might it be possible to portray something which eludes spatial and temporal understanding using a language which is inevitably bound into the categories of space and time? Dante does not skirt this difficulty; on the contrary, he very consciously faces up to it, and again develops a series of techniques which allow him to exploit poetic language to develop a vivid image of the transcendental world of the empireo that reflects his own perception. I would like to go on now to illustrate this poetics of transcendence with reference to the description of his encounter with the candida rosa, the rose in the shape of which the Blest who have arrived here group themselves around their creator:

> O isplendor di Dio, per cu' io vidi
> l'alto tlïunfo del regno verace,
> dammi virtu a dir com' io it vidi!
> Lume a la sa che visibile face
> lo creatore a quella creatura
> che solo in lui vedere ha la sua pace.
> E' si distende in circular figura,
> in tanto che la sua circunferenza
> sarebbe al sol troppo larga cintura.
> Fassi di raggio tutta sua parvenza
> reflesso al sommo del mobile primo
> che prende quindi vivere e potenza.
> E come clivo in acqua di suo imo
> si specchia, quasi per vedersi adorno,
> quando a nel verde e ne' fioretti opimo,
> si, soprastando al lume intorno intorno,
> vidi specchiarsi in pia di mille soglie
> quanto di not la sit fatto ha ritorno.
> E se l'infimo grado in se raccoglie
> si grande lume, quanta è la larghezza
> di questa rosa ne l'estreme foglie!
> La vista mia ne l'ampio e ne l'altezza
> non si smarriva, ma tutto prendeva
> il quanto e 'I quale di quella allegrezza.
> é leva:
> ché dove Dio sanza mezzo governa
> la Legge natural nulla rileva. (Paradiso XXX,97-123)

These lines make the very difficulties of the depiction the subject of discussion, right from the start, namely with the apostrophising of the isplendor di Dio. This plea for inspiration is one of a whole series of such pleas throughout the Cornmedia, which - following the progress of the Pilgrim into ever higher regions themselves aspire to ever higher things. Thus at the beginning of the Paradiso the apostrophising of Apollo replaced the invoking of the muses. Now, having reached the moment when he has to describe the empireo, the author of the sacro poems pleads for that isplendor di Dio, that reflection of divine glory that had once, in heaven itself, permitted him to gaze upon that transcendental reality that is beyond human powers of imagining. What this isplendor can achieve, therefore, namely the transgression of the powers of cognition natural in humans, also already leads to the proprium that is hidden behind the image. It is therefore only right that, in the 14th century, even the very earliest commentators identified God's grace in this reflection of divine glory. The metaphorical description, however, acquires a particular meaning in the context of the lines considered here. For, as we shall later observe in detail, the concept of inspiration Dante describes corresponds exactly to the manifestation of eternal bliss, the visio beatijicata, as he will go on to elucidate. So the supposedly metaphorical model for the text of the Commedia is part of the reality of the Blest. This relation between the text and its subject initially seems to correspond to the difference that Paul once defined as the difference between the cognition of truth in this world and the immediate cognition that occurs in the next, in Heaven. But the similarity between the model for inspiration and the visio beatificata is intended to dissolve that difference: "dammi virtu a dir com'io it vidi". The language used should reproduce the vision directly. It therefore needs to develop methods that approximate a transgression of earthbound modes of thinking and speaking.

But how can we imagine something that is beyond our powers of imagining? All human imaginatio is bound into space and time, and both categories fail in the face of the non-corporeal world of the Empyreum. What we see here again has the structure of a paradox. We can only imagine the foreign reality that is the blessed state of the saved souls by taking recourse to familiar notions, but precisely this familiarity must needs block our view into a sphere that is foreign to humans in this world. It is this very structure, the paradox, that Dante will use here to make possible what seems impossible. To this end he first uses a rhetorical device that seems completely unsuited to the task in hand. For in lines 109 ff. he uses a comparison, more specifically a comparison that develops a pastoral scene: "E come clivo in acqua di suo imo/si specchia, quasi per vedersi adorno,/quando a nel verde e ne' fioretti opimo". Such a comparison seems unsuitable in several ways. To start with there is a problem with the comparative method as such, the most notable function of which is to render the unknown imaginable by analogy with what is known. But precisely this analogy is risky when describing a world that is per se outwith the bounds of human imagining. And furthermore, the unsuitability of this comparison seems to emerge from the marked spatial relations it thematises, above all the dominant vertical arrangement of the space. We shall be observing how Dante transforms this impediment into its opposite.

The comparison is made up of two separate components. It is basically a hybrid construction. On the one hand, it refers back to the myth of Narcissus: the motif of looking into a watery mirror, which reveals to the beholder his own beauty, inevitably makes one think of Ovid's image of the youth, in love with himself, who has to pay for his longing with death. Dante was very familiar with Ovid's Metamorphoses; particularly in the Purgatorio, he uses a number of Ovid's tales of transformation to convey figuratively the metamorphosis from sinner to one seeking salvation that is so basic to Christian thought. Especially line 110 of our comparison invites the connection with its reference, "quasi per vedersi adorno": "as if he wanted to gaze at his beauty in the water's mirror". But this gesture in the direction of the Narcissus myth seems oddly alienated, for the lines cited are not describing a person, but a mountain, whose peak is reflected in all the glory of its spring blossoms and greenery in the water at its foot. We shall return to this later. For the moment let us instead look at how Dante uses the comparison to deal with the categories of space which are invalid in the noncorporeal world of the Empyreum.

In this connection it is noticeable that the image of the mountain reflected in the water is clearly defined by a vertical axis, by the relation between above and below. The high mountain is reflected in the water at its foot. And the second part of the description of what is being compared with it, also begins with the characterisation of just such a vertical relationship. "Soprastando al lume intorno", it reads. Taken in conjunction with the formulation, or more precisely the periphrasis from line 114: that part of human beings which returns to heaven, that is, their immaterial part, is reflected in the light that circles around it. And this, at first sight, merely curious circumscription, which reduces the nature of the person who has returned to heaven to an indication of quantity, a quanto, is also a part of the programmatic intent of these lines, as will become clear. But of that more later. For now let us turn to look more closely at the description of the spatial conditions. In a circle or in a ball - the text leaves these alternatives open, and we shall soon see why it does - in a circle or in a ball the Blest surround the light that is God Himself, and in this way they form a rose, as it is called in line 117. If the word soprastando seems to pick up on the spatial conditions that pertained to the mountain, the characterisation that follows, intorno, immediately calls that analogy into question. For if the individual Blest ones, wherever they are, always stand above the light and yet simultaneously surround this light completely, then the relationship between 'above' and 'below' essentially loses relevance. The difference between the two is dissolved, and the pertinence of such spatial differentials to the Empyreum is in the same breath profoundly called into question. So at the point where the comparison appears to suggest similarities, it is in fact specifically drawing attention to differences. It is basically - as we see here - revoking itself, and we shall be able to observe the application of this method further in these lines.

This verbal image, that works against itself, is as such a very particular kind of illustration. No longer does it elucidate the unfamiliar by means of the familiar, nor the abstract by means of the graphic, rather an intentional incongruity alerts us to the general unsuitability of our notions in the face of the non-corporeal Empyreum. Thus the incongruous comparison becomes an epistemic medium; in fact it amounts to the rejection of the imagination that proves to be an unfit means with which to seek insight into the nature of this transcendental reality. Thus, by specifically employing metaphor in this way, Dante uses a poetic device as an instrument to transcend the cognitive modalities of this world. At the same time this also constitutes a remarkable recasting of the function of the imagination, which scholastic epistemology, following the Aristotelian tradition, had linked to our imaginative powers. For this theoria, imagination means a cognitive gain, because it goes hand in hand with an upwards movement, away from merely sensual data to purely intellectual entities. But Dante uses this imagination *ex negativo* in the same sense. And if this comparison does indeed raise cognitive perception onto an abstract level, then this is specifically because it also negates the responsibility of the imagination for our perception of the afterlife.

Given that so far we have been able to observe how Dante nullifies the first spatial category - the vertical axis and the opposition between 'above' and `below' - then the same may also be seen with regard to the other dimensions of space. Let us, to this end, look more closely at lines 115 -117: "E se l'infimo grado in se raccoglie/sï grande lume, quanta è la larghezza/di questa rosa ne l'estreme foglie." Here another spatial opposition, that of height and width, of vertical and horizontal, plays an important part. And in the sense that Dante now also negates this opposition, then he only succeeds in doing so by setting the two axes in a, so to say, oblique relationship to each other. And it is not least of significance that the sentence quoted in effect lays out a set of condi- tions. For the conditional constructions suggests a consecutio which specifically does not come about. A more expected construction might read: "and if the lowest tier alone can hold so great a brilliance, then how brightly must the topmost tier shine." But this is exactly what the text does not do, and it even does not do so twice over. For on one hand it contrasts the lowest threshold of the light rose, l'infimo grado, with its larghezza. On the other hand, however, larghezza is a category of expansion which points to the horizontal rather than the vertical. And there is a second difference. For, when we read "quant' a la larghezza di questa rosa ne l'estreme foglie", then the category of larghezza corresponds - both grammatically and logically - to the light. Here, then, amplitude, that is, a broadly expansive area, is set against light; and the conditional structure of the sentence shows that ultimately the two are identical. Thus the opposition between vertical and horizontal already disappears on a verbal letter. For the larghezza of the rose is located in its extreme foglie. But estremo, the extreme outer edge, denotes a peripheral position where there is no distinction between vertical and horizontal; thus estremo does not in fact stand in opposition to infimo. But this mismatch also only indicates the principle that is realised in these lines. They dissipate the differences between the classifications of space that we are familiar with, and the removal of these spatial categories brings with it a second, incomparably more incisive change. What now happens is nothing less than the identification of quantitative and qualitative phenomena. For light intensity and lateral expansion are here seen as one. And with that, one of the most crucial distinctions in our reality - the difference between quantity and quality - is negated. In the non-corporeal world of the Empyreum, that by definition also knows no spatiality, the very categories of space became purely metaphorical, a metaphor of that distinction that alone is valid here: the different degrees of blessedness, which are distributed according to the level of grace that is apportioned to each of the Blest: "il quanto e '1 quale di quella allegrezza". In this sphere quantitas is identical with qualitas. And this also explains the paraphrasis that initially appeared so odd, and that Dante uses with reference to the nature of the souls who have returned to Heaven and who have a part in his salvation: "quanta di not la su ha fatto ritorno". The soul of the human being - the immaterial part of his or her being which alone can enter the eternal blessedness of Paradise - is referred to in terms of a quantity, quanto. This at first glance almost derogatory description of the Blest in fact points to the orders of this transcendental world, in which quantitas and qualitas can no longer be distinguished from each other.

The negation of the categories of space now also makes its mark on the language of these lines; and while the introductory apostrophe on the "isplendor di Dio" was issued as an appeal to the Lord to give the poet, on his return to Earth, the capacity to describe everything as he saw it, then this appeal is answered in these lines. It is worth citing these lines (Paradiso XXX, 118 —123) once again here: "La vista mia ne l'ampio e ne l'altezza/non si smarriva, ma tutto prendeva/il quanto e 'l quale di quella allegrezza./Presso e lontano, lï, né pon né leva:/che dove Dio sanza mezzo governa,/la legge natural nulla rileva." In a sense these lines articulate what the previous lines had portrayed in the reversal of the categories familiar to us in this world. Once again the horizontal and the vertical, ampio and altezza are called into play. But what concept are they set against? "Tutto prendeva it quanto e it quale." Thus we are told that the Pilgrim was not overwhelmed (smarriva) by the breadth and height of what he was seeing, but that he perceived the quantity and the quality of this blessedness tutto, that is to say, in the same moment. Any such perception would be impossible under the laws of our own temporal world.

But these words graphically signal the differences. Space is now seen as a dimension of dispersion that is subsumed in the intelligible world; indeed spatiality, i. e. expansion, is shown by the choice of the verb smarriva to be a source of confusion. Here, in the Empyreum, there is, instead, expanseless oneness, which in turn also negates the difference between quantity and quality. The extent to which this nullification of the categories of space also pervades Dante's language, may be seen in the closing explanation for the invalidation of all natural laws: "Presso e lontano, il, né pon né leva". If one were to try to 'make sense' of these words, then one might paraphrase them as: "Near and far have no meaning there." But abstract concepts of this kind take away the real impact of Dante's words. For the non-validity of the relevant spatial categories is indicated by means of two verbs which, for their part, introduce spatial notions into the equation: "né pon né leva". And again verticals and horizontals come into play, which are thus ascribed to proximity and distance, although they are not identical to them. Thus the language in these lines evolves a metaphorical conceptuality and by means of a somewhat oblique combination of spatial categories exactly replicates the experience that constituted the Pilgrim's perception of reality in the empireo itself. And the same may be said of the phrase sanza mezzo in line 122. For this, too, links a spatial connotation, 'without distance', with a qualitative one, 'without mediator': and this mediation refers to none other than Nature, natura naturans, which at God's behest keeps Creation alive. The imagery of the formulation sanza mezzo once again causes the difference between quantitas and qualitas to disappear. "Dammi virtu a dir com'io it vidi!": this wish seems to have been fulfilled in the lines we have been looking at, and thus the text itself stands as evidence of the author's subsequent divine inspiration.

To recapitulate once more: the image in lines 109 —111, which signals dissimilarity by suggesting comparability paves the way for the dismissal of the categories of space that no longer make sense in the non-corporeal reality of the Empyreum. A circumstance that theoretical discourse can only describe as a negative finding is revealed in the comparison that revokes itself, in that it demonstrates the failure of the categories, familiar to us, that we normally resort to in the perception of reality. Thus, here again, Dante transforms poetic language into the instrument of a theoria that elucidates what theory itself is unable to describe.

While we have so far focused above all on the negation of spatial categories that Dante pursues in these lines, we shall now devote a little more attention to another phenomenon, namely the characteristics of perception itself, as it is described here. In this connection an important part is played by the notion of the mirror. As we saw, through the reference to the story of Narcissus, the mirror has, on one hand, a mythical stratum. But at the same time it has another, theoretical dimension. For the mirror also features in the patterns used to explain the human capacity for sight. A connection of this kind already seems apparent in the word or, to quote Ernst Robert Curtius, seems to be indicated by the etymology of the name. Speculum and speculari are related to each other, even if the connection may at first seem to be anything other than obvious. For a mirror would appear to be passive; whereas speculari implies an intentional, goal-oriented looking; it implies searching out meaning and serves to mediate something hitherto unknown. But this question leads us to an opposition that pertains to the entire theory of optics as Dante knew it. A fundamental feature of this theory is its inability to decide between two alternatives. For, according to this theory, it is not certain whether seeing is an active or a passive faculty. At issue is the process of seeing: whether it depends on a light that is emitted by the eyes and which refracts on external objects, or whether seeing is a matter of absorbing images that the objects themselves transmit. These alternatives are also important in explanations of intellectual cognitive processes, for the theory of seeing also provides a - metaphorical - model for intellectual cognition, that is to say, our perception of reality. However, the case that concerns us here, the perception of God by the Blest in the Empyreum, removes the difference between the two. Here seeing and perceiving are no longer linked metaphorically, instead seeing, the visio beatijicata, is shown to mean nothing less than the undistorted perception and simultaneous recognition of God. How then is the vision of the Blest, which nullifies the difference between seeing and perceiving, presented in Dante's text?

In order to answer this question it is worth looking at a further paradox in lines 112 - 115, that we have so far not taken into account. The mirror situation described here presents not fewer, but probably incomparably more difficulties than the nullification of familiar spatial categories. For in the end, we would be hard put to say what is reflected where. According to the syntax, the relationship seems perfectly clear. "Quanto di not la su fatto ha ritorno": the immaterial nature of the Blest who have returned to Heaven seems to be the subject. Thus the minds of the redeemed souls who have been elevated into Heaven seem to be reflected in the light of God. But, at the same time, these apparently entirely unequivocal syntactical relationships contradict the logic — or at least the laws —of physics. For light, as a mirror for something else, is scarcely imaginable. On the contrary, it is normally light that is reflected in mirror images. So how can this paradox be resolved? We will have to take a second passage into consideration where these light relationships are described rather differently. Concerning the lowest level of the rose, we are told that "in sé raccoglie sí grande lume". It receives light, and thus God Himself is in fact shown to be the source of all light refractions and reflections. But once again we can make good use of the aporia between different passages, for it demonstrates the truth of the reality of the afterlife. Indeed, here it is no longer possible to distinguish between self-contemplation and the perception of God. The self-perception of the Blest is identical with their gaze on the divine. Thus this God is reflected as much in the faithful who have been elevated into Heaven as these see themselves in their God-given contemplation of their Lord. Dante thus manages to provide a very plastic illustration of the traditional notion of the visio beatificata. The beatific contemplation of the Lord as the epitome — as the very existence — of the redeemed in Paradise coincides with their own self-perception. And this contemplation of the Lord is itself beatific because it goes hand in hand with self-perception; thus the contemplation of God may be understood as a reflection of the self. So Dante's construction proves to be an ingenious combination of the two theoretical alternatives for the explanation of human seeing. In the situation he creates, it is no longer possible to decide whether seeing is a result of the emission of light from within oneself or whether it is rather the absorption of images transmitted by the objects themselves. Indeed, the reciprocity of light beam and reflection renders this difference insignificant. For the contemplation of God is identical with His self-reflection and at the same time constitutes the self-contemplation of the Blest. With his intentional subversion of the laws governing the logic and the physics of this world, Dante transforms the theory of optical perception into something of a phenomenology of heavenly blessedness.

But at this point the connection to the myth of Narcissus, inscribed into the comparison, again proves to be of relevance. And again we are dealing with a negative connection: the similarity is once again lost in radical difference. The potentially fatal self-love of Narcissus, which is exacerbated by his gazing into his own reflection, is now set against the self-contemplation of the Blest which, for them, is associated with eternal life, and which is indistinguishable from God's self-reflection. The analogy with the myth of

Narcissus thus also signals its dismissal. But this dismissal goes beyond a mythic allegorese. For Dante's so to speak anagogic reading of the story recounted by Ovid — that is to say, his response in terms of the afterlife — amounts to an invalidation of this myth. It no longer seems like a puzzle that hides the truth in an opaque form. The similarity again proves to be simply an instrument that serves to point out the difference. This mythic allegorese is thus anagogic because it in effect displaces the myth.

It is scarcely even a semi-comfort when the rather sad story of Narcissus, recounted by Ovid, ends with his transformation into a flower, that is to say, into a narcissus. In Dante's Empyreum, as we see from the lines we have been examining here, the flower that forms is a rose. And it is in this form that the Blest group themselves around the divine light. But that shape of the rose also reveals a last aspect of the light reflection in which eternal grace is realised. The relevant meaning is connected to the symbolic form of the rose. The rose is known as one of the most prevalent allegories for the Mother of God, and thus it also brings the Incarnation into play. Hence the lines examined here can be regarded as a rather hybrid, in a sense scriptural-neoplatonic theory of the Incarnation of the Son of God. If the Blest in Paradise are reflected in God as God is reflected in them, then they also constitute that figure which is in fact the source of this blessedness. For it was only when God became Man that the gates of Heaven reopened. The image of the rose thus transforms the unique, salvational event, that was the root of all grace, into the eternal form that humankind's salvation takes on in Paradise. At the same time, however, the Incarnation of the Son of God seems as such to be God's own self-reflection in humankind. Dante's depiction of transcendental blessedness seems to want to perfect Creation. As we read in the book of Genesis, human beings were originally created as an "imago Dei", in God's image. And here, in the Empyreum, salvation history comes full circle, we see the redemption of sinful humankind in the mirror-like nature of this imago. For now human beings not only carry the image of God within them, now this God recognises Himself in His own image. Thus the creation of a likeness of God amounts here — through the Incarnation of that same God — into His self-contemplation in humankind. It is almost as though we were seeing a cosmological theodicy of the self-sacrifice of God. The Incarnation — the sacrifice of God to the immaculate woman, embodied by the rose — now has the same meaning as the process of Redemption. For God's sacrifice to humankind cannot be distinguished here from the salvation of the individual human being, who sees him- or herself in the contemplation of God, in the visio beatificata. The preconditions for the redemption of humankind, the Incarnation and its result — the eternal grace of the saved — are here identified as one.

In view of the construction of these verses it is at first sight astonishing to see the ease with which we talk here of an image. For the figure of the rose, that the Blest together form, is indeed an image, an image of the virgin Mother of God and, as such, the beginning of Salvation. And the lines which demonstrate the inability of human imagination to establish the nature of heavenly reality, cannot manage without that image. At the same time it is interesting to look precisely at the point where this image appears. It relates to the Incarnation, that is to say salvation history, the history of God and humankind. Thus precisely this connection to salvation history is presented in the shape of an image. And in the matter of the connection between the transcendental world and the temporal world, again the image makes an appearance. While the ontological characteristics of Paradise would seem to preclude any images, here ongoing salvation history once again reinstates them.

We have seen how the verbal image revokes itself, in order to manifest the inability of the human imagination to picture the Empyreum. But this rejection of the image not only concerns its illustrative, graphic nature. It is also a matter of the rejection of the image as an exegetic device. Which at last brings me to an as yet unfulfilled promise. For still unanswered is the question as to the reason for Dante's radical intervention in the Ovidian Narcissus myth. To put it a little bluntly — what's the point of this green, flourishing mountain that Dante has replaced Narcissus with? It seems as though the Patristics' interpretation of the Old Testament might be of assistance here. In the First Book of Kings there is a mountain, named Ephraim, on which lie the towns of Ramatha and Sophim. The interpretation of the mountain relies on the meaning of these names. Ephraim, as Gregory tells us, means 'fruit-bearing', furthermore he translates 'ramatha' as `visio' and `sophim' as 'mirror'. And so Mount Ephraim seems like a jigura coeli, a symbolic prefiguration of heavenly Paradise:

> Quis est enim mons ephraim nisi caelum? Mons quippe est frugifer, qui aeternae pulchritudinis flores et fructus indeficientis gaudii semper profert. Bene autem et ramatha et so-phim in ephraim monte sita perhibetur, quia illa omnipotentis dei aeterna uisio et altitudo illa ciuium beatorum non in terra habetur sed in caelo.'

Thus Dante's comparison is not limited to an illustrative effect, the image of the green, flourishing mountain proves at the same time to be an allegorical figuration of that Heaven whose reality is described in the sacro poema in the light reflections of the candida rosa. In view of the undistorted, unmediated contemplation of the afterlife, now this jigura coeli also loses its impact and seems no longer sufficient as a means to imagine Heaven. "Videmus nunc per speculum in enigmate tunc autem facie ad faciem": With this momentous sentence Paul articulated the difference between the truth of this world and the next. And it is only against the background of this formulation by Paul, that Dante's depiction of transcendental blessedness is seen in its true light. For this reality, too, manifests itself in mirror-relations. But these reflections are no longer mere shadows, inferior likenesses of a higher and actual truth. The self-reflection of the Blest in the light of their God is the unmediated visio beatijicata of a truth which knows no higher level. Meanwhile, almost surreptitiously, one might say, this rejection of all imagery is confronted by the new, heavenly image; and significantly the blessedness of the Blest takes the form of an image at the very point where it is alluding to the temporal world. In the sense that the visio beatificata also has its roots in the salvation history of the temporal world, so, too, the Blest form into a rose, into the image of the woman whose role was the beginning of the Salvation that is here perfected. Thus the images in the Empyreum needs must be there, because the transcendental reality of the Blest could not be shaped without reference to the fate of this world. <>

BODY AND SPIRIT IN THE MIDDLE AGES: LITERATURE, PHILOSOPHY, MEDICINE edited by: Gaia Gubbini [Funded by European Research Council (ERC) and Alexander von Humboldt-Stiftung, De Gruyter, 9783110615913] Open Access

A crucial question throughout the Middle Ages, the relationship between body and spirit cannot be understood without an interdisciplinary approach – combining literature, philosophy and medicine.

Gathering contributions by leading international scholars from these disciplines, the collected volume explores themes such as lovesickness, the five senses, the role of memory and passions, in order to shed new light on the complex nature of the medieval Self.

CONTENTS

Introduction by Gaia Gubbini
La notion philosophico-médicale de spiritus dans l'Avicenne latin by Danielle Jacquart
Skin, the inner senses, and the readers' inner life in the Aviarium of Hugh of Fouilloy and related texts by Sarah Kay
Les cinq sens, le corps et l'esprit by Éric Palazzo
Language, Soul, & Body (Parts) by Stephen G. Nichols
Corps et esprit by Gaia Gubbini
The Medical, the Philosophical, and the Theological Discourses on the Senses by Joachim Küpper
La poésie mystique by Franco Suitner
Animae sequuntur corpora by Irene Caiazzo
Amour, imagination et poésie dans l'oeuvre médicale de Gentile da Foligno by Aurélien Robert
Petrarch and the Senses by Andreas Kablitz
Melancholy and Creativity in Petrarch by Massimo Ciavolella
Bodies without Minds, Minds without Bodies by R. Howard Bloch
Le « contact virtuel » entre un esprit et un corps et l'action à distance by Nicolas Weill-Parot
Retorica delle passioni by Carla Casagrande

Excerpt: 'Body and spirit in the Middle Ages': why wonder about this subject today?

For two reasons, I would say. Two (apparently) antithetical reasons – or, rather, complementary ones.

The first reason arises from a contemporary perspective: it is a theme deeply rooted in the condition of being human, and today – maybe more than ever – the importance of the 'psychosomatic' dimension seems evident to medicine, to psychoanalysis and, more broadly, to contemporary culture. The Middle Ages, in their complexity and richness, can thus provide us (paradoxically enough) with 'new' perspectives – even on some of the questions at the centre of contemporary debates. Moreover, the problem being, as mentioned, deeply rooted in the human condition, it is a theme that is at the very heart of studia humanitatis and that, especially in the present-day context of continuous, short-sighted questioning of the legitimacy and usefulness of the study of the humanities, can constitute by itself a good answer: in a nutshell, what are the studia humanitatis if not a better understanding of the historical 'strata' and the cultural dynamics that have characterised humankind and its representation of itself and of its world over the course of time? The 'body and spirit' question is a crucial element of such a puzzle.

Which brings us to the second reason, which could be characterised as 'nostalgic': the Middle Ages and their world – where the encounter/clash between body and spirit played a central role – are forever lost, despite all our efforts. Each passage from one text to another, each historical upheaval, brings changes over the centuries, which can make researchers aware of the distance that separates them from the object of analysis. Trying to patiently 'reconstruct' – although always in a highly hypothetical way – the tesserae of the mosaic can give us a much more well-defined picture. And every tessera counts.

‘Body and spirit in the Middle Ages: literature, philosophy, medicine’: why is this complex best explored with an interdisciplinary approach? The reason for this is that the theme itself renders it necessary, due to the richness of perspectives that we find in medieval texts and works of art on this topic, from the body as a prison of the soul, according to some Church Fathers, to the texts that stage, in Latin and in the vernacular languages, debates between the body and the soul. From the senses designed as ‘windows of vices’ – in the tradition of Saint Jerome and others – to the glorification of the five senses in the liturgy and in the doctrine of the spiritual senses. From the close connection between the body, the senses, the faculty of imagination, the role of memory and of emotions, theorised by medieval philosophy and medicine, to the central role of the imagined and fantasised feminine body in the courtly lyric poetry of medieval Europe. From the body of Christ and of the saints affected by the ‘folly for Christ’ (stultitia Christi), to the psychosomatic sufferings of profane lovesickness, melancholy and folly that affect the characters of medieval romance. There are, therefore, a multitude of facets that cannot easily be separated from one another without the risk of losing the ‘depth’ of perspective.

At the base of this volume lies the conviction – developed in several years of investigations on medieval Romance literatures – that it is fundamental for the future of medieval studies to relate the literary masterpieces examined with the episteme, that is, the medical texts and also the philosophical texts that convey and summarise the knowledge of the time. It is, of course, rather difficult to identify direct sources, since it is almost impossible to know with certainty if an author has or has not read a given treatise or summa. But these investigations allow us to reconstruct, through well-founded hypotheses, the ‘imagery’ behind literary metaphors: an imagery that is, very probably, fed not only by literary references, but by the entire knowledge of the time – since medieval cultural discourses had much more permeable borders compared to the boundaries of disciplines nowadays, and they were in many cases not produced by specialists in the modern sense of the term, but, rather, by people one may characterise as cross-skilled intellectuals. A strict disciplinary compartmentalisation in the study of the Middle Ages would, therefore, distance us even more from understanding the cultural discourse of that time.

Grasping the complex and stratified nature of medieval cultural discourse is not an easy task, but the path for such an approach has been, in part, already shown by some crucial works that medieval studies have produced so far. This volume contains the papers presented during an interdisciplinary and international conference that took place at Freie Universität Berlin in November 2014: truly interdisciplinary, thanks to the participation of major specialists of medieval literature, medicine, and philosophy; and truly international, as the speakers came from four major traditions of medieval studies – from Germany, the United States, France and Italy.

A few words on the occasion of the conference are called for. It was planned in the context of my fellowship, generously financed by the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation at Freie Universität Berlin, for my project (closely connected to the theme of the conference) ‘Breaths, Sighs and Spirits in Medieval Romance Literature’. I would like to express my profound gratitude to the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation for the generosity of their support, for their cultural involvement in the promotion of humanities and their meritocratic approach toward international scholars. I would like here to thank Joachim Küpper, who was my host at the Freie Universität: when I met him, I was ‘exiled’ from my country, I was completely new to the German university system and he has always stimulated and supported me with excellent scholarly conversations and extremely insightful advice.

The following paragraphs will give a brief overview of the content of the different contributions – following not the order of their presence in this book, but some fundamental themes that connect the different essays of the volume.

The first article of the book is a contribution by Danielle Jacquart (École Pratique des Hautes Études, Paris), entitled La notion philosophico-médicale de spiritus dans l'Avicenne latin. This essay analyses the meaning, the role and the nuances that the term and the concept of spiritus have in the different Latin 'translations' of the works of Avicenna. In fact, Avicenna repeatedly refers to 'spirit' – but, as the essay highlights, without clearly stating its origin and nature. In order to try to better understand this concept in Avicenna's thought, the essay follows the different instances of this term in different works, and in particular in the following texts: De anima, Canon, De viribus cordis and De animalibus. The spiritus in the works of Avicenna is quite omnipresent, as highlighted by the author of the essay, but its role is 'multifaceted' so to speak – precisely because this subtle substance is not immaterial but, at the same time, it is distinguished from the merely 'bodily' elements. Spiritus is, in fact, the special link between body and spirit, and it is also connected, in Avicenna, with celestial bodies and with the male semen. The result of the analysis shows the complexity and variety of ideas that the Middle Ages linked to the concept of spiritus: in particular, the essay shows that the term acquires different but complementary meanings in different works of Avicenna, according to the different perspectives adopted by the author when writing medical or more philosophically oriented texts.

The stratified richness of the conceptual 'hub' constituted by spiritus is present and analysed also in the contribution Corps et esprit: les olhs espiritaus de Bernard de Ventadour et la maladie de Tristan by the editor of this volume (Gaia Gubbini, Ludwig Maximilians-Universität München). This essay is divided into two sections – closely linked to one another precisely by the role played by the stratified and multiple medieval concept of 'spirit', and by its complex relationship with the body. The first part is dedicated to the analysis of the expression in langue d'oc olhs espiritaus contained in a very important song of the troubadour Bernart de Ventadorn, Chantars no pot gaire valer. In this first section of the article, the expression 'eyes full of spirit' is connected to both Patristic and medical texts. The second section is devoted to the Anglo-Norman texts in verses on Tristan and Iseut: the Tristan et Yseut of Béroul, the one of Thomas d'Angleterre, and two different (but very similar) anonymous texts known as the Folies Tristan (the Folie de Berne and the Folie d'Oxford). The relationship between fictitious and real maladies of the character of Tristan is investigated, connecting the 'symptoms' to the medical discourse of the time. In both of its sections, this essay shows how the entangled relationship between body and spirit plays a key role in some of the literary masterpieces of medieval France and Anglo-Norman England, and that the dominant note of such an interconnection seems to be the 'psychosomatic' dimension.

A crucial element of this connection between body and spirit is to be found in the five senses, analysed in the essay Les cinq sens, le corps et l'esprit by Éric Palazzo (Université de Poitiers-CESCM, IUF). The symbolic meaning of the five senses in the authors of late Antiquity and of the Middle Ages is rooted in the 'unity' of body and spirit. This unity, the essay explains, is, in turn, at the basis of the twofold medieval doctrine of the bodily and spiritual senses. The essay continues and explains the development of this doctrine – and its influence on the liturgy – through the centuries, highlighting the milestones of this history. After a period dominated by the demonisation of the sinful dimension of the bodily five senses – strongly present, for example, in Saint Jerome – a fundamental turning point on this theme is to be found in Saint Augustine's thought, which deepened the doctrine of the spiritual senses as well as shaped and developed the concepts of inner sense and of synaesthesia. The further development of the conceptualisation of the five senses shows, for example in the case of Saint Bernard, how the five senses play the role of 'mediator' between God and humankind. Thus, the essay sheds light on the twofold role played by the five senses in the history of Christian thinking, namely that humankind can either reach God thanks to the help of the spiritual senses, or definitively lose itself in the sinful and fleeting pleasures of the five bodily senses.

Skin, senses and emotions: these themes – intimately connected to the 'body and spirit' conceptual knot investigated in this volume – are addressed in the contribution Skin, the inner senses, and the readers' inner life in the Aviarium of Hugh of Fouilloy and related texts of Sarah Kay (New York University). In this essay, the author argues that Hugh of Fouilloy's Aviarium – and the literary bestiary tradition related to this text – builds a close connection between the bodily substance of the manuscript (the skin) and the emotional dimension of the spiritual self of the reader. Hugh uses sensorial imagery with high awareness – as the author demonstrates – emphasising the relationship between external and inner senses, in order to overcome the clear-cut separation 'flesh vs. spirit' that was at the basis of earlier bestiary production. The central role of imagination and of the senses is highlighted in the prologue of the Aviarium. The essay argues that the Aviarium exploits the similarity between the hide used for the manuscript and the skin of the human being in order to convey a 'mothering' and parental theme and, through all this process, the 'awakening' of the imagination and of the inner life of the reader. Seeing and touching the parchment changes the practice of reading entirely, which becomes for the medieval reader a 'second skin', as the essay defines it. Through such an experience, the reader can shift from visual image to the touch of the parchment and, via the external senses, advance to the internal senses and to the inner self.

At the centre of the essay The Medical, the Philosophical, and the Theological Discourses on the Senses: Congruences and Divergences by Joachim Küpper (Freie Universität Berlin) stand the different conceptions about human perception at play in the Middle Ages. The paper argues that during the medieval period different discourses divulge different ideas about the senses. In particular, the medical, philosophical, and theological discourses diverge with regard to a specific point – the post-sensory faculties of the mind that govern the inner senses. If the different faculties (virtutes) are common to human beings and beasts, what is the difference between them? Where the medical discourse conceives such a difference as a gradual and not a fundamental one, philosophy and theology cannot agree on this point – since the question involves a fundamental issue: free will and moral responsibility. The essay shows that such divergent anthropologies on the human perception co-existed within medieval discourse, and even in the textual production of specific individuals, depending on the field to which their various texts pertain. As a proof of this medieval 'pluralism' an emblematic passage from Petrus Hispanus' Quaestiones de animalibus is analysed, where the author – a professor of medicine, later elected pope with the name of John XXI – describes sexual intercourse and the female intimate parts following two different functions, pleasure and procreation. These two functions are in this passage regarded as independent from one another and, surprisingly enough for a Christian point of view, they are not 'hierarchised'. The essay shows how Petrus Hispanus as a medical author admits certain concepts to his scientific writings that as a theologian and as a pope he would (later) condemn.

The senses, their presence, their relationship to reason and the moral discourse of Petrarch's Canzoniere are at the centre of the essay Petrarch and the Senses. Petrarch's Anthropology of Love and the Scholastic Transformation of Christian Ethics of Andreas Kablitz (Universität zu Köln). Through a close reading of Sonnet No. 6, Sì travïato è 'l folle mi' desio, Kablitz detects quotations and reuses of Thomas Aquinas' texts – a device that recurs in other poems by the author. The essay highlights how, though apparently the reuse of passages of Scholastic origin in the context of love poetry seems to operate an 'inversion' of Thomistic moral discourse, in fact Petrarch mirrors in his poetry the contradictions and the inconsistencies already existent in Scholastic ethics. In particular, at centre stage is the complicated, tortured relationship between reason and the senses. After original sin, the essay shows, and therefore after the loss of the iustitia originalis – a gift from God to humankind, to allow humans to control desire and the sensual drives and to direct themselves instead towards God – reason cannot be conceived as completely independent from sensorial and sensual involvements. As the effect of original sin, reason is inevitably bound to the senses: therefore, marginalised, reason cannot guarantee a safeguard for humankind against sin. The result of the battle among reason, senses and will thus remain uncertain – and Petrarch has imbued his texts with this suspended contradiction.

The essay Language, Soul, & Body (Parts) by Stephen G. Nichols (Johns Hopkins University) is focused on the relationship between the sexually-gendered body and the complex dynamics of mind, soul and body. The author highlights the paradoxical pattern of the coexistence of two contradictory elements: on the one hand, the rich series of names devoted to the erogenous zones and, on the other, the cultural norm and prohibition according to which the parts of shame should have no name. The essay analyses the obsession that Antiquity and the Middle Ages had with these human organs, an obsession that, far from being dispelled by the oft-repeated prohibition of naming the sexually-gendered body, is rooted in the highly problematic relationship present in every human being between mens (mind), ratio (reason), anima (soul) and animus (will) – as a passage of Isidore examined in the essay clearly states. Such a polarised and coexistent contradiction is strongly present also in Troubadour poetry, as the essay shows: in this literary tradition we find a 'spiritualised' version of the fin'amors, but also the exuberant exaltation of sexuality – accompanied by a very physical description of male intimate parts. The 'boomerang effect' – as the author defines it – of the haunting presence of what should be kept silent and unnamed is particularly strong in a key figure of Western philosophy, Peter Abelard, and, especially, in the dense passage of the Historia calamitatum – a fundamental text to understand medieval France – where he narrates his castration full of anguish.

The exaltation of bodily and, in particular, sensual pleasures is a dominant note in the texts analysed in the essay Bodies without Minds, Minds without Bodies. Tales of the Night in the Fabliaux and Boccaccio by R. Howard Bloch (Yale University). The contribution analyses a special sub-genre present in ancient French fabliaux and in the Decameron of Boccaccio, 'the tale of a single night', that is to say tales that develop within the time frames from dusk to dawn. These texts convey a special relationship with time, sexuality and love. If, in the fabliaux analysed, the bodily pleasures are not connected to previous sentimental connections between the characters and are therefore the simple expression of sexual drives, in one of Boccaccio's tales examined, novella IX, 6, the sexual intercourse of Pinuccio and Niccolosa is almost 'prepared' in the diegesis by a mutual, shared desire. In fact the two characters of Pinuccio and Niccolosa, as the essay explains, fall in love with each other long before the night of love – their romance, in contrast to the cases of sexual intercourse present in the fabliaux, preexists their first night and it lasts after it: they will continue their relationship with many nights after the first one. Therefore, compared to the fabliaux, in Boccaccio's novella there appears a different concept of time and love, according to which the body and its sensual pleasures involve mind, will and desire – where sex meets romance, as it were.

The body and spirit meet and intertwine in the 'psychosomatic' medieval malady par excellence: the malady of love, which is at the centre of the essay Amour, imagination et poésie dans l'œuvre médicale de Gentile da Foligno of Aurélien Robert (CNRS, Centre d'Études Supérieures de la Renaissance). This contribution focuses on the commentary of the 14th-century Italian physician Gentile da Foligno on the Canon of Avicenna, and in particular on the section devoted to the analysis of love's passion. The questions that Gentile da Foligno places at the centre of his commentary – on the origin of the passion of love, on the influence of the imagination on the body, on the power of words in the physical expression of passion – are conceived by the physician as an 'organic' system: such a perspective, tackling all these questions simultaneously constitutes a novelty in the panorama of the treatises of the time. Medieval physicians generally stressed the strong role of imagination in the development of amorous passion: however, they also underlined bodily dysfunctions as preconditions linked to the origin of such a malady. The essay highlights that, compared to this tradition, Gentile da Foligno instead accentuates the importance of dysfunctions of the mind as the key element for love malady to develop. Moreover, in Gentile da Foligno's commentary we find a crucial element for the relationship between literature and medicine in 14th-century Italy: an enhancement of the central function of poetry and of its connection with the malady of love. The essay demonstrates how, in Gentile da Foligno's analysis of love malady, the description of the characteristics of the love-sick come very close to those of the (love-)poet.

The essay Melancholy and Creativity in Petrarch by Massimo Ciavolella (University of California Los Angeles) is dedicated to the close relationship between the intellectual dimension of creativity and the key humoral imbalance and (consequent) malady of melancholy in the Rerum Vulgarium Fragmenta and in the Secretum of Petrarch. The author examines the psycho-physiological dynamics that influence the relationship between melancholy and poetic creativity in Petrarch. In these dynamics the role played by imagination and the function of phantasmata in engendering melancholy is of crucial importance: in fact, the essay explains, the heat caused by desire and by the multiplications of spirits 'alters' the receptacle of the brain containing the power of estimation. Such an overheating of this specific receptacle is at the origin of the power and the endurance of the images – the phantasmata, causing, amongst other symptoms, dryness of the brain and the consequent increase of the melancholic humour. The alteration of the power of estimation creates the crucial problem that tra verses the works of Petrarch as a fil rouge: the 'confusion' and conflation of physi cal desire and the moral good, as the essay highlights. In Petrarch the invincible power of the phantasmata finds its perfect representation in the obsessive presence of Laura's image – the phantasm that overwhelms the faculty of estimation of the lyric 'I' and takes the place of the good. An illusory object of desire, Laura becomes in fact a fictio fixed in the imagination, engendering the melancholic passion that permeates the Rerum Vulgarium Fragmenta and that is acknowleged as the obstacle to salvation in the Secretum.

At the centre of the essay Animae sequuntur corpora. Le philosophe, les astres et la physiognomonie au XIIIe siècle by Irene Caiazzo (CNRS, PSL, Laboratoire d'Études sur les Monothéismes) is the bodily and moral portrait of the intellectual contained in 13th-century texts on physiognomy. Physiognomy, 'reborn' in the West in the 12th century, fully develops in the 13th century and tries to understand the disposition of a person based on their appearance; it establishes, during the Middle Ages, a close connection between medicine, psychology, philosophy and astrology. The essay analyses in particular one of the first commentaries to the pseudo-Aristotelian Physiognomy, the commentary of William of Aragon. One of the main concerns of this commentary is to establish what kind of relationship exists between body and soul: the commentary highlights the interdependence of body and soul – a basic concept for the science of physiognomy – but, at the same time, it stresses the supremacy of the soul over the body. William of Aragon's text argues that, through the study of physiognomy, it is possible to detect a human being's natural attitude towards science: the commentary emphasises that it is only the attitude towards science that is possible to recognise – and not an intellectual 'in act'. The essay shows that the commentary of William of Aragon founds the 'scientific' basis of physiognomy in astrology through the implementation of a cosmology. This strong role of astrology in the physical and intellectual formation of human beings – and therefore in the analysis of physiognomy – is a medieval innovation.

The relationships between body and spiritual substances and between celestial and terrestrial bodies are fundamental in order to understand the dynamics of the notion of 'virtual contact': this is the topic at the core of the essay Le « contact virtuel » entre un esprit et un corps et l'action à distance of Nicolas WeillParot (École Pratique des Hautes Études, EPHE PSL). The notion of contactus virtualis has a double dimension: the action of a spirit on a body and the action of a body on a spiritual substance. The essay stresses the importance of Thomas Aquinas' distinction – present in his Commentary of Sentences (I, d. 37, q.3, art. 1, co.) – of two sorts of touch, the proper one, were the extremities touch each other, and the 'metaphorical' touch, that takes place only with an action at a distance (and this is specific to angels). But how could such a concept of the action of a spiritual entity on a body be conceived and formulated in the context of an Aristotelian philosophy which implied a 'contact' between the agent and the patient? As the contribution shows, different thinkers, in different contexts and dealing with different subjects, gave different answers to this question. Thomas Aquinas uses this concept of contactus virtualis several times in order to explain the action of a spiritual substance – such as a demon, an angel or God – on a body. But the contribution also stresses that several 13th-century authors conceive 'action at a distance' the other way round: that is to say, the action that a body can exert on a spiritual substance, and, in particular, on one of the soul's faculties. The contribution highlights, moreover, that a special form of contactus virtualis is to be detected in the contact between celestial bodies and, distant from them, terrestrial ones.

The simultaneous presence of the bodily dimension and of the spiritual one is a key element of religious literature and mysticism, as shown in this volume by two essays. The first essay dealing with religious production is the one by Franco Suitner (Università di Roma Tre), entitled La poésie mystique: Iacopone da Todi et les contradictions de l'âme. The idea of the body present in the poetry of Iacopone da Todi – the most important Franciscan poet of medieval Italian literature – is complex and stratified. As the contribution highlights, Saint Francis, alter Christus, has modelled his religious trajectory on that of Christ. Franciscan mysticism is therefore Christocentric, as the body of Christ – simultaneously 'vessel' of all worldly pains and triumphantly resurrected – plays a crucial role in it. In the poetry of Iacopone da Todi there is a double evaluation of the bodily dimension: in fact on one hand, the body is an obstacle for the elevation of the soul, but on the other it is important to keep it in good health, the body being the 'medium' of our penitence before God. The spiritual dimension – the other 'pole' of the complex couple at the basis of the present book – is also perceptible in a contradictory, yet intense way in the religious production of Iacopone da Todi, and seems to mirror the contradictions of the body just evoked. In fact, where some texts refer to the soul in a 'plain' way, according to which the spiritual dimension represents simply the 'good' side of humankind, in some other laude we find more ambiguous passages that insist on the soul's freedom and seem – as the contribution highlights – to echo certain theories linked to the coeval Heresy of the Free Spirit.

The last contribution that ends the volume, the essay Retorica delle passioni. La preghiera tra anima e corpo of Carla Casagrande (Università degli studi di Pavia) is dedicated to the entanglement of body and spirit and to its role in the prayer of the mystic author Jean Gerson. The article insists on a crucial element, intimately connected to the 'body and spirit' enquiry at the basis of this volume: the importance of emotions in the Middle Ages. Jean Gerson in fact, at the end of Middle Ages, builds in his works what the author of the essay defines as a 'rhetoric of the affective communication with God' – therefore: a communication entirely grounded on emotions. Starting and ending with Jean Gerson, the essay analyses the idea, broadly shared during the Middle Ages, that emotions play a fundamental role in prayer – investigating, moreover, which kinds of emotions are present, and in which order, in prayer, according to authors like Augustine, Hugh of Saint Victor, William of Auvergne and, of course, Jean Gerson. The investigation on the emotions in prayer also involves the participation of the body in this process. However, as the essay highlights, the presence of the body is not to be detected in the emotions in prayer themselves, which, directed to God, have to be purified and detached from earthly involvements. The body is present in the prayer through the voice, the gesture: it helps the person praying to move himself – and, therefore, to make the prayer more intense, and deeper.

As I have tried to sketch out here, the 'body and spirit' topic has been tackled in this volume with a richness and a broadness of perspectives that would not have been possible without an interdisciplinary approach – combining literature, philosophy and medicine. The present book, dealing with a crucial question such as this, of prime importance throughout the Middle Ages, moreover explores further fundamental themes intimately related to the 'body and spirit' question – such as lovesickness, the five senses, the role of memory, passions and emotions – so as to shed new light on the complex nature of the medieval Self. <>

POETRY, BIBLE AND THEOLOGY FROM LATE ANTIQUITY TO THE MIDDLE AGES edited by Michele Cutino [Series Millennium-Studien / Millennium Studies, De Gruyter, 9783110687194]

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

CONTENTS

Introduction
Contents
PART I: THE GREEK-LATIN BIBLICAL EPIC IN LATE ANTIQUITY
Narrative and Exegesis in Sedulius' Carmen paschale by Michael Roberts
Fictions poétiques et vérités bibliques dans les réécritures vétéro et néotestamentaires en vers by Michele Cutino
L'auteur et son public by Nicole Hecquet-Noti
La réécriture des récits bibliques de guérison chez les poètes latins du IVe au VIe siècle by Sylvie Labarre
Avit de Vienne et Dracontius en rapport by Luciana Furbetta
L'autorité apostolique à travers les discours de l'Historia Apostolica d'Arator by Bruno Bureau
Severus (of Malaga?) and Narrative Construction by Franca Ela Consolino
Usage des sources poétiques classiques et perspectives «théologiques» dans l'Heptateuchos de Cyprien le Gaulois (Ve s.) by Renaud Lestrade
Four Variations on the Theme by Donato De Gianni
Dieu rejeté, Dieu triomphant by Filip Doroszewski
Salut et prophéties messianiques dans le septième chant de la Paraphrase de Nonnos by Arianna Rotondo
Voices, Hearing and Acoustic Epiphany in Nonnus' Paraphrase of St. John's Gospel by Salvatore Costanza
PART II: BIBLICAL POETRY AND THEOLOGICAL AIMS IN OTHER POETIC GENRES BETWEEN LATE ANTIQUITY AND THE MIDDLE AGES
La poésie biblique grecque en Égypte au IVe siècle by Gianfranco Agosti
Deux chemins d'apprentissage by Anna Lefteratou
Two Metrical Rewritings of the Greek Psalms by Rachele Ricceri
Descent and Ascent in the 8th Hymn of Synesius of Cirene by Jesús F. Polo
Gregory of Nazianzus' Hymn to Parthenie (II.1.2.1–214) by Miguel Herrero de Jáuregui
Les personnages bibliques, héros d'une épopée grecque chrétienne dans la poésie de Grégoire de Nazianze by Juliette Prudhomme
Grave Matters: Love, Death, Resurrection, and Reception in the De laudibus Domini by Danuta Shanzer
Un diner sur l'herbe by Gabriella Aragione and Agnès Molinier Arbo
Biblical hypotexts in Prudentius' Contra Symmachum by Manuel José Crespo Losada
O crucifer bone lucisator (Prudence, cath. 3.1) by Patricio De Navascués
Figures bibliques et idéal familial de la consécration à Dieu by Alice Leflaëc
Poétique des listes apostoliques by Christophe Guignard
PART III: THE VERSIFICATION OF THE BIBLE IN THE LATIN WEST IN THE MIDDLE AGE
La réception en Afrique, au VIe siècle, du motif apocalyptique de la fin du monde à travers le poème de Verecundus de Junca et l'anonyme «À Flavius Felix» by Vincent Zarini
La doctrine dans les hymnes de la liturgie wisigothique by Céline Urlacher-Becht
La dramatisation de l'histoire biblique dans la poésie carolingienne by Pascale Bourgain
Entre satire de l'Église et parodie biblique by François Ploton-Nicollet
Die Bibeldichtung Aurora des Petrus Riga (P.R.) by Kurt Smolak
Théologie de la poésie entre Scolastique et Humanisme by Francesco Stella
Voice of the Muse, Word of the Church by Daniel Nodes
Post vestigia gregum by Isabelle Fabre

Bible, poésie et doctrine dans la Josephina de Jean Gerson by Isabel Iribarren
Abstracts
Index of Ancient and Medieval Authors
Index of Biblical Texts

This volume contains the proceedings of the International Symposium "Poetry, Bible and Theology from Late Antiquity to the Middle Ages" organized on25– 27 January 2018 in Strasbourg by ERCAM, "Research Team on Ancient and Medieval Christianity", belonging to UR 4377 of Catholic Theology and Religious Sciences of Strasbourg, in collaboration with several French institutions (IEA, "Institut d'Études Aug ustiniennes "-LEM,"Laboratoire d'études sur les monothéismes"-UMR 8584; École Nationale des Chartres; THAT Association,"Texts for the History of Late Antiquity"; CARRA EA 3094- University of Strasbourg) and international Institutions (Facultad de Literatura Cristianay Clásica"San Justino" (FLCC) of Madrid; Universidad Complutense de Madrid). This conference was attended by the greatest specialists in late ancient and medieval poetry, involving a total of 33 papers, divided into three full days.

All methodological questions concerning Christian poetry– i. e. Christian, Greek and Latin, ancient and medieval, poetic texts, in classical metres– with biblical and theological content, were approached from a diachronic perspective which made it possible to evaluate the doctrinal significance and the role that these compositions play even in the development of Christian theological ideas and biblical exegesis. From a chronological point of view, we have taken into account the period from Late Antiquity to the Middle Ages, with particular attention to the adaptation of classical poetic modules to there writing of the Bible in all its forms by Greek and Latin poets of Late Antiquity, and to the new forms of biblical poetry promoted in the West, from the Carolingian Renaissance to the 12th-13th centuries, when the Charters legitimized the use of poetry in the theological debate, and to the later polemics between scholastic theologians (such as Giovanni Dominici and Jean Gerson) and Christian "humanist" poets. Indeed, it can be noted that the use of poetic genres by Greek and Latin-speaking Christians begins much later (especially from the end of the 3rd century/ beginning of the 4th century) than the birth of Christian literary production in prose, which accompanies the very birth of this religion. This "delay" reveals a real difficulty for Christian culture: the creation of a code adapted to the expression of biblical contents, central in this religion, through the cultural tools of Greek and Latin literary production inverse. This difficulty is often reflected in declarations of radical incompatibility between the two areas of reflection of Sacred Scripture and poetry, which is the instrument of expression privileged by profane culture (just think of certain statements hostile to poetry by important authors, such as Jerome or Augustine, who will have a follow-up to the Middle Ages, as M. Zink Poésie et conversion au Moyen Âge, Paris2003. has clearly shown). On the other hand, poetry is at the origin of attempts to integrate the style of biblical poetic texts, psalms, and classical literary forms (this is the path followed, for example, by the type of Responsorial Psalm, which will not be very successful. The solution that ultimately prevails over the others gives rise, using a remarkable expression of Herzog, to the third cycle of poems of Western literature, which flanks the Homeric and Carolingian-Arthurian cycles: the cycle of biblical poetry in classical meters. This is a literary field of vital importance, which, after having encountered prejudices from a certain classicising perspective, especially from the middle of the20th century, has been established in the panorama of critical studies because of its chronological cross-cutting. Indeed, the "canons" of biblical poetry developed in Late Antiquity will dominate medieval schools and even those of the humanist era, finding also a favourable ground in the culture of the Reformation and Counter-Reformation, to enter definitively into crisis with the cultural renewal of the

Enlightenment. This has also been established thanks to the interaction that the field has promoted between emerging cultures, biblical-Christian and Germanic, and Greek-Latin civilization in its expressive forms.

The symposium highlighted the socio-cultural importance of this transposition of scriptural content into poetic forms: in fact, according to various modalities and purposes, and in relation to different recipients and reference environments, this transposition aims, first of all, at the "vulgarization" of the biblical interpretation and theological speculation in favor of the *rudes*, i.e. people who are foreign to catechetical schools or to the ecclesiastical careers, but who belong to the cultured/educated elites of their time, through the expressive instrument privileged by them, that is, the production in verse. This is the reason why Christian literature inverse is of great interest in the in-depth evaluation even of the phenomenon of the Christianization of the ruling classes, especially from the fourth/fifth century. A literary genre such as the 'epic' or the 'biblical paraphrase' clearly shows the value of this cultural operation: the transposition principally into hexameters of the books of the Old Testament (mention the paraphrases of Genesis by Cyprian the Gaul, Claudius Marius Victorius and Avitus) or of the New Testament (such as the Evangeliorum libri of Juvencus, the Carmen Paschale of Sedulius, the Paraphrase of the John's Gospel of Nonnos of Panopolis and the Historia apostolorum of Arator) is not reduced to a simple rhetorical exercise or a literary reading. As M. Roberts (Biblical Epic and Rhetorical Paraphrase in Late Antiquity, Liverpool 1985) and D. Nodes (Doctrine and Exegesis in Biblical Latin Poetry, Leeds 1993) have clearly shown, from different perspectives. J. Nodes, such transpositions into verse offer readers a re-reading of the biblical hypotext, an "update" of Scripture in relation to the requirements and expectations of there reference environment. So, this production associates scriptural interpretations and doctrinal commentaries with paraphrasing in verse, so that for this genre, we can also speak of a true biblical exegesis inverse, which is often accompanied by very precise theological objectives.

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

By publishing these proceedings, we are convinced that the contributions they contain will make it possible to provide a good framework for these issues and to bring new clarification to them. — Michele Cutino <>

ROME AND THE NEAR EASTERN KINGDOMS AND PRINCIPALITIES, 44-31 BC: A STUDY OF POLITICAL RELATIONS DURING CIVIL WAR by Hendrikus A.M. van Wijlick [Series: Impact of Empire, Brill, 9789004441743]

The study presents a critical analysis of the political relations between Rome and Near Eastern kingdoms and principalities during the age of civil war from the death of Julius Caesar in 44 to Mark Antony's defeat at Actium in 31 BC. By examining each bilateral relationship separately, it argues that those relations were marked by a large degree of continuity with earlier periods. Circumstances connected to the civil war had only a limited impact on the interstate conduct of the period despite the effects that the strife had on Rome's domestic politics and the *res publica*. The ever-present rival Parthia and its external policies were more influential in steering the relations between Rome and Near Eastern powers.

CONTENTS

Dedication
Preface
Figures
A Note on the Maps, Texts and Abbreviations
Introduction
Part 1 Prelude
Chapter 1 Pompey's Reorganisation of the Near East, 66–63 BC
Part 2
Section 1 44–42 BC
Chapter 2 Parthia
Chapter 3 Ptolemaic Kingdom
Chapter 4 Judaea
Chapter 5 Princedom of Chalcis and the Emisenoi
Section 2 42–31 BC
Chapter 6 Parthia
Chapter 7 Ptolemaic Kingdom
Chapter 8 Judaea
Chapter 9 Princedom of Chalcis
Chapter 10 Nabataea
Chapter 11 Armenia
Chapter 12 Media Atropatene
Chapter 13 Commagene
Part 3 Types of Conduct
Introduction to Part 3
Chapter 14 Conduct of Near Eastern Rulers towards Rome
Chapter 15 Rome's Conduct towards Near Eastern Kingdoms and Principalities
Epilogue
Appendices
List of Editions Used
Bibliography

Index of Ancient Sources
Index of Personal Names
Index of Geographical Names
General Index

More than twenty-five years have passed now since the publication of **THE ROMAN NEAR EAST 31 BC–AD 337**, Fergus Millar's ground-breaking work on the social and political history of the Levant and its hinterland during the Principate and the successive period of the tetrarchs up until the death of Constantine. As prophesied by Michał Gawlikowski in a review at that time, the book still stands as the best analysis of Near Eastern society during the Roman imperial era, not only in that it exposes the variety in civilisation and culture across the entire region in question, but also in that it demonstrates how changes in political circumstances—more specifically Rome's eastward expansion and the interplay with the Parthians and (later) the Sassanians—influenced social life within the area. Pioneering as this work thus is, Millar chose not to trace Rome's presence in the Near East to its initial stages in the 60s BC, but instead to begin his analysis at the Battle of Actium, judging that a stretch of the chronological confines as far back as Pompey's intervention into the affairs in Syria "would have either taken up too much space or failed to reveal much about the Near East itself, or probably both". Undeniably, there is much to say in favour of a beginning in 31 BC, besides constraints of time and space: the end of a more than thirteen years lasting period of civil war—and prior to that intermittent flares of political unrest—the emergence of an emperor at the head of the Roman state and the ensuing changes in governance and political culture. Yet, given the fact that the work does not merely aim to unveil the geography, languages, social life and local identities of the region in question, but also the gradual progress of Roman direct rule over the Near East as well as the resultant political relations which Rome had with Parthia and minor kingdoms and principalities situated in the Levant and in the Euphrates catchment basins, a more elaborate discussion on the political events of this region prior to Actium would have been welcomed—even if in a separate publication. Moreover, I am unable to concur with Millar when he asserts that the period from Pompey's administrative reorganisation of the Near East up to Octavian's decisive victory in the civil war in 31 BC would fail to bring about relevant insights into the area in question. Indeed, if one has a predeliction for history of the *longue durée*, then an excursion into the Late Republic may not reveal much of the Near East. But if other more contingent aspects of the past are observed, such as political structures and interstate relations maintained by Rome—issues which Millar *does* consider in his work—then it is hardly convincing that an appraisal of the source material for the outgoing years of the Republic would *not* unveil a great deal, in particular when one considers that the period of civil war from 44 until 31 was characterised by institutional novelties, deviant administrative practices—especially with regard to the provinces—armed clashes, and by an almost continuous movement of troops and military personnel. Reflecting on these developments should we not expect these changes to have had some effect on Rome's affairs in the Near East where the easternmost stretches of its empire were situated, on political relations with Near Eastern powers as well as on the administrative landscape of the region?

The present work aims to redress the balance somewhat, not by considering the entire political and interstate history of the Near East from Pompey up to Actium, but by providing a critical analysis of the political relations maintained by Rome on the one hand and Near Eastern kingdoms and principalities on the other hand during the era of civil conflict from 44 until 31. In the light of the developments just described it is to examine whether the relations between Rome and royal powers in the Near East—the area that more than once would function as the main stage of the civil war—also underwent any changes. In the field of cultural anthropology, processes marked by an overturn of existing structures, institutions and practices, as a result of which all those participating or involved in these changes enter a state of liminality, are attractive objects of study. Societal changes not infrequently are associated with an erosion of certainties, with strife and violence. The famed symbolic anthropologist Victor Turner once provided a justification for why analyses of such processes of change are invaluable:

> Conflict seems to bring fundamental aspects of society, normally overlaid by the customs and habits of daily intercourse, into frightening prominence. People have to take sides in terms of deeply entrenched moral imperatives and constraints, often against their own personal preferences. Choice is overborne by duty.

The present study will more than once provide the reader with instances whereby Near Eastern powers had to choose, confronted as they were by Roman internal discord, the origins of which lay far beyond most them both in physical distance and in responsibility. Thus far, no publication has specifically focused on Rome's interstate transactions with the Near East during the thirteen years that marked the transition from Republic to Principate. Although the French historian Maurice Sartre deals in his *opus magnum* with the political and socio-cultural history of the Levant from the era of Alexander the Great until the demise of the Palmyrene Empire in AD 273, his study is limited in geographical terms to the Levant, and does not deal, for example, with Egypt. Michael Sommer's monograph from 2005, on the other hand, is a cultural history of the Near East and as such does not specifically treat interstate relations in our period of civil war. Yet, even Adrian Sherwin-White and Richard Sullivan, who both *do* cover bilateral interactions in their respective works, have focused predominantly on the period prior to the civil war, and less so on the period of Roman civil war from 44 until 31—Sullivan mainly with reference to the dynastic relations in Asia Minor and the Near East. This disparity is odd given the fact that the evidence for Rome's affairs with foreign powers in the Near East during this era of civil strife is not necessarily inferior to the source material for Pompey's reorganisation of Asia Minor and the Levant. Even studies that do concentrate on the age of internal strife have neglected Rome's foreign affairs in the Near East.

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The period of civil war between Caesar's assassination in 44 and the defeat of Antony and Cleopatra in the Battle of Actium in 31 did not merely see armed clashes between Roman armies, but also a proliferation in new administrative practices, especially following the enactment of the Triumvirate in November 43 by the *lex Titia*. It is well-known that during the period of the Triumvirate, many measures were taken against traditional custom. Not only were the proconsuls appointed by the triumvirs themselves, they even controlled the selection of other magistrates to a large extent. Nevertheless, in spite of all the unlawful and despotic measures taken by the triumvirs, Fergus Millar has argued convincingly in a classic article from 1973 that "the Triumvirate was an institution which was created by a form of law, and which was superimposed on, but did not replace, the institutions of the *res publica*". Numerous indications in our extant source material indicate, for example, that the people's assemblies were still summoned for the passage of laws, or that the magistrates were not all directly appointed by the triumvirs. The administrative institutions of the *res publica* did thus not cease to function in the age of Roman civil war that lasted from 44 until 31. Whether a similar continuity can be detected in the conduct of Rome and Near Eastern kings and princes towards one another, is an issue that needs to be examined at present. In order to determine the extent to which this behaviour altered during the period of civil strife, the political interaction between Rome and Near Eastern rulers in the period from 44 until 31 shall be compared with the bilateral relations between these two parties in the period before this civil war. Such a comparative analysis, on the one hand from the perspective of the Near Eastern kingdoms and principalities (chapter 14) and on the other hand from the perspective of Rome (chapter 15), will shed light on the extent to which the conduct of each of the parties towards one another between 44 and 31 was typical of our period of civil war and, consequently, facilitate a better understanding of the civil war's impact on the political interaction between Rome and Near Eastern rulers. <>

ARRIAN THE HISTORIAN: WRITING THE GREEK PAST IN THE ROMAN EMPIRE by Daniel W. Leon [University of Texas Press, 9781477321867]

During the first centuries of the Roman Empire, Greek intellectuals wrote a great many texts modeled on the dialect and literature of Classical Athens, some 500 years prior. Among the most successful of these literary figures were sophists, whose highly influential display oratory has been the prevailing focus of scholarship on Roman Greece over the past fifty years. Often overlooked are the period's historians, who spurned sophistic oral performance in favor of written accounts. One such author is Arrian of Nicomedia. Daniel W. Leon examines the works of Arrian to show how the era's historians responded to their sophistic peers' claims of authority and played a crucial role in theorizing the past at a time when knowledge of history was central to defining Greek cultural identity. Best known for his history of Alexander the Great, Arrian articulated a methodical approach to the study of the past and a notion of historical progress that established a continuous line of human activity leading to his present and imparting moral and political lessons. Using Arrian as a case study in Greek historiography, Leon demonstrates how the genre functioned during the Imperial Period and what it brings to the study of the Roman world in the second century.

CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS
NOTE ON TEXTS AND TRANSLATIONS
INTRODUCTION
CHAPTER 1. Amateurs, Experts, and History
CHAPTER 2. Novelty and Revision in the Works of Arrian
CHAPTER 3. Alexander among the Kings of History
CHAPTER 4. Sickness, Death, and Virtue
CONCLUSION
APPENDIX: THE DATE OF THE *ANABASIS*
ABBREVIATIONS IN THE NOTES AND BIBLIOGRAPHY
NOTES
BIBLIOGRAPHY
INDEX LOCORUM
GENERAL INDEX

In the foregoing pages, I have followed a single author through the experience of writing history in the second century CE, always with an eye to illuminating the intellectual atmosphere in which he was working. Along the way, I have shown how he defined himself against popular cultural trends by appealing to a particular vision of research that elevated the study of history above other types of scholarly activity. This vision also posited a separation between the historian's idealized future audience and inferior contemporary audiences who preferred flashy performances over serious historical conversations, a rhetorical gambit with deep roots in Classical Greek historiography. The ancient rivalry between historians and virtuoso literary performers helped Arrian and his colleagues claim ownership of a body of knowledge that intellectuals working in other disciplines clearly valued, even as they refused to compete on the chosen playing field of their rivals. At the same time, I have shown how Arrian deployed narrative techniques and intellectual discourses that were current in his own day to improve the methodologies available to those who wished to master the study of history. In so doing, he not only provided a model for emulation but also authorized continued attempts to create meaningful narratives of real past events, whether recent (as in his history of the Parthian Wars) or ancient (as in his history of Alexander). The field of historical inquiry remained vigorous across the second century and into the third, and whether later historians consciously drew inspiration from Arrian or not, the persona he crafted for himself seems to have worked for others as well.'

I began by exploring the relationship between sophistic oratory on historical themes and narrative history in the Imperial period. This discussion looked at definitions of historical practice used both by authors who considered themselves historians and by authors who did not. The discourse of history that emerged exhibits for historians a parallel strand of literary development of which both groups were aware. The superiority claimed by historians and the anxiety displayed by nonhistorians underscore the epistemologically distinct motives of the former. Arrian, who so often claims to be driven by questions about how it is possible to know anything about the past, served as a prime example of someone who actively theorized history amid its narration. A survey of his work made clear that his approach to the past relied upon his awareness of the passage of time, both because the consequences of events become evident through knowledge of their aftermath and because contemporary methods of studying history allowed him to construct better arguments than his predecessors had. Arrian argued that his present built upon the achievements of the past.

Two extended case studies showed the dynamics of these processes in a focused way. Using the tools available to him from contemporary rhetorical education and political culture, Arrian crafted an incisive commentary on government as he narrated Alexander's inspiring yet troubled rise to fame, emphasizing the importance of personal responsibility in a system of government centered on a single individual. He also explored the problems of adapting a culturally specific set of political practices to a large multicultural empire. These issues were relevant to his contemporary audience, and through his narrative of past events he offered that audience a set of abstract principles with which to understand their own world. Nevertheless, by stepping into a crowded field of Alexander historians, Arrian also staked a claim to supreme authority on one of the most consistently popular historical themes of Greek and Roman literature, thus attempting to establish himself as a canonical author. His attempt seems to have been successful, since no analytical history of Alexander produced after Arrian's has survived from antiquity, and those that are known have not left a strong impression.' Furthermore, while locking down such a popular topic, he also placed himself in rivalry with the greats of his discipline by discussing and adapting their methods and by questioning some of their most lasting conclusions. In this way, he claimed a position in the canon of historians deemed worthy of sustained study. In the words of the influential medieval critic Photius, Arrian was "second to none of those writing history best."

It has been said that "a valuable commentary on the mentality of an age is usually to be found in the sort of history it chooses to write and read and the manner in which the chosen themes are treated..." The preceding study has taken up this invitation to dive deep into the work of a historically minded author who was unusually forthright about the problems he encountered in his research and his attempts to solve them. Through him and the discourse of history to which he and his contemporaries repeatedly appealed, it has been possible to observe the concerns of a group of intellectuals who tried hard to separate themselves from popular trends and create a counterculture of sorts. Centering those characters who reveled in forcing problems ahead of enjoyment and constructed a parallel literary universe for themselves and their readers can shed new light on the complexity of intellectual culture in Imperial Greek literature. <>

JESUS AND JUDAISM by Martin Hengel, Anna Maria Schwemer, translation by Wayne Coppins [Baylor-Mohr Siebeck Studies in Early Christianity, Baylor University Press & Mohr Siebeck, 9783161589201]

The debate over the extent of Jewish influence upon early Christianity rages on. At the heart of this argument lies the question of Jesus: how does the fate of a first-century Galilean Jew inspire and determine the nature, shape, and practices of a distinct religious movement? Vital to this first question is another equally challenging one: can the four Gospels be used to reconstruct the historical Jesus? In this work, Martin Hengel and Anna Maria Schwemer seek to untangle the complex relationships among Jesus, Judaism, and the Gospels in the earliest Christian movement.

JESUS AND JUDAISM, the first in a four-volume series, focuses on the person of Jesus in the context of Judaism. Beginning with his Galilean origin, the volume analyzes Jesus' relationship with John the Baptist and the Jewish context of Jesus' life and work. The authors argue that there never was a nonmessianic Jesus. Rather, his messianic claim finds expression in his relationship to the Baptist, his preaching in authority, his deeds of power, and his crucifixion as king of the Jews, and in the emergence of the earliest Christology. As Martin Hengel and Anna Maria Schwemer reveal, Jesus was not only a devout Jew, nor merely a miracle worker, but the essential part of the earliest form of Christianity. The authors insist that Jesus belongs *within* the history of early Christianity, rather than as its presupposition. Christianity did not begin after Jesus' death; Christianity began as soon as a Jew from Galilee started to preach the word of God.

Reviews

Hengel’s work acts as something like a summation of the New Testament scholarship of the twentieth century. ~Karl-Wilhelm Niebuhr, Theologische Literaturzeitung

Hengel and Schwemer have laid a fascinating and important book on the table. ~Peter J. Tomson, Journal for the Study of Judaism

The extraordinary amount of learning [in this text] means that the argument of this volume cannot easily be brushed aside. ~Simon J. Gathercole, Booklist

I'm impressed by the abundance of carefully processed primary and secondary literature. ~Franz Graf-Stuhlhofer, European Journal of Theology

[JESUS AND JUDAISM] is distinguished by a strong sense of measure, as well as by a high level of treatment. ~Romano Penna, Biblica

Anyone wanting to dig deeply into the historical context surrounding Jesus and the apostolic church would have to look hard to find a more substantial and reliable source than this. ~The Bible Today

CONTENTS [SUMMARY]

Preliminary Observations
1. The Overall Temporal and Thematic Framework for a History of Early Christianity
2. Judaism and Early Christianity
Part One: Judaism
3. Judaism under Roman Rule in the First Century BCE and CE
4. The Jewish Religious Parties in Palestine
Part Two: Preliminary Questions about the Person and History of Jesus
5. On the Quest for Jesus of Nazareth
6. The Sources
7. The Historical Quest
Part Three: Jesus the Galilean and John the Baptist
8. Jesus the Galilean
9. John the Baptist
10. Jesus and His Forerunner
Part Four: Jesus' Activity and Proclamation
11. On the Geographical-Historical Framework of the Activity of Jesus
12. The Poetic Form of the Proclamation of Jesus
13. Jesus' Proclamation of the Kingdom of God
14. The Will of God
15. The Fatherly Love of God
Part Five: Jesus' Authority and Messianic Claim
16. The Prophetic-Messianic Miracle Worker
17. Prophet or Messiah?
Part Six: The Passion of Jesus
18. The Last Confrontation in Jerusalem
19. The Preparation of the Passion of Jesus
20. Gethsemane, Arrest, and Interrogation of Jesus
21. The Crucified Messiah
Part Seven: The Testimony to the Resurrection of Jesus
22. The Testimony to the Resurrection of Jesus
Retrospect and Prospect
Bibliography
Indexes

MARTIN HENGLE

Martin Hengel, was eventually recognized as one of the greatest theological scholars of 20th century, concentrated his studies upon the New Testament as well as other theological writings of early Christianity. Hengel specialized in the early period of Rabbinic Judaism as inclusive of the origins of Christianity and incipient Christian church. Throughout his extensive writings, Hengel frankly acknowledges the challenges involved in developing a thorough history of early Christianity. Because the sources available to scholars are often found surviving in fragments, as a result, "the sparseness of the sources vitiates our knowledge of large areas of the ancient world". In his article "*Raising the Bar: A daring proposal for the future of evangelical New Testament scholarship*", Hengel thus challenges scholars to delve into more extensive biblical research to ensure proper understandings of the texts being established. Hengel's Christology strove to share an accurate illumination of who Jesus was and what he did and sought after as well as the notion that 'Christianity emerged completely from within Judaism'. After his experience as a soldier in the Second World War, Hengel said:

> "As for these specific errors that have affected my own country, today one may say that among the most important insights of our field of study since the Second World War belongs the recognition of how deeply rooted earliest Christianity is in Judaism as its native soil. This implies that the study of the pre-Christian Judaism of the Hellenistic period as a whole, that is, from the fourth century BCE on, is to be included in our field of study. Here Old and New Testament scholars must work hand in hand".

Not only did Hengel desire that scholars "work hand in hand" but also was known for supporting scholars of all backgrounds. In 1992 he was Emeritus Professor of New Testament and Early Judaism at the University of Tübingen. This period of Judaism includes early Christianity and the field known as Christian origins. Much scholarly work is currently being done around the intersection of Hellenism, Judaism, Paganism, and Christianity and the ways in which these terms are potentially problematic for the Second-Temple era. Such work of the past two or three decades follows 50 years of work by Hengel, who reconceptualized the scholarly approach to the period in such works as **JUDENTUM UND HELLENISMUS**, and other scholars.

Within his studies of Rabbinic Judaism and the origins of Christianity, Hengel explored the perceived dichotomy between Judaism and Hellenism. In his study, **JUDENTUM UND HELLENISMUS**, he documented that the designation of the apostle Paul exclusively as either Jewish or Hellenistic is a misunderstanding. Hengel argues in his writings that despite Paul's controversial rhetoric scholars, along with Jewish and Christian communities, must recognize the historical value of Paul's epistles and Luke's account of Paul's life within the Acts of the Apostles. Hengel recognizes the importance of this awareness because of the multifaceted insight provided about the Second Temple Era and Hellenistic Judaism of the first century within these texts. **JESUS AND JUDAISM** promises to initiate the capstone of his evangelic of the historical man Jesus and the Church founded upon what he became to mean to his generations of followers.

Excerpt: The Overall Temporal and Thematic Framework for a History of Early Christianity

[As Pertains to the First Volume of the Projected Four Volume Study]

According to the unanimous judgment of all four evangelists, the temporal starting point for a history of the beginnings of Christianity is the appearance of John the Baptist. The beginning of the public activity of Jesus most intimately connected with his person. Despite their theological significance, the stories of birth and childhood in the first two chapters of Luke and Matthew elude a historical presentation. At most we can infer from them that Jesus was born prior to the death of King Herod (4 BCE). The evangelist Luke therefore connects his only exact chronological specification regarding the activity of Jesus with the appearance of the Baptist in a synchronism of various rulers patterned on Jer 1.1-2 (LXX), which begins with Emperor Tiberius, and places it in his fifteenth year, i.e., in 27 or 28 CE. Tiberius became princeps on September 19, 14 CE. The time of his reign must be calculated from this date. There is no reason to fundamentally mistrust Luke here, to place the appearance of the Baptist in 26 CE, and, for example, to place the death of Jesus already in the following year 27 CE. Whoever fundamentally rejects the information provided in Luke 3.1-2 must entirely forgo the attempt to provide a more exact chronology of Christian beginnings. Since Pilate did not come to Palestine until the summer of 26 CE, Jesus would have been executed at the first Passover festival in which the prefect participated!' Against this speaks not only the passion story—Pilate shows himself to be familiar with the Jewish relations there—but also the bloody incident effected by Pilate, which is portrayed in Luke 13.1ff. If Pilate "mixed the blood of Galileans with the blood of their sacrificial animals," then the concern is probably with an event on a day of preparation for the Passover festival, when the pilgrims brought their Passover lambs to the temple for slaughter. After all, the prefects usually came to Jerusalem only for the main festivals and above all for the festival of Passover. The incident confirms the various indications in Josephus and the Gospels that this festival was always especially threatened by unrests.

Thus, this first volume of our portrayal encompasses the time of the activity of the Baptist from about 27/28 CE and the time of Jesus, who was executed, according to the Synoptics, on Nisan 15, the first day of the Passover festival, presumably of the year 30 CE. This means that in the case of Jesus' public activity we are dealing with a relatively short period of time of scarcely more than a year and a half to two years, from which, to be sure, unique world-historical effects resulted. From this brief period a tradition that is astonishingly detailed by ancient standards is preserved for us, in which historical recollection and later interpretation are often inseparably fused with each other. These few years and the traditions bound up with them have changed the world as no other comparable period of time in antiquity. The contents of our first volume are concentrated on this period of time. The attempt to provide a portrayal of the activity of Jesus cannot be separated without loss from a history of emerging early Christianity. The connection to Jesus has imprinted itself upon his disciples: the whole tradition about him was handed on, shaped, and configured by them. The tradents of the oral tradition— above all Peter—were, like the evangelists later, important community members who had authority. The primitive church as well was determined to a large extent by Jesus tradition in the shaping of its life and faith. This always remained vibrant in primitive Christianity. Accordingly, in the treatment of John the Baptist and the activity and passion of Jesus, the first volume will repeatedly keep in view the later tradition history of the Jesus tradition in the primitive community. A concise presentation of the political, the social, and especially the religious conditions in Jewish Palestine, which had been restless since the time of the Maccabees, belongs, of course, in this volume. This includes especially the time of the Hasmoneans, Herod I (37-4 BCE) and his successors, and then the fate of Judaea as a Roman province from 6 CE to the outbreak of the Jewish War in 66 CE... <>

CLASSIFYING CHRISTIANS: ETHNOGRAPHY, HERESIOLOGY, AND THE LIMITS OF KNOWLEDGE IN LATE ANTIQUITY by Todd S. Berzon [University of California Press, 9780520284265]

Classifying Christians investigates late antique Christian heresiologies as ethnographies that catalogued and detailed the origins, rituals, doctrines, and customs of the heretics in explicitly polemical and theological terms. Oscillating between ancient ethnographic evidence and contemporary ethnographic writing, Todd S. Berzon argues that late antique heresiology shares an underlying logic with classical ethnography in the ancient Mediterranean world. By providing an account of heresiological writing from the second to fifth century, **CLASSIFYING CHRISTIANS** embeds heresiology within the historical development of imperial forms of knowledge that have shaped western culture from antiquity to the present.

Review

"Berzon's book offers a potent epistemological reflection on the production, organization, and limits of knowledge in late antiquity... a finely articulated meditation on the effects of theological and ethnographic ancient list-making." — *Bryn Mawr Classical Review*

"**CLASSIFYING CHRISTIANS** is a remarkable book... indispensable." — *Reading Religion*

"Todd S. Berzon's **CLASSIFYING CHRISTIANS: ETHNOGRAPHY, HERESIOLOGY, AND THE LIMITS OF KNOWLEDGE IN LATE ANTIQUITY** partakes of these rich conversations by offering a sustained and convincing reflection on the adaptations, innovations, and antinomies of heresy-writing in the late ancient period." — *Ancient Jew Review*

"**CLASSIFYING CHRISTIANS** is a learned, wide-ranging, and exciting new study on ancient Christian heresiology... we look forward to Todd Berzon's next [volume]." — *Histos*

"This volume clears more space in our scholarly discourse for several topics which are only recently starting to receive a fraction of the attention they deserve." — *Zeitschrift für Antikes Christentum*

"**CLASSIFYING CHRISTIANS** is a splendid and challenging study, a must-read for scholars in the field of Late Antique theological polemics. . . . immersive and engaging while intellectually challenging at the same time." — *Augustiniana*

"**CLASSIFYING CHRISTIANS** represents a crucial missing chapter in the larger history of Western discourse about itself and others. Too often, studies of heresiology understand and present it as a sui generis literature, a fascinating late-ancient 'oddity' that gets pitched to modern readers as an intriguing bauble. Todd Berzon's study is the first to make a convincing argument as to why anyone outside the narrow field of late ancient studies should care about heresiology."—Andrew Jacobs, Professor of Religious Studies and Mary W. and J. Stanley Johnson Professor of Humanities, Scripps College

"With **CLASSIFYING CHRISTIANS**, Todd Berzon has produced an original, important, and impressive intellectual intervention in early Christian history, the history of social sciences, and critical theory of religion. This well-conceived, highly learned, and sophisticated analysis of the genre of heresiology will be required reading for scholars of antiquity."—Jeremy Schott, Associate Professor of Religious Studies, Indiana University, Bloomington

CONTENTS

Acknowledgments
List of Abbreviations
Introduction: Writing People, Writing Religion
1. Heresiology as Ethnography: The Ethnographic Disposition
2. Comparing Theologies and Comparing Peoples: The Customs, Doctrines, and Dispositions of the Heretics
3. Contesting Ethnography: Heretical Models of Human and Cosmic Plurality
4. Christianized Ethnography: Paradigms of Heresiological Knowledge
5. Knowledge Fair and Foul: The Rhetoric of Heresiological Inquiry
6. The Infinity of Continuity: Epiphanius of Salamis and the Limits of the Ethnographic Disposition
7. From Ethnography to List: Transcribing and Traversing Heresy
Epilogue: The Legacy of Heresiology
Bibliography
Index

We are always organizing knowledge. We are always aggregating data in order to arrive at a clearer, more coherent, and more systematic understanding of the world around us. But what happens when there is simply too much information to be collected? What happens when efforts to organize vast amounts of material fall short or fail completely? What happens when the knowledge we meticulously collect simply overwhelms the system or model designed to make sense of it? What are the epistemological implications and challenges that emerge in the production of ethnography—the process of writing about the customs and habits of peoples and communities? **CLASSIFYING CHRISTIANS: ETHNOGRAPHY, HERESIOLOGY, AND THE LIMITS OF KNOWLEDGE IN LATE ANTIQUITY** investigates these questions within the context of late antique Christianity (ca. 150–500 C.E.). It provides an analysis of the ways in which early Christian authors not only produced ethnography (literally "wrote people") but they also how they openly negotiated the very possibility and desire of undertaking such a task. Focusing on late antique heresiological literature (orthodox catalogues about heretics), I outline the techniques Christian writers used to collect, organize, and polemicize ethnographic knowledge about their Christian world. I show how the rituals, doctrinal beliefs, customs, and historical origins of the heretics functioned to map and delimit not only the composition of the

Christian world but also the world at large. It is the epistemological challenges produced by such classificatory efforts that I explore throughout the book.

In the late antique world defined by remarkable religious and political change, heresiology illustrates the simultaneous attraction and repulsion of discovery and exploration. But just as Christians wrote their movement into the history of the world as *the* organizing principle of human difference through models of heretical growth and diffusion, they also codified a deep ambivalence about the literary or representative capacity of heresiological ethnography. I argue that heretics were highly unstable theoretical scaffolding through which Christian authors sought to make sense of the diverse and diversifying world around them. Knowledge about the heretics was necessary to assert orthodox theological dominance, but it was also highly dangerous. Heretical knowledge not only contaminated the ethnographer, but it also confused and in some sense overpowered the compiler because such knowledge was seemingly without limit. There was simply no end to the process of collecting knowledge about the heretics.

Indeed, Christian ethnography reveals not totalizing aspirations of authority—a projected ideology of total epistemological mastery—but a far less secure knowledge about the heretics specifically and the world generally: writing and knowing were endeavors fraught with conceptual fears and uncertainties. In fact, Christian authors explicitly contemplated the danger of investigating the natural and supernatural worlds. It is not simply that they struggle to classify the world around them, but that they openly discuss their failures to do just that. The heresiologists explicitly pondered the epistemological limits of ethnographic investigation, the representative capacity of language, and the unmanageability of ethnographic knowledge in texts. They know that there are limitations to what they can know about the heretics and that their efforts to produce a literary model to contain them is and always will be incomplete.

Discovery, travel, and expansion were not singularly triumphant endeavors, but rather highly perilous and disruptive efforts. The discoveries of new peoples (heretics, nations, islands, etc.) cemented intellectual unease and ethnographic fear. Precisely because the heresiologists gave ethnography into a distinctly theological texture, **CLASSIFYING CHRISTIANS** points toward the enduring and potent legacy of Christianity in shaping the discourse of centuries of ethnographic investigation. By investigating the role ethnography played in mapping the theological landscape of the late antique world, my aim has been to refine discussions of emergent Christian discourses about heresy and human difference more broadly.

Excerpt: Writing People, Writing Religion

> A survey of our globe shows the continents inhabited by a great diversity of peoples different in appearance, different in language and in cultural life. The Europeans and their descendants on other continents are united by similarity of bodily build, and their civilization sets them off sharply against all the people of different appearance. The Chinese, the native New Zealander, the African Negro, the American Indian present not only distinctive bodily features, but each possesses also his own peculiar mode of life. Each human type seems to have its own inventions, its own customs and beliefs, and it is very generally assumed that race and culture must be intimately associated, that racial descent determines cultural life. —Franz Boas

The opening of Franz Boas's watershed anthropological text, **THE MIND OF PRIMITIVE MAN**, describes the long-held theory that "primitive" was both a racial and a cultural designation.1 Insofar as the latter was a derivation of the former, racial typology served as the foundation for hierarchical classifications of culture. The modes of life that ethnographers, missionaries, and travel writers had described were reflections of racial differences, where race, as a hereditary biological unit, was governed by phenotype, aptitude, and anatomy. Over the next almost three hundred pages, Boas sharply contests this supposed correlation between race, culture, and civilization. In arguing that "there is no necessary relationship between the 'race,' the language, and the cultural forms and expressions of a people," Boas imagined "cultures transcending racial classifications, and racial groups crossing cultural boundaries." Boas's major contribution to the history of anthropology was to combat the science of racism and eugenics, to reject not only the idea of race as a biological category but also the very idea of evolutionist ethnology. He was emphatic that human beings were ultimately "subjugated to the tyranny of customs" and that those customs—many of which we were barely even aware of—were the foundations of culture. But it was only at the end of Boas's lengthy career that he actually proffered a coherent definition of culture. And in fact, it was his students—Margaret Mead, Ruth Benedict, Edward Sapir, Robert Lowie, Alfred Kroeber, among others—who have been credited with defining culture "as a complex set of life ways of a given group of people."

Boas's contributions to the development of professional anthropology and critical ethnography, combatting the cultural prejudices of his Victorian predecessors, the biblicism of ethnologists, and the overt racism of eugenicists, is part of a long, complex, and diverse intellectual genealogy.6 The intense preoccupation with the roots and causes of human difference was a fixture of centuries of critical and uncritical ethnographic writing alike. The unspoken counter term of much of Boas's argument, implied by his persistent use of the term "Europeans," is Christianity, the dominant ideological framework for centuries of ethnographic representation, ethnological theorization, and cultural hierarchization. As the anthropologist Kenelm Burridge has noted,

> Through the Bible and its interpreters all kinds of different European communities were brought onto common ground, came into contact with, and knew, the word of God as it was expressed in the myths, history, figures, and customs and activities of a strange non-European people. . . . It was through the variety of images of other kinds of man that European peoples were invited to seek the dimensions and mystery of God and of themselves.

Christian theology—and a belief in the fundamental unity of the human species—was the foundation of European ethnology and ethnography. In that sense, Boas was seeking to overhaul both an ethnocentric and a theological anthropology. Tomoko Masuzawa, David Livingstone, and George Stocking, Jr., among others, have emphasized that Christian writers—uncritical ethnographers, theologians, missionaries, philologists, and so forth—relied upon their own theological orthodoxy to elaborate the contours of racial, cultural, religious, and geographical differences. Comparative philology, ethnography, and theology were all part and parcel of the discourse of world religions and of religion itself. The intersection of these disciplines constructed a scientific scheme of religious classification: "Religion," as Masuzawa puts it, "offered European scholars a powerful, far-reaching, and comprehensive categorical framework by virtue of which they could hope to explain the characteristic features of a given non-European society."

Shrouded in the language of evolution and devolution, the science of religion was guided by the comparison of ethnographic and hermeneutical data. The organization and analysis of these data created taxonomies of religions and provided verifiable models of religious and ethnological difference and behavior. Uncritical ethnography was as much about theology as about customs, habits, and dispositions. Early modern ethnological theories—theories about the causes and nature of human difference—took Genesis as their starting point and, indeed, as their end point. Although the authors of Genesis had enumerated an explicit correspondence between nations and languages (and perhaps also cultures), their narratives were hardly comprehensive. As the historian Colin Kidd observes:

> Of course, Old Testament anthropology runs into the sand. There is a huge gap—or perhaps not so huge, depending upon one's scheme of chronology—between the facts of ethnicity set out in Genesis and the appearance of ethnic groups in the historical and ethnographic works of Greece and Rome. From which of Noah's sons came the Scythians, say? A great deal of early modern anthropology involved the reconstitution of the lineages of peoples between the petering out of scriptural ethnography and the start of the classical record.

Early modern anthropologists sought to manage, to borrow Stocking's phrase, the "ethnological problem" of monogenism: they sought to demonstrate the fundamental unity of the human species and the transmission of original sin despite evidence to the contrary. The work of Christian ethnographers and theologians was thus to fill in the gaps of the biblical narrative and to maintain its ethnological integrity. In certain cases, however, ethnological theories that were said to undermine the integrity of the biblical narrative led to accusations of heresy. The arch-heresiarch, so to speak, of Christian anthropology was Isaac La Peyrère (1596–1676), who had argued in his *Prae-Adamitae* (Men before Adam, published in Latin in 1655) that a careful reading of Romans 5.12–14—Paul's discussion of sin, law, Adam, and Moses—indicated that there were human beings before Adam. La Peyrère, though a Calvinist, was brought before Pope Alexander VII to answer for his heresy, after which he recanted but remained subject to intense opprobrium from scores of theologians and ethnologists. By 1656, according to Anthony Grafton, there were already nineteen published refutations of his treatise.

With the accusation of heresy swirling, debates over ethnological theories illustrated the centrality of orthodox thinking to questions of human difference. The language of heresy was not only an accusation to be hurled against blasphemous ideas or interpretations—a charge by clerics—but was itself an important theological force in the history of both human and religious diversity. The development of a hierarchy of culture and nations as a hierarchy of religion follows not only from biblical interpretation but also from the development of the Christian discourse of heresy. Whereas it is true, as Kidd notes, that the narrative of Genesis 11 did not offer a comprehensive genealogy of all peoples everywhere, the New Testament supplied an important conceptual addendum: it laid the foundation for the Christian discourse of heresy, which would, over time, supplement the narrative gaps of Genesis 11 while also creating its own problematic narrative of theological diversity. A central piece in the foundations of theological anthropology belongs, then, to a much earlier set of debates, theories, and writings: the discourse of early Christian ethnography.

For those who study the ancient world, ethnography is an absorbing yet elusive subject. In contrast to the modern concept, which denotes both the practice of fieldwork and a genre of writing, there were no established methods or a fixed generic form in the ancient Mediterranean world. Few ancient authors undertook anything approximating modern fieldwork. Greeks and Romans—from Homer to Pliny, and Herodotus to Tacitus—did write profusely about foreign dress, myths, dietary habits, histories, cosmologies, and religious customs. But they "wrote peoples" (ethno-graphy) primarily as a counterpoint, both positive and negative, to their own cultural conventions. Building upon the work of classicists, scholars of religion, anthropologists, and literary critics, this book posits that ancient ethnography, specifically Christian ethnography, attests a complex set of negotiations between attempts to understand the surrounding world by inventorying its people, explaining their history and origins, and by establishing a position within it. Ethnography in the ancient world functioned descriptively, though tendentiously, through the chronicling, stylizing, and essentializing of human customs, communities, and institutions. It operated as a discursive activity in which people were created as textual objects with discrete and precise characteristics, origins, histories, and customs. While ethnographers moved to study the changing world—not only to orient themselves within their evolving social and cultural surroundings but also to articulate the terms of these changes from their own cultural perspective—they supplied a certain fixity and predictability to the diversity of people the macroscopic, broader extrapolations about human nature, human diversity, and human behavior. To that end, I focus on the paradigms and techniques that the late antique Christian heresiologists used to array, historicize, and characterize Christian ethnographic knowledge. The heretics were invaluable yet highly unstable theoretical playthings through which Christian authors navigated and systematized the diversity of the entire human world. The heresiologists used the heretics not only to define the borders of Christianity but also to create the Christian conditions for understanding the contents and diversity of the world. As the Christian ethnographic gaze contemplated the differences of the peoples of the world, the Christian turn toward ethnography signaled not just ethnography by Christians but also ethnography of Christians. In so doing, this ethnographic discourse, at once aspirational and polemical, constructed the boundaries of late antique Christianity itself.

The expansive gaze of Christian authors and travelers infused their writings with ethnographical and geographical maps of piety and impiety, religion and irreligion: to travel in the world in texts was to construct Christianity, to deny expressions of Christianity, and to envision the potential for Christianity everywhere. The Christian narrative of sacred history encompassed the elaboration, both macroscopically and microscopically, of holy topographies and hallowed ethnographies. To watch the world become Christian—to see it materialize with respect to both place and people—was to watch the promise of scripture unfold. And to capture this transformation was to blend Christian missionary activity and ethnographic writing. Ethnography conveyed an ideology “employed by Christians to tell themselves a new story of religious Empire.” Heresiological literature is thus deeply embedded in larger corpora of varying genres. In writing about the world they inhabited, their relationship to it, and their interpretation of it, Christian writers infused various genres of writing, including letters, sermons, commentaries, travelogues, monastic handbooks, and hagiographies, with an awareness of macroscopic paradigms and microscopic description. This study is, then, not meant to be exhaustive but rather aims to focus in on a particular textual endeavor, heresiology, that is simultaneously rhetorical, theological, geographic, ethnographic, and epistemological.

As the heresiologists investigated the diversity of Christian sectarianism across the Mediterranean, they produced a textual world and worldview driven by the comparison of theologies and dispositions. To the extent that heresiological writers functioned as ethnographers, whether armchair or fieldworker, they did more than simply regurgitate stereotypes, provide moral warnings, and convey imperial propaganda. My focus is on heresiology as an illustration of Christian classification and organization of knowledge. I explore how Christian authors framed their texts ethnographically by amassing data, marshaling their discoveries, fashioning explanatory models, and theologizing and negotiating their own authorial abilities. The process of organizing knowledge by writing people constructed categorical and discursive binaries. Heresiologies identified the similarities and differences among Christians by creating a categorical framework, even if just discursive, within which to house them. Within the context of late antiquity, Jeremy Schott has rightly emphasized how theories of knowledge, classification, and their generic forms were written in conjunction with imperial ideologies:

> Universal history, ethnography, and figurative reading strategies—the tools of philosophers and apologists alike—owed much of their shape to the specific political context in which they were practiced. The leverage of these universalizing discourses lay not in "pluralism" or "inclusivity," as sometimes has been suggested; rather, the political potency of universalism resided in its simultaneous demand for comprehensiveness and difference. The distinction between universality and particularity that grounded these intellectual discourses closely paralleled the asymmetrical relationship of courses of social privilege and social control. Ethnography and universal history sought a comprehension of diversity homologous to the imperial desire for control of diverse territories and peoples.

Even as Schott stresses that the classification of knowledge worked in tandem with a larger imperial discourse of control, he foregrounds the tensions embedded within ethnographic theorization: writers were compelled to emphasize coherence and difference simultaneously. Indeed, the heresiologists are remarkably ambivalent about their discourse as a mechanism of comprehensiveness and control. In thinking about heresiology as an expression of Christian ethnography, I want to ask how its authors negotiated the push and pull of coherence and difference; how they worked to distill and essentialize heretics as communities that were both macroscopically similar and yet microscopically different from each other; and how they thought about and went about translating peoples into words. Finally, I wish to investigate how the writing and the editing processes imposed not only a self-reflexivity but also an epistemological paradox upon the heresiologists, in which the capacity to make and know the world of Christianity and the architect of the world of Christianity became fleeting possibilities.

One of the central claims of this project is that even as heresiological ethnography built a discourse of control and expertise, that very same discourse communicated the constraints of the heresiologists' knowledge about their object of study. As Christopher Herbert has incisively shown within the context of Victorian ethnography, the discourses of ethnographic totalization and restraint were, in fact, bound together as epistemological and investigative contradictions. The heresiologists' claims of totalizing knowledge were undercut by their open acknowledgment of the conceptual and practical fissures within their texts: the heresiologists could not know any one heresy fully or know all the heretics in their entirety. Augustine's explication of this conceptual fissure in the edifice of his heresiology signaled his perception of the restricted epistemological reach of the ethnographic gaze and the ethnographic word. Augustine acknowledged that the theological distance and cultural gap between heresiologist and heresy precluded his ability to understand the heretics fully. Not only were there limits to what the heresiologists could know, but there were conceptual limits to how knowledge could be meaningfully processed. In expressing the discourse of totalization as aspirational rather than realized, the heresiologists emphasized their labor as collectors over and above their ability to find and enumerate a comprehensive whole of heresy. I am not arguing that the heresiologists, by demonstrating their detailed knowledge of and ability to refute the heretics, amassed for themselves some vague notion of scholastic or ecclesiastical authority. Instead, I am claiming that the heresiologists' stated understanding of the heretics cut in precisely the opposite direction. Heresiologies were not texts of control and totalization but catalogues marked by vulnerability, hazard, and fissure. Even as polemically constructed caricatures, the heretics proved an enigmatic, elusive, and altogether destructive object of inquiry. To think with and through ethnography is to invite a scrutiny not simply of another or even oneself but to contemplate openly about the representative capacity of writers, language, and their texts. Ethnography encapsulates the tension between totality and partiality, comprehension and ignorance, and the insurmountable gap between human nature and the natural world. Ethnographic data hold the potential to inspire as much as puzzle and to fracture as much as unify. As Irenaeus succinctly put it, "it is not possible to name the number of those who have fallen away from the truth in various ways." The overarching aim of this study, then, is to trace how the ethnographic impulse, embedded within certain strands of early Christian discourse, informed theorizations of religious diversity and the classification of religious knowledge.

How To Read Heresiology

Because the terms of early Christian devotion and tradition were developing and diverse, the history of formative Christianity evidences both the rhetorical and the institutional efforts by which boundaries between sects were constructed. Heresiology was an effort by particular members of the still nascent Christian community to elaborate claims of tradition by specifying the terms of Christian principles, practices, and theology. As Christians spread themselves across the Mediterranean preaching the good news of Christ, and as peoples assumed the mantle of Christian identification in different ways and in different environments, theological and ecclesiastical diversity became increasingly endemic to Christian culture. With the number of Christians multiplying across the Mediterranean, disputes over the finer points of theological doctrine, ecclesiastical governance, exegesis, ritual observation, and canonical inclusion naturally followed. With each new church, the purported unanimity of the Christian movement was subjected to new threats of fissure and dissolution. Paul himself, as his epistles clearly demonstrate, struggled to maintain order among the communities that he visited and to which he wrote. Communities forgot, disputed, or ignored his instructions about Christ's Gospel. His First Letter to the Corinthians famously chastises them for their division and disunity:

> Now I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same purpose. For it has been reported to me . . . that there are quarrels among you, my brothers and sisters. What I mean is that each of you says, "I belong to Paul," or "I belong to Apollos," or "I belong to Cephas," or "I belong to Christ." Has Christ been divided?

Early divisions among followers of Jesus were sown in overtly human terms: divisions were facilitated by allegiances to human leaders (a charge the heresiologists repeatedly made). While scripture had rightly forewarned its believers about division, dissension, and false prophets—"Indeed, there have to be factions among you, for only so will it become clear who among you are genuine"—it did not elaborate a plenary understanding of its origins, essence, and history. While Simon Magus became the father of Christian heresy for the heresiologists, in the biblical narrative (Acts 8.9–24) he is not identified as such. He is a magician, first and foremost.

Just as early modern Christian ethnologists sought to fill in the gaps in the narrative of Genesis, early Christian heresiologists similarly worked to clarify in the Bible's broader warnings about sectarianism and disharmony. Nearly a century and a half after the death of the apostle Paul, Irenaeus, bishop of

Lyons, enumerated in the preface to his five-book refutation of heresies, Adversus haereses, the principal hazard of the heresy: it was unstable, erroneous, derivative, false, arrogant, and demonic. The heretics, Irenaeus warns, "believe differently about the same things as time passes and never have a stable doctrine, because they wish rather to be sophists of words than disciples of the truth." Via their addenda and excisions, the heretics were said to mutilate the revealed truth of Christ. Rather than simply allow the truth to be, so Irenaeus claims, they massage it, augment it, recast it, and ultimately threaten its untrammeled facilitation through generations of Christians. Irenaeus's discourse about the heretics hinged upon a series of rhetorical and dispositional distinctions. Considering themselves exponents of (an alternative) system of truth, the heretics craftily "speak the same language" as (orthodox) Christians, though they "intend different meanings." Their treachery, moreover, as Irenaeus diagnoses it, attests an underlying and more perilous condition: they persist and metastasize "under the pretense of knowledge." Their so-called knowledge—while revealing detailed cosmologies, alternative scriptures, a multiplicity of deities, the impetus of creation, the divisions within the soul, the process of redemption, and the metaphysical principles of the universe—imported a grandiose claim of privileged authority into their schematization of a cosmic narrative. In supplanting the primacy of the God of the Bible and his Word, the creative and enlightening powers behind the creation of the universe and the human race, the heretics embarked upon a massive restructuring of revealed truth. Reorienting the truths of the apostolic age not only complicated claims about the exclusive transmission of knowledge but also perpetuated an open and unfixed understanding of Christian tradition.

Scholars now regard Irenaeus's history of Christianity and Christian tradition, where truth always preceded falsity and heresy was conceptualized as an adulteration of a uniform, stable, continuous chain of tradition, as an ideological representation rather than a historical reality. Since the pioneering work of Walter Bauer, they have primarily treated the writings of the heresiologists as tendentious texts written to establish the narrative of a single, consistent orthodoxy over against derivative, corrupting heresy. The history of early Christianity, scholars now emphasize, was never a history of singularity and uniformity; rather it was a history of diversity, discord, and disunity. To attend to this multiplicity of Christian voices, scholars developed what David Brakke identifies as the "variety of Christianities" model, which maps Christian diversity and disagreement. According to this narrative, the earliest centuries of the Common Era were a time of intense competition among various Christian groups—including the so-called proto-orthodoxy faction that would ultimately win out—all of which claimed to be the embodiment of true Christianity. Brakke rightly criticizes the varieties model by emphasizing that it has tended to treat Christian diversity in rather static terms: it conceptualizes groups as discrete and bounded entities, perpetuating Irenaeus's idea that proto-orthodoxy was uniform and neatly delineated. In its place, Brakke argues for what he calls the "identity-formation" model. Building upon the work of Karen King, he emphasizes the scholarly shift that attends to "the strategies by which individuals and groups sought to define themselves. The historian does not take for granted the existence of defined groups, but instead interrogates how ancient peoples sought to create, transform, and challenge religious communities and practices." And while many scholars have embraced the identity-formation model—exploring how heresy was constructed in relation to issues of law, gender, celibacy, and prophecy, among myriad other themes—the genre of heresiology and heresiological catalogues in particular have remained largely absent from this interpretive shift.

In a provocative article entitled “How to Read Heresiology,” the historian Averil Cameron raises a series of questions about the genre. She seeks to shift scholarly attention away from thinking about heresiologies as sources of information and suggests that we should read them instead as “performative or functional texts.” Cameron contends that scholars have failed to comprehend the complexities within these texts, due in large part to the perception that Epiphanius’s *Panarion*, in many ways the classic example of the genre, is an uninventive and hyperbolic text. Insofar as the *Panarion* reflected banal generalizations about the need to dispel error and articulate the topography of true Christianity, it was an uninspired, rote polemical dispute between two mutually exclusive yet dependent theological categories: orthodoxy and heresy. Heresiology, despite its encyclopedic aspirations, was mired as much by the simplicity of its own dichotomous worldview as by its perceived lack of “imaginative content.” Scholars routinely assert that the heresiologies are tired screeds, largely devoid of sophistication and nuance. But according to Cameron, to dismiss “heresiology as sterile or boring, as mere scholastic exercises, therefore misses several points at the same time.” Such a position fails to delve deeply into the details of these admittedly lengthy but surprisingly complex literary compositions.

Cameron contends that heresiology, shaped by “a poetics of [its] own,” harbored a web of interrelated rhetorical, theological, political, ecclesiastical, and scholastic agendas. With respect to the Panarion, she notes that, “a less hostile view might be willing to recognize a degree of literary skill in the ways in which Epiphanius modelled the Panarion both on Song of Songs and on scientific treatises on snake bites and poisons.” With its persistent use of the rhetoric of entomology, herpetology, and medicine, the Panarion presents itself as a work shaped by precision and the rhetoric of science. To that end, it explicitly engages with classical models, referencing at its outset Nicander’s Theriaka—a poem enumerating venomous animals—and also contests classical literary tropes: “For the Greek authors, poets and chroniclers would invoke a Muse when they undertook some work of mythology. . . . I, however, am calling upon the holy Lord of all to come to the aid of my poverty.” Cameron is especially emphatic that heresiological literature should be read as part of a broader effort on the part of Christian elite to establish their own sociology of knowledge. Inasmuch as the Panarion “enshrines certain fundamentals about heresiological literature,” it produced a broader heresiological discourse that bound together techniques of naming, differentiating, classifying, prescribing, refuting, and hierarchizing. It is worth considering why Augustine enumerated eighty-eight heretics, Filastrius one hundred fifty-six, Epiphanius eighty, Theodoret sixty-one, Irenaeus nineteen, and Hippolytus thirty-six, not only in relation to the shifting landscape of heresy—however real or imagined that landscape may have been—but also as reflections of editorial, structural, and ethnographic practices.58 Indeed, heresiology, as a generic chain of utterances, offered “a structured system of explanation” about the heretics that placed them at the center of theories and arguments about human difference, epistemology, scholasticism, hermeneutics, and pedagogy.

Taking up Cameron’s various suggestions, my reading of heresiology does not explicitly focus on questions related to orthodox identity-formation or historical information about the heretics. Instead, it interprets heresiology as a genre that produced a culture and discourse of Christian knowledge—how it constructed Christianity as the repository of this knowledge and tradition—through the act of naming and describing people as heretics. Heresiology is a major literary site “in the formation of a Christian intellectual system.” In elaborating even the most minute of heretical customs and doctrines—from baptismal rituals and intricate cosmologies to dietary habits and alternative scriptural interpretations—

the heresiologists confront how the procession, production, and ordering of knowledge underscored and altered the very foundations of Christianity and the Christian world. The interplay between form and content requires particular attention precisely because the heresiologists presented their texts as updated, synchronous (with the times) accounts of the ever-changing state of the heretical world. By styling knowledge of the heretics as handbooks, universal histories, genealogies, dialogues, curatives, and so on, the heresiologists utilized various literary forms to articulate and adjust their theological ambitions and their theorization of heretical profusion. Heresiologies were not static, inert, uninventive screeds. Rather, I will argue that they were creative, if polemical, meditations on the dangers, values, and limits of knowledge.

The heresiologists specifically and repeatedly parsed the value of social and intellectual discourse, the very lifeblood of ethnography. They worried that cross-cultural contact unsettled their claims to exclusive truth. Discovering, let alone seeking, knowledge was not unproblematic. Christian inquiry and heresiological inquiry had their limits. But, as Edward Peters has emphasized, Christians were hardly the first to debate the merits of knowledge acquisition: "The debates concerning the validity of knowledge gained by travel and observation began in the ancient world with Homer and continued through Platonic and Stoic ethics and epistemology, the work of ethnographers and historians, Augustan political propagandists, and the romances of Alexander the Great." Curiosity, "the unseemly interest in acquiring knowledge," had enormous disruptive potential; it was an indication of an unbalanced self. The curious person was defined by uninhibited passions and desires. And he became, in Christian parlance, the epitome of heresy. To inquire about the wrong things and in the wrong way was the very core of the heretical disposition. For the heresiologists, however, there was a complementary and more dangerous fear. If the heretics were defined by epistemological hubris, a form of knowledge that subverted the singular authority of God, the act of investigating the heretics carried with it the fear that to know them was somehow to acquire the taint of heresy oneself. Guilt by association—the paradox of ethnographic intimacy—was both a rhetorical tactic that the heresiologists used to create chains of error and a problem that they confronted themselves in the very act of writing their texts. Their fear was that the need to missionize against heresies by writing about them would become the heresiologists' own undoing. The heresiologists worried not only that knowledge of the heretics would ultimately weaken their own orthodoxy but also that even in attempting to identify and describe the heretics they actually legitimated their existence. Despite the fact that the heresiologists studied the heretics in order to destroy them, they nonetheless expressed anxiety about acquiring and preserving this knowledge. The heresiologists devised and ordered a Christian epistemological system that thrust two competing realities into contention: knowledge of the heretical world and the rejection of that knowledge. The entire heresiological apparatus ensnared its authors in the throes of a paradoxical project: "How can a Christian [heresiologist] justify laboring to preserve in minute detail the memory of a satanically inspired system of degradation and evil?"

Mapping Christianity: Heresiology, History, And Sectarianism

In Tomoko Masuzawa's narrative of *The Invention of World Religions*, Victorian anthropologists were one of two primary investigators and collectors of the customs of various non-Christian religions scattered beyond Europe. Masuzawa lists a few of their myriad ethnographic interests: natural religion, myths, rituals, cosmologies, metaphysical systems, and doctrines. They sought, in turn, to translate these habits and rituals, religious particulars, into coherent religious systems governed by transhistorical principles, religious universals. Anthropologists and Orientalists, the other primary investigators of non-Western religions, became the academics most devoted to the study of non-European, nonmodern peoples, especially their religions or superstitions, or both, as a direct result of shifting European attitudes toward the notion of religious society. As European society presented itself as guided by logic and rationalism, it perceived the rest of the world to be in the grip of supernatural forces. The social sciences—political science, economics, and sociology—had emerged in the early nineteenth century as the academic-scientific site for the study of the human and social structures of modern European society. Making sense of the rest of the world beyond Europe would be the task of Orientalism and anthropology. While these armchair anthropologists conceptualized tribal religions as "expressions of some basic and natural human propensities and behaviors in the face of the mysterious and the superhuman," orientalists eschewed claims of a generic religious essence and instead identified oriental religion as possessing "a vast and powerful metaphysical system deeply ingrained in the social fabric of a particular nation, and in the psychical predilections of its individual citizens and subjects." The scholarly theorizations of both anthropologists and orientalists contributed to the nineteenth-century scholarly discourse that gave birth to our contemporary category of world religions.

As this taxonomic scheme took shape over the course of the nineteenth century, the hallmarks of religion—even with the rise of the *Religionswissenschaft* in the second half of the nineteenth century—were invariably parsed through the language and principles of Christianity. Inasmuch as Christianity was, in the words of the Rev. Robert Flint (1838–1910), "the only religion from which, and in relation to which, all other religions may be viewed in an impartial and truthful manner," its comparative value lay in its theological supremacy. For the academics that perpetuated this discourse, Christianity was the sine qua non of religiosity. The other religions of the world—the beliefs and practices attested by the rest—were not only expressed through the discourse of Christianity. They also reinforced, through their deviations, oddities, archaisms, and so forth, that Christianity remained atop the hierarchy of universal religions. The British physician James Cowles Prichard (1786–1848), the pioneer of nineteenth-century ethnology, the science of human races, adhered to a strict biblical anthropology, which treated Christianity as the governing principle of human history:

> Prichard believed that just as in the beginning all men were one, so had God in the beginning revealed to all men the one true religion. . . . His concern with civilization was not to trace its origins but to defend its foundations, and in defending both primitive revelation and human unity he was in fact defending the principle that all mankind had once been and were rightfully subject to a single ethical dispensation.

It was the comparative theologians and armchair anthropologists of the nineteenth century who asserted in volume after volume that the world was filled not with properly transcendent and transnational religions but instead with local, pseudo, or incomplete religions. Writers such as Prichard tried valiantly to ensure that the study of the world's other religions—compiled by travelers, missionaries, colonial administrators, and, in rare cases, scholars—not only served the interests of Christianity but also were compatible with Christian dogma and scripture. The title of Rev. Thomas Smyth's 1851 treatise, *The Unity of the Human Races Proved to Be the Doctrine of Scripture, Reason and Science*, proudly proclaims the theological perspective of Victorian ethnology. And yet biblical anthropology, the study of diversity within a single, unified species, was both supported and undermined through the collection of the customs, habits, and traditions of primitive peoples. The data of travelers, missionaries, and ethnographers seemed to overwhelm the biblical narrative. And projects designed to fill in the ethnological gaps in the biblical account often created a disunity of cultures, races, and religions even as they insisted upon the fundamental unity of humankind. That very effort, as Isaac La Peyrère discovered, could easily lead to accusations of heresy.

For ethnologists and ethnographers, the irony of hurling accusations of heresy was that heresy itself served as an invaluable tool in the elaboration of a scripturally based Christian account of human unity as religious unity. Heresy was, after all, a choice. While that choice may have been old and long since forgotten by the people who made it, the heresiologists, as the mouthpieces of a Christian orthodoxy, identified and railed against this process—this contentious choice—of religious degeneration. Heresy could also be easily mapped on to (and out of) other expressions of behavioral and habitual difference. Epiphanius used the heretics to explain the rise of all religious and cultural differences by making nations, cult, and culture manifestations of heresy. Polemical investigations by the heresiologists authorized and even empowered subsequent generations to study all manner of religious and national difference, no matter how repulsive and dangerous. In the first quarter of the seventeenth century, Samuel Purchas, the traveler and Anglican cleric, published three massive volumes—known collectively as Purchas His Pilgrimage; or, Relations of the World and the Religions Observed in All Ages and Places Discovered from the Creation unto This Present—in which he reconciled the experience of his travels and the biblical worldview of Christian truth. In one particularly famous passage, he justified his decision to describe various irreligious people—whose "absence of religion was an absence of Christian Truth"—by appealing both to biblical precedent and to the writings of the heresiologists:

Now if any man thinke, that it were better these rotten bones of the passed, and stinking bodies of the present Superstitions were buried, then thus raked out of their graves besides that which has been said I answere, That I have sufficient example in the Scriptures, which were written for our learning to the ends of the World, and yet depaint unto us the ugly face of Idolatry in so many Countries of the Heathens, with the Apostasies, Sects, and Heresies of the Jewes, as in our first and second booke is shewed: and the Ancient Fathers also, Justin, Tertullian, Clemens, Irenaeus, Origen, and more fully, Eusebius, Epiphanius, and Augustine have gone before us in their large Catalogues of Heresies and false Opinions.

Here, as both Masuzawa and Schott have emphasized, Purchas situates himself as an empowered collector precisely because he writes from the position of Christian truth. In that regard, both he and the heresiologists shared a theological ambition: to catalogue the world in the vernacular of Christian and biblical orthodoxy. The heresiologists, like the comparative theologians and missionaries of later centuries, described customs and habits through the contrast between orthodox center and heretical periphery, even when the two were located in the same exact space. In short, they elaborated an ethnographic foundation for the comparative Christian worldview. Heresiologists took great pains to define the heretics in the most effective terms for their own polemical purposes. It was their prerogative to define true Christianity from a place of knowledge about false Christianity, a knowledge they sought to control through their very descriptions of it.

Because, as Daniel Boyarin has put it, the "heresiologists are the inspectors of religious customs," they operated as the collectors and, indeed, inventors of Christian diversity. The aim of the heresiologists was to create representations— self-serving and polemical representations—of what the heretics did and said. Heresiological ethnography puts into practice the famous maxim of Franz Boas that "to the ethnologist, the most trifling features of social life are important." It is about the microscopic, which sets in motion the production of bigger and broader systems of living. But microscopic analysis, whether through fieldwork or armchair aggregation, "does not occur spontaneously in an intentional vacuum or as the consequence of mere 'curiosity,' but is inherently a motivated and leveraged activity, a positive rhetoric loaded from the first with ideological and emotional, as well as practical, implications." Anthropologists go into the field and study peoples "because of what has been implanted in them." Like Pausanias, who guided his readers through the topography of Greece, and Diogenes Laertius, who guided his readers through the philosophical schools, heresiology offers its readers an intellectual map of the sectarian world. Heresiologists surveyed theologically and polemically the oikoumenë (the known or inhabited world) that was Christian, while also striving to make the oikoumenë Christian. They positioned themselves as courageous and necessary—if not hesitant—experts about the evolving contours of the Christian world. Their texts supplied reasons for seemingly inexplicable differences between Jews, Christians, heretics, and pagans. The science of heresy theorized not only the genesis of heresy but also its impact across all of human history.

Outlining The Project

This is a book about both ancient ethnography and ancient heresiology. In my reading, the two are inextricably linked. The ensuing chapters are organized thematically, rather than chronologically, precisely to demonstrate this point. This thematic structure better captures my interest in the stabilizing and destabilizing qualities—the discursive fits and starts, fissures and connections—of ethnographic knowledge and theories of classification within the context of late antique heresi-olog y. Instead of tracing a diachronic style or genre, which might erroneously suggest a single genealogy or systematic process of thought, I have configured this book to illustrate how ethnography functioned within heresiological literature as a tool for organizing or disorganizing sects. My aim is to understand how the production of Christian ethnography engulfed the heresiologists in a series of conceptual, structural, and literary paradoxes and to show how these textual problems shaped centuries of Christian discourse about religion, irreligion, and the writing of people. Readers will notice that certain scholars—Christopher Herbert, Jeremy Schott, David Chidester, Clifford Geertz, James Clifford, and Averil Cameron, among others—receive outsized attention over the course of this book. The reason is simple: I have found the works of these authors immeasurably useful in thinking about late antique heresiology specifically and the history of Christian ethnography more broadly. They have clarified, challenged, and refined my own ideas— and, to that end, I have chosen to be explicit about my influences. My references to Victorian ethnography and contemporary ethnographic theory are a conscious effort to think beyond the confines of late antiquity: to gesture at, however preliminarily and fragmentarily, the effects and implications of the production of Christianity, Christian theology, and the discourse of heresy for the history of writing peoples and their religions (and lack of religion). The point of these comparisons, moreover, is to highlight the enduring challenges of writing people through a discourse that presents itself as absolute and comprehensive yet is, at the same time, unsettled and constrained. They serve to reinforce the paradoxical qualities of ethnographic investigation, which, I suggest, were further complicated by the Christian discourse of heresy.

Chapter 1 begins with contextualization. I survey the forms and functions of ethnography in antiquity to provide the analytical foundation for my discussion of Christian heresiology as a mode of ethnographic writing. Through analysis of the works of Herodotus, Pliny, Josephus, Tacitus, Diodorus Siculus, and others, I identify the methodological, theoretical, and descriptive contours of classical ethnography. Precisely because ethnography was not a formal genre, I advocate the idea of an ethnographic disposition. The ethnographic disposition encapsulates the process and effects of writing people and defining cultural systems. If we conceive of ethnography as a multifaceted process in which information about a particular people is collected and then theorized, the ethnographic disposition encompasses the suppositions behind these methodological and theoretical decisions. I pose two interrelated questions about the ethnographic method. What were the sources and methods with which ethnography was written? And how was the collected information applied? The answer reveals the bipartite scope of ethnographic writing about the ancient world: (1) microscopic ethnography, descriptions of the customs and habits of peoples, and (2) macroscopic ethnography, the use of grand paradigms such as genealogy, typology, and astrology to explain habits, customs, phenotypes, and behaviors. By identifying the vast array of microcosmic habits, practices, and beliefs across the world, and theorizing human diversity via such macroscopic analysis, ethnographers balanced efforts to describe peoples against the desire to routinize this process.

Chapter 2 describes the ethnographic microcosms of the heretics as recounted in the heresiologists' polemical writings. I analyze the heresiologists' description of heretical customs and habits, including dietary practices, dress, rituals, and textual traditions, in order to parse the relationship between heresy, theology, and praxis. In tracing how ethnography was written "Christianly" (how Christians developed their own ethnographic vernacular), I emphasize—through a close reading of Epiphanius's description of the ascetical Messalians—how the study of the heretics both upended and reinforced ethnographic tropes and aspirations. While the microscopic facets of Christian ethnography often parallel classical ethnographic descriptions, they reorient those descriptive tendencies with theological language. The heresiologists used the opinions and practices of the heretics to produce sectarian communities and to identify heretical dispositions. In that way, the heresiologists constructed a culture of heresy in order to dismantle it.

In chapter 3, I analyze how the heresiologists contested heretical models of human and Christian diversification. While disputes between the heresiologists and the heretics revolved around matters of ecclesiology, prophecy, scripture, and dogma, they also encompassed vehement disagreement over attempts to explain human behavior and customs in the context of sacred history. Insofar as the heresiologists were aware that the heretics had their own macroscopic paradigms of ethnography, they attacked these elaborate theories. With specific attention to Hippolytus of Rome and his Refutation of All the Heresies, I describe the attempt to delegitimize the heretics' astrological theories and cosmological-mythological narratives of human diversification.

Hippolytus's prolonged and intricate engagement with these heretical models— imported, he charges, from pagan traditions and myths—illustrates the ethnographic terms in which heresiological inquiry and polemic were framed. Hippolytus assailed these alternative models precisely because he aspired to lay down his own truly Christian explanation of human and heretical difference. It is the very appearance of such disputes that signals their implications for understanding the Christianization of ethnographic writing. The terms and trajectories of these disputes point toward heresiology's fundamentally ethnographic logic.

Chapter 4 explores the rhetorical and ethnographic strategies utilized by Epiphanius of Salamis and Theodoret of Cyrrhus to organize the diverse world of Christian heresy. Though contextually and stylistically distinct, Epiphanius's *Panarion* and Theodoret's *Compendium of Heretical Fables* evidence their authors' parallel efforts to delineate their roles as ethnographers of the Christian tradition. Epiphanius deploys a universal genealogy of knowledge to organize his ethnographic data, whereas Theodoret proposes a schematic typology—built around the actions of demonic forces—to array his knowledge of the heretics. Epiphanius further suggests in his Panarion that his model of heresy and heretical expansion explains the totality of human history as well as all cultural, national, and religious difference. For him, the rise of sectarianism reflects the structure of all human difference: to map heresy is to map the entirety of the known world. But in the context of various Greco-Roman precedents of macroscopic ethnography, Christian ethnography functioned not only to explain human origins and diversity but also to elaborate an underlying human unity. Theodoret and Epiphanius are quite careful to express the Christian longing for a reunited human race, a pre–Genesis 11 world of a singular symbolic Christian language. Heresiology articulated the nature and possibility of a fundamental human unity.

Chapter 5 analyzes heresiological theorizations of social discourse and exchange, the lifeblood of ethnography. Tertullian's Rule against the Heretics adamantly insists on the theological futility of investigating heresy. His exegesis of Matthew 7.7— "Search, and you shall find"—attests the soteriological fulfillment of Christ, whose presence precludes any further need for inquiry. Tertullian cautions against study and inquiry born of curiosity—where heresy serves as the epitome of curiosity—because they lead the mind astray. Heresiology thus becomes a meditation on the nature and limitations of Christian knowledge. The heresiologists' fear—that they will delve too deeply into the abyss of heresy—ran up against their self-described effort to serve the greater Christian world as its doctrinal cartographers and polemical ethnographers. The danger of dialoguing with heretics signaled the paradoxical nature of Christian ethnographic inquiry: the danger that the necessity of pastoral care and education—exposing heresy—would contaminate and hereticize the inquirer. To counteract the pollution of the heretics, the heresiologists deployed a rhetoric of anti-ethnographic ethnography. They expressed their disdain for engaging with and collecting knowledge about the heretics just as they heralded their triumph over these blasphemous peoples.

I argue in chapters 6 and 7, about Epiphanius and Augustine, respectively, that the Christianization of ethnography and ethnographic paradigms accentuates the dangers of heresiological inquiry and the limits of so-called heresiological authority. As they try to order and number the totality of the heretical world, Epiphanius and Augustine reflect on the impossibility of their task. They cogitate about their inability to understand foreign customs, to translate peoples into texts, to manage, in essence, an impossibly large and ever-expanding repository of knowledge, a repository that they themselves helped to create. The heresiologists are all too aware that the world, despite the rise of Christianity, is beyond systematization and plenary understanding. Heresiology exposes the aporetic core of ethnographic writing; it is a task at once beyond the scope of the written word and of the human mind. In chapter 6, I discuss the ethnographic and epistemological limitations of Epiphanius's *Panarion*. Surveying and organizing the heretical world forces the heresiologists, like various classical ethnographers before them, to reflect upon their ability to comprehend the totality of Christian world around them. Epiphanius further acknowledged that heresy knew no geographical or territorial boundaries: it was a counterworld residing in his orthodox world. I demonstrate that Epiphanius not only admits this loss of control but also in a sense embraces it. There is no attempt to hide the fissures within his knowledge; they reflect his humanity and humility. Although Epiphanius persistently devised rhetorical and structural schemes to combat the ever-changing contours of the heretical world, he was consciously aware of his shortcomings, fears, and failures.

In chapter 7, I turn to Augustine's understudied *De haeresibus* to consider how he confronts not only the textual possibilities and limitations of epistemological representation but also the theoretical capacity to comprehend his heretical environs. Through intertextual reading, tireless research, and personal experience, Augustine edited the work of his antecedents and contemporaries into a slender heresiological handbook. By explicitly adding and subtracting heretics, Augustine presented his text as a polemical palimpsest of ethnographic knowledge. But although Augustine insisted on his expansive knowledge of the heretics, he readily admitted to falling short. His text is totalizing in aspiration, perhaps, but not in practice or even in theory. Instead it attests a stark conversation about the capacity of texts to represent and circumscribe ethnographic phenomena. What is especially revealing about Augustine and his text is the precise manner in which he framed his limitations not simply as a collector of abstract knowledge but as a living, practicing, flesh-and-blood heresiologist. Augustine was self-consciously aware of his inability to move from observer to observed, from heresiologist to heretic. For Augustine, the limitations of heresiology were insurmountable because they were fundamentally ethnographic. <>

PATTERNS OF WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP IN EARLY CHRISTIANITY edited by Joan E. Taylor and Ilaria L. E. Ramelli [Oxford University Press, 9780198867067]

- Brings together the latest research and reflections on women's leadership in early Christianity
- Considers the evidence for ways in which women exercised leadership in churches in the first Christian millennium
- Includes new archaeological, artistic, and literary material on women's leadership in the early centuries of the Christian era

This authoritative collection brings together the latest thinking on women's leadership in early Christianity. **PATTERNS OF WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP IN EARLY CHRISTIANITY** considers the evidence for ways in which women exercised leadership in churches from the 1st to the 9th centuries CE. This rich and diverse volume breaks new ground in the study of women in early Christianity. This is not about working with one method, based on one type of feminist theory, but overall there is nevertheless a feminist or egalitarian agenda in considering the full equality of women with men in religious spheres a positive goal, with the assumption that this full equality has yet to be attained. The chapters revisit both older studies and offers new and unpublished research, exploring the many ways in which ancient Christian women's leadership could function.

CONTENTS

List of Figures
List of Maps
List of Abbreviations
List of Contributors
Introduction, *Joan E. Taylor and Ilaria L E. Ramelli*
1. Male-Female Missionary Pairings among Jesus' Disciples: Some Further Considerations, *Joan E. Taylor*
2. Colleagues of Apostles, Presbyters, and Bishops: Women *Syzygoi* in Ancient Christian Communities, *Ilaria L.E. Ramelli*
3. The Entrepreneurial Widows of 1 Timothy, *Harry Maier*
4. Sacred Intercessors: Widows as Altar in Polycarp, *Philippians*, *Margaret Butterfield*
5. The Image of the Feminine in the *Gospel of Philip*: An Innovative Assimilation of Paul's Gender Legacy in the Valentinian Milieu, *Piotr Ashwin-Siejkowski*
6. Women in Gnosticism, *Nicola Denzey Lewis*
7. More 'Holy Women' in Early Christianity: The Gospels of Mary and Marcion, *Markus Vinzent*
8. Women Officeholders in Montanism, *William Tabbernee*
9. Women's Liturgical Practices and Leadership Roles in Early Christian Communities, *Teresa Berger*
10. Women Deacons in Ancient Christian Communities: Leadership and Ordination, *John Wijngaards*
11. Eudocia's Homeric Cento and the Woman Anointing Jesus: An Example of Female Authority, *Karl Olav Sandnes*
12. Women Church Leaders in and around Fifth-Century Rome, *Ally Kateusz and Luca Badini Confalonieri*
13. The Meaning of *Presbytera* in Byzantine and Early Medieval Christianity, *Kevin J. Madigan*
14. Gendered Space: Eusebius on the Therapeutae and the 'Megiddo Church', *Joan E. Taylor*
Bibliography
Index

At a time when there are continuing debates concerning ancient precedents for women's leadership in churches today, this volume is a very welcome addition that provides new and relevant historical evidence. Leadership is defined broadly, and the chapters of this book comprehensively demonstrate that women could exercise leadership in diverse ways. They present evidence for women with religious authority—both formal and informal, public and private—and ultimately we see a mosaic on which there are different patterns, evident in different places and times. In these patterns, we do not necessarily get clear lines of continuity, but we do appear to have various models which provided the rationales for women to function as partners of male apostles and scholars, or teachers, or baptizers, or independent celibates (in the case of widows), or presiders over the eucharist, in different times and places. Art and archaeology are used adeptly to furnish vital evidence not extant in texts. In various roles we see women acting as leaders, either solely or else in relationship to a man (or another woman) in a team. We have only small pieces of the patterns, as so much has been lost, but this book presents them in a clear and engaging manner. This is an important collection of essays, and the editors are to be congratulated on all their efforts.—Helen K. Bond

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There is little doubt that Graeco-Roman society as a whole, and the religious groups within society, operated with implicit assumptions of normative gender concepts, but both in wider society and in religious groups gender dynamics could be complex, and women could enjoy economic freedom, public authority, and engage widely in activities that were configured as more commonly those of men. Our authors here are generally conscious of this, as well as the androcentrism, rhetoricity, and selective survival of literary works. Historiography is not rendered pointless because of literary rhetoricity, but simply requires a certain care (for which see Fiorenza 1983, 1992, 1994a, 1994b; Brooten 1982; Matthews 2001). We simply do not have a full range of writings from Christianity that would enable us to understand gender dynamics in the first centuries in a comprehensive way, because of the selection, copying, and preservation processes of later centuries. This necessitates recovery work in terms of older evidence and a hermeneutic of suspicion regarding manuscripts dating from during or after the fourth century, since scribal amendments may mean manuscripts do not necessarily preserve impartial evidence. For this reason, material culture (epigraphy, art, and archaeology) can provide very important evidence that challenges simple readings of literary material alone.

Thus this book takes the baton from studies done in the 1970s through to the present. The important collections of evidence made by Eisen and Madigan and Osiek are particularly to be noted. Some earlier studies have played an important part in the push for the ordination of women in the mainline churches. With successes in numerous confessions, the impetus has somewhat waned. However, it has to be noted that still, within most of Christianity globally, the key leadership roles remain in the hands of men, despite the progress in gender inclusivity, particularly in western Europe, America, and Australasia. With the successes of the struggle for equality has come an even greater intransigence in other quarters. The Roman Catholic, Orthodox, and most Protestant evangelical churches are resistant to the full participation of women in ordained church leadership roles (or, in some confessions, any participation at all, though see Vassiliadis, Papageorgiou, and Kasselouri-Hatzivassiliadi 2017 in regard to Orthodox Christianity). In 2019 a Papal commission appointed to study the role of women deacons historically, given the question of ordaining women as deacons in the Roman Catholic Church today, decided that more evidence was needed; it was not convinced that women were ordained as deacons in the same way as men. A new commission with new membership, established in 2020, has begun the process again. It is flatly stated on many evangelical websites that women's voices should not be heard in church, because of 1 Cor. 14:34-5 and other passages in the Pauline corpus.' The same issues that affected Paul in advising women prayer-leaders and prophets to cover their hair 1 Cor. 11:1-9—modesty, or 'what feels right'—can also play a part today. Christianity can look to biblical and ancient precedents to justify current practices. Therefore, the problem of interpretation plagues the appreciation of the historical evidence. Teresa Berger's essay (Chapter 9) directly addresses the methodological issues that stump enquiry.

Throughout this book we are seeking a more contextualized, expanded, and nuanced concept of how men and women worked together in early churches. In the studies collected here women are frequently seen working with men but also independently as widows and virgins, as wives of prominent men, making their own decisions and exercising leadership, and as women with particular titles designating authority and respect. At times this leadership is focused on other women, given the strongly gendered nature of Graeco-Roman societies, in which there was a clear power differential between men and women as a normative social division, and strong delineations between public and private spheres. Women's leadership was often exercised within women's space, with women leading other women.

It is sometimes assumed by those who reject women's ordination that women teaching and baptizing other women does not count as true leadership, or else such gender division is used to reinscribe ancient binary concepts and practice as a kind of essential without which there would be a downfall in adherence to both scripture and tradition. The presupposition here is that the ancient women who looked to other women as leaders do not count in terms of defining true leadership. Conversely, it can be assumed that only women in ancient societies that demonstrate leadership of men, or perform in male roles, are actual leaders. Ancient churches have to be seen to have had a modern standard of gender parity in order for there to be recognition of meaningful precedents, and therefore an impossible standard is applied, which leads then to a temptation to push the evidence too far and defensively indulge in the 'feminist utopia' construct.

Ancient women validly exercised leadership in numerous ways that do not map on to contemporary Christian leadership practices. These took place within gendered constructs of space and place, often with a primary goal to provide service. Highly educated elite women could perform as men, rendering masculine language irrelevant. Thus, contemporary conceptual frameworks can be detrimental in terms of understanding ancient patterns. Where there is less gender division among us the distinctive leadership roles exercised by women for women in ancient societies have often been diminished, rendered inconsequential or rejected. Again, the order of widows is not one we find in today's churches, but in a gendered context it was an important body, and one we see both validated and controlled in 1 Timothy 4. The point here is that women's leadership matters, and was real, regardless of what antique social structures underlay it, or how nervously ancient authors testify to it. A Church in which the only leadership roles were held by men is simply not the Church we see in our ancient evidence.

Thus an unstated theme throughout these essays concerns the present. Given the history of women's roles in religious traditions, what does this mean for Christian women now? It is hoped that the studies of this collection, besides advancing historical research, will also provide material for reflection as communities move forward to embrace the challenges of the contemporary world, balancing societal expectations, heritage, inspiration, and capacity.

In this collection, we begin as editors with two of our own contributions, which are integrally linked. The first one, by Joan Taylor, focuses on a biblical text. In 'Male-Female Missionary Pairings among Jesus' Disciples: Some Further Considerations', the chapter expands on aspects of Taylor's previous argument that the designation 'two by two', in Mark 1:7 suggests that the Twelve male apostles appointed by Jesus in Galilee were not paired off internally as masculine teams but were paired with unnamed and obscured female companions. It is argued that the use of two-by-twoin Mark, found without a preposition, needs to be distinguished from the usage in Luke 10:1 in regard to the seventy (or seventy-two) apostles sent out since the Gospel of Peter [91:35 indicates this latter expression means 'two after two': namely, pairs going off in sequence, successively. The expression two-by-two, without any preposition, is not idiomatic Koine but rather is an expression reliant on the Semitic pattern of distributive repetition, and in Sirach 33:14-15 is it used precisely in regard to pairs of opposites, or contraries, created by God, which would normatively include the binary pair of male and female, in accordance with Aristotelian archetypes.

Following on from this, Ilaria Ramelli assembles evidence for the role of female `colleagues' or 'partners' (syzygoi) in the early churches. 'Colleagues of Apostles, Presbyters, and Bishops: Women Syzygoi in Ancient Christian Communities' focuses initially on the meaning(s) of syzygos, literally `yokefellow', and the patristic debate about it, and where such partnerships may be seen in the literature. She takes into consideration the Acts of Philip and its portrait of the apostolic couple of Philip and Mariamme. She also points to the suggestion of a pairing in the Acts of Paul and Thecla, and includes assessment of Clement, Origen, Theodoret, and Gregory Nazianzen. Nazianzen testifies to the existence of a woman presbyter, colleague of a male presbyter and bishop, and highly respected in Cappadocia in the late fourth century, Theosebia, who was most likely the sister of Gregory Nyssen. Ramelli notes that the women syzygoi need to be seen in the context of other women officeholders in the Church, and provides a detailed overview of the key evidence and ending with Origen, who could even use passages of the Pastoral Epistles as a means of acknowledging them.

After this Harry Maier continues with his examination of 'The Entrepreneurial Widows of I Timothy'. He argues that the exhortations and admonitions to widows (i.e. unmarried women) voiced in I Timothy—identified as a highly rhetorical pseudonymous letter written in Paul's name—attests to a concern with single women's patronage of Christ assemblies, which the writer seeks to address by having them marry. Maier seeks to move beyond a common explanation that the letter was occasioned by ascetical teachings in which women discovered in sexual continence a new freedom from traditional gender roles. He aims to establish that the letter has a broader economic concern with widows, through an historical exploration of the socio-economic status of women who were artisans in the imperial urban economy. He identifies the means by which women gained skill in trades and the roles they played in the 'adaptive family' in which households of tradespeople plied their trade often at economic levels of subsistence. New Testament texts point to artisan women, some of them probably widows, who played important roles of patronage and leadership in assemblies of Christ believers. By attending to levels of poverty in the urban empire, traditional views of the widows of I Timothy as wealthier women assigned to gender roles are seen in a new light through consideration of spouses accustomed to working alongside their husbands and taking on the businesses after they died. While the lives of these women are largely invisible, attention to benefactions of wealthy women to synagogues and associations gives insight into the lives of women acting independently in various kinds of social gatherings.

In the work of Margaret Butterfield, we continue with the subject of widows, and consider the metaphorical way that widows can be presented. In 'How is a Widow like an Altar? Early Christian Women at the Centre of the Human-Divine Economy', Butterfield notes how a small number of Christian texts, dating from the second to the fifth centuries CE, briefly invoke the strange metaphor of the widow as an altar of God. She asks: in what ways might such a metaphor have been intelligible to early Christian audiences? In service of what rhetorical aims might the metaphor have been employed, and what might have been effects of its usages? She considers the use of the metaphor in relation to evidence for widows' statuses as recipients of community funds and as those who offer prayer on behalf of the community. By characterizing the widows as altars these texts present them as objects under the control of others yet acknowledge their position at the centre of a transformational economy of offering. Ultimately, she asks if the widows as altars metaphor indicates they are passive recipients of charity, or workers in the ekklësia entitled to a share of the sacred portion.

Piotr Ashwin-Siejkowski then considers a text that is often considered 'Gnostic' in character. 'The Image of the Feminine in the' Gospel of Philip: An Innovative Assimilation of Paul's Gender Legacy in the Valentinian Milieu', is an essay that explores the richness of images of the feminine preserved in the Coptic Gospel of Philip and their significance to the life of the Valentinian community. It assesses the diversity and dichotomy of the feminine symbolism in relevant documents from Nag Hammadi. In this context the study highlights the importance and creativity of Philip's construction of the feminine. Ashwin-Siejkowski also offers a discussion of the assimilation of the Pauline exegesis of the story of the creation of Adam and Eve by this document. On that basis he shows the original trajectory of the Gospel, which goes beyond the Pauline legacy, to serve the needs of its audience. Finally, as the Gospel of Philip pays a great deal of attention to the value of Christian teaching (exegesis) and the sacraments, the chapter addresses the vital question: could Valentinian women take an active role in teaching and worship in the light of this Gospel and its gender construction?

Nicola Denzey Lewis goes further along this track in 'Women in Gnosticism', noting that real women are difficult to find from the sources conventionally identified as 'Gnostic'. The few that are mentioned in a variety of sources—Marcellina, Flora, and Flavia Sophe—remain enigmatic, mere fleeting mentions that force us to draw on all our resources to reconstruct even the barest contours of their lives. In every case, however, these women appear to have irritated and scandalized the pious self-proclaimed arbiters of Christian 'orthodoxy'. Sadly, however, these women do not seem to have had better spiritual lives in 'Gnostic' circles; there, too, they encountered men ready to take advantage of the power differential evident in Roman imperial Christian culture, such as it was at the time. To be perhaps less pessimistic, however, the language and imagery of 'Gnostic' documents—particularly those found at Nag Hammadi—contain often startling plays on sexual politics in the spiritual realm. At times, these result in sweeping cosmic dramas that place human women not merely as victims of male spiritual malevolence but as heroines who are able to transcend their earthly fates because there is a place, even in the highest heavenly realms, where 'the feminine' holds sway; beyond that, even, gender differences melt away and are absorbed into an absolute, genderless oneness of existence.

Markus Vinzent explores then 'More "Holy Women" in Early Christianity: The Gospels of Mary and Marcion'. He provides a comparison between the role of women as described by the Gospel of Mary and Marcion's Gospel (and Apostolikon) to that of the canonical Gospels. It emerges that in the two non-canonical texts women were regarded as true witnesses, prophets, and apostles of Christ in contrast to the ambiguous, if not dubious, role of the Twelve, and especially of that of Peter. The chapter also looks into the role of women in the Roman church where, for example, in Hippolytus (In Song of Songs 25.6) they are still known as 'Apostles to the Apostles'. This picture differs considerably from what we are used to read, at least at face value, in the canonical texts, and ultimately asks us to consider the editing process that resulted in certain versions of the earliest stories to be erased.

We then move to the evidence of the Montanists in Phrygia. William Tabbernee, in 'Women Officeholders in Montanism', explores the role of women as invested with religious authority, leaders, prophets, ordained, and objects of reverence in Montanist communities, in the light both of literary sources and epigraphical evidence. He considers key issues, for example whether the designation presbytera on the tombstone of Ammion in ancient Temenothyrai, now Usak, Turkey, means 'elderly woman', 'the wife of a presbyter (or bishop)', or a 'female presbyter'. In the latter case, was this title simply honorific or did it involve holding of an actual office? Tabbernee decides ultimately this was an actual office for a woman that functioned in an entirely Catholic community, perhaps in a proto-Catholic house-church at Temenothyrai, which would be influenced by the attested practices of the Montanists. The Montanists, founding their gender theory on Paul's assertion in Gal. 3:28 (so Epiphanius, Panarion 49.2.5), rejected the dichotomy of public and private spheres for the ministry of men and women, and women were included as officeholders serving both.

Leading on from this, Teresa Berger discusses a central issue in `Women's Liturgical Practices and Leadership Roles in Early Christian Communities'. This chapter explores the scattered and fragmentary evidence for early Christian liturgical practices and the traces it offers of women's leadership roles in worship. She attends to these traces within the broader frame of the emergence of a particular kind of priestly masculinity that increasingly renders women's leadership problematic, especially in worship. This suggests changing circumstances as the mainstream church evolves.

In the next chapter, John Wijngaards, veteran campaigner for Catholic women's ordination, writes on 'Women Deacons in Ancient Christian Communities: Leadership and Ordination'. Women deacons are widely attested in early Christianity, though terms vary and they can be difficult to distinguish. He examines the evidence and considers some of the issues involved in identifying women deacons. He argues that the ordination of women deacons was not dependent on their being associates of male deacons. As time passed, however, this role was abolished, though it still remained in a few places through to the Middle Ages.

In Karl Olav Sandnes' paper we move forward in time to look at the way precedents of women's leadership could be used later, here in the work of the estranged wife of the emperor Theodosius II, Eudocia. In Eudocia's Homeric Cento and the Woman Anointing Jesus: An Example of Female Authority', Sandnes identifies how the woman of Bethany in the Gospel of Mark is praised in words taken from Achilles, a most prominent figure of manly honour in the Iliad. However, the honour for which she is praised remains within the boundaries of a proper, submissive woman. This duality corresponds to how Eudocia portrays herself in her preface to the Homeric Cento. On the one hand, she improved upon Patricius' poem, presenting a better poem in style as well as content. She demonstrated her superiority. Her superiority was, however, coupled with restrictions implied in her being a woman. It seems, therefore, that Eudocia has inscribed her own dual authority of both superior and woman into her interpretation of the woman of Bethany.

Ally Kateusz and Luca Badini Confalonieri take us then to artistic representations, showing evidence of 'Women Church Leaders in and around Fifth-century Rome'. Their chapter focuses on two artefacts that portrayed women church leaders operating within this broad context. They address frescos of deceased women painted with open gospel books in the San Gennaro Catacombs in Naples; they propose that the most logical interpretation of the iconographic motifs associated with them is that they were women bishops, perhaps two of the women about whom Pope Gelasius complained to male bishops in southern Italy c.496. For cultural context they next consider an ivory reliquary box discovered in 1906, which depicts three pairs of men and women in the altar area of Old St Peter's Basilica in Rome. This scene has recently been re-analysed; one of the pairs appears to have been sculpted jointly officiating the Eucharist at the basilica's altar. Additional fifth- and sixth-century artefacts that portray women as clergy, sometimes paired with men, sometimes independently, affirm both the identification of women bishops in the two Naples catacomb frescoes and also the scene of the woman and man officiating at the altar in Old St Peter's on the ivory box.

In Kevin Madigan's discussion in 'The Meaning of Presbytera in Byzantine and Early Medieval Christianity' there is an examination of the title of 'presbyter' attached to women in antiquity and the early Middle Ages. It is argued that this is always subject to difficult interpretation and, if capable of interpretation at all, highly dependent upon contemporary, contextual evidence. As noted by Tabbernee, this term presbytera can refer to an elderly woman and, often, it refers to the wives of male presbyters. Yet there are a number of instances in which neither is the case. Using inscriptional evidence, canonical decrees, episcopal letters, and one papal letter, Madigan demonstrates that, in this third category of cases, presbyterae seem to have had authority in local communities, or performed quasi-diaconal service at the altar, assisted itinerant priests, and, possibly, engaged in other, routine unspecified presbyteral activities. It is these actions that the ecclesiastical letters and decrees are intended to stop.

Finally, Joan Taylor considers the meeting place of the Therapeutae, described in Philo of Alexandria's De Vita Contemplativa, as represented by Eusebius of Caesarea. Since Eusebius read Philo's treatise as indicating an early Christian community, he sees a church here, with gendered space, affirming this is Christian practice. The ministries of Christian women overall then need then to be considered within a gendered construct of space and movement. While the appropriate 'place' for women in the earliest congregations depends on how meeting spaces are configured (for meals, charity, teaching, healing, and prayer), the recent work of Edward Adams has contested the ubiquitous house-church model and allowed for more cognitive templates for how gendered space was constructed. The third-century 'Megiddo church' seems to suggest a divided dining hall for women and men, in line with gendered dining as a Hellenistic norm, with centralized ritual space.

This is then a rich and diverse collection of chapters that—from a variety of perspectives—break new ground in the study of women in early Christianity. This is not about working with one method, based on one type of feminist theory, but overall, in these papers there is nevertheless a feminist or egalitarian agenda in considering the full equality of women with men in religious spheres a positive goal, with the assumption that this full equality has yet to be attained. Much of the work here implicitly adopts the empirical historical methodology of critically evaluating positive evidence. The concern is to explore the evidence—literary, epigraphic, archaeological, artistic, iconographic, etc.—for women teachers, officeholders, leaders, and others invested with religious authority, in a collection of contributions by world experts in their fields. The chapters revisit both older studies and offer new and unpublished research, exploring the many ways in which ancient Christian women's leadership could function. <>

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