PORPHYRY in FRAGMENTS

Reception of an Anti-Christian Text in Late Antiquity

ARIANE MAGNY

ROUTLEDGE

PORPHYRY IN FRAGMENTS

The Greek philosopher Porphyry of Tyre had a reputation as the fiercest critic of Christianity. It was well-deserved: he composed (at the end the 3rd century A.D.) fifteen discourses against the Christians, so offensive that Christian emperors ordered them to be burnt. We thus rely on the testimonies of three prominent Christian writers to know what Porphyry wrote. Scholars have long thought that we could rely on those testimonies to know Porphyry's ideas.

Exploring early religious debates which still resonate today, *Porphyry in Fragments* argues instead that Porphyry's actual thoughts became mixed with the thoughts of the Christians who preserved his ideas, as well as those of other Christian opponents.

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Porphyry in Fragments

Reception of an Anti-Christian Text in Late Antiquity

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For Dominic

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Foreword

'Porphyry, most learned of the philosophers, although a most bitter enemy of the Christians …' . With these few words Augustine, writing c. 425, characterized Christian reaction to a Platonist philosopher who died c. 305. Porphyry prompted refutations by Christian authors and orders from Christian emperors to burn his books; he may even have influenced the 'Great Persecution' of the early fourth century. But what did this bitter enemy write to provoke so fierce a response? Very little is left of anti-Christian critique in the centuries when Christianity in the Roman empire moved from outlawed sect to dominant religion. Historians of this major cultural change particularly want to know about Porphyry *Against the Christians.* But from Porphyry's immense range of writings on philosophy and religion, literature and culture, only a few survive, incomplete. They are not concerned with the scriptures and teachings he is said to have attacked. It is not even clear that he wrote a work specifically *Against the Christians*, rather than a section of a longer work on religion, or scattered passages which someone else compiled.

So Porphyry against the Christians, in the words of Ariane Magny's title, is Porphyry in fragments. There are words and arguments taken out of context, ascribed to Porphyry by opponents who had no wish to do him justice, and who had perhaps read his work only in excerpts, or in the writings of another opponent, or in Latin translation from Porphyry's Greek. Or there are words and arguments which may come from Porphyry, but are not ascribed to him.

Fragments are difficult to identify and to use in reconstruction. A scholar who is expert in patterns of thought and style may detect part of a lost work embedded in another text. But such fragments cannot simply be lifted out, as if they were *tesserae* of Porphyry embedded in a mosaic, to be reassembled in accordance with evidence for the lost work. Ancient citation practice leaves it unclear where a fragment begins or ends, what has been omitted or paraphrased, and whether anyone even expected quotation to be accurate. Dr Magny therefore starts from the contexts of the supposed fragments, asking why their authors engaged with Porphyry, and how their own interests and the genre of their writing shaped what they took from him.

Of the three main sources for Porphyry against the Christians, only Eusebius, a contemporary who lived through persecution, is said to have written a work *Against Porphyry*. It is now lost: did Eusebius in other works continue to answer Porphyry, but without naming him? Jerome, half a century later, made occasional references to Porphyry's critique of scripture, especially to his argument that the book of Daniel was not a prophecy but a later history, and to his objections that some passages of scripture are inconsistent or absurd or unedifying. But we cannot deduce from Jerome's concern with texts that Porphyry made a detailed study of scripture. Nor can we assume that opposition to Christianity was a priority for Porphyry, or that he is the most likely source for any anti-Christian argument. Augustine provided the familiar description of Porphyry, but in earlier work he showed no awareness of Porphyry as an enemy; instead, he used Porphyry to show how close Platonism was to Christianity.

Dr Magny shows how the search for Porphyry *Against the Christians* must begin with Christians against Porphyry: that is, with the motives and methods of the Christian authors who chose Porphyry as an opponent. In this way the search for fragments reveals the complexities of debate among pagans and Christians.

Gillian Clark
Bristol, August 2013

Preface

How did Christians react to highly educated and informed critiques of Christianity in the first few centuries of Christianity? The complex relationship between pagans and early Christians is a fascinating topic. This book offers an insight into some of the Christian reaction to one pagan philosopher in particular, between the early fourth and fifth centuries. But their reaction is most telling: the Roman world was fast changing, and early reactions differed in intention and content from those arising just a century later.

The idea for this book emerged during the writing of a Master's thesis on Porphyry and the book of Daniel entitled: 'Porphyre et le *Livre de Daniel*: réaction à la tradition exégétique chrétienne du IIIe siècle' and submitted to McGill University in 2004. I was then primarily interested in Porphyry's attacks against the book of Daniel, as well as the Christian exegetical tradition that might have influenced the philosopher's reading of Daniel. I then moved the project to the PhD level at the University of Bristol, with the aim of studying all of the Porphyrian fragments against the Christians. My initial plan, as an enthusiastic PhD student, who does not yet realize that an 80,000-word dissertation is not that long, was to offer a new collection of the fragments of Porphyry's *Against the Christians*, and to offer, as part of the commentary, an analysis of the third century Christian exegetical tradition that preceded Porphyry. However, not only did it finally occur to me that I would only be able to focus on the main three authors, who had preserved Porphyry – that is, Eusebius, Jerome and Augustine – I also reflected further on the methodological approaches developed by Most et al. in the end of the 90s and used by classicists to work on fragment gathering and commenting. I thus had to change my views on how this project should be conducted. I ended up reflecting far more on the authors who had cited Porphyry than on Porphyry himself ... Indeed, the methodological approaches stress the importance of the contextual framework of the fragment, namely the works in which they are extant, for the assessment of a fragment's quality and for the reconstruction of a lost work. I have also applied the critical theories used by classicists to identify the various biases of the authors preserving fragments, following a helpful review of an article submitted to *JECS*. I realized

that the case of Porphyry bore challenges of its own, for it consists of philological and historical writings – Porphyry used history and philology to show that Scriptures were not prophetical but historical – preserved in the Christian corpus, that is, in a polemical context. This type of fragment had not yet been studied. Furthermore, because Porphyry had been preserved mainly in Eusebius, Jerome and Augustine, my interest in the context, and, therefore, in the citing authors, led me to compare their various agendas, that is, the reasons why they cited Porphyry. These reasons varied according to time and place, it seems, and this influenced the way in which Porphyry was received throughout the late antique period.

Upon using the method of contextualization to recover fragments from Eusebius, Jerome, and Augustine, it became evident that the methodology for fragment collecting needed to be adapted to each individual author, and that there was no straightforward approach to the problem of recovering a lost work, which survives in a polemical context. What this book therefore attempts to recover is the reception of Porphyry in the Christian literature, as opposed to *Against the Christians*.

I am very grateful to Gillian Clark, who was my PhD supervisor at the University of Bristol, and whose scholarship and human qualities have been invaluable throughout the realization of this project, even after she had retired. I also wish to thank Mark Edwards, from the University of Oxford, for his conscientious review of the manuscript, as well as Neville Morley and Bella Sandwell, both from the University of Bristol, for their comments on various stages of the dissertation. Peregrine Horden, from Royal Holloway, and the reviewers of the *Journal of Early Christian Studies* have provided very helpful feedback on the chapters 'New Methods' and 'Jerome'. I am grateful to Sébastien Morlet from Paris-Sorbonne University for inviting me to the 2009 colloquium entitled 'Le traité de Porphyre contre les chrétiens. Un siècle de recherches, nouvelles questions'; the ideas shared with participants (André Laks, Paris-Sorbonne, in particular) changed the orientation of a good part of this project. Elizabeth DePalma Digeser and Harold Drake, from UCSB, provided most helpful comments on the overall argument of the book during various seminar discussions over the years. I am also grateful to Louis Painchaud, from Université Laval, and Wendy Helleman, from the University of Toronto, for their comments on the last stage of the project during the 2013 meeting of the Canadian Society of Patristic Studies, held in Victoria, and for helping me to determine the book title. This project has also benefited from conversations on Porphyry with John G. Cook (LaGrange College), Aaron Johnson (Lee

University) and Jeremy Schott (Bloomington, Indiana), and on Neoplatonism with Heidi Marx (University of Manitoba) and Olivier Dufault (Université Laval). David J. Miller has patiently helped me to decipher Eusebius' Greek. I thank the Arts Faculty of the University of Bristol, as well as the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada for their financial support throughout the writing of the dissertation, which has now taken the form of a book.

Finally, I wish to thank my husband, Dominic, as well as my family and friends for their invaluable support throughout the past few years.

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List of Abbreviations

Abbreviations of ancient works and periodicals follow *L'Année Philologique*, except in the following cases:

AKPAW	*Abhandlungen der Königlich Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*
ANRW	*Aufstieg und Niedergang der Romischen Welt*
DE	*Demonstration evangelica*
ETR	*Études théologiques et religieuses*
HE	*Historia ecclesiastica*
Mak.	Macarios Magnes
Nr.	Fragment number
PE	*Preparatio evangelica*
RE	PAULY-WISSOWA, *Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*
REG	*Revue des Études Grecques*
RHLR	*Revue d'Histoire et de Littérature Religieuse*
SE	*Sacris Erudire*
SPAW	*Sitzungsberichte der Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*
ThQ	*Theologische Quartalschrift*
ZNW	*Zeitschrift für die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche*
ZwissTh	*Zeitschrift für wissenschaftliche Theologie*

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Note on the Texts

A. von Harnack, for his collection of fragments, used the Latin edition of texts as found in J.-P. Migne *Patrologia Latina*.[1] I have decided to use the most recent editions of the texts for this book; as a result, when a quotation differs from Harnack, it means that it is from another, more recent edition than PL (PL had to be used when no other edition existed for a text). Please also note that italic type is used for the portion of the translation which corresponds to the fragment as found in Harnack, in order to make it clearly stand out of the context.

[1] A. von Harnack, 'Porphyrius, *Gegen die Christen*. 15 Bücher: Zeugnisse, Fragmente und Referate', *AKPAW* (1916): 1-115.

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Introduction[1]

> ... Then indeed, then was the time when very many who were leaders in the churches exhibited scenes of grand struggles, as they eagerly underwent terrible tortures; while countless others, numbed to the heart in advance by cowardice, were simply overcome by weakness straight away, at the first onset. Each of the rest went through various forms of torture in turn, one receiving agonising lashes to the body from whips while another was being tormented with unendurable rackings and abrasions, under which some soon came to a hideous end.[2]

This is a scene from the Palestinian countryside during the Great Persecution, (303-11) launched against the Christians by the Roman emperor Diocletian and his co-rulers. Eusebius, future bishop of Caesarea, who was living in the province of Palestine at the time, was no stranger to the horrific fate awaiting Christians at the hands of the Roman authorities. And the words of Porphyry of Tyre, a famous Neoplatonist philosopher and contemporary, had been circulating against the Christians for some time and perhaps had fuelled persecution. The Christians may have been despising death,[3] however, God's plan for humanity, namely the spread of Christianity, was at stake. Eusebius had to make sense of this all, and also to address Porphyry's attacks. This he will do in a work, now lost, entitled *Against Porphyry*.[4]

Later on, in the early 5th century A.D., Jerome of Stridon will write: 'Porphyry barks'.[5] According to the famous Father of the Church, Porphyry's

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[1] All abbreviations follow *L'Année Philologique*, and all translations are mine, unless otherwise specified.

[2] Eusebius, *Church History* 8.3. 'τότε δὴ οὖν, τότε πλεῖστοι μὲν ὅσοι τῶν ἐκκλησιῶν ἄρχοντες, δειναῖς αἰκίαις προθύμως ἐναθλήσαντες, μεγάλων ἀγώνων ἱστορίας ἐπεδείξαντο, μυρίοι δ' ἄλλοι τὴν ψυχὴν ὑπὸ δειλίας προναρκήσαντες προχείρως οὕτως ἀπὸ πρώτης ἐξησθένησαν προσβολῆς, τῶν δὲ λοιπῶν ἕκαστος εἴδη διάφορα βασάνων ἐνήλλατεν, ὅ μὲν μάστιξιν αἰκιζόμενος τό σῶμα, ὅ δέ στρεβλώσεσιν καὶ ξεσμοῖς ἀνυπομονήτοις τιμωρούμενος, ἐφ' οἷς ἤδη τινὲς οὐκ αἴσιον ἀπηνέγκαντο τοῦ βίου τέλος' (LCL: 258).

[3] Eusebius, *Church History* 8.14.13.

[4] See S. Morlet, 'Que savons-nous du *Contre Porphyre* d'Eusèbe?' *REG* 125(2012): 473-514, for a discussion of the work, which, he argues, contained 25 books.

[5] Jerome, *Against Pelagius* 2.17.11 'Latrat Porphyrius' (CCL 80: 76).

attacks against the Christians are thus mere annoyance to the ears of Christians. While this kind of reception of anti-Christian critiques is well embedded in the tradition of Christian refutations – just two centuries earlier, Jerome's predecessor, Origen, was saying about his adversary Celsus that, 'hopefully, none of those who have come to know the infinite love of God 'in Jesus Christ' will ever see their faith shaken by the words of Celsus or anyone of his kind'[6] – it certainly indicates that Porphyry was still relevant to the Christian writers long after Eusebius refuted Porphyry. However, one factor had changed dramatically between the time when Celsus was refuted and Porphyry referred to in the Christian literature: Christianity had become the dominant religion of the Roman empire. While Origen died a martyre, Jerome had far less to fear from religious enemies. Porphyry had evidently become less of a threat to Christians.

A contemporary of Jerome, Augustine of Hippo was also interested in Porphyry, whom he labelled as 'the most learned of philosophers'.[7] In just a century or so, Porphyry had thus become known as 'wise' by an equally wise Church Father. If we look more closely at Augustine, it becomes clear that he was referring to Porphyry's work as a Platonist, not as a Christian opponent, when he commended his wisdom. But Augustine also went even as far as presenting Porphyry as almost Christian himself. Clearly, things had changed.

These three authors are the major sources for Porphyry's critique of Christianity, which survives only in the works of Christians, and only in fragments and allusions. This book shows how what we think we know about Porphyry's critique is shaped by the historical contexts, the writing style, and the agenda, of the authors who cite him.

Anti-Christian attacks

R.L. Wilken labelled Porphyry as 'the most learned critic of all'.[8] In comparison with other anti-Christian writers, Porphyry's critiques appear far more developed. But before we look at Porphyry, let us discuss the intellectuals' response to the rise of Christianity in general. There are four other well-known

[6] Origen, *Against Celsus* Preface 1.3. 'Καὶ μὴ εἴη γε εὑρεθῆναί τινα τοιαύτην ἀνειληφότα ἀγάπην τοῦ θεοῦ 'ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ', ὡς ὑπὸ τῶν ῥηματίων Κέλσου ἤ τινος τῶν ὁμοίων σεισθῆναι τὴν προαίρεσιν αὐτοῦ' (SC 132: 68).

[7] Augustine, *City of God* 19.22. '... doctissimus philosophorum'.

[8] R.I. Wilken, *The Christians as the Romans saw them* (New Haven, 1984), 126, labelled Porphyry as 'the most learned critique of all'; see his book for a discussion on pre-porphyrian philosophical attacks on Christianity.

late antique Christian opponents: Celsus, Hierocles, Arnobius and the emperor Julian. This book argues that by the time of Augustine's writings, Porphyry had become merely a name for *the* Christian opponent, a sort of bogey-man, and that what Augustine preserved of Porphyry was actually a combination of anti-Christian ideas both earlier than and contemporary to the bishop of Hippo. But what had these opponents to say on the Christians and their way of life?

The Platonist philosopher Celsus (2nd c. A.D.) wrote a work, now lost, entitled *True Doctrine*, which received an extensive response from the Christian Origen (*Against Celsus*). It is through Origen's apological treatise that we know Celsus' anti-Christian argument. According to M. Fédou, the date of Celsus' work is uncertain, however scholars agree on the second half of the second century A.D.[9] As M. Frede argues, the philosopher Celsus saw Plato as a guide to accessing knowledge about the divine. Hellenism, in turn, had best articulated past cultural traditions about the gods that could lead to Truth. In contrast, contemporary Christians were claiming access to divine truth, while denying the gods of the pantheon.[10] The Christian God is a jealous god that will not accept to share his rule with other traditional deities. What was the risk incurred? Those subversive Christians will attract the wrath of the gods for turning their backs on them. With his Greek philosophical background, Frede explains, Celsus, in *True Doctrine*, discussed more fully how Christianity was a threat both to the empire and to Hellenism.[11]

As Wilken put it, Celsus' 'portrait of the Christian movement is detailed and concrete. He has a keen eye for Christianity's most vulnerable points and the wit to exploit them for a laugh.'[12] Celsus' portrayal of Christianity was basically meant to enhance the existing predjudices – such as Jesus was a magician – and to associate the Christians with what the Romans hated most, namely poor and uneducated people, believers in a new religion, and followers of a crucified criminal.[13] In one instance, Celsus even quotes Paul 1 Corinth. 1:25-6, who said that the Christians should not ask questions, but simply believe and be faithful, in order to mock the Christians' reluctance to appeal to reason.[14]

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[9] M. Fédou, *Christianisme et Religions païennes dans le Contre Celse d'Origène* (Paris, Beauchesne: 1988), 40; R. Wilken, *The Christians as the Romans saw them* (New Haven: 1984), 94, proposes c. 170.

[10] M. Frede, 'Celsus's Attack on the Christians', in *Philosophia Togata II: Plato and Aristotle at Rome*, ed. J. Barnes and M. Griffin, 218-40 (Oxford: 1997), 220.

[11] Frede, Celsus's Attack, 220.

[12] Wilken, *Christians*, 95.

[13] See Wilken, *Christians,* 94-125, for a lengthy discussion.

[14] Origen, *Against Celsus* 1.19.

But, as mentioned above, Celsus' critique did not come directly to us, and we must read through Origen's *Against Celsus* to recover its fragments. *Against Celsus* is Origen's latest remarkable work, and was written at the request of bishop Ambrose. M. Fédou explains that it was written shortly before the emperor Decius came to the throne, and ordered all Roman citizens to sacrifice to the gods. This edict would lead to a religious persecution that targetted Christians amongst other groups, and would only end with the emperor's death in 251. During that persecution, Origen was tortured, and died a few years later of the injuries he had incurred.[15] The historical context of both Celsus' *True Doctrine* and Origen's reply is thus set at a time when the Christians' lives were in actual danger. M. Edwards argues that Origen was in a dialectic relation with Plato and his professed way to divine truth when he answered his adversary Celsus.[16] Origen was thus more than a mere Christian apologist: his refutation was embedded in a thorough philosophical debate over the interpretation and relevance of Plato to the ascent of the soul. He used this debate to incite Christians to become martyrs, for this was, to him, an excellent path to salvation, and an available path at that, given the religious and political situation in the empire under Decius. This is the intellectual context in which he preserved passages from Celsus' *True Doctrine*. But Origen actually quotes Celsus before arguing with him; as a result, even if it is selective quotation, it makes it possible to recover most of his opponent's arguments.

The governor of the Eastern Roman province of Bithynia, Hierocles (*fl*. early 300s A.D.),[17] in turn, was a contemporary of both Porphyry and Eusebius. He was also the author of *Lover of Truth*, in which he reproduces some of Celsus's and Porphyry's attacks on Christians. Hierocles' work, again, only survived in fragments, in the work of Eusebius' *Against Hierocles*. Hierocles compared Christ to the famous magician Apollonius of Tyana, and mocked the ignorance of Christ's disciples, and in particular that of Peter and Paul, who, he argues, falsely recorded his life.[18] According to M. Simmons, Hierocles thus wished to prove the superiority of the Graeco-Romans to the Christians; indeed, Apollonius had lived before Christ, and, after his death, a tradition of writings about him and his life emerged, in sharp contrast with Jesus', by his educated disciples; accordingly, Graeco-Romans held the truth, not Christians.[19]

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[15] Fédou, *Christianisme,* 38-9.

[16] M. Edwards, *Origen Against Plato* (Burlington, 2002), 1.

[17] See T.D. Barnes, 'Sossianus Hierocles and the Antecedents of the "Great Persecution"', *Harvard Studies in Classical Theology* 80 (1976): 239-52 on the date.

[18] Eusebius, *Against Hierocles* 1-2.

[19] M. Simmons, *Arnobius of Sicca* (Oxford: 1995), 25.

Lactantius explains, in *Divine Institutes*, how Hierocles was called at Diocletian's court in Nicomedia on the eve of the Great Persecution to present his anti-Christian arguments at a conference, and Eusebius tells us, in *Against Hierocles*, that Hierocles was most influential at the time in politics.[20] But Lactantius tells us that attending this conference was also a pamphleter, who he does not name, but who was a philosopher, a priest of the highest god and a preacher of abstinence.[21] This anonymous man has been identified with Porphyry, for he was a notorious Neoplatonist and wrote a work entitled *On Abstinence from Animal Food* – his identity shall be discussed below. We do not know what Porphyry presented at the conference; however, it is certainly interesting to note that his anti-Christian ideas, as preserved by Jerome, bore points in common with those of Hierocles. Jerome, indeed, accuses Porphyry of comparing Jesus with the magician, and of commenting that he was a far superior magician at that.[22] Fourth century critiques of Christianity were therefore quite similar in content, or this is at least the impression that the Christian-citing authors give us.

As for the emperor Julian, an apostate of Christianity himself, and a Neoplatonist – and therefore a man who had experienced the new religion first-hand – he wrote a book called *Against the Galileans* (also lost and partly preserved in Cyril's *Against Julian*). His criticism of Christianity was also very close to Celsus', for he discussed the divinity of Jesus and Christianity as being an apostasy from Judaism, and opposing Christianity to the more sophisticated, Platonist ideas of God.[23] However, Julian's reign was so short (361-63) that he did not have time to overturn the rise of Christianity. Even though he had a few detractors, no one was interested in formally refuting his *Against the Galileans* before Cyril of Alexandria took on this task in the 430s, decades after the emperor's death, with his *Against Julian* (Cyril's dates are 378-444).[24] The reaction to his text was, therefore, less quick than with Porphyry, and it shows that the power of Julian's critique was mitigated at the time he was writing, probably due to the general acceptance Christianity had gained before Julian's accession to the throne. In fact, Julian received a few, informal responses; from Gregory Nazianzen, not long after

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[20] Lactantius, *Divine Institutes* 5.2.15; Eusebius, *Against Hierocles* 4. See also T. Hägg, 'Hierocles the Lover of Truth and Eusebius the Sophist', *Symbolae Osloenses* 67 (1992): 138-50 vs. T.D. Barnes, 'Scholarship or Propaganda? Porphyry *Against the Christians* and its Historical Setting', *BICS* 39 (1994): 53-65 on the identity of Eusebius.

[21] Lactantius, *Divine Institutes* 5.2.12.

[22] Jerome, *Abridged commentary on the psalms* 81 – Harnack Nr. 4.

[23] See Wilken, *Christians*, 164-96, for a lengthy discussion.

[24] See R. Smith, *Julian's Gods: Religion and Philosophy in the thought and Action of Julian the Apostate* (London: 1995), 190.

the emperor's death, and from Theodorus of Mopsuestia and Philip Sideta in the 5th c.; all are lost, however. The emperor certainly expected a more immediate reaction, as a ruler who had rejected Christianity, and who was intolerant of Christianity during his reign. According to Cyril, however, Julian left his opponents speechless.[25] But if the emperor was aware of Porphyry's writings, he never mentioned them. There is a possibility that a few copies of Porphyry's books survived the edicts of emperors ordering their burning, or, as R. Smith suggests, that he knew the main Platonist objections to Christianity as expressed by Celsus and Porphyry.[26] What is certainly of interest to us is the fact that a work against Christianity was composed even after the religion had been legalized (since Constantine's edict of Milan in 313), but that he did not get much attention. This is a very good indicator of the confidence of the late fourth century Christians, and is in agreement with Porphyry's changing reception over time.

Julian's agenda was different from that of Porphyry. According to S. Elm, Julian thought he was the offspring of Zeus and his son Helios.[27] Elm argues that Julian, as a follower of the fourth century Neoplatonist Iamblichus and as an emperor of the Flavian dynasty, reconciled Plato's philosopher-king, whose duty is to lead his people from the darkness of the cave to the light of the sun – or from ignorance to knowledge – with the invincible Roman Sun god Zeus-Helios, or the One, the creator of the universe in a Neoplatonic sense, the origin of all things. Julian's aim was thus to create a Roman emperor that would correspond to both his imperial and philosophical ambitions.[28] In other words, he believed it was his duty to be the uniting factor in his empire, and Christianity was a dividing factor. Julian, as philosopher-king, had to be a philanthropist and clement ruler, and show the right path to the mistaken Christians, as well as 'reintegrate them into the family of men created by Zeus-Helios as one universal community'.[29] Julian's work *Against the Galileans* was 'but one tool to save the *koina tôn Rhomaiôn* from its recent deviations...', that is, the Christian, empire-wide deviation from the gods.[30]

Celsus', Hierocles' and Julian's attacks, although able, were not as skilled as Porphyry's, however, since the latter really addressed the core of Christian doctrine and Scripture, i.e. beliefs such as the predicted advent of Christ – by

[25] Cyril of Alexandria, *Against Julian* Preface (PG 76: 508a-d).

[26] Smith, *Julian's Gods*,191.

[27] S. Elm, *Sons of Hellenism, Fathers of the Church: Emperor Julian, Gregory of Nazianzus, and the Vision of Rome* (Berkeley: 2012), 114 and 292.

[28] Elm, *Sons of Hellenism* 292.

[29] Elm, *Sons of Hellenism*, 306.

[30] Elm, *Sons of Hellenism*, 306.

the prophet Daniel – and the teachings of Peter and Paul. Libanius, when commenting on the quality of *Against the Galileans*, said that Julian did better than the 'old Tyrian', but this is not the opinion of modern scholars.[31] The fragmentary state of these works means, however, that we are left with little evidence for the response of non-Christians to Christianity; hence the importance of Porphyry's work to our understanding of interreligious debates in Late Antiquity. We have even less of Porphyry, but because we have so little, every response is important.

Political and intellectual milieu

Porphyry flourished in the end of the third c. C.E. (232-ca.305),[32] right in the midst of profound religious changes, which will affect the entire Roman empire. Indeed, the emperor Diocletian will launch the Great Persecution in 303, an empire-wide persecution targetting the Christians, and Constantine will become the first Christian emperor in 312. Porphyry's real name was Malkos, which translates from Syrian into Greek as *basileus* or 'king', and 'porphyry' (Greek for 'purple'), is the colour of kingship.[33] However, he may not have known Syriac.[34] When he was very young, Porphyry met with the Christian apologist Origen, whom he mentions in his *Life of Plotinus.*[35] He then studied rhetoric, literature

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[31] Socrates Scholasticus, *Church History* 3.23.

[32] Porphyry, *Vita Plotini* 4, was 30 ca.263; Eunapius *Vitae sophistarum* s.v. *Porphyrios,* ed. and trans. by W.C. Wright, *Philostratus and Eunapius: The Lives of the Sophists* (London: 1922), 353. 'Πορφυίων Τὺπος μὲν ἡ πατρίς (...)'; Porphyry was probably still alive under Diocletian: Souda s.v. *Porphyrios* 2.2098, ed. A. Adler, in A. Smith, *Porphyrii philosophi fragmenta* (Stuttgart: 1993), 6. 'παρατείνας ἐως Διοκλητιανοῦ'.

[33] Porphyry, *Vita Plotini* 17. 'Βασιλεὺς δὲ τοὔνομα τῷ Πορφυρίῳ ἐμοὶ προσῆν, κατὰ μὲν πάτριον διάλεκτον Μάλκῳ κεκλημένῳ, ὅπερ μοι καὶ ὁ πατὴρ ὄνομα κέκλητο, τοῦ δὲ Μάλκου ἑρμηνείαν ἔχοντος βσιλεύς, εἴ τις εἰς Ἑλληνίδα διάλεκτον μεταβάλλειν ἐθέλοι'; see also Eunapius *Vitae sophistarum* s.v. *Porphyrios.*

[34] J.G. Cook, *The Interpretation of the Old Testament in Greco-Roman Paganism* (Tübingen, 2004), pp. 191-3; he disagrees with P.M. Casey, 'Porphyry and the Origin of the Book of Daniel', *JThS* 27 (1976): 15-33 and 'Porphyry and Syrian Exegesis of the Book of Daniel', *ZNW* 81 (1990): 139-42 on this.

[35] See Nicephorus Callistus Xanthopulus, *Church History* X 36PG 146, 561A3-11 and Socrates Scholasticus, *Church History* 3.23.37-9, ed. A. Smith, *Porphyrii* 14; Porphyry, *Vita Plotini* 20.40, himself says that he met a certain Origen; see also Eusebius, *HE* 6.19.5.

and philology with Longinus in Athens. When he was 30, Porphyry travelled to Rome to study with Plotinus.[36]

In a recent study, E. DePalma Digeser has suggested that the context of Porphyry's writings against the Christians was far more complex than previously believed, that is, it was not a simple opposition of 'pagans' and Christians.[37] In her compelling work, she explains how Porphyry's school was at war with the school of his apostate student Iamblichus, a fourth century Neoplatonist, whose followers were called Iamblicheans, and the Origenists over the right to advise the emperor on shaping religious law for the empire, so that it conforms to divine law, and thus act as Plato's philosopher-king. Answering the Christians, she argues, was part of Porphyry's agenda when he started to develop an argument against religions claiming to have access to a universal way of salvation. Iamblicheans, Porphyrians and Origenists had all studied with a common master, Ammonius Saccas, and had split over the interpretation of his teachings as regards the return of the soul to the One, Supreme being, from whom it originated.[38] DePalma Digeser argues that some religious fanatics may have come across Porphyry's arguments against the Christians belonging to this broader intellectual and religious context, and used them to push religiously tolerant emperors to launch the Great Persecution. Religious boundaries were hardly significant for these intellectuals prior to the argument between Porphyry and Iamblichus.

DePalma Digeser's findings are in line with arguments made recently regarding religious 'domination', that is the overtaking of everyday life and death by the dominant, religious group. B. Caseau, for instance, has argued that the Christians, in order to avoid pollution, had slowly resacralized the late antique religious landscape, making temples into churches and destroying cult statues, thus slowly transforming the pagan, religious space into a Christian space. In order to be able to do so, the power of a Christian emperor and predominantly

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[36] Eunapius, *Vitae sophistarum* s.v. *Porphyrios*, for Porphyry as disciple of Longinus and then Plotinus; Porphyry, *Vita Plotini* 4, for Porphyry disciple of Plotinus; see J. Bidez, *Vie de Porphyre* (Gand: 1913), 30 for Longinus' qualities. When Porphyry left Longinus for Rome and Plotinus, he was 30 (*Vita Plotini* 4-5). Longinus is the one who provided him with his nickname 'Porphyry' [cf. Eunapius, *Vitae sophistarum* s.v. *Porphyrios*].

[37] E. DePalma Digeser, *A Threat to Public Piety: Christians, Platonists, and the Great Persecution* (Ithaca: 2012).

[38] Most scholars disagree with her on Ammonius the Peripatetic and Ammonius the Platonist being the same person. See R. Goulet, 'Porphyry, Ammonius, les deux Origène et les autres', *RHPhR* (1977): 481; H. Dörrie, 'Ammonios Sakkas', *Theologische Realenzyklopädie* 2 (1978): 467; M.J. Edwards, 'Ammonius, Teacher of Origen', *JEH* 44 (1993): 174, who argue for two Ammonii.

Christian administration was mandatory.[39] M. Kahlos similarly argued that the Christians needed to create clear boundaries between the sacred and the profane, thus seeing themselves in opposition to a group that they labelled as 'pagan'.[40]

But 'pagan' is not a clear category. Over the past few years, scholars have insisted on the need to revise our terminology when discussing issues related to late antique people. They argue that for far too long, we have relied on a Christian dominated perspective.[41] This desire to get the best picture possible of the late antique society stems from the trajectory of the field since P. Brown's most influential book *The World of Late Antiquity*, published in 1971.[42] As A. Cameron explains in 'The "Long" Late Antiquity',[43] historians before Brown – and A.H.M. Jones, she insists – would consider that the Classical world had ended with the advent of the emperor Constantine. Anything beyond that period, they felt, would be the realm of theologians. Increasing interest in early Christianity and society, following Brown's anthropological and social history of the period, was novel in itself. The trouble was that the Christian sources represented the majority of the writings from the period and continued to dictate scholars' terminology until rising interests in religious identities in the 90s. A logical, next step was the attribution of a new vocabulary to each religious group for identification purposes, a vocabulary that would be as free as possible from the Christian point of view, and that would better define the relations between late antique individuals. Therefore, the term pagan, used solely by Christians to identify 'the Other', has been challenged. A consensus has yet to be reached among scholars as to what term(s) would best suit the other religious affiliations.[44] For the purpose of this study, however, I shall consciously use the terms 'pagan' and 'paganism', for I will be digging into Christian sources to recover Porphyry's ideas on Christianity. This requires entering the worldview of those Christians, who preserved passages from Porphyry's subversive discourses against their faith.

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[39] B. Caseau, 'Sacred Landscapes', in *Late Antiquity: A Guide to the Postclassical World*, eds. G.W. Bowersock, P. Brown and O. Grabar (Boston, 1999).

[40] M. Kahlos, *Debate and Dialogue: Christian and Pagan Cultures c.360-430* (Aldershot: 2007), 15-17.

[41] Kahlos, *Debate and Dialogue* (Aldershot: 2007), 2.

[42] P. Brown, *The World of Late Antiquity* (London: 1971).

[43] A. Cameron, 'The "Long" Late Antiquity: a late twentieth-century model', in *Classics in Progress: Essays on Ancient Greece and Rome*, ed. T.P. Wiseman (Oxford: 2002), 166.

[44] For instance, I. Sandwell, *Religious Identity in Late Antiquity: Greeks, Jews and Christians in Antioch* (Cambridge: 2007), decided to call the pagans and paganism the 'Greco-Romans' and 'Greco-Roman religions', while Kahlos, *Debate and Dialogue*, developed the term *incerti*, namely the cryptopagans, who hesitate between paganism and Christianity.

Reception of Porphyry

Augustine says, in *City of God* 19.23, that Porphyry is the most learned philosopher of all, but the worst enemy of the Christians. Many modern scholars agree with Augustine's assessment of Porphyry, who is said to be the most learned ancient critic of Christianity, because, from what we know of his writings, he seems to have skillfully performed the fiercest attacks on Christian sacred texts and interpretations of Jewish Scripture.[45] Many also say that Porphyry's *Against the Christians* demonstrated an extensive knowledge of Scripture, which was rather unusual for a third century pagan philosopher.[46] But do the Porphyrian fragments themselves bear witness to this characterization of their author as the detailed critic of Scriptures, or are modern (and other late ancient) interpreters simply following Augustine? It may be that the material selected by the authors who preserved the majority of fragments misleadingly suggests that Porphyry was well versed in the knowledge of Scripture. Or it may be that, as G. Clark has pointed out, Porphyry, who also wrote a treatise demonstrating that the writings of Zoroaster were a later forgery, liked to work by analysing texts.[47] It is even possible, as W. Kinzig, among others, has argued, that Porphyry, like Julian, had a Christian background,[48] which would explain his knowledge of the religion as well as his aversion from it. The important fact is that, to judge from the fragments and Christian references to him, Porphyry was seen as a

[45] Wilken, *Christians* 126, labelled Porphyry as the most learned critic of all; see his book for a discussion on pre-porphyrian philosophical attacks on Christianity (see also, for instance, J.G. Cook, *The Interpretation of the New Testament in Greco-Roman Paganism* (Peabody: 2000), 103, who says that, 'Porphyry was probably the most acute and philologically skilled critic of Christianity'). See Porphyry, *Vie de Plotin*, ed. and trans. L. Brisson et al. (Paris: 1982), or M. Edwards (trans.), *Neoplatonic Saints: The Lives of Plotinus and Proclus by their Students* (Liverpool: 2000) for the information that Porphyry provides on his own life.

[46] T.W. Crafer, 'The Work of Porphyry against the Christians, and its Reconstruction', *JThS* n.s. 15 (1914): 364-9. Crafer wrote, however, before Harnack, and did not evaluate Porphyry's ideas; see also Bidez, *Vie de Porphyre,* 74-5. Although he does not develop this as fully as Crafer did, Bidez has long been an authority on Porphyry's biography; see also Wilken*, Christians*; A. Benoît, 'Un adversaire du christianisme au IIIe siècle: Porphyre', *RBi* 54 (1947): 555, also supports this point.

[47] G. Clark, 'Philosophic Lives and the Philosophic Life', in *Greek Biography and Panegyric in Late Antiquity*, T. Hägg and P. Rousseau, eds (Berkeley: 2000), 43.

[48] W. Kinzig, 'War der Neuplatoniker Porphyrios ursprünglich Christ?' in *Mousopolos Stephanos: Festschrift für Herwig Görgemanns*, M. Baumbach, H. Köhler and A.M. Ritter, eds, (Heidelberg: 1998), 320-32.

well-informed critic, and his ideas were very disturbing.[49] This certainly raises problems about how to read the fragments extant in Christian literature.

Porphyry is said to have written two works against Christianity: *Against the Christians* and *The Philosophy from Oracles* (discussed below). This study focuses on *Against the Christians*, a treatise in 15 volumes, of which only books 1, 3, 4, 12 and 14 have survived, and in which Porphyry attacked the Old and New Testaments.[50] The remains of Porphyry's anti-Christian ideas survive only in the answers written by Christian apologists, and thus in a polemical context. Besides the existing fragments in Eusebius, Jerome and Augustine, a few were also found in the works of Diodorus of Tarsus, Epiphanius, Methodius, Nemesius, Pacatus, Severus of Gabala, Theodoret and Theophylactus. There is a debate on whether or not the fragments from Macarius' *Apocriticos*, which represent the greatest number of fragments collected from *Against the Christians*, actually belong to the series. Many scholars are in disagreement with Adolf von Harnack as to the authorship of the Macarius fragments.[51] In the *Apocriticos*, Macarius – a Christian apologist of the end of the 4th century – presents a fictitious argument occurring between himself and an anonymous Greek philosopher, nicknamed "the Anonymous Hellene" by the scholarly community, in which the Greek is criticizing the New Testament. Harnack, the German scholar, who was the first to produce a collection of the fragments of *Against the Christians*, found many parallels between the Porphyrian fragments, where Porphyry is named and attacks the New Testament, and the content of the Anonymous Hellene's criticisms. He thus decided to include in his collection all the fragments from the *Apocriticos* pertaining to the Anonymous Hellene, arguing that Porphyry is the philosopher in question, but also arguing that Macarius was not aware that he was quoting from Porphyry.[52] There are also Syriac and Arab fragments, which will not be discussed here, and can be found in A. Smith, *Porphyrii philosophi fragmenta*. In this book, I plan to discuss the main three sources for fragments.

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[49] Scholars have also suggested that Porphyry had framed the anti-Christian debate of the fourth century; see DePalma Digeser, *Threat to Public Piety* and Elm, *Sons of Hellenism*, 305.

[50] Only books 1, 3 (Eusebius, *Church History* 6.19.2 – Harnack Nr. 39), 4 (Eusebius, *Chronicle* Preface – Harnack Nr. 40; and Eusebius, *Evangelical preparation* 1.9.20 – Harnack Nr. 41), 12 (Jerome, *Commentary on Daniel* Prologue – Harnack Nr. 43a), 13 (Jerome, *Commentary on Matthew* 24.16s – Harnack Nr. 44), and 14 (Jerome, *From the beginning of Mark* – Harnack Nr. 9a) are directly referred to by book number.

[51] See, notably, T.D. Barnes, 'Porphyry Against the Christians', 424-42 vs. R. Goulet, *Macarios de Magnésie: Le Monogénès* (Paris: Vrin, 2003).

[52] A. von Harnack, 'Porphyrius, *Gegen die Christen*. 15 Bücher: Zeugnisse, Fragmente und Referate', *AKPAW* (1916): 7-9.

The fact that Porphyry's work survives only in fragments is a direct result of the fact that the Christian authorities saw it as a dangerous text. Three Christian emperors issued edicts ordering the burning of all of Porphyry's 'impious' works. The first was issued by Constantine in 325, shortly after the first council of Nicaea; it was primarily directed against the priest Arius, and it also mentions that Porphyry's works – as well as his reputation – should be destroyed.[53] A second edict was issued by Theodosius II and Valentinian II in 448. Again, Porphyry is mentioned in the context of the prosecution of two Christian bishops charged with heresy, namely Nestorius and Ireneus of Tyre. The philosopher's anti-Christian writings were condemned to be burnt, because it was thought that they may cause God's wrath and be harmful to men's souls.[54] It seems, therefore, that Porphyry was not the main target of these edicts. He was perhaps associated with these supposed heretics in that he makes Christ a good man, with an exceptional soul, who is mistakenly worshipped by Christians. It has been argued that Porphyry presented his anti-Christian ideas to Diocletian's court, which was based in Nicomedia, during the meetings preceding the Great Persecution of 303-11 launched against the Christians by the Tetrarchy.[55] The question that we have to ask is whether Porphyry's writings against the Christians were destroyed because they were influential, or because they became a symbol of anti-Christian argument? Extant fragments from *Against the Christians* have at least led us to believe that Porphyry had been both influential and symbolic.

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[53] See Socrates, *Church History* 1.9.30, ed. by R. Hussey (Oxon: 1953), in Smith, *Porphyrii*, 30. 'ὡσπερ τοίνυν Πορφύριος ὁ τῆς θεοσεβείας ἐκθρός, συντάγματα παράνομα κατὰ τῆς θρησκείας συστησάμενος, ἄξιον εὕρετο μισθὸν καὶ τοιοῦτον, ὥστε ἐπονείδιστον μὲν αὐτὸν πρὸς τὸν ἑξῆς γενέσθαι; χρόνον καὶ πλείστης ἀναπλησθῆναι κακοδοξίας, ἀφανισθῆναι δὲ τὰ ἀσεβῆ αὐτοῦ συγγράμματα, οὕτω καὶ νῦν ἔδοξεν Ἀρειόν τε καὶ τοὺς Ἀρείου ὁμογνώμονας Πορφυριανοὺς μὲν καλεῖσθαι, ἵ ὧν τοὺς τρόπους μεμίμηνται τούτων ἔχσι καὶ τὴν προσηγορίαν, πρὸς δὲ τούτοις καὶ εἴ τι σύγγραμμα ὑπο Ἀρειου συ·τεταγμένον εὑρίσκοιτο, τοῦτο πυρὶ παραδίδοσθαι;' see also Gelasius, *Church History* 2.36.1. ed. by H.G. Opitz, *Urkunden zur Geschichte des arianischen Streites* (Berlin, 1934-35), *Urk.* 33 [cf. P-F Beatrice, 'Le traité de Porphyre contre les chrétiens. L'état de la question', *Kernos* 4 (1991), 120].

[54] 'Edictum Theodosii et Valentiniani', 17 February 448 (*Collectiana Vaticana*), 1.1.4 in *Acta Conciliorum Oecumenicorum*, 1.1.4, ed. by Eduard Scwartz (Berlin: 1927), 66.3-4; 8-12, in Smith, *Porphyrii* 32. 'πάντα γὰρ τὰ κινοῦντα τὸν θεὸν εἰς ὀργὴν συγγράμματα καὶ τὰς ψυχὰς ἀδικοῦντα οὐδὲ εἰς ἀκοὰς ἀνθρώπων ἐλθεῖν βουλόμεθα'.

[55] Namely E. DePalma Digeser, 'Porphyry, Julian, or Hierokles? The Anonymous Hellene in Makarios Magnes' *Apokritikos*', *JThS* (2003): 466-502.

Aims

The proceedings of a conference held at the Sorbonne in September 2009 on the problems raised by Porphyry's *Against the Christians*: 'Le traité de Porphyre contre les chrétiens. Un siècle de recherches, nouvelles questions', to which I contributed, was published in the *Collection des Études Augustiniennes* just on time for the centenary of the first fragment collection published by Adolf von Harnack in 1916.[56] In this work, an entirely new and returning generation of Porphyrian scholars gather to reflect on a century of scholarly developments in, and on the future of the questions raised by, *Against the Christians*. This is in line with the current revival of interest in Porphyry's *corpus*. Contributors to *Studies on Porphyry*, edited by G. Karamanolis and A. Sheppard in 2007,[57] focused on Porphyry's Neoplatonism; Sébastien Morlet, the organizer of the Sorbonne colloquium, has himself published on Porphyry and Eusebius, as well as on *Against the Christians*;[58] Aaron Johnson has written on Eusebius, ethnicity and *Against the Christians*, and he wrote a book on Porphyry;[59] Jeremy Schott used Porphyry to discuss Greek ethnicity;[60] and Aude Busine has been interested in Porphyry's *Philosophy from Oracles*.[61] Porphyry's *Against the Christians* is meant to be at the centre of this book. But the Porphyry that we shall be looking at is the product of secondary elaborations of his anti-Christian ideas. These ideas have been compiled in various fragment collections, but recent developments on the gathering of fragments have led me to question the word 'fragment'

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[56] Harnack, 'Porphyrius, *Gegen die Christen*', 1-115.

[57] G. Karamanolis and A. Sheppard, eds, *Studies on Porphyry* (London: 2007), Supplement to the Bulletin of Classical Studies 98.

[58] S. Morlet, *La 'Démonstration évangélique' d'Eusèbe de Césarée: Étude sur l'apologétique chrétienne à l'époque de Constantin* (Paris: 2009); S. Morlet, '*La Démonstration évangélique* d'Eusèbe de Césarée contient-elle des fragments du *Contra Christianos* de Porphyre? À propos du frg. 73 Harnack', *Studia Patristica* 46 (2010), 59-64; S. Morlet, 'Un nouveau témoignage sur le Contra Christianos de Porphyre?' *Semitica et Classica* 1 (2008): 157-66.

[59] A. Johnson, 'Rethinking the Authenticity of Porphyry, c. christ. Fr. 1', *Studia Patristica* 64 (2010), 53-8, and *Religion and Identity in Porphyry of Tyre: The Limits of Hellenism in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge, 2013).

[60] J. Schott, *'Porphyry on Christians and Others: 'Barbarian Wisdom', Identity Politics, and Anti-Christian Polemics on the Eve of the Great Persecution', JECS* 13 no. 3 (2005): 277-314*; Christianity, Empire, and the Making of Religion in Late Antiquity* (Philadelphia: 2008).

[61] A. Busine, *Paroles d'Apollon: pratiques et traditions oraculaires dans l'Antiquité tardive (IIe-IV2e siècles)* (Leiden: 2005).

itself. Therefore, am I being just as dishonest about my intentions as Jerome of Stridon is, when the very first sentence to his *Commentary on Daniel* goes as follows: 'Porphyry wrote his twelfth book against the Book of Daniel ... .'[62] and when he later insists that, 'In fact, we are not proposing to respond to the calumnies of that adversary, which would require a lengthy argument, but to discuss the things, which our prophet said ... .'[63] Jerome is our main source for Porphyry's *Against the Christians*, for he provides even more material than Eusebius and Augustine. This must lead us to ask, what the subject matter of this book is going to be if, from the start, we question the existence of Porphyry's *Against the Christians*. Studying *Against the Christians* is just like studying an enigma, for it constantly escapes those reflecting on it. It exists in a very abstract way, because it is a lost work whose content needs to be carefully reconstructed, a task that is almost impossible. In that respect, this made writing the book a real challenge. But at the same time, this is also what made it exciting. Let us look at the problems raised by *Against the Christians*, and at how we can try to overcome them.

But what is a 'fragment'? This question rests at the core of this study. I started this project with the firm intention of revising the main fragment collection on which all scholars still rely, and which dates back to the early twentieth c. (Harnack 1916). Over the course of my research, however, I came to the realization that there may be no such thing as a 'fragment' *per se*. Everyone refers to fragments of *Against the Christians*, however, as this study seeks to show, the very term 'fragment' needs to be seriously questioned. Even Harnack himself had expressed reservations, and never meant to publish a 'fragment' collection; it seems, therefore, that we have been going astray for almost a century. How, then, should we be reading Porphyry on Christianity? And can we read him at all?

Date and title of *Against the Christians*

There are three questions pertaining to the date and title of *Against the Christians*: Did Porphyry write a book called *Against the Christians*? Did he write specifically against Christians, or did someone collect anti-Christian arguments from his writings? And can we identify 'fragments' of what Porphyry wrote? Traditional translations from the Greek dictate scholars' assumptions about the title – and

[62] Jerome, *Commentary on Daniel* Prologue: 'Contra prophetam Danielem duodecimum librum scribit Porphyrius' (CCL 75A: 771).

[63] Jerome, *Commentary on Daniel* Prologue: 'Verum quia nobis propositum est non aduersarii calumniis respondere, quae longo sermone indigent, sed ea quae a propheta dicta sunt nostris disserere ...' (CCL 75A: 772).

even existence – of *Against the Christians*, as well as the date of its composition. It is Eusebius who reports that Porphyry is 'the one who settled in Sicily in our times, setting works against us [i.e. the Christians]'.[64] 'ἐνστησάμενος' is a singular, masculine, nominative and middle, aorist participle of the verb 'to threaten' or 'to press hard'; 'συγγράμματα' is a neuter, plural, noun meaning 'writings'. Porphyry was thus, according to Eusebius, writing threatening things on the Christians. But when? The Greek syntax does not include Sicily (ὅτε καὶ ὁ καθ' ἡμᾶς ἐν Σικελίᾳ καταστὰς) in the part of the sentence on 'writings against us'. Since both Sicily and the writings are mentioned in the same sentence, Eusebius seems to mean that he thought Porphyry had written in Sicily, but as we cannot be certain about this, we simply cannot tell what he means.[65] We could well understand from Eusebius' sentence that Porphyry was in Sicily while Eusebius was writing, and that this is where he wrote his works against them, the Christians. What is certain is that scholars have wanted to see in this sentence evidence for Porphyry writing a collection against the Christians while residing in Sicily. The passage was used since Bidez in order to date *Against the Christians* to Porphyry's stay in Sicily before Plotinus' death in 270.[66] T.D. Barnes, who argued for a later date closer to the Great Persecution (c. 300), and, as a result, for a direct implication of the philosopher into state affairs, seems to have used the nuances offered by the Greek in order to associate Porphyry with Sicily during Eusebius' time.[67] He suggested that Porphyry went back to Sicily years after Plotinus' death, where he wrote *Against the Christians*. The problem is that we have no evidence for this. Barnes has even argued that Eusebius was referring to Sicily as being the backwater of education and culture, and that associating Porphyry *with* it was a

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[64] Eusebius, *Church History* 6.19.2: '... ὅτε καὶ ὁ καθ' ἡμᾶς ἐν Σικελίᾳ καταστὰς Πορφύριος συγγράμματα καθ' ἡμῶν ἐνστησάμενος ...' (LCL 265: 56).

[65] As M. Edwards pointed out to me, Eusebius, with the allusion to Sicily, could mean to remind his readership of the suicidal tendancies of Porphyry, which led him toward Sicily. Only a man who has contempt for the laws of God could have written such a work against the Christians.

[66] Bidez, *Vie de Porphyre*. See also A. Cameron, 'The Date of Porphyry's Κατὰ Χριστιανῶν', *Class. Quart.* 18 (1967): 382-4.

[67] T.D. Barnes, 'Scholarship or Propaganda? Porphyry *Against the Christians* and its Historical Setting', *BICS* 39 (1994): 53-65. It has been argued that Porphyry presented his anti-Christian ideas to Diocletian's court, which was based in Nicomedia, during the meetings preceding the Great Persecution of 303-11 launched against the Christians by the Tetrarchy (see E. DePalma Digeser, 'Porphyry, Julian, or Hierokles? The Anonymous Hellene in Macarius Magnes' *Apokritikos*', *JThS* (2003): 466-502; see also J. Schott, 'Porphyry on Christians and Others: "Barbarian Wisdom", Identity Politics, and Anti-Christian Polemics on the Eve of the Great Persecution', *JECS* 13.3 (2005): 278, who mentions the debate).

way of downgrading the philosopher. But Eusebius praises Porphyry for being a great philosopher,[68] so why does he also say that he was uneducated? The same argument applies to Augustine, who commends Porphyry for being one of the most learned philosophers,[69] but who also calls him the 'Sicilian'.[70] Pushing forward in time the date of *Against the Christians* on the basis of an association with Sicily as intellectually backward is therefore not convincing.

Eusebius' sentence raises an additional problem: that of *what* exactly Porphyry wrote. Although Eusebius does not explicitly name it, the 'works' he mentions are traditionally referred to as *Against the Christians*, in accordance with Eusebius' 'against us', which has been associated with a reference in the Souda (tenth century Greek lexicon) to Porphyry's '15 logoi against the Christians'.[71] The actual title of the treatise is much debated. Harnack was the first to argue that two anti-Christian works traditionally assigned to Porphyry, namely *Against the Christians* and *Philosophy from Oracles*, were in fact one single work, but he later dismissed that hypothesis in 1916, when he published his fragment collection of *Against the Christians*.[72] P.-F. Beatrice later renewed the debate by arguing that both works were one.[73] Indeed, he claimed that *Against the Christians*, *The Philosophy from Oracles*, and *De regressu animae* were all part of the same work, the *Philosophy from Oracles*.[74] Beatrice's argument is based on a Eusebian citation found in *The Proof of the Gospel*, which states that no other testimony could better convince us than that written by Porphyry in the third book of his work *Philosophy from Oracles*.[75] Eusebius thus clearly associated Porphyry with the title *Philosophy from Oracles.* It should be noted that Eusebius often makes that kind of association, e.g. 'Porphyry also wrote this in his treatise

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[68] Eusebius, *PE* 1.10.44.

[69] Augustine, *City of God* 19.23.

[70] Augustine, *Retractationes* 2.31.

[71] Souda, s.v. *Porphyrios* 2, 2098, ed. A. Adler, in Smith, *Porphyrii* 6: 'Πορφύριος ὁ κατὰ Χριστιανῶν γράφας . . . Κατὰ Χριστιανῶν λόγους ιέ'.

[72] A. von Harnack, *Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur bis Eusebius zu Die Überlieferung und der Bestand* 12 (Berlin: 1893), 873.

[73] P.-F. Beatrice, 'Towards a new Edition of Porphyry's Fragments Against the Christians', in *ΣΟΦΙΗΣ ΜΑΙΗΤΟΡΕΣ*, ed. M.O. Goulet-Cazé et al. (Paris: 1992), 349.

[74] As well as *Peri agalmaton*, *On Matter*, *Chronicle*, *On Abstinence.*

[75] Eusebius, *DE* 3.6.39. 'τις δ' ἂν γένοιτό σοι τούτων ἀξιόπιστος ὁμολογία 'μᾶλλον' τῆς τοῦ καθ' ἡμῶν πολεμίου γραφῆς, ἣν ἐν οἷς ἐπέγραψεν 'Περὶ τῆς ἐκ λογίων φιλοσοφίας' ἐν τρίτῳ συγγράμματι τέθειται, ὧδέ πως ἱστορῶν κατὰ λέξιν' (Eusebius Werke 6: 139-40).

entitled *Philosophy from Oracles*.'[76] The point is that Eusebius never mentions the title *Against the Christians*, nor does any other Christian writer.

The main problem scholars are facing is that the Souda is the only source that mentions what some would like to see as the title *Against the Christians*, as well as its number of volumes. However, the Souda does not mention the *Philosophy from Oracles*. It is therefore difficult to rely solely on this lexicon to judge whether there were two works or not. As for Eusebius, when he mentions works 'against (them) [Christians]' or καθ' ἡμῶν, he may well be referring to either the *Philosophy from Oracles* or *Against the Christians*. Recently, M. Edwards made a very interesting argument that may solve the problem. He has noted that like anywhere else, in the Souda, 'the usual term for divisions of a single work is *biblia*, or "books"', whereas in this case the term *logoi*, or 'discourses', is used.[77] Eusebius, he argues, in his *Evangelical Preparation*, named the title *Philosophy from Oracles* only, and referred to 'a collection against us' five times. The only reason why we can link this collection to Porphyry is that it is mentioned twice along with the title *Philosophy from Oracles*. It would be tempting to use this observation in order to argue that Beatrice's thesis is correct, and that the fifteen logoi against the Christians mentioned in the Souda would thus be comprised of various anti-Christian writings (or discourses), including the *Philosophy from Oracles*, which was written in three volumes (the number of volumes was attributed on the basis that no other volume was mentioned in the ancient literature).[78] Even Augustine does not use the title *Against the Christians*, after all. However, Edwards says, it is impossible to identify the *Philosophy from Oracles* with the treatise against the Christians, because Eusebius refers to both of these works simultaneously at *Evangelical Preparation* 5.5.5.

Another problem has prompted scholars to question that Porphyry was the author of a single composition in fifteen books against the Christians. Lactantius mentions, in *Divine Institutes*, an anonymous pamphleteer, who wrote an anti-Christian treatise in three books, and who was active in Nicomedia on the eve of the Great Persecution.[79] H. Chadwick was the first to associate the philosopher

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[76] Eusebius, *PE* 3.14.4. 'Γράφει δέ ὁ Πορφύριος καὶ ταῦτα ἐν οἷς ἐπέγραψε Περί τῆς ἐκ λογίων φιλοσοφίας'.

[77] M. Edwards, 'Porphyry and the Christians', *Studies on Porphyry*, eds G. Karamanolis and A. Sheppard (London: 2007).

[78] Eusebius, *DE* 3.6, mentions volume 3. Cited n. 65.

[79] Lactantius, *Divine Institutes* 5.2.2-12. 'Ego cum in Bithynia oratorias litteras accitus docerem, contigissetque ut eodem tempore Dei templum everteretur: duo extiterunt ibidem, qui jacenti atque abiectae veritati, nescio utrum superbius, an importunius insultarent.. (...) Alius eamdem materiam mordacius scripsit, qui erat tum e numero iudicum, et qui auctor

mentioned by Lacatantius with Porphyry.[80] Lactantius describes a man, who is a priest of philosophy, and who, while preaching abstinence, endulges in the worse vices. Barnes has always refused to make that association, reading the text literally, and arguing that Lactantius is not describing a vegetarian man, like Porphyry was, and that Porphyry was not blind, like the anonymous philosopher.[81] Barnes further contends that the Anonymous pamphleteer of *Divine Institutes* cannot be Porphyry, because Lactantius claims that the pamphlet is of poor intellectual quality, a flaw that cannot be linked to the Neoplatonist philosopher, and because Lactantius mentions that the Anonymous sold 'judicial verdicts' or 'sententias venderet', something that Porphyry never did.[82] Barnes also suggests that the pamphleteer was a landowner in Pontica, for Lactantius complains that he was appropriating the property of his neighbours; Barnes reminds us that Porphyry would have been living in Rome, Sicily or Phoenicia at the time, not in Asia Minor.[83] However, Lactantius could well be making a satire of Porphyry. R.L. Wilken and E. DePalma Digeser both concluded that the three books mentioned by Lactantius were in fact the *Philosophy from Oracles*, which contains some anti-Christian elements, and which were written in three books.[84] The issue is that if Porphyry is the anonymous philosopher who wrote three books against Christianity, then those books could well be part of a fifteen-volume compendium written by Porphyry, whether they are *Philosophy from Oracles* or not. Berchman's fragment collection actually enforces this idea, for it incorporates passages from *Against the Christians*, *The Philosophy from Oracles*, and *De regressu animae* (although without ever mentioning Beatrice's work). However, this argument is being vehemently rejected by many.[85]

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in primis faciendae persecutionis fuit: quo scelere non contentus, etiam scriptis eos, quos afflixerat, insecutus est ... .' (PL 6: 552B; 555B).

[80] H. Chadwick, *The Sentences of Sextus* (Cambridge: 1959), 142-3.

[81] Barnes, 'Scholarship or Propaganda?', 59.

[82] Lactantius, *Divine Institutes* 2.3-4. Other scholars have translated 'ut erorum sententias venderet' as 'so that he might profit from their opinion'. See, for instance, E. DePalma Digeser, *The Making of a Christian Empire: Lactantius and Rome* (Ithaca: 2000), 94.

[83] T.D. Barnes 'Porphyry *Against the Christians*: Date and Attribution of Fragments'. *JThS* n.s. 24 (1973): 438-9.

[84] Wilken, *Christians,* 134-7; DePalma Digeser, *Christian Empire*, 93-107.

[85] R.L. Wilken, 'Pagan Criticism of Christianity: Greek Religion and Christian Faith', in *Early Christian Literature and the Classical Intellectual Tradition*, ed. W.R. Schoedel and R.L. Wilken (Paris: 1979), 129; idem *Christians,* 136: the title *Philosophy from Oracles* is cited by many Christian writers; W.H. Frend, 'Prelude to the Great Persecution: the Propaganda War', *JEH* 38 (1987): 11; A.J. Droge, *Homer or Moses? Early Christian Interpretations of the*

Beatrice disagrees with the argument that the *Philosophy from Oracles* was written in three volumes, and argues that we have traces of a tenth book in a manuscript tradition, for both A. Steuchus and A. Mai mention the same oracle from volume 10.[86] It is on a Neapolitan manuscript, which puts that oracle in volume 2 of *Philosophy from Oracles*, that the editor G. Wolff relies, and his edition set the wrong standard, according to Beatrice.[87] However, Beatrice himself admits the impossibility of resolving this issue, since the same oracle could have been mentioned by Porphyry in both volumes 2 and 10, but still argues that *Philosophy from Oracles* and *Against the Christians* are the same work. It is therefore very difficult to tell whether or not we are facing a copyist error, as far as book 10 is concerned, and the safest position is to assume that *Philosophy from Oracles* was written in three volumes. To come back to Edwards' hypothesis on the fifteen *logoi*, it remains hard to prove, especially in the event that one cannot even find convincing evidence as regards the number of books in *Philosophy from Oracles*.

But the *Philosophy from Oracles* cannot be used as an umbrella title; written in three books or not, it was certainly not written in fifteen, as the Souda states about *Against the Christians*. If one work could be used as an umbrella title, though, it has to be *Against the Christians*, for it is possible to think of it as a compendium of anti-Christian writings, and this could explain our complete ignorance of the content of books 5-11. M. Edwards has already pointed out, in 'Porphyry and the Christians', that the Souda mentions 'fifteen *logoi* against the Christians', i.e. fifteen discourses against the Christians. We could also see the *logoi* as being about inconsistencies in Biblical teaching, bad behaviour by Peter and Paul, lack of respect for one's master, and the historical context of the Old Testament, all topics that Porphyry discussed. The *Philosophy from Oracles* is about the kind of philosophy one can get from oracles, or, as A. Busine put it, it is a philosophical explanation of oracles to guide those looking for truth.[88]

History of Culture (Tübingen: 1989), 172; R. Goulet, 'Hypothèses récentes sur le traité de Porphyre *Contre les Chrétiens*', in *Hellénisme et christianisme*, M. Narcy and É. Rebillard, eds, coll. 'Mythe, Imaginaires, Religions' (Villeneuve-d'Ascq: 2004), 61-109. Oppositions to Beatrice's thesis were also raised in the recent colloquium entitled 'Le traité de Porphyry contre les chrétiens. Un siècle de recherches, nouvelles questions'.

[86] Beatrice, 'Towards a new Edition of Porphyry', 351; A. Steuchus, *De perenni philosophia* 3.14 (Lugduni: 1540), 155-7, and A. Mai, *Philonis Iudaei, Porphyrii philosophi, Eusebii Pamphili opera inedita* (Mediolani: 1816), 59-64.

[87] G. Wolff, *Porphyrii 'De philosophia ex oraculis' haurienda librorum reliquiae* (Berlin: 1856), 39 and 143-7.

[88] Busine, *Paroles d'Apollon*, 242 and 290. She also thinks that the *Philosophy from Oracles* had an anti-Christian tone.

Beatrice's 1982 article, although highly criticized, has this one quality: that it questioned how confident we should be about the title *Against the Christians*. For the convenience of this argument, I shall use the title *Against the Christians* when referring to Porphyry's writings on Christian sacred texts.[89] However, one should bear in mind that it cannot be understood as being the title of a work *per se*, but rather a collection of arguments denouncing Christianity. So we cannot be sure that Porphyry wrote a work called *Against the Christians*, or even a work specifically against Christians; next, can we be sure that we have any fragments of Porphyry against Christians?

Studies on methodology insist that a fragment should never be read apart from the context of the work in which it is embedded (called 'cover-text'). The argument is that a closer look at that context reveals important information on the rhetorical style of a citing author, and that by analysing that style, one has better chances to recover the original passage of a lost work, or at least to evaluate its quality. Even the very word 'fragment' is being re-assessed, for various scholars are raising the issue of the quality of a citation in Antiquity, given the absence of copyright concerns. Furthermore, if Eusebius, Jerome and Augustine never name the work from which they cite, it makes it harder for us to know which work their citations come from, and we are dealing with a lost work which eludes us; this makes the task of fragment collectors even more difficult than in the regular cases where the existence of a lost work is at least being acknowledged by the citing authors. Part of the aim of this book is thus also to assess the methodological approaches, and to determine to what extent they can be applied to *Against the Christians*, a lost work which survives in a polemical context, and whether new nuances need to be developed. The following chapters explore these questions in relation to the three main sources.

[89] DePalma Digeser, *Threat to Public Piety*, 167, chose to refer to the fragments as Porphyry's 'anti-Christian texts'.

Chapter 1
New Methods[1]

Porphyry's *Against the Christians*, survives only in fragments, chiefly in Eusebius, Jerome and Augustine. A few were also found in the works of Diodorus of Tarsus, Epiphanius, Methodius, Nemesius, Pacatus, Severus of Gabala, Theodoret and Theophylactus. How can we collect the fragments and reconstruct Porphyry's critique of Christianity?

Fragments in context

New methodological approaches allow for an expanded and more nuanced reading of the discourses against the Christians through the setting of the criteria required to study the treatise. First, there is the general problem of survival. As is too often the case with works from Antiquity, fragments are the only means for acquiring knowledge about lost writings.[2] Indeed, as far as ancient Greek literature is concerned, 'the ratio of surviving literature to lost literature is in the order of 1:40'.[3] Many factors contribute to preservation or destruction of works, and they are not always related to the quality of these works,[4] which were therefore not deliberately eliminated. According to G. Schepens, 'There are difficulties the distribution of "books" in Antiquity ... had to face before the invention of typography; the preference for easy-to-handle compilations over the often too voluminous (and more valuable) originals; ... and, above all,

[1] Parts of this chapter and the following chapter were first published by Johns Hopkins: A. Magny, 'Porphyry in Fragments: Jerome, Harnack, and the problem of reconstruction', *JECS* 18.2 (2010): 515-55.

[2] Schepens, 'Jacoby's *FgrHist*', 144.

[3] Schepens, 'Jacoby's *FgrHist*', 144; furthermore, as A.C. Dionisotti points out, 'On Fragments in Classical Scholarship', in *Collecting Fragments*, 1, only copies of the ancient material survive.

[4] Schepens, 'Jacoby's FgrHist', 145; according to A. Laks, 'Du témoignage comme fragment', in *Collecting Fragments*, 237, 'la fragmentation de l'oeuvre peut être due au support, quand le manuscript (parfois) ou le papyrus (toujours) qui l'ont transmise sont incomplets ou endommagés'. Portions of works may also survive in the form of an anthology, i.e. as citations of works without direct tradition.

the role of chance.'[5] Furthermore, adds Schepens, most of the works from that period survived only partially in direct transmission. Textual distortions are thus very common, he argues, and are due to the mode of transmission from Antiquity to the Middle Ages.

In the case of Porphyry, there are specific problems. The complete version of *Against the Christians* is unknown. It was deliberately destroyed after the Great Persecution (303-11), various emperors having issued edicts condemning all of Porphyry's infamous works to the flames.[6] Some copies must have survived, but the principal sources for Porphyry's treatise are Christian apologists who aimed at defending their dogmas against any future threat of persecution, in the case of Eusebius, or against ridicule in the case of Augustine – who writes, for instance, in his letter 102 to Deogratias, that stories such as Jonah in the belly of a whale were provoking laughter in pagan circles (102.30). These Christians quoted or paraphrased the philosopher when answering his ideas, which, in turn, creates a major problem for the fragment collectors. According to Schepens, 'the methodological key-problem the student of (historical) fragments has to face is invariably a problem of *context*'.[7] Historians must contextualize citations in the texts in which they were found in order to be able to understand their meaning fully; but, in so doing, they risk distorting Porphyry's original meaning. Consequently, the risk with contextualizing is the distortion of the meaning of the discourses *Against the Christians'* original version.[8] Here, 'Contextualization' thus means reading the fragment as if it belonged to the context in which it was transmitted.

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[5] Schepens, 'Jacoby's *FgrHist*', 145-6.

[6] See Socrates, *Church History* 1.9.30; see also Gelasius, *Church History* 2.36.1; the Theodosian Code 16.5.66; and 'Edictum Theodosii et Valentiniani', 17 February 448 (*Collectanea Vaticana*_138), 1.1.4 in *Acta Conciliorum Oecumenicorum* 1.1.4, ed. by E. Schwartz (Berlin, 1927), 66.3-4; 8-12, in Smith *Porphyrii philosophi fragmenta* 32.

[7] Schepens, 'Jacoby's *FgrHist*', 166.

[8] Schepens, 'Jacoby's *FgrHist*', 166. Schepens further points out that ancient historians preferred an anonymous reference to one by name. One by name had a specific purpose: either to show that they disagreed or to show off their better knowledge. Schepens proposes to first examine critically the reference by name before using it 'as evidence for reconstructing the contents of lost works'. He then suggests that any study of fragments should ideally be supplemented 'by an examination of the indirect tradition'. The starting-point of such an investigation should be the named fragments, otherwise the work will become speculative. Since Schepens is writing here on Jacoby's *Fragmente der griechischen Historiker*, he is concerned with historians, therefore his argument may well be applied to ancient writers such as Christians, especially since it is well-known that they were imitating the classical writing style. It may be argued, however, that Christian writers tend to be more precise in giving references, perhaps because they had a tradition of quoting official letters or edicts.

While establishing the required parts of a good, modern, historical fragment collection (taking as example the work of the late F. Jacoby), Schepens argues that the commentary should 'consist of two moments'. These 'aim at relocating the fragments in the lively political, intellectual and artistic process of intertextual exchange that once took place and to which the survival of these very fragments is testimony'. The first moment is 'an act of *de*construction of the cover-text by which the fragment is set free from the potential biases of the text in which it survives. This operation aims at establishing the original meaning (if possible also the 'wording') of the fragments'.[9] Schepens named as 'cover-texts' the works in which the fragments survive, for this wording creates, according to him, a distinction from the (con)text 'of the later works in which the fragments survive'.[10] As he put it, 'The notion of cover-text conveys – ... better than the phrases commonly used (sources of fragments or expressions like the citing or quoting later authors) ... the consequential and multiple functions these texts perform in the process of transmitting a fragment.'[11] He uses the word 'cover' to mean 'to conceal, protect or enclose something'. He argues that the later authors perform just those three tasks when transmitting a text:

> They, first of all, *preserve* (= protect from being lost) texts drawn from works that are no longer extant; very often, too, they more or less *conceal* the precursor text (form characteristics such as the original wording and style of the precursor text are no longer discernible; often also fragments seems to 'hide' in the cover-text, so that one can only guess where a paraphrase begins or where a quotation ends); and, last but not least, the cover-text *encloses* the precursor text: it is inserted or enveloped in a new con-text, which may impose interpretations that differ considerably from the original writer's understanding of his text.[12]

The second moment that should be part of the commentary, according to Schepens, 'is an attempt to *re*construct the lost context of the original work and try to re-insert the fragment in it'.[13]

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[9] See Schepens, 'Jacoby's *FgrHist*', 168-9, on the quotations.

[10] Schepens, 'Jacoby's *FgrHist*', 166-7 n. 66. Schepens uses the words '(con)text' and 'con-text', but it remains unclear how these are different from the usual word 'context'.

[11] Schepens, 'Jacoby's *FgrHist*', 168.

[12] See Schepens, 'Jacoby's *FgrHist*', 166-7 n. 66, on the quotations.

[13] Schepens, 'Jacoby's *FgrHist*', 168. Schepens does not provide further explanations for what he means by 'lost context'. Instead, he refers his readers to R. Vattuone, *Sapienza d'Occidente. Il pensiero storico di Timeo di tauromenio* (Bologna: Pàtron, 1991) 7-17.

Next, the work of A. Laks exposes the necessity to redefine the word 'fragment'. He says that there is a distinction to make between a *testimonium* and a fragment. According to him, the pair fragment/testimony belongs to the primary critical apparatus of all ancient historians. Laks explains that a testimony is what can be found in the ancient literature about a lost text or its author, whereas a fragment is a part of that lost work. A fragment is thus a literal quotation, and a testimony is the doing of a reader, who gives us their secondary interpretation of the text. The difficulty lies in the fact that testimonies can be confused with fragments, or that one can hesitate between where a testimony and a fragment start and end, if present together. But Laks argues that scholars should go beyond the traditional separation of the two categories (commonly made under the letters A – fragments – and B – testimonies) in fragment collections, and understand that a testimony may also be a fragment, and therefore may be included in the A category. The only reason why a testimony should be excluded is when the selection is made according to what is literal; only the fragment is literal. But if the selection criterion is changed to 'content', then the testimony should not be excluded from the fragments. Laks says that the testimony of a work is actually a mere fragment.[14] Laks applies his argument to doxographies (works that are collections of opinions), and therefore not to works such as Jerome's, however he introduces the interesting notion that fragment collections should be more flexible in what they understand as being a fragment. As far as methodology is concerned, what an author says about a work before quoting or paraphrasing it should also be considered as part of the fragment.

In the context of a conference held in September 2009 on Porphyry's *Against the Christians*, A. Laks was asked to discuss the problems related to a collection of the fragments of *Against the Christians*. Giving a fresh look at the topic, he exposed an error that has been missed by all the scholars who have been studying the treatise: Harnack never meant to publish a fragment collection, but a collection of (*testimonium*) fragments *and* references – '(Zeugnisse) Fragmente und Referate'.[15] All of those who worked on the fragments since

[14] Laks, 'Du témoignage comme fragment', 237-9. '... Le couple fragment/témoignage fait partie de l'appareil critique primaire de tous les historiens de l'Antiquité ... [Le fragment] est le fait d'un lecteur ... qui ... nous livre une élaboration secondaire ... *Ce dont* le témoignage est témoignage – quand il est un témoignage sur l'oeuvre – n'est en effet derechef qu'un fragment.'

[15] A. Laks, 'Réflexions sur quelques modèles éditoriaux. À propos de l'édition Harnack du *Contre les Chrétiens* de Porphyre', In *Le traité de Porphyre contre les chrétiens: un siècle de recherches, nouvelles questions*, ed. Sébastien Morlet, *Collection des Études Augustiniennes. Série Antiquité – EAA 190*. Paris: 2012, pp. 51-8.

Harnack have, it seems, forgotten to translate part of the title of his work. As a result, our constant references to the fragments as, say, Fr. 1 or 44, are wrong, for Harnack did not attribute a number to 'fragments', but rather to 'Fragmente und Referate'. Indeed, he himself abstained from using the word 'fragment', and refers to the passages from his collection as follows: 'Nr'. (Nummer/number) 1, 5 or 28, and not 'Fr', 1, 5 or 28. Laks, therefore, does not only suggest a greater flexibility in our definition of 'fragment',[16] but he also corrects almost a century of misinterpretation of Harnack's work. This is why I have decided to use the abbreviation Nr. myself.

As I wish to demonstrate in this book, the traditional definition of the term 'fragment' is inappropriate as far as the remains of *Against the Christians* are concerned. Harnack had already observed this,[17] and recent studies on the citation technique in Antiquity are ruining any hope in finding, among the Church Fathers' corpus, some intact passages from the anti-Christian discourses, namely 'fragments'.

Finally, one of the methodological issues raised by Schepens is the distinction between fragments that survive with or without title and/or book number.[18] Assigning a title and book number is very important, because it allows an attempt to reconstruct the work, and because the fragments' order necessarily affects their interpretation. The title and number of books (fifteen) of *Against the Christians* are provided by a reference in the Souda; it may also derive, as discussed earlier, from Eusebius of Caesarea.[19] This mention may be associated with the title *Against the Christians* found in the Souda – should it, of course, be an actual title. After having found the title, the volumes must be reconstructed, which is difficult since fragments are related to books 1, 3, 4, 12, 13 and 14 only. Some fragments, therefore, allow for associating Porphyry's ideas with a book number, and the ones that seem to correspond to the same ideas should thus be grouped under the right number.[20] This is how Harnack chose his five headings, namely 1- Critique of the characters and reliability of the evangelists and apostles, as a basis for the critique of Christianity, 2- Critique of the Old Testament,

[16] Laks, 'Du témoignage comme fragment', 237.

[17] Harnack, 'Porphyrius, *Gegen die Christen*', 9-10.

[18] Schepens, 'Jacoby's *FgrHist*', 165.

[19] Souda, s.v. *Porphyrios* 2.2098, ed. A. Adler, in Smith (1993), 6. Cited introduction n.68. Eusebius, *Church History* 6.19.2. Cited introduction n.60.

[20] Beatrice, 'Towards a new Edition of Porphyry's Fragments Against the Christians', 123. See also J. Dillon, 'Gathering Fragments: The Case of Iamblichus', in *Fragmentsammlungen Philosophischer Texte der Antike*, ed. by W. von Burkert et al. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1998), 170, on methodology.

3- Critique of the deeds and words of Jesus, 4- The dogmatic element, and 5- The contemporary Church, rather than attempting a reconstruction as previous scholars did.[21]. Jerome identifies for us some of the content of book 1: 'And the wholly unintelligent Bataneot and famous villain Porphyry objects, in the first book of his work against us, that Peter is blamed by Paul.'[22] The first book may thus have been devoted to attacks on the apostles – or it may well have been an introductory survey of the incoherence of Christian teaching. Porphyry then gives examples of how the evangelists misquoted the Prophets. Eusebius, in the *Ecclesiastical History* (6.19.9), says that Porphyry criticized Origen's use of the allegorical method of interpretation to decode Scripture in book 3 of *Against the Christians*. The book was thus most probably concerned with how the Bible should not be read as containing divine revelations aimed at the Christians, rather than the Jews.[23] Jerome also identifies some of the content of book 14: '...The famous impious Porphyry, who vomited his rage against us in numerous volumes, argues against this passage in book 14 and says "The evangelists were so ill-informed ... . '[24] Book 14 was thus probably on the evangelists. We should, therefore, logically try to group all the fragments pertaining to these topics under either book 1 or 14. It is, however, impossible to take for granted that everything written on these topics was originally found only in these books. Furthermore, we have admitted earlier, following Edwards' conclusions, that *Against the Christians* might be a compendium of discourses against the Christians. If he is right, then either Jerome or someone else had already assembled a number of works into a 15-volume collection, but this cannot be verified. Finally, since the contents of books 2, 15 and 5 to 11 remain unknown, all the fragments of the discourses against the Christians might need re-attribution.[25]

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[21] Harnack, 'Porphyrius, *Gegen die Christen*', 46-104. '1-Kritik des Charakters und der Glaubwürdigkeit der Evangelisten und Apostel als Grundlegung der Kritik des Christentums, 2-Kritik des Alten Testaments, 3-Kritik der Taten und Sprüche Jesu, 4-Dogmatisches, 5-Zur kirchlichen gegenwart'; see also P. de Labriolle, 'Porphyre et le christianisme', *RHPhR* 3 (1929): 405, who comments further on Harnack's classification.

[22] Jerome, *Commentary on Galatians* Prologue – Harnack Nr. 21a. 'Quod nequaquam intelligens Bataneotes et sceleratus ille Porphyrius, in primo operis sui adversum nos libro, Petrum a Paulo objecit esse reprehensum ... ' (PL 26: 334)

[23] See Schott, 'Porphyry on Christians and Others', 303.

[24] Jerome, *On the beginning of Mark* 1.1-2 – Harnack Nr. 9. 'Locum istum impius ille Porphyrius, qui adversum nos conscripsit et multis voluminibus rabiem suam evomuit, in XIV volumine disputat et dicit: 'Evangelistae tam imperiti fuerant homines ....' (CCL 78: 452).

[25] See Benoît, '*Contra christianos* de Porphyre', 265, on the content of these books.

Textual complications

There are other important issues to take into account when it comes to locating an 'original' text within its (con)text and cover-text, in particular the complexities of the citation process.[26] In the case of Porphyry and Eusebius, Jerome and Augustine, there are special factors in their relationship. This section of the current chapter will thus look at the textual problems raised by a fragmentary text that does not survive independently from its cover-text. I will discuss how texts were quoted in Antiquity, and how Jerome's reaction to Porphyry, as well as his background, might have shaped the fragments into their current form.

The context in which Christian authors might have read and then used Porphyry should first be further analysed. It has long been established that in Antiquity, citations had a very different meaning than in our modern world. Ancient historians would very much like to take it for granted that when an author claims to be quoting and the work is lost, this is a 'proper' citation, that is, a passage literally reproduced from a work. Unfortunately, this is not straightforward. What is a citation in a modern view, if not a fully referenced and clearly identified passage, either in the direct or indirect form of speech, which is untouched in that no changes have been made to the wording and meaning of the duly acknowledged author? None of the allusions made by the Christians to Porphyry live up to this modern ideal. They at times name Porphyry, at other times may be referring to him; they either quote, summarize, or make passing comments apparently from memory; they may even be distorting the meaning of the excerpts they choose. So how can we make sense of such a mess and get as close as possible to the lost treatise?

To begin untangling Christian citations of Porphyry, we must first understand the citation process as practised in Antiquity. First, a quotation – or allusion – depends on the reading that the quoting author made of a text, and belongs to a particular politico-social context, which invariably interferes with the original text.

Sabrina Inowlocki took on the task of defining the concept of citation in Antiquity, since, as she states, '… no comprehensive study on the subject has yet

[26] Drawing on Mikhaïl Bakhtin (whose writings were rediscovered by Western writers around 1960 – see M. Acouturier (trans.), 'Préface', *Esthétique et Théorie du roman* by M. Bakhtin (Paris: Gallimard, 1978), 9, on this) literary theorists started to take into account all the variously-located voices, which constitute the writing of any univocal text – see M. Bakhtin, 'Discourse in the Novel', in *The Dialogic Imagination*, ed. and trans. M. Holquist et al. (Austin: 1981).

been published'.[27] Although she focuses on Greek texts, her findings can be applied to Latin authors, who shared the common culture. She first notes that there were no citation techniques in Antiquity. Rather, the ancients 'choose or not to mark the use of citation'. When they choose to indicate a citation clearly, they (or their scribes – another complication!) mark it with a sign in the margin, as can be seen in manuscripts, as well as with linguistic markers (e.g. 'lego', etc.).[28] According to D. Delattre and R. Goulet, when an author and/or title are mentioned, it means that the writer appeals to the authority of the cited author, in order to back up their own argument, for precision might better convince a reader; it is not done for the purpose of locating a passage.[29] This explains why secondhand sources are almost never indicated – unless to show the learning and research of the author who cites them, as in Porphyry's *On Abstinence*: e.g. 'Phylarchos reports that ...'. (2.56.7)[30] – and it makes it impossible to decide whether or not the Christians may have used others' works in order to read *Against the Christians*. There is also the practical difficulty of locating a passage, which Inowlocki does not mention: authors usually signal the beginnings and ends of books, but books – scrolls or codices – did not have standard subdivisions or pagination. The most difficult problem, however, when it comes to recovering fragments from a lost treatise, certainly lies in the fact that authors are not always faithful to the text, but make changes to it either deliberately or accidentally. Inowlocki, however, explains that the ancients would not hesitate to change the wording of a text in order to 'express its essence more clearly', not for the purpose of falsifying it. She goes on to list and explain the kinds of modifications that can be made to a cited text, and concludes by saying that the line between literal citation and allusions is very unclear because it was useless to the ancients. The meaning was more important to them than the phrasing was, and, as a result, modifications were common as they were an explication of the truth. Inowlocki gives, among others, the example of Aristobulus, a Jewish philosopher, who cited Aratus, but says he subtracted the word 'Zeus' from the poems, and replaced it by 'God', for he

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[27] S. Inowlocki, *Eusebius and the Jewish Authors: His Citation Technique in an Apologetic Context* (Boston: 2006), 33.

[28] Inowlocki, *Eusebius*, 33-6.

[29] Inowlocki, *Eusebius*, 39-40. She cites from D. Delattre, 'Les titres des oeuvres philosophiques de l'Épicurien Philodème de Gadara et des ouvrages qu'il cite', in J.-Cl. Fredouille, Ph. Hoffmann, P. Petitmengin, M.-O. Goulet-Cazé and S. Déléani, eds, *Titres et articulations du texte dans les oeuvres antiques* (Turnhout: 1997), 125; and R. Goulet, 'Les références chez Diogène Laërce: sources ou autorités?', in *Titres et articulations du texte*, 149-66.

[30] Porphyry, *De l'Abstinence*, vol 2 (Paris: 1979), 119. 'Φύλαρχος . . . ἱστορει.'

thought the meaning of the words refers to God, not to Zeus. He thus produced 'his own reading of the text', while not changing its meaning; 'in his own view, he has only established the truth'.[31]

One of Inowlocki's most disturbing findings, as far as this study is concerned, is the fact that the ancients would make semantic changes for the purpose of adapting the meaning of a citation to make it fit with its new context. P. Chiron also underlines the problem of the 'decontextualization', which, he claims, is far more serious. To him, the decontextualization is an action in which the meaning is affected by the elimination of elements of the cited text, which are not involved in the quoting author's discussion. That kind of distortion could lead to a very different interpretation of the text.[32] Only the 'contextualization' (or, in this case, the 'recontextualization') of the fragment can allow to identify such a problem.

Inowlocki also noted that, 'Faithfulness to the text often depend(ed) on the feelings of the quoting author towards the quoted author.'[33] It is obvious that Porphyry, being a famous anti-Christian author, was not very dear to, say, Jerome, who on so many occasions presents him as 'barking' rather than arguing.[34] This suggests another reason why Christians may not have worried very much about reporting accurately what Porphyry said. Furthermore, it is highly unlikely that an opponent would accuse a Church Father of misquoting Porphyry. Therefore, as Jerome himself says, for example, he will quote Porphyry when the occasion arises while writing his commentary on Daniel, for the purpose of his work is not to refute him, but to talk about Daniel.[35]

P. Chiron added a further difficulty to the problem of the reliability of a citation, namely copyist errors. He reminds us that obstacles do not stop with the ancient author, but with those who reproduced their works. While comparing different manuscripts, Chiron listed the many difficulties that fragment collectors are regularly facing ('mécoupures', misreading, pronounciation errors, additions, omissions, transpositions, and, finally, secondary mistakes).[36] Furthermore, Chiron says that copists were often copying from a language that

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[31] Inowlocki, *Eusebius*, 40-47.

[32] J. Chiron, 'Tibérios citateur de Démosthène', in *Réceptions antiques*, C. Ciccolini, C. Guérin, S. Itic, S. Morlet, eds (Paris: 2006), 123.

[33] Inowlocki, *Eusebius*, 43-5.

[34] See, for instance, Jerome, *Commentary on Matthew* 21.21 – Harnack Nr. 3. 'Latrant contra nos gentilium canes in suis uoluminibus' (SC 2: 122).

[35] Jerome, *Commentary on Daniel* Prologue – Harnack Nr. 43a.

[36] Chiron, 'Tibérios citateur de Démosthène', 107-18.

they did not master.[37] There thus seem to be endless possibilities to making errors and diverging from the original text.

There are further complications of Porphyry's treatise. First, it is deprived of what G. Genette would term a complete 'paratexte'. As Genette explains, the paratext is what makes a text a 'book' for its readers and audience.[38] Genette means here that texts are accompanied by a variety of practices (such as titles, prefaces, etc) and discourses (what the world would say about a text), which participate in their presentation to the public ('présenter' or 'to present'), as well as their actualization ('présenter' or 'to present' as in 'rendre présent' or 'making present'). But there are works, which were either aborted or lost, and for which we merely know the title.[39] *Against the Christians* is thus a text, of which only an obscure 'paratexte' remains, i.e., not only is the title uncertain, but the text was very partially preserved by Christian adversaries. As a result, it is very difficult to assess the reception of the discourses *Against the Christians* in late antique circles, both pagan and Christian, and this makes it even harder to know the content of the lost text. Genette further explains that an element of a paratext can surface at any given time, but can also disappear without warning, and this can be due to a decision from its author, to an external intervention, or to the damage of time.[40] The discourses against the Christians were meant to disappear for good when they were burned on the orders of Christian emperors, although it is impossible to confirm whether their edicts were respected.

Ancient conventions of citation are not the only factors, which may have contributed to the Porphyry created by the Christians. There is also the subjective way in which they might have processed the text in their mind. In a major work entitled *La Seconde main*, Antoine Compagnon takes a philosophical look at citation, and explains how a reader systematically selects passages of a text as part of a complex reading process formed by the characteristics of memory. He argues that there are sentences that readers do not read, and others that they will remember. It is those sentences that they will cite. As he aptly put it, 'Lorsque je

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37 Chiron, 'Tibérios citateur de Démosthène', 108.

38 G. Genette, *Seuils* (Paris: Seuil, 1987), 7-9. '(Le paratexte est) ce par quoi un texte se fait livre et se propose comme tel à ses lecteurs, et plus généralement au public.'

39 Genette, *Seuils,* 9. 'Il est ... des œuvres, disparues ou avortées, dont nous ne connaissons que le titre.'

40 Genette, *Seuils*, 12. time ' ... Un élément de paratexte peut ... apparaître à tout moment, (et) il peut également disparaître, définitivement ou non, par décision de l'auteur ou sur intervention étrangère, ou en vertu de l'usure du temps'.

cite, j'excise, je mutile, je prélève.'[41] Compagnon defines four distinctive features of reading, namely 'ablation' or 'taking out', underlining, accommodation and solicitation.[42]

Compagnon argues that when someone reads, their very reading of the text is a citation process, for it desintegrates the text and separates it from its context. He means that someone will cite the sentences that seem to them to be summarizing the main idea of a book or a paragraph, or other sentences that caught their attention. Reading thus allows one to go back to a passage, and reorganize the text, in order to make sure that they are following the author's argument. Therefore, reading induces memory and imitation, that is citation. The citation is thus a marker, a point of reference for the reader.[43]

The Christians, when they read either *Against the Christians* or second hand material, must have experienced the reading process as explained by Compagnon. In the event that the text was read to them, they would have needed to assimilate its content swiftly, and would have memorized the passages that made the whole meaningful to them, and others which they found of interest. What needs to be understood here is what sort of sentences or passages caught their attention, as well as the reason why they either memorized or noted these. What do the Porphyrian fragments represent in their work? Do they represent the main ideas of the text they cite from, so that they might represent a summary, or were

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[41] A. Compagnon, *La seconde main, ou, le traval de la citation* (Paris: Seuil, 1979), 17. 'When I cite, I excise, I mutilate and I remove.'

[42] Compagnon, *La seconde main*, 25. Compagnon's work also contains a chapter entitled 'Un comble, le discours de la théologie', in which he analyses the principles governing patristic commentary in Late Antiquity, and how it is based on citation. He develops the idea that what he names 'theological discourse' is a forever expanding repetition in the form of a commentary, which has as its source the Bible. Compagnon mainly argues that, 'L'argument patristique a (...) la valeur d'une preuve ou d'une confirmation de la doctrine ...' (p. 220). While Compagnon's conclusions could be used to better explain the relationship between Porphyry's text and Jerome's commentaries (in that Porphyry cannot be a source for Jerome, who was naturally more likely to look for authority in patristic scholars), it is not applicable, for Compagnon's argument on patristic authority is not valid. In a recent article, E. Rebillard, 'A New Style of Argument in Christian Polemic: Augustine and the Use of Patristic Citations', *JECS* 8.4 (2000): 559-78, reached a different conclusion: 'In his use of patristic citations as an argument in theological controversy, Augustine makes a clear distinction between the authority of a single writer and the authority of the consensus of the largest number of writers. As a consequence, he criticizes or rejects the authority of an argument from a patristic citation.'

[43] Compagnon, *La seconde main*, 18 and 23. 'La lecture ... dispose au souvenir et à l'imitation, soit à la citation ..., (et) la citation ... est un lieu de reconnaissance, un repère de lecture.'

they 'thrown' into their work simply because they bore a relation to their own argument? The following chapters of this book should help to negotiate this question.

Of interest here is also what Compagnon defines as 'solicitation'.[44] While reading, the reader bumps into certain sentences in particular. For various reasons, a specific sentence solicits their attention, and this does not necessarily happen because it summarizes an idea. In the same fashion, Eusebius, Jerome and Augustine must have been solicited by a few sentences, which caught their attention either because he especially disliked them or because he wanted to correct them.

It follows that what the Christians retained from Porphyry might have been influenced by their opinion of the philosopher. To Jerome, for instance, an ordained Christian from the late fourth century, Porphyry's discourse is not legitimate for various reasons. First, as a pagan, he does not write from the right social perspective. Although at the time he was writing (end of third century) paganism was still the official religion, it had been unlawful since 391 (edict of Theodosius I) when Jerome was writing, and therefore Christianity was not under threat. Furthermore, Porphyry is not Christian; he cannot talk about Christianity, and even less so on behalf of Christians. Jerome writes as a Christian in full authority, while Porphyry 'speaks wrong'.

Furthermore, Eusebius, Jerome and Augustine's status as Christians – and therefore as followers of the official religion in Rome, in the case of Jerome and Augustine – might have shaped the way they used *Against the Christians*. Plato, in book 3 of *Republic*, identified two narrative genres in poetry, namely pure narrative – when the poet speaks on his own behalf – and mimesis (or imitation) – when the poet wants to give the illusion that a character is speaking. Plato forbade the use of 'oratio recta' (direct speech) to the guardians of his ideal city, because it was a mimesis, i.e. an imitation, dangerous for their soul in that it consists in imitating the discourse of another, talking on their behalf, therefore making one's speech similar to someone else's through imitation. In other words, it implied appropriating their discourse.[45] Mimesis is a representation through art, and it was used primarily by the poet. The philosopher thus forbids poetry for guardians, because it lacks a direct relationship to truth. To Plato, in turn, indirect speech is acceptable, since it is deprived of mimesis, and therefore closer to truth.

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[44] Compagnon, *La seconde main*, 18-23.

[45] Plato, *Republic* 3.

Mimesis is thus the process by which one appropriates the words – or discourse – of someone else. However, the Christians, when they cite Porphyry, appropriate his discourse, but not for the purpose of imitation. They rephrase it at their convenience, remember what either helped them to make sense of the philosopher's treatise, or solicited their attention while reading it – Compagnon – and find an appropriate space for themselves in the text where they will be able to oppose Porphyry and show him under a distasteful light. Furthermore, the Christians may well have looked for evidence they could cite against Porphyry by selecting the quotation, which do most damage, a standard rhetorical technique.[46]

According to theories of intertextuality, one of the voices, which influence the writing of any text is the audience. In this case, Porphyry's audience becomes the Church fathers' audience, for his ideas survive in texts that will be read by their readers. Genette, in *Seuils*, explains how the author's original preface is targeting specific readers by setting out clearly the purpose and scope of the work.[47] To Genette, an author cannot put his work forward in its preface, for it would be presumptuous, but may at least use it to point out its accuracy, and therefore catch the audience's attention.[48] In his *Commentary on Daniel* (written in 407), Jerome states that although Porphyry has written a whole book on Daniel, he does not intend to answer the philosopher, for Eusebius, Apollinarius and Methodius have already done so extensively.[49] Furthermore, by the early fifth century, *Against the Christians* was not supposed to be freely circulating and read. Jerome and Augustine empower themselves by delivering the unavailable work to posterity, a mighty device against the enemy of Christendom, for not only is the treatise meant to disappear over time, but its author is no longer alive to defend himself and address his own audience. Jerome and Augustine are alone with an inaccessible work, and they do as they please with it. In the process, they appropriate Porphyry's audience. The Church fathers are in a position to promote truth, and this is what their discourse is meant to represent.

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[46] See G. Clark, 'Augustine's Porphyry and the Universal Way of Salvation', in *Studies on Porphyry*, G. Karamanolis and A. Sheppard, eds (London: 2007), 133, who argues that Augustine, in *City of God*, selected from Porphyry what would make him sound like a Christian.

[47] Genette, *Seuils*, 197.

[48] Genette, *Seuils*, 191.

[49] Jerome, *Commentary on Daniel* Prologue – Harnack Nr. 43a. 'cui solertissime responderunt Eusebius Caesariensis episcopus tribus uoluminibus, octauo decimo et nono decimo et uicesimo, Apollinaris quoque uno grandi libro, hoc est uicesimo sexto, et ante hos ex parte Methodius' (CCL 75A: 772).

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Chapter 2
Eusebius

The first Christian author in whose corpus many passages from Porphyry appear to be extant is Eusebius of Caesarea, one of the most important Christian writers of Late Antiquity. We will first apply the methodology and theories discussed in the previous chapter on him, because chronologically, he comes before Jerome and Augustine, and we want to get an idea of how Porphyry was preserved at that time. As an eye-witness to the Great Persecution and the accession of Constantine to the throne, Eusebius' legacy as the father of Church History and his general work on Christianity stand at the forefront of important religious transformations in the Roman empire. Porphyry's anti-Christian treatise and Eusebius' *Church History*, *Preparation for the Gospel*, and *Proof of the Gospel* may be closely related in time, as will be discussed. Furthermore, we know from Jerome that Eusebius wrote twenty-five books in response to the Neoplatonist philosopher's invectives.[1] Where does Porphyry stand in Eusebius' corpus? Scholars have long seen Porphyry as standing at the centre of Eusebius' apologetic work,[2] but recently some have seriously questioned the relevance of such claims not only by challenging the authorship of the Eusebian fragments,[3] but also by arguing against the view that Eusebius was ever an apologist at all.[4] Some further argue that it is difficult to claim that *PE* and *DE* are a refutation of *Against the Christians*, for Eusebius does not mention such an intention in either works.[5]

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[1] Jerome, *Letter* 48.13 to *Pammachus*.

[2] Since Harnack, 'Porphyrius, *Gegen die Christen*', selected Nr. 1 from Eusebius' *PE* 1.2.1-5, and argued that this passage was extracted from Porphyry's proem.

[3] S. Morlet, 'La *Démonstration évangélique* d'Eusèbe de Césarée contient-elle des fragments du *Contra Christianos* de Porphyre? À propos du frg. 73 Harnack', in *Studia Patristica* 46 (2010): 59-64, ed. J. Baun, A. Cameron, M. Edwards and M. Vinzent; A. Johnson, 'Rethinking the Authenticity of Porphyry, *c. Christ.* fr. 1'. *Studia Patristica* 46 (2010), 53-8; J. Cook, *The Interpretation of the New Testament* (Peabody: 2002).

[4] C. Zamagni, 'Porphyry est-il la cible principale des "questions" chrétiennes des IVe et Ve siècles?' in *Le traité de Porphyre contre les chrétiens: un siècle de recherches, nouvelles questions*, ed. Sébastien Morlet (Paris: 2012), 357-70; see also A. Kofsky, *Eusebius of Caesarea Against Paganism* (Brill: 2002), 17, who argues that those who see in Eusebius' apologetic and polemical work a response to Porphyry do so without sufficient proof.

[5] Kofsky, *Eusebius* 250.

We are trying to establish whether or not actual 'fragments' of the discourses against the Christians can be found in Eusebius, and how far Eusebius' agenda obscures Porphyry's original arguments during the citation process. This is where the 'cover-text', as defined by Schepens, will become a necessary tool. We shall therefore test Schepens' methodological approach to the gathering of fragments against Eusebius.

But is there such a thing as a 'Eusebian fragment'? Recent studies have sought to demonstrate that one should be doubtful of Eusebius as a source for Porphyry, when the latter is not named. The main argument presented as a challenge to advocates of Eusebian fragments is that the style of the anonymous Greek in Eusebius' *Preparation for the Gospel* and *Proof of the Gospel* is closer to that of Celsus than to that of Porphyry. The fragments at stake are 1 and 73 of the Harnack collection. Their association with Porphyry is surrounded by a long history of academic debate. Indeed, Harnack viewed the content of 1 as a possible summary of Porphyry's main argument against the Christians as it was presented in his treatise. He classified it under the title: 'Wahrscheinlich aus der Vorrede' (probably from the prologue).[6] Harnack explains that U. von Wilamowitz-Möllendorff has proved such an association, and identifies shared vocabulary between this passage and 28 and 39, as well as *Letter to Marcella* 18, among others.[7] The assumption is, therefore, that the anonymous Hellene, to whom Eusebius addresses his answers, could be Porphyry. Nr. 1 reads as follows:

> For a start, one might well be seriously puzzled as to who we are that have come forward as authors: whether we are barbarians or Hellenes – or what could there be between these?; – and what we say we are – not just our name, because that is actually clear to all, but our character and way of life. For they see that we are not either on the side of the Greeks in our ideas, nor of the barbarians in our practices. Therefore what is it about us that is foreign, and how have we revolutionized life? How could they not be entirely impious and atheistic, these people who have renounced the ancestral divinities that guaranteed the cohesion of any people, and of any city? Or what good is it reasonable to expect of those who have become hostile, and enemies of all that leads to their preservation, and who have rejected their benefactors? What is that but fighting against the gods? What sort of forgiveness do people deserve who have turned their backs on the

[6] Harnack, 'Porphyrius, *Gegen die Christen*', 45. 'Man darf sie dem Eingang des Werks zuschreiben.'

[7] Harnack, 'Porphyrius, *Gegen die Christen*', 45. N.B.: while Nr. 39 is from Eusebius *HE* 6.19.2, Nr. 28 is from Macarius, and therefore doubtful.

> theologians from all times, all Greeks and barbarians, in cities and countryside alike, in all kinds of temples and initiations and mysteries by all kings and law-givers and philosophers together, and have chosen instead whatever in human affairs is impious and atheistic? To what sort of punishment should they not be subjected, those men who have deserted ancestral customs to become zealots of the Jews' weird fables, universally criticized? Is it not the last degree of perversity, as well as fickleness, to abandon their own institutions and calmly to adopt, in unreasoning and unconsidered faith those of an impious people who are enemies of every nation? And not even to devote themselves to the God honoured by the Jews in a way that accords with the Jews' own laws, but to cut for themselves a new, lonely path that is no path, and does not respect the traditions either of the Greeks or of the Jews?[8]

Sébastien Morlet argues that it is not Porphyry that Eusebius is answering in *PE* and *DE*, but Celsus.[9] He analysed the style of Harnack Nr. 73 and compared it to the manuscript. He found parallels between the vocabulary used in Eusebius and Celsus, but not in Porphyry. S. Morlet has shown how Eusebius' source for the anti-Christian polemic was Celsus.[10] To him, therefore, only two of the six

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[8] Eusebius, *PE* 1.2.1-5. 'Πρῶτον μὲν γὰρ εἰκότως ἄν τις διαπορήσειεν, τίνες ὄντες ἐπὶ τὴν γραφὴν παρεληλύθαμεν, πότερον Ἕλληνες ἢ βάρβαροι, ἢ τί ἂν γένοιτο τούτων μέσον, καὶ τίνας ἑαυτοὺς εἶναί φαμεν, οὐ τὴν προσηγορίαν, ὅτι καὶ τοῖς πᾶσιν ἔκδηλος αὕτη, ἀλλὰ τὸν τρόπον καὶ τὴν προαίρεσιν τοῦ βίου· οὔτε γὰρ τὰ Ἑλλήνων φρονοῦντας ὁρᾶν οὔτε τὰ βαρβάρων ἐπιτηδεύοντας. τί οὖν ἂν γένοιτο τὸ καθ' ἡμᾶς ξένον καὶ τίς ὁ νεωτερισμὸς τοῦ βίου; πῶς δ' οὐ πανταχόθεν δυσσεβεῖς ἂν εἶεν καὶ ἄθεοι οἱ τῶν πατρῴων θεῶν ἀποστάντες, δι' ὧν πᾶν ἔθνος καὶ πᾶσα πόλις συνέστηκεν; ἢ τί καλὸν ἐλπίσαι εἰκὸς τοὺς τῶν σωτηρίων ἐχθροὺς καὶ πολεμίους καταστάντας καὶ τοὺς εὐεργέτας παρωσαμένους καὶ τί γὰρ ἄλλο ἢ θεομαχοῦντας; ποίας δὲ καταξιωθήσεσθαι συγγνώμης τοὺς τοὺς ἐξ αἰῶνος μὲν παρὰ πᾶσιν Ἕλλησι καὶ βαρβάροις κατά τε πόλεις καὶ ἀγροὺς παντοίοις ἱεροῖς καὶ τελεταῖς καὶ μυστηρίοις πρὸς ἁπάντων ὁμοῦ βασιπαντοίοις ἱεροῖς καὶ τελεταῖς καὶ μυστηρίοις πρὸς ἁπάντων ὁμοῦ βασιλέων τε καὶ νομοθετῶν καὶ φιλοσόφων θεολογουμένους ἀποστραφέντας, ἑλομένους δὲ τὰ ἀσεβῆ καὶ ἄθεα τῶν ἐν ἀνθρώποις; ποίαις δ' οὐκ ἂν ἐνδίκως ὑποβληθεῖεν τιμωρίαις οἱ τῶν μὲν πατρίων φυγάδες, τῶν δ' ὀθνείων καὶ παρὰ πᾶσι διαβεβλημένων Ἰουδαϊκῶν μυθολογημάτων γενόμενοι ζηλωταί; πῶς δ' οὐ μοχθηρίας εἶναι καὶ εὐχερείας ἐσχάτης τὸ μεταθέσθαι μὲν εὐκόλως τῶν οἰκείων, ἀλόγῳ δὲ καὶ ἀνεξετάστῳ πίστει τὰ τῶν δυσσεβῶν καὶ πᾶσιν ἔθνεσι πολεμίων ἑλέσθαι, καὶ μηδ' αὐτῷ τῷ παρὰ Ἰουδαίοις τιμωμένῳ θεῷ κατὰ τὰ παρ' αὐτοῖς προσανέχειν νόμιμα, καινὴν δέ τινα καὶ ἐρήμην ἀνοδίαν ἑαυτοῖς συντεμεῖν, μήτε τὰ Ἑλλήνων μήτε τὰ Ἰουδαίων φυλάττουσαν;Ταῦτα μὲν οὖν εἰκότως ἄν τις Ἑλλήνων, μηδὲν ἀληθὲς μήτε τῶν οἰκείων μήτε τῶν καθ' ἡμᾶς ἐπαΐων, πρὸς ἡμᾶς ἀπορήσειεν' (ed. K. Mras).

[9] Morlet, 'La *Démonstration évangélique* d'Eusèbe'. Morlet, *'Contre Porphyre'* 503-4, argues that Eusebius was unaware of Porphyry's *Against the Christians* until late in his career.

[10] S. Morlet, *L'apologétique chrétienne à l'époque de Constantin. Étude sur l'apologétique chrétienne à l'époque de Constantin* (Paris: 2009).

fragments found in *PE* and *DE* are Porphyrian, namely Nr. 41 (*PE* 1.9.21) and Nr. 80 (*PE* 5.1.10). Morlet cites, for instance, the term 'sycophantes', which is conspicuously present in both Eusebius and Origen (*Against Celsus*), but absent from Porphyry's corpus. However, Morlet also notes that some words, although present in Celsus and Eusebius, are typical of Eusebius. He thus concludes that Nr. 73 is not Porphyrian, but mainly Celsian, and was tainted by Eusebius' style. However, Morlet's sound analysis of Eusebius', Porphyry's, Origen's and Celsus' Greek does not take into consideration approaches to citation in Antiquity. As S. Inowlocki has shown, any author was prone to make changes to the texts they were citing from, especially in cases where the original text was profane, and, as we have shown, even more so in cases of opponents, who are not considered as intellectual authorities. Recovering either Celsus or Porphyry means reading Origen on Celsus and Eusebius on Porphyry. Therefore, both *On True Doctrine* and the discourses against the Christians are very likely to have been transformed along the way. Furthermore, Jerome says that Eusebius wrote a lengthy refutation of Porphyry;[11] why, then, would he have repeated his argument in *PE* and *DE*?[12] And why would he have written the work *Against Celsus*, and not name him? But Morlet's conclusions on how Eusebius adapted Celsus serve to strengthen Inowlocki's ideas on the citation process in Antiquity, and also provide good evidence that many passages that have been ascribed to Porphyry are only vaguely related to him, and may only belong to the broader anti-Christian argument. They are not 'fragments' of *Porphyry*. Also, Morlet's analysis of the language of Harnack gives us further reasons to insist on revising his work, and not be content with a mere translation or re-organization of his Porphyrian material. Going back to the 'cover-texts' from which passages from *Against the Christians* were extracted is thus a mandatory step in the reconstruction of Porphyry's ideas.

Following the same lead – and writing, unbeknownst to both himself and Morlet, at the same time – Aaron Johnson has questioned the authorship of Nr. 1 on the basis of Eusebius' failure to identify the attacks he mentions with a specific author, the rhetorical style (in the form of questions and answers), which is typically Eusebian, and, finally, the vocabulary of the passage, which is also typically Eusebian rather than Celsian, as Morlet argues.[13] Johnson could also not find a clear correspondence between the ideas put forward by Eusebius, and those expressed in Porphyry's works, as regards the notion of 'apostasy'.

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[11] Jerome, *Commentary on Daniel* Prologue.

[12] Morlet, '*Contre Porphyre*' 503 argues that Eusebius wrote *Against Porphyry* toward the end of his career.

[13] Johnson, 'Rethinking the Authenticity of Porphyry', see 53-8 n. 6.

In *PE*, the anonymous Greek argues that the Christians have rejected their previous way of life. But Eusebius, Johnson explains, wants us to think, in *HE*, that Porphyry attacks Origen for being an apostate from Hellenism, when he actually simply wants to say that Origen and the Christians in general were not applying Greek learning properly when they used it to decipher 'Jewish riddles'. Johnson argues that the vocabulary relating to 'apostasy', which is found in both Eusebius and Porphyry, is not used to convey the same meaning: Porphyry, when he talks about apostatizing from the previous life, means withdrawing from the public sphere as a philosopher. Therefore, Johnson concludes, it is not because common words are present in both Porphyry and Nr. 1 that the idea expressed is similar: the anonymous Greek means apostatizing from ancestral, religious tradition, while Porphyry, when he uses such a term, refers to either withdrawing from society or misusing Greek learning. But Johnson's conclusions are not convincing. As J. Cook noted, it seems that Porphyry's assertion actually goes beyond the misuse of the allegorical method of interpretation:

Besides the echoes with *HE* 6.19.4-8 ('Christians who leave their ancestral religion and who become zealots for foreign Jewish mythologies are justly subjected to any sort of punishment' – Cook's translation), the text from Eusebius is related to Porphyry's comments to his lapsed vegetarian friend, Castricius, in *On Abstinence* (1.2.3). There he tells Castricius that he does not scorn his ancestral traditions (vegetarianism) because of greed. He also does not have a nature inferior to people who accept laws contrary to those by which they once lived and endure the amputation of their body parts and refuse to eat the flesh of certain animals.[14] There are thus echoes not only of Eusebius, but also of Porphyry.

The Porphyrian criticisms mentioned in *PE* actually fit with arguments in Porphyry's extant works. First, in *The Proof of the Gospel*, Eusebius reports that according to Porphyry, '[they – the Christians] cannot at all provide anything by way of proof but [they] think that the people who encounter [them] should rely entirely on faith', who shut their eyes to any form of examination, an attitude which earned them the title of 'faithful'.[15] Second, Porphyry devoted a good part of his *On Abstinence* to documenting ancestral customs of the Greeks and the barbarians, which all pointed to a way of life very close to the philosophic way he aspired to. Porphyry says the true ancestral custom is vegetarian, both in diet and sacrifice, and that all traditions have an ascetic elite; the true philosopher

[14] Cook, *The Interpretation of the New Testament*, 134.

[15] Eusebius, *DE* 1.1.12 – Harnack Nr. 73. 'οὐδὲν γοῦν ἡμᾶς δύνασθαί φασι δι' ἀποδείξεως παρέχειν, πίστει δὲ μόνῃ προσέχειν ἀξιοῦν τοὺς ἡμῖν προσιόντας' (ed. Heikel).

will stay clear of current sacrificial practice, which may be necessary for cities to placate *daimones*.[16] Porphyry was thus more than interested in identity-related questions. As Jeremy Schott argues, he wanted to re-establish the difference between Greeks and barbarians.[17] Next, in both *On Abstinence* and the *Letter to Marcella*, written to his wife, Porphyry makes the link between antiquity and truth very obvious.[18] He also explains how the gods should be worshipped, i.e. through traditional, pagan channels as far as the ordinary man is concerned, or through an assiduous, demanding, and silent discipline in the case of the philosopher. Irrational thinking is therefore not an appropriate way to the One.

So Nr. 1 is not inconsistent with Porphyry's thought in other works, but we can conclude from Johnson's analysis that Nr 1 is not a 'fragment' from Porphyry, but rather part of anti-Christian ideas that Eusebius gathered from different pagan sources (e.g. from Celsus, Porphyry, Maximinus Daia, and/or Hierocles). It is in that respect only that we can consider Porphyry as being related to Nr. 1. After all, as Cook has noted, there *are* parallels between the ideas expressed by Eusebius' Greek in *PE* and those expressed in a passage from Eusebius' *Church History,* which is undoubtedly Porphyrian. Cook adds that because the 'complaint that Christians do not argue for their faith' was also found in Celsus and Galen, it continues a tradition.[19] As a result, we should see Nr. 1 as belonging to the overall argument against the Christians, to which Porphyry certainly contributed, more than as a passage *per se* (or not) of *Against the Christians.*

A closer look at Eusebius' rhetorical strategies allows us to doubt seriously that we may be holding authentic passages of *Against the Christians.* We shall first look at Eusebius' pattern when referring to secular authors. In *Eusebius and the Jewish Authors*, S. Inowlocki notes that Eusebius' *PE* and *DE* consist almost entirely of citations – 71 per cent in the case of *PE*, while *DE* consists mainly in citations.[20] We have already pointed out the problem of citations in Antiquity; Inowlocki argues that Eusebius' method makes him stand out from the other ancient citers. Indeed, not only does Eusebius unintentionally change

[16] G. Clark, *On Abstinence from Killing Animals* (London: 2000).

[17] J. Schott, 'Porphyry on Christians and Others: 'Barbarian Wisdom', Identity Politics, and Anti-Christian Polemics on the Eve of the Great Persecution'. *JECS* 13 no. 3 (2005): 277-314.

[18] Porphyry, in book 1 of *On Abstinence*, gives credit to the most ancient peoples for their attitude toward sacrifice, and their way of life. In *Letter to Marcella* 18 and 22-3, he explains that the proper way to honour the gods is according to traditional customs.

[19] Cook, *New Testament*, 134.

[20] Inowlocki, *Eusebius*, 54.

the meaning of the passages he quotes, he also uses citations as a rhetorical technique, claiming it will allow his reader to get an impartial picture of the Greek arguments he exposes in *PE*, as opposed to reading his own words. In the words of A. Kofsky, this method 'allow(s) (the pagans') testimony to speak for (them)self rather than quoting evidence from the Scriptures, so as to avoid raising suspicion of being biased in favour of Christianity'.[21] Eusebius' aim is to appear as an objective and faithful witness. He thus wished to expose 'the contradictions (the pagan religious and philosophical concepts) presented in every field'.[22] 'When Eusebius cites opponents such as Porphyry, Inowlocki says, 'he aims to shatter the foundations of paganism by using their [the opponents'] own testimonies'.[23] In other words, Eusebius exposes the pagan doctrines in order to turn them against the pagans. We shall see later on that Augustine uses a similar rhetorical technique. To Kofsky, this is a direct response to pagan critics of Christianity, namely Celsus and Porphyry, who had also sought to show Christian Scripture as being full of contradictions. In sum, the purpose of presenting pagan sources is to further Eusebius' argument about the truth of Scripture.[24] The consequence of these claims for the present study is that Eusebius would certainly have chosen the passages from his opponents that would be most harmful to them. Even if he means to offer an impartial account, we may assume that Eusebius made a personal selection from Porphyry, which would have allowed him to portray the man negatively. Eusebius' method is therefore treacherous: he claims to be reporting objectively for the purpose of exposing the truth (Christianity), which will become evident to anyone from a comparison of Greek and Christian doctrines, but he still selected the passages he quoted. Moreover, Eusebius is more faithful to the text than other writers, and, as Inowlocki has noted, there is a clear distinction in Eusebius between his words and those of the cited authors, for he uses 'linguistic markers', as well as book and chapter titles to mark the beginning and end of a passage. However, although he claims to be citing literally, taking him at his word would mean understanding citations in a modern way.[25]

Furthermore, Eusebius uses 'l'argument par autorité'[26] as a strategy when citing authors and, Inowlocki adds, this is especially the case with *PE*. That is to say, most of the time, Eusebius will name the authors he quotes from, as well as

[21] A. Kofsky, *Eusebius of Caesarea Against Paganism* (Boston: 2002), 240.
[22] Kofsky, *Eusebius*, 240.
[23] Inowlocki, *Eusebius*, 56.
[24] Kofsky, *Eusebius*, 244.
[25] Inowlocki, *Eusebius*, 68-9.
[26] Inowlocki, *Eusebius*, 61. cf. O. Ducrot, *Le Dire et le Dit* (Paris: 1984), 158.

the reasons why they are famous, so that his argument is reinforced when pagans recognize their authority. However, although he will also name the famous authors, he will not explain where their reputation comes from, assuming that his readers will be aware of it; Inowlocki cites Plotinus and Plutarch as examples of people who 'require no introduction'. That is to say, when he talks about Porphyry, he does name him, but he does not mention his name or anyone in particular in the introduction to his *PE* (Harnack Nr. 1). This, again, could point to the fact that Porphyry alone was not the author of the attacks Eusebius mentions in that book. But one must not forget that Eusebius had refuted Porphyry extensively in *Against Porphyry*. It could be taking for granted that his readers would know about that work and its content.

Beyond these problems related to Eusebius' faithfulness to a text, Inowlocki reminds us that the problem of ancient citations and manuscripts must be taken into account. Indeed, there are Eusebius' original texts, in which the citations lie in indirect transmission, but there are also the medieval manuscripts, directly copied from Eusebius. As we have already shown, these can contain errors of multiple types.[27] Therefore, Inowlocki argues, it is difficult to assess the faithfulness of Eusebius by comparing the manuscripts that we have of his works with those of the ancient authors from which he quoted. The problem is further enhanced in the case of Porphyry, for we do not even have manuscripts of all of his works. It is thus impossible to establish whether Eusebius preserved the literal passages, and whether what we have of Eusebius is faithful to his original words.

Inowlocki used Plato's and Plutarch's texts to understand how Eusebius was citing from pagan authors, for, she says, we still have their texts and can compare with Eusebius' citations, but this is not the case with most of the authors that he quotes from. She notes that although the Church father is considered by modern scholars to be among the ancient Christians who cite most faithfully, there is evidence that he tampered with the original text. For instance, in *Preparation* 11.29.4, Eusebius adapted *Timaeus* 28c 3-4 to his 'Christian and Neoplatonic *credo*'.[28] In addition, Eusebius has a reputation for being careless with quotations – Bidez has, among others, noted this when working on Porphyry's fragments in the *PE*.[29] Scholarly opinions vary when it comes to the intentionality of Eusebius' tampering with texts, but, according to Inowlocki, we must at least be aware

[27] See Chiron, 'Tibérios citateur de Démosthène', cited in chapter 1.

[28] See Inowlocki, *Eusebius*, 87-8. cf. Favrelle, *Eusèbe de Césarée. La Préparation évangélique IX* (SC 292: 383).

[29] Bidez, *Vide de Porphyry*, 144.

that he is modifying the original to a certain degree and that this was common practice at the time. This furthers our argument that hoping to find original passages from the discourses against the Christians should be abandoned in favour of a more all-encompassing approach, i.e. we must understand that what is extant of the treatise are ideas, references, and allusions to Porphyry, tainted by Eusebius' own concerns, beliefs, and understanding, and most possibly entangled in the existing anti-Christian argument. We do not have the actual words of the philosopher.

Kofsky also argues that considering *PE* and *DE* as a refutation of Porphyry is a difficult claim to make, for in neither work does Eusebius mention such an intention.[30] According to Kofsky, Eusebius used Porphyry as a representative of pagan religion and philosophy in order to discredit paganism and promote Christianity. Since he may have already written *Against Porphyry*, what he presents to his readers could be a summary of his major arguments – hence the silence on *Against the Christians*.[31]

Eusebius' Porphyry

Eusebius is our earliest source for Porphyry (his dates are ca. 275-339). We know from Jerome's *Commentary on Daniel* that at some point, Eusebius wrote a refutation of Porphyry's argument against the Christians, and dedicated books 18, 19 and 20 to an answer to Porphyry's book 12 on Daniel.[32] The date of Eusebius' *Against Porphyry* is, however, unknown, and its twenty-five volumes are lost, but Kofsky suggests that it may be an early work.[33] The title *Against Porphyry* is mentioned in the Codex Laurentianus (Nr. 8), one of the manuscripts of Eusebius' *Church History* (10-11th c.). It can be found in Florence, at the Medicean-Laurentian library.[34] If Eusebius engaged with *Against the Christians* in *Evangelical Preparation* and *Proof of the Gospel*, composed between

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30 Kofsky, *Eusebius*, 250.

31 Kofsky, *Eusebius*, 275.

32 Jerome, *Commentary in Daniel* Prologue: '... cui solertissime responderunt Eusebius Caesariensis episcopus tribus uoluminibus, octauo decimo et nono decimo et uicesimo ... .'

33 Kofsky, *Eusebius*, 71.

34 Kofsky, *Eusebius*, 71-2, suggests that the Church historian Socrates might have got the story of Porphyry's youth as a Christian (*HE* 3.23) from Eusebius' *Against Porphyry*. He also notes that two Greek catalogues from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries mention Eusebius' manuscript (on this, he refers his readers to Hanarck, *Chronologie* II, 118, and Stevenson, *Studies*, 36).

314 and 318, he did not do so earlier in *Chronicle* and *Ecclesiastical History*. É. des Places noted in his introduction to the edition of the *Evangelical Preparation* that Porphyry is quoted 96 times in the *Evangelical Preparation*, and his various writings are regularly referred to, whereas Eusebius seems not to have known a lot about him when he wrote his *Chronicle*, presumably around 306 according to R. Burgess' dating, and *Ecclesiastical History* – first version composed around 313/314 again according to Burgess.[35] Nor does Eusebius in these earlier works seem to see Porphyry as a major threat to Christianity. This is, however, most probably due to the content of Eusebius' works, since he focuses on specific parts of Porphyry's critique. Both the *Chronicle* and *Ecclesiastical History* were meant to establish a history of the Church and its chronology. We thus find in these two works one fragment on the date of Moses, and one on Origen's allegories as part of a biography of Origen.[36] As for the *Evangelical Preparation* and the *Proof of the Gospel*, which were two parts of a single work designed to explain Christianity, we find what may be a synthesis of the pagans' thesis on Christianity and its dangers, as well as a few Porphyrian passages related to the date of Moses, Daniel, and the evangelists.[37] The choice of passages appears, at first sight, to depend on the subject matter of the books.

Let us now look at Porphyry in Eusebius as represented by the Harnack collection. According to Harnack, Eusebius allowed three categories of passages to be preserved: attacks on dogma; attacks on the New Testament, and the evangelists and apostles; and attacks on the Old Testament. Eusebius is also our primary source for the content of two books that Porphyry wrote 'against us (the Christians)'. namely books 3 and 4, since he refers to them by their number. We have already looked at the content of Nr. 1, from Eusebius' preface. It seems to summarize the pagans' general critique, or at least the reason why Eusebius answered the questions of the Greeks. Nr. 1 mainly says that the Christians have abandoned the common religious tradition. What seems to be at stake are Christian identity and fideism – are the Christians Greeks or barbarians,

[35] See É. des Places, *Eusebèbe de Césarée. La Préparation évangélique. I* SC 206 (Paris: 1974); R.W. Burgess, 'The Dates and Editions of Eusebius' *Chronici Canones* and *Historia Ecclesiastica*', *JThS* 48 (1997): 486.

[36] Eusebius, *Chronicle* Preface – Harnack Nr. 40; Eusebius, *HE* 6.19.1-9 – Harnack Nr. 39.

[37] Eusebius, *PE* 1.2.1-5 – Harnack Nr. 1; *PE* 1.9.20-1 – Harnack Nr. 41; *PE* 5.1.9 – Harnack Nr. 80; *PE* 1.10.44 – P. Nautin, 'Trois autres fragments du livre de Porphyre *Contre les Chrétiens*', *Revue Biblique* 57 (1950): 409-16; *DE* 1.1.12-15 – Harnack Nr. 73; *DE* 3.5.95 – Harnack Nr. 7; *DE* 6.18.11.1 – Harnack Nr. 47.

or both?[38] Their way of life seems like neither, and sounds especially new, in addition to being impious and divorced from traditional religion. It is even just to punish those, who refuse to placate the gods and therefore endanger the safety of the community for Jewish myths. The pagans also accuse Christianity of being an irrational religion based on mere belief, a religion that deserted the old laws of the Jews.

Where Porphyry is clearly identified, we learn that he was very sceptical about the stories reported in the Gospels. He said that the evangelists falsified the record of what Jesus actually did, while providing no evidence for their claims. Their writings are obviously full of lies, for Jesus never performed any miracle. The disciples thus failed to report honestly the actions of their master, a major form of disrespect.[39] As for the evangelists, they are unable to provide rigorous arguments for what they claim. According to Porphyry, 'how could they [the Christians] not justifiably agree that these people [the evangelists] have made themselves free from all self-interest and lying, and furthermore admit that they have provided clear and transparent proofs of a truthloving disposition?'[40] It follows that Porphyry taxes them with lies and blasphemies, and accuses them of being the enemies of truth itself, and mere sophists. 'Made themselves free from all self-interest and lying', is not just heavy irony; Porphyry means that Christians would have to say this about the evangelists. The followers of Christ falsified the words of their master to their own satisfaction, and Porphyry even went as far as questioning whether they also lied about the sufferings of Jesus.[41]

Eusebius accounts for a few points that Porphyry made in relation to the Old Testament. In the third book of the work composed against the Christians, we know from Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History*, Porphyry especially criticized Origen among others.[42] The Christian apologist, however, became an apostate from these teachings, and made use of the allegorical method of interpretation, that he borrowed from the Greeks, in order to find deeper meanings in the crude narratives of the Jewish myths. And in so doing, he had Scripture say things that were very inconsistent with the original content of Scripture. Therefore, 'Origen,

[38] Fideism is a doctrine which concedes to a revelation an access to truth that is considered as superior to that of reason.

[39] Eusebius, *DE* 3.5.1. Note that this passage is not in Harnack or in any other collection, and is a personal addition.

[40] Eusebius, *DE* 3.5.95.

[41] Eusebius, *DE* 3.5.95.

[42] See J.G. Cook, 'Porphyry's Attempted Demolition of Christian Allegory', *The International Journal of the Platonic Tradition* 2 (2008): 1-27, on Porphyry and the allegorical method used by Christians.

who was educated a Hellene among Hellenes, fell disastrously into barbarian temerity. He prostituted himself and his intellectual capabilities, living illegally as a Christian, but as far as his opinions about reality and the divine were concerned, he was behaving like a Greek and subjecting what belonged to the Greeks to despicable story-telling.'[43]

In the preface to Eusebius' *Chronicle*, translated into Latin by Jerome, Eusebius says that Porphyry dated Moses to 850 years before the Trojan War. In *Evangelical Preparation*, Eusebius wishing to promote the antiquity of Moses, says that Porphyry established, in the fourth book that he wrote 'against us' the Christians (καθ' ἡμῶν), the validity of Jewish sources; in this passage, he does name Porphyry. On history, Sanchuniathon of Beirut 'was inquiring into the truest things of the Jews' (i.e. their history), according to the philosopher. He was thus the most reliable historian of the Jews.[44] This Porphyry establishes by using the writings of Philon of Byblos, which discuss the ancient religion of the Phoenicians, and which are, in turn, based on Sanchuniathon's Phoenician chronicle. The latter lived under Semiramis, queen of Assyria, and had access to the Phoenician records of Hierambalus, priest of the god IEUO. According to A. Meredith, Porphyry wished to demonstrate that the Jewish religion was derived from the Phoenician one, and was therefore not older, hence the resemblance in name to the Jewish god YHWH.[45] Crafer assumes that after having dealt with interpretations of the Old Testament interpretations in his third book, Porphyry turned to the history of the Jews in his fourth book.[46] He may thus have compared Sanchuniathon's history with the Old Testament in order to show all the inconsistencies between the two accounts, since Eusebius says that Porphyry condemned the Christians, the Jews, and their prophets altogether.[47] This argument is further enhanced by a reference, in Eusebius's *Chronicle* (Nr. 40), to a passage from Porphyry's book 4, in which Moses and

[43] Eusebius, *HE*, 6.19.7 – Harnack Nr. 39. '... Ὠριγένης δὲ Ἕλλην ἐν Ἕλλησιν παιδευθεὶς λόγοις, πρὸς τὸ βάρβαρον ἐξώκειλεν τόλμημα· ᾧ δὴ φέρων αὐτόν τε καὶ τὴν ἐν τοῖς λόγοις ἕξιν ἐκαπήλευσεν, κατὰ μὲν τὸν βίον Χριστιανῶς ζῶν καὶ παρανόμως, κατὰ δὲ τὰς μὲν τὸν βίον Χριστιανῶς ζῶν καὶ παρανόμως, κατὰ δὲ τὰς περὶ τῶν πραγμάτων καὶ τοῦ θείου δόξας ἑλληνίζων τε καὶ τὰ Ἑλλήνων τοῖς ὀθνείοις ὑποβαλλόμενος μύθοις' (LCL 265: 54-60).

[44] See Nr. 41. This passage was also quoted by Theodoret (Nr. 38); see T.W. Crafer, 'The Work of Porphyry against the Christians, and its Reconstruction', *JThS* n.s. 15 (1914): 486 on this; see A. Benoît, 'Contra Christianos', 265, who lists all the quoted anti-Christian books.

[45] A. Meredith, 'Porphyry and Julian', 1132; see also Wilken, *Christians*, 137, who says that Porphyry's aim was to show that Judaism was not older than other religions.

[46] Crafer, 'The Work of Porphyry', 486.

[47] Crafer, 'The Work of Porphyry', 487.

Semiramis are used for dating purposes. In this passage, Porphyry argued that Semiramis 'lived 700 years after Moses and 150 before Inachus'.[48] which allows him to date Moses to 850 years before the Trojan war.[49] Crafer concludes that, 'Porphyry had made an elaborate computation and comparison of dates, and had drawn conclusions with regard to the place of the Jews in the world's history which had to be seriously considered.'[50] We may thus deduce that Porphyry, in his fourth book, established the chronology related to Moses, and, in order to prove his points, used what he considered to be the best of all sources on Jewish history (according to the passage, Sanchuniathon was from Beirut, but used Jewish information), and his credibility was based, according to Porphyry, on his antiquity and veracity, following his usual way of thinking. Dating Moses was most probably meant to establish the credibility of the history of Moses as found in the Old Testament, so that Porphyry could show that Moses – and Judaism – was not as ancient as the Christians claim.

When Eusebius demonstrates how Christ was announced in the OT, he makes mention of a passage which is more complete in Jerome's *Commentary on Daniel*, namely that the prophecy of Daniel regarding the uprooted little horn refers to Antiochus Epiphanes, not to Christ.[51] Eusebius is commenting on Zechariah 16, 1-10, in which it is said that the Hebrew race will experience the destruction of Jerusalem and captivity at the hands of the Gentiles. According to Eusebius, Porphyry attributed those events to the persecution of the Jews under Antiochus Epiphanes IV. We know from Jerome that Porphyry based his critique of the Book of Daniel on his dating of the text to the years 165-64 B.C., i.e. to Antiochus Epiphanes' reign. According to Porphyry, the sacred text is a mere forgery, written in different languages – he identified wordplays typical of Greek – by many anonymous writers to support the morale of the Jews during the persecution, and Antiochus is depicted metaphorically as the persecutor of the one that Christians identified with Christ.[52] The Book of Daniel is therefore not prophetic, as it tells the past rather than the future. Before Eusebius, then, Porphyry had matched the biblical story with history, but with different results. Eusebius certainly refers here to the well-known interpretation that Porphyry had made of this passage, but without the information provided by Jerome, readers

[48] Eusebius, *Chronicle* Preface: '... post Moysen Semiramin fuisse adfirmat ... .'

[49] Meredith, 'Porphyry and Julian', 1131.

[50] Crafer, 'The Work of Porphyry', 487. He also points out that Theodoret made similar allusions to *Against the Christians*' fourth book, and that this confirms, in his view, his thesis about Porphyry making an argument on the Jews and the Old Testament.

[51] Eusebius, *DE* 6.18.11.1 – Harnack Nr. 47.

[52] Jerome, *Commentary on Daniel* Prologue.

would be tempted to think that if Eusebius referred to Porphyry in this passage, then Porphyry dated Zechariah, rather than Daniel, to the period of Antiochus Epiphanes. Porphyry might in fact have used his dating of Daniel to interpret this passage of Zechariah and without the context the passage alone taken out of the *Proof of the Gospel* is meaningless. It is very daunting to extrapolate this thought to any other fragment that we have from one source only, without being able to compare different authors. In this case, Jerome paraphrased Porphyry extensively, because he wanted to promote his thesis that Daniel was referring here to the second parousia, when the Son of Man will come back at the end of times to fight the Antichrist.[53] This interpretation is not in line with Eusebius, who had answered Porphyry at length in his lost *Against Porphyry*, and therefore Jerome felt the need to answer Porphyry on that specific matter.

The Harnack collection can thus allow for these conclusions. But how can the passages selected by Harnack be reconciled with the work in which they belong, namely Eusebius' *corpus*? In other words, what sort of knowledge can we acquire on the content of Porphyry's thought by reading Eusebius?

Harnack's collection cannot allow for an overview of Porphyry's books against the Christians, because it does not fully recognize that Eusebius' own concerns shape his selection from Porphyry. One of the main preoccupations of Eusebius was to demonstrate that Christianity had a long, established tradition, and therefore was not a new religion.[54] This aspect is very present in his *Ecclesiastical History*, a work devoted to the History of the Christians as a nation. The *Ecclesiastical History* is based on the material gathered for the *Chronicle*.[55] As H. Drake puts it, Eusebius argues in these two books that the Roman peace is part of God's plan for the spread of Christianity.[56] The Great Persecution is therefore not a good sign of the fulfilment of the will of God. As for the *Evangelical Preparation* and the *Proof of the Gospel*, they are both part of one single work, aiming at answering the adversaries of the Christians – both Jewish and Greek – and written in a time of major change in the religious politics of the Roman empire. Both the *PE* and the *DE* were designed, as Eusebius puts it, to explain what Christianity is to those who do not know about it, and who would be tempted to listen to the detractors of the Christians. According to Kofsky, Eusebius would have completed the writing of those works between 312

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53 Jerome, *Commentary on Daniel* 11.21 – Harnack Nr. 43m and n.

54 Eusebius's *Ecclesiastical History* is devoted to showing just that.

55 Burgess, 'The Dates and Editions of Eusebius', 482-3.

56 H. Drake, *Constantine and the Bishops: The Politics of Intolerance* (Baltimore: 2000), 363.

and 324, therefore well after *HE*.[57] Eusebius sets as his first step an explanation of what the Gospels are.[58] He thus seeks to establish that the events accounted for in the Gospels had been predicted long before taking place, namely during the time of the Hebrews. If we recall Eusebius' concept of the world as presented in the *Ecclesiastical History*, the Ancient Hebrews were the ancestors of the Christians, and were the true worshippers of the Son of God, although not yet ready to receive the Word of God. The *Evangelical Preparation* is thus meant to answer any question that a pagan or a Jew might have regarding Christianity, and, in turn, to prepare someone to receive the demonstration, i.e. higher teachings.[59] We shall not forget that the attacks on fideism and Christianity in general had led to a cruel form of punishment, namely the Great Persecution. Eusebius did certainly have in mind Porphyry on the punishment that Christians deserve for denying the gods when he wrote his Preface to the *Evangelical Preparation*.

In the introduction to his *Proof of the Gospel*, Eusebius makes a passing comment most probably referring to Porphyry and other Greeks, whom he says he has answered in the *Evangelical preparation*. While he is summarizing the arguments developed in *Evangelical preparation*, as well as the purpose of the work, he ironically says that:

> ... Together it [his book] is demonstrating the divine quality of the truth according to us and its freedom from falsehood, and simultaneously also it is even gagging the tongues of those making false accusations through our logical proof, which our malicious prosecutors insist we have no part of at all, pounding away very well day after day as hard as they can on their slanderous accusations against us. Because they say that we cannot at all provide anything by way of proof. ... [60]

He then refers to the Greek opponents, who condemn Christian followers for their lack of ability to think about their religion and the teachings they receive.

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[57] Kofsky, *Eusebius*, 74.

[58] Eusebius, *PE* 1.2; see also Kofsky, *Eusebius*, chapter 3, on *PE* and *DE*, and Johnson, *Ethnicity*, on *PE*.

[59] Eusebius, *PE* 1.1.12.

[60] Eusebius, *DE* 1.1.12. 'ἁρμόσειε δ' ἂν καὶ παισὶν Ἑλλήνων, εἰ εὐγνωμονοῖεν, διὰ τῆς παραδόξου τῶν μελλόντων προγνώσεως τῆς τε τῶν πραγμάτων κατὰ τὰς προρρήσεις ἐκβάσεως, ὁμοῦ μὲν τὸ ἔνθεον καὶ ἀψευδὲς τῆς καθ' ἡμᾶς ἀληθείας ἐπιδεικνυμένη, ὁμοῦ δὲ καὶ τὰς τῶν ψευδηγόρων γλώττας ἐπιστομίζουσα διὰ τῆς λογικωτέρας ἀποδείξεως, ἧς οὐδαμῶς ἡμῖν οἱ συκοφάνται μετεῖναι διατείνονται, εὖ μάλα ὁσημέραι ταῖς καθ' ἡμῶν φάνται μετεῖναι διατείνονται, εὖ μάλα ὁσημέραι ταῖς καθ' ἡμῶν διαβολαῖς κατὰ κράτος ἐπεντριβόμενοι. οὐδὲν γοῦν ἡμᾶς δύνασθαί φασι δι' ἀποδείξεως παρέχειν, πίστει δὲ μόνῃ προσέχειν ἀξιοῦν τοὺς ἡμῖν προσιόντας' (ed. Heikel).

While the passage sounds very much like an indirect quotation of Porphyry's words, it is obvious that the context alone is responsible for its occurrence in the text. Eusebius is thus more concerned with being ironic than with preserving Porphyry's treatise.

As for his point of view on Daniel, that he developed extensively in three lost books, the reference in *Proof of the Gospel* to Porphyry's disturbing thesis on the chronology of Daniel may only allow us to think that it was an obvious criticism to mention. Eusebius says that, 'According to [his own] interpretation, [the books] are fulfilled both literally and also in another sense.'[61] The passage, which follows, may well be a mere summary of the argument that he elaborated in *Against Porphyry*. Without the extensive fragments preserved by Jerome on Porphyry and Daniel, it would be very difficult for us to realize the extent of the importance of the supposed Eusebian fragments to Porphyry's thesis, since according to Jerome, Porphyry wrote all of his twelfth book on the prophecies of Daniel. This allows us to deduce that the dating of Moses may well have been as important, although only a few sentences remain.

Eusebius uses the pagan authors, especially Porphyry, as authorities in arguing his own case.[62] To Porphyry, or the Greeks who attacked Christianity for being irrational, Eusebius answers, in *Evangelical Preparation*, with an overview of the beliefs as found in pagan cosmogony and mythology, as well as Greek philosophy, going back to very ancient times.[63] He thus wishes to demonstrate how the Greeks are mistaken, and how their insults are unfounded. Eusebius' discussion resembles the standard arguments of Porphyry in *On Abstinence*; the Church father provides a list of various ancient religions, which were not polytheistic, citing the oldest traditions as evidence, just as Porphyry cited the oldest traditions to support abstinence from animal food. Eusebius then turns to what he calls the 'polytheistic mistake'. His source for the 'polytheistic mistake' is Sanchuniathon, whose credibility was attested by Porphyry himself, as has been discussed. It is in this context that Porphyry is cited on Sanchuniathon's Jewish history. Eusebius was not interested here in telling us more about the content of *Against the Christians*.

In book 5 of *Evangelical preparation*, Eusebius argues that bad demons were the instigators of all the pagan oracles and so-called prophecies. The world therefore owes the destruction of the demons to the Gospel and to Christ.

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[61] Eusebius, *DE* 6.18.12 – Harnack Nr. 47: 'καθ' ἡμᾶς δὲ ταῦτα καὶ πρὸς λέξιν μὲν ἀποδέδοται, καὶ καθ' ἑτέραν δὲ διάνοιαν'.

[62] Kofsky, *Eusebius*, 253, makes a similar observation.

[63] Eusebius, *PE* 1.6.5.

According to Eusebius, the Greeks themselves acknowledge the disappearance of their oracles since the advent of Christ.[64] This world has become a better place in which to live, free of successive tyrants and of the power of the bad demons.[65] When Porphyry is likely to have been arguing that the city has been sick since men have ceased worshipping the gods, and since Jesus has been adored, Eusebius merely retains what is of interest to his thesis, namely that Porphyry himself witnesses that Jesus is adored. To Eusebius, the best evidence of the superiority of Christ over the gods is the fact that they are unable to triumph over him.[66]

If we look at the *Ecclesiastical History*, Porphyry's anti-Christian treatise is mentioned in the same fashion. Eusebius, who, as part of his History of the Church, wrote the history of the Christian writers, devoted much of his sixth book to Origen. On the topic of Origen's success among the Greek philosophers, and his relation to the classical heritage, which he considered useful but yet dangerous, Eusebius mentions what Porphyry wrote about him. The Neoplatonist criticized the method employed by Origen to decipher Scripture. But according to Eusebius, although Porphyry tried to ruin Origen's reputation as a thinker, he also provided the world with valuable information regarding his vast knowledge of Greek learning, as well as his renown among the Greek elite. As Eusebius put it, Porphyry 'is trying to slander him, but did not realize that he was actually commending him'.[67]

As for the reference to Porphyry's thesis on the origin and significance of the Book of Daniel, Eusebius comments in *Proof of the Gospel* (6.18) on a passage from Zechariah (14.1-10), in which it is announced that from the coming of the Lord onwards, the Jews will suffer calamities at the hands of the Gentiles, and that Jerusalem, especially, will be plundered, and its people forced into captivity. Eusebius reads the passage as referring to Jesus, and he interprets the Gentiles as being the Romans. Matching history to prophecy, he concludes that his interpretation makes perfectly good sense, since 'what the present prophet means by foretelling the second siege of Jerusalem [after its destruction and desolation by the Babylonians] is the one that it underwent at the hands of the Romans, only after its inhabitants had carried out their outrage on our Saviour Jesus Christ. Thus the coming of our Saviour and the events connected therewith

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[64] Eusebius, *PE* 5.2.

[65] Eusebius, *PE* 5.6.

[66] Eusebius, *PE* 5.12.

[67] Eusebius, *HE* 6.19.1-9 – Harnack Nr. 39. 'ὅν κατὰ τὴν νέαν ἡλικίαν ἐνωκέναι φήσας, διαβὰλλειν μὲν πειρᾶται, συνιστῶ δέ ἄρα τὸν ἄνδρα ἐλάνθανεν ... .'

are very clearly shown in this passage ...' .[68] He notes that, indeed, as soon as Jesus came and the Jews mistreated him, we observe that they have suffered under Nero, Titus and Vespasian. Eusebius says he consulted Flavius Josephus, the famous Jewish historian, on this matter.[69] He then mentions that anyone who supposes that this prophecy – announced 500 years ago, he says – was fulfilled at the time of Antiochus Epiphanes, can only be mistaken as regards the rest of the prophecy, for they would be unable to explain the captivity of the Jews, the standing of the Lord on the Mount of Olives, and His (Christ) becoming King of all the earth in that day, and His name encircling all the earth and the desert.[70] Kofsky suggests that one explanation for the writing of a number of refutations to Porphyry is that authors may have felt that Porphyry had not been satisfactorily answered. This would be the case with Eusebius, who wrote a refutation after Methodius did, and of Apollinarius and then Philostorgius, who wrote after Eusebius.[71]

To conclude, Eusebius was concerned with the general ideas expressed in *Against the Christians* to the extent that they interfered with his vision of the Christian community, and threatened the Christians' identity and security. The attacks made by Porphyry destabilized Eusebius' conception of the History of the Christian race, as well as the thesis he elaborated in his *Ecclesiastical History*. The consequences of the attacks circulating in the empire were far too serious to be ignored; after he had finished the first edition of the *Ecclesiastical History*, where Porphyry is barely mentioned, Eusebius decided to educate the Greeks and the Jews about Christian identity, the content of the Old and New Testaments, as well the teachings of Christ, and how Christ participates in a very complex system.

One must not forget, however, that Eusebius' *Against Porphyry* is no longer extant. It is in this book that the Church father might have extensively quoted and paraphrased his enemy. This further explains why he was not concerned about redoing the quotation work in his *Evangelical preparation* and *Proof of the Gospel*, and why the quality of the Eusebian fragments is so limited.

These Eusebian passages were thus preserved according to Eusebius' interests: we may have less fragments on topics other than the ones we have discussed

[68] Eusebius, *DE* 6.18. 'ὁ παρὼν προφήτης θεσπίζει, τὴν μετὰ ταῦτα δευτέραν πολιορκίαν τῆς Ἱερουσαλὴμ σημαίνων, ἣν πέπονθεν ὑπὸ Ῥωμαίων οὐκ ἄλλοτε ἢ μετὰ τὰ κατὰ τοῦ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῖς οἰκήτορσιν αὐτῆς τετολμημένα. ἐναργέστατα τοιγαροῦν καὶ ἐνταῦθα τοῦ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν, τοῦ θεοῦ λόγου ... ' (ed. A. Heikel).

[69] Eusebius, *DE* 6.18.

[70] Eusebius, *DE* 6.18.

[71] Kofsky, *Eusebius*, 71.

above, but that does not mean that Porphyry wrote less extensively about them, rather, it means that Eusebius was less interested in them. This is an aspect which does not stand out from the Harnack collection. Even if we do not have sure parts of *Against the Christians*, we do learn about what kind of ideas would have been preserved at the time, and about the general argument against Christianity contemporary to Eusebius' time. The arguments preserved by Jerome almost a century later, however, are presented very differently, as we will next see.

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Chapter 3
Jerome

Because the Porphyrian material preserved in Jerome is very scattered in his corpus, the contextualization of the fragments against the Christians is most necessary. If the Macarius fragments are discarded, Jerome is, as has been said, the author who preserved the most important part of Harnack's first heading, namely the critique of the evangelists and apostles, as a basis for the critique of Christianity.[1] As previously stated, books 1, 12, 13 and 14 are some of the very few books the Christian authors mentioned by book number. Jerome says that book 1 of *Against the Christians* dealt with the dispute between Peter and Paul.[2] Books 12 and 13 dealt with the *Book of Daniel*.[3] As for book 14, it was concerned with the evangelists' mistakes about the Old Testament.[4] According to Benoît, Harnack's decision to put all the attacks on the New Testament under the first heading testifies to the problem of reconstructing the lost work. Indeed, books 1 and 14 of *Against the Christians* are rather distanced from one another in the series, but Harnack still decided to put them together in his collection, because he thought their entire contents pertained to the NT. This is why, to Benoît, Harnack's plan sounds rather arbitrary, and it would have been more appropriate to classify the fragments according to the Christian authors.[5] As has been previously said, scholars waited until 2005 before anyone fully undertook such a task.[6] For the sake of the present study, however, the Jerome fragments pertaining to the New Testament attacks will be discussed as an entity, since their content is related in themes and concerns. Issues pertaining to the Old Testament fragments will be addressed at the end of this chapter.

Let us first discuss what modern writers have concluded, from Harnack's collection, about Porphyry's critique of the NT. Scholars have tried to reconstruct the content of the attacks on the New Testament. This is why the difference

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1 There is one fragment only from Eusebius, *The Proof of the Gospel* 5.95 – Harnack Nr. 7, and one from the *Lawrentian Codex* (Athos) 184. B 64 saec. X – Harnack Nr. 8.

2 Jerome, *Commentary on Galatians* Prologue – Harnack Nr. 21a.

3 Prologue – Harnack Nr. 43a and 44.

4 Jerome, *From the beginning of Mark* 1.1-12 – Harnack Nr. 9a.

5 Benoît, '*Contra christianos* de Porphyre', 266.

6 Berchman, *Porphyry Against the Christians*.

between the knowledge acquired by historians from the Harnack fragments and the knowledge that can be acquired from a contextualized reading of the Porphyrian fragments needs to be established. It is thus necessary to understand what can be grasped of Porphyry's critique of the New Testament – according to Jerome's testimony – from the existing literature. The literature pertaining to the content of the fragments does not show any major disagreement, and it further shows that everyone relied heavily on Harnack.

The attacks on the heads of the Church, Peter and Paul, will be used as an illustration of what scholars have done with Harnack's fragments, and how his suggested structure is not ideal. Indeed, we know that Jerome said that Porphyry said that Peter and Paul disagreed on basic Christian doctrine, but we still do not know whether this was part of an attack on NT inconsistency, or part of an attack on Peter as chief of the apostles, or anything else. Porphyry claimed that Peter and Paul did not even agree, and that this is exposed in *Galatians*.[7] According to Crafer, Jerome addressed the issue of the disagreement in book 2 of his *Commentary on Galatians* in order to discard the theory that the Cephas mentioned in *Gal.* is not Peter, an argument advanced by Christians to refute a porphyrian critique.[8] Jerome also tells us that Porphyry says that Paul is blaming Peter.[9] According to Wilken, this argument was advanced in order to show that the Apostles, who were authority figures to the Christians, were not reliable.[10] As G. Boys-Stones says in *Post-Hellenistic Philosophy*, non-Christians argued that the great tradition of philosophy was consistent, whereas the New Testament contradicted the Old Testament and Christian teachers contradicted each other.[11] Crafer believes that Gal 1.16 – where it is said that Paul preached among the Gentiles, but did not condescend to 'flesh and blood' – was possibly discussed in detail by Porphyry, although his intentions remain the same, namely to highlight the discord between the two chief apostles.[12] Crafer does not, however, demonstrate his point of view.[13] Porphyry argued that Paul also demonstrated his 'impudence' as he claimed that 'he received a special revelation

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7 Jerome, *Commentary on Galatians* Prologue – Harnack Nr. 21a.

8 Crafer, 'Work of Porphyry against the Christians', 483. See also Labriolle 'Porphyre et le christianisme', 411-14 on Porphyry, Peter and Paul. See also Jerome, *Commentary on Galatians* 2.11 – Harnack Nr. 21c.

9 Jerome, *Commentary on Galatians* 2.11 – Harnack Nr. 21c.

10 Wilken, *Christians*, 146; see also Anastos, 'Porphyry's Attack on the Bible', 429, and Hoffman, *Porphyry's Against the Christians*, 172.

11 G. Boys-Stones, *Post-Hellenistic Philosophy* (Oxford: 2001).

12 Crafer, 'Work of Porphyry against the Christians', 483-4.

13 Crafer, 'Work of Porphyry against the Christians', 484.

from the Lord (Gal. 16), and did not want to share this revelation with "flesh and blood"'.[14] According to Anastos, the passage simply illustrates that Paul was jealous of Peter,[15] and Meredith further pointed out that for Porphyry this meant that Peter was in error.[16] The philosopher also says that Paul did not owe his success to moral or intellectual excellence, but to magic, and in this respect, Apollonius of Tyana and Apuleius did better.[17] Wilken argues that all these various examples were used by Porphyry to show that the Church had never been united.[18] Porphyry further blames Peter for the death of Ananias and Saphira, whom he had executed.[19] Since all these attacks are related to Peter, and since Jerome explicitly says that book 1 was concerned with criticizing Peter, Crafer argued that all of the related attacks on the followers of Christ may have been made at the beginning of the discourses against the Christians.[20]

According to Wilken, Porphyry's criticisms of Christianity had a central concern, namely the reliability of the Christian accounts of the history of Christ.[21] After a minimal examination, it was clear to Porphyry that the Christians had based their claims on falsified accounts and incompetent writers. It is, however, difficult to evaluate the content of books 1 and 14 from numbered fragments only, since these do not indicate the place they actually occupied in the works in which they are extant. As a result, the methodological conditions in which the gathering of *Against the Christians* can be realized need to be established.

As will be shown, the existing fragment collections do not allow us to fully grasp the meaning of the extant fragments; what is missing from these collections is the content of the conversations between Jerome and the Neoplatonist philosopher. Since Jerome's primary purpose was not to write formal refutations of Porphyry's ideas, he can most probably be trusted in his reports of what Porphyry said. If he had written a refutation of Porphyry, however, it would have been very difficult to trust him on what Porphyry argued. Jerome, indeed, is

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14 Wilken, *Christians*, 146.

15 Anastos, 'Porphyry's Attack on the Bible', 429.

16 Meredith, 'Porphyry and Julian against the Christians', 1131.

17 Meredith, 'Porphyry and Julian against the Christians', 1130.

18 Wilken, *Christians*, 146-7. Wilken further says that Porphyry used other examples to demonstrate that there were contradictions and inconsistencies between the disciples, however these pertain to the Macarius fragments, and he thinks we cannot attribute them with certainty to the Neoplatonist; see also Meredith, 'Porphyry and Julian against the Christians', 1131, on the lack of harmony within the early Church.

19 Crafer, 'Work of Porphyry against the Christians', 484; Labriolle, 'Porphyre et le christianisme', 411.

20 Crafer, 'Work of Porphyry against the Christians', 484.

21 Wilken, *Christians*, 147.

not writing *Against Porphyry* and selecting quotations as Origen does in *Against Celsus*; in fact, he either makes a small number of comments *en passant*, or he paraphrases long passages when it suits his argument. This implies, in turn, that Jerome is not interested in transmitting the fifteen books. Nevertheless, Jerome regularly quoted and paraphrased the philosopher, thus conveying to us important points of Porphyry's attacks. These issues will be discussed more fully later in the chapter. The next few pages shall be devoted to methodology, and Jerome in *Daniel* will be discussed more, because it conveys more information on this particular topic.

Porphyry in Jerome

It is Schepens's first step, deconstructing the cover-text, which is of interest here, and it requires an investigation of Jerome and his motives for citing Porphyry. Although Porphyry was a philosopher, it is clear, as will be shown, from the remaining fragments that Porphyry's anti-Christian discourses constituted a historical and philological analysis of the Bible. Porphyry is remembered as a philosopher, because his introduction to Aristotle's *Categories* was so much used, and because of his editorial work on Plotinus, but in fact he was a polymath who wrote on literary topics and enjoyed critique of texts. Most et al. grouped their essays on fragments into three different categories: literary, historical, and finally philosophical, philological and medical. Porphyry's lost treatise on Christianity does not exactly fit in any of these categories. Schepens's method, which is concerned with reconstructing lost histories, will thus be applied to a different literary genre to see whether it can add to the previous fragment collections, and to our knowledge of *Against the Christians*.

It should first be remembered that Jerome cites or paraphrases Porphyry for a defensive purpose. Furthermore, if we are to take Jerome at his word in the prologue to his *Commentary on Daniel*, his attack on the Neoplatonist philosopher is not the principal aim of his work. He tells us that, '... Because in truth it is not proposed by us to answer the calumnies of an adversary, which demand a long discourse, but to discuss what was said by the prophet to our people, that is to Christians, I declare in my preface that none of the prophets spoke so openly about Christ.'[22] We owe to Jerome's *Commentary on Daniel* the most extensive fragments of the discourses against the Christians. Jerome is our

[22] Jerome, *Commentary on Daniel* Prologue – Harnack Nr. 43a. 'Verum quia nobis propositum est non aduersarii calumniis respondere, quae longo sermone indigent, sed ea

only remaining source for book 12, since the other works written in response to Porphyry are lost. Fragments from other works of Jerome are so scattered that Jerome's statement may be applied as a general rule in regard to his attitude toward Porphyry. Porphyry's attacks on the *Book of Daniel* came in book 12 of the discourses, which he wrote to deny Christian claims that Daniel was a prophet who had accurately predicted the advent of Christ. This critique especially disturbed the early Church fathers, Jerome among them, for the first and second comings of Christ as prophesied in *Daniel* are central to Christianity. It explains why Jerome devoted so much attention to the philosopher's criticisms. Jerome says in the prologue to his *Commentary on Daniel* that Apollinarius, Eusebius, and Methodius have already answered the philosopher on Daniel.[23] There is thus no need for him to fully perform such a task. Who is Porphyry anyway, other than a 'blasphemous, ignorant, and impious' philosopher?[24] Jerome will refer to Porphyry's work when he treats specific topics only. Furthermore, in the prologue to his *Commentary on Daniel*, Jerome states very clearly for his readers that, 'Whenever the opportunity offers in the cause of this work, (he) shall try to reply briefly to (Porphyry's) allegations and to counter with a simple explanation the arts of philosophy, or rather the worldly malice with which he (Porphyry) tries to undermine truth and to remove clear light from the eyes with deceptions.'[25] But that does suggest that Jerome was writing a commentary on Daniel, not an 'Answer to Porphyry', and answering Porphyry was only a secondary concern.

As far as the fragments' 'cover-text' is concerned, Jerome's assertion creates major methodological problems. First, the fragments will represent only the threatening aspect of the treatise to which Jerome could not help alluding. The

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quae a propheta dicta sunt nostris disserere, id est Christianis, illud in praefatione commoneo, nullum prophetarum tam aperte dixisse de Christo' (CCL 75A: 772).

[23] Jerome, *Commentary on Daniel* Prologue – Harnack Nr. 43a.

[24] Jerome, *Commentary on Galatians* Prologue – Harnack Nr. 21a. Cited chapter 1 n.23; Jerome, *Commentary on Galatians* 1.2.11-13 – Harnack Nr. 21c. '... Porphyrio blasphemanti ... ' (PL 26: 366); *Abridged commentary on the psalms* 77 – Harnack Nr. 10. 'Inpius ille Porphyrius proponit aduersum nos ... ' (CCL 78: 66). Jerome stated, however, in the prologue to his *Commentary on Galatians*, that the critiques of the debate between Peter and Paul would deserve a proper answer on his part, 'in alio', i.e. in another book, which, as far as we know he never wrote.

[25] Jerome, *Commentary on Daniel* Prologue – Harnack Nr. 43a. 'Et tamen sicubi se occasio in explanatione eiusdem uoluminis dederit, calumniae illius strictim respondere conabor, et philosophiae artibus, immo malitiae saeculari, per quam subuertere nititur ueritatem, et quibusdam praestigiis clarum oculorum lumen auferre, explanatione simplici contraire' (CCL 75A: 772).

fragments are thus merely a metonymy for Porphyry's discourses as Jerome saw them.[26] Second, Jerome's own interests were mainly textual.[27] Following the steps of the apologist Origen, he studied Scripture by comparing all the versions of the sacred texts, and himself translated some of the Bible into Latin in his Vulgate, thus being fully aware of the problems linked to translation and edition.[28] So he may have focused on Porphyry's critique of texts and disregarded other aspects of his argument. Third, he may have read Christian refutations of Porphyry rather than the full text of Porphyry. The full text may not have been available, and according to his own testimony, Jerome once had a dream, ca. 374, in which he is told by a divine judge: 'You are lying: you are a Ciceronian, not a Christian.'[29] Afterwards, Jerome swore to himself that he would never possess or read any secular literature.[30] Although the importance of this dream for understanding Jerome's scholarship can be challenged,[31] it is most revealing in terms of the complexity of using Jerome as a source for Porphyry. E. Plumer reminds us that when Jerome wrote his *Commentary on Galatians*, he mentioned this dream in the preface to book 3. At that time, 15 years have passed since he presumably opened a secular book.[32] While Jerome's regular allusions to the pagan world give reason to doubt this, he might well have used secondary material to read Porphyry – for instance, the lost works of Apollinarius, Methodius, and Eusebius – instead of Porphyry himself.[33] Jerome himself says that anyone who

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[26] H.U. Gumbrecht, 'Eat your Fragment! About Imagination and the Restitution of Texts', in *Collecting Fragments*, 319.

[27] E. Plumer, *Augustine's Commentary on Galatians* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2003), 38.

[28] See J.N.D. Kelly, *Jerome: his life, writings, and controversies* (London: 1975), for a lengthy discussion of Jerome's writings.

[29] Jerome, *Letter* 22.30 *to Eustochium.* 'Mentiris, ait, Ciceronianus es, non Christianus', see also Kelly, 'Jerome', 41-4 and Plumer, *Augustine's Commentary on Galatians*, 40.

[30] Jerome, *Letter* 22.30 *to Eustochium*. 'Domine, si umquam habuero codices saeculares, si legero, te negavi', in *Saint Jérôme, Lettres*, ed. and trans. J. Labourt, vol. 1, Collection Budé (Paris: Belles Lettres, 1949), 145.

[31] And Jerome himself tells Rufinus not to take his dream too seriously (*Against Rufinus* 1.31).

[32] Jerome, *Commentary on Galatians* 1. 2.1-2; see Plumer, *Augustine's Commentary on Galatians*, 40. '(Jerome) reminds Paula and Eustochium that he has not read Cicero, Virgil, or any pagan writer for more than fifteen years' (PL 26: 358).

[33] According to Harnack, 'Porphyrius, *Gegen die Christen*', 7, Jerome relied on these responses. 'Nachweisbar selbst gesehen hat das Werk des Porphyrius ... sonst niemand, ja es ist sehr warhscheinlich, dass auch Hieronymus es nicht selbst in Händen gehabt hat: denn so häufig, wenn er es zitiert, nennt er zugleich die Gegenschriften des Methodius, Eusebius und Apolinarius, dass der Verdacht, sie seien seine einzigen Gewährsmänner für den Inhalt des

would like to read those refutations (concerning the Antichrist) could do so.[34] Furthermore, if we are to believe Jerome's statement in his commentary on *Galatians*, the references to Porphyry were made from memory, which, in turn, explains why most of them are so scattered. Jerome also, however, quotes directly from Porphyry, but in a very inconsistent fashion, which allows us to deduce that he may have had other Christians' responses in front of him while writing. The extent to which we can rely on Jerome is not obvious. It is thus very important to distinguish between the secondary elaboration made by Jerome on Porphyry's ideas and these ideas, i.e. to contextualize the fragments.

Added to these complications is the fact that Jerome, when he uses Porphyry, is translating his words from Greek into Latin. He himself says, in a letter to Pammachius, that since his youth he has been translating ideas rather than words (*ep*. 57.6). He explains that a translator has to be an interpreter, and should never translate a text word for word, but focus on rendering its meaning in another language. What is left of Porphyry in Jerome has therefore been altered by both the translation process and by his intentions.

There is also the question of how important Porphyry's treatise was to Jerome. Jerome betrays his interest in a few points he may have considered major to his argument. The greatest amount of existing fragments was excerpted from book 11 of his *Commentary on Daniel*. Passages from Porphyry's book 12 on Daniel[35] survive extensively to the point where the Church father and the philosopher disagree on the prophecy about the fourth beast's little horn, which Jerome ascribed to the Antichrist, while Porphyry claims it was meant to represent Antiochus Epiphanes IV. Jerome says that he will answer adversaries point by point: 'Sequamur igitur expositionis ordinem et iuxta utramque explanationem, quid aduersariis, quid nostris uideatur, breuiter annotemus. 'Stabit' inquiunt' in loco Seleuci, frater eius' (Dan. 11.24 – Harnack Nr. 43p). He later states that he has been exposing Porphyry's argument, thus providing a concrete identity for

Werkes, nicht unterdrückt werden kann'; R. Courtray, *Porphète des temps derniers: Jérôme commente Daniel* (Paris: 2009), 150, makes a similar argument – he thinks that Eusebius was particularly used by Jerome; but according to Beatrice, 'Traité de Porphyre contre les chrétiens', 120, the Arian Philostorgius answered Porphyry in 420, which means that the treatise was possibly still circulating in the early fifth century. Beatrice also says that Libanius, *Oration* 18 – – cited by Socrates, *Church History* 3.23 – refers to Porphyry when he writes 'the old Tyrian', and that John Chrysostom *De S. Babyla* 11 wrote ca. 380 that the pagan writings against the Christians, if still extant, are to be found in Christian writings; see also Bidez (1913), 130; see Jerome, *Commentary on Daniel* Prologue – Harnack Nr. 43a, on the responses of Eusebius, Apollinarius and Methodius.

[34] Jerome, *Commentary on Daniel* 5.13.

[35] See Jerome, *Commentary on Daniel* Prologue on this.

those 'adversaries', and, more significantly, that he has been summarizing: 'Haec, Porphyrius sequens Sutorium sermone laciniosissimo prosecutus est, quae nos breui compendio diximus' (Dan. 11.24 – Harnack Nr. 43p), which further points to the fact that it is impossible to tell whether or not Jerome is either paraphrasing or quoting Porphyry elsewhere in the work.[36]

Jerome's style may thus merely vary according to the text he is composing, or to his argument. If Inowlocki's line of argument is to be followed, then Jerome may be both citing the text and modifying it by making semantical, grammatical, or lexical changes; he does not recognize Porphyry as an authority, for he was a famous anti-Christian, and therefore does not worry about respecting his thoughts, and summarizes at his own convenience (and discretion).

The 'cover-text' will now be 'deconstructed' by exploring why and when Jerome refers to Porphyry. The key question is how and why Jerome cited or responded to Porphyry. Attention will be given to the fragments of the discourses *Against the Christians* which are extant in various letters and commentaries of Jerome, namely his commentaries on Matthew, on Joel, on Isaiah, on Mark, on Daniel, on the psalms, and more importantly on Galatians, and his letters to Pammachus, Augustine and Demetrias. Jerome's fragments are a case study of how new methods might change our interpretation of Porphyry. Porphyry's ideas on the evangelists and the apostles are inscribed in a very large debate, which incorporates not only Porphyry the philosopher, but also Jerome's understanding of how to read Scripture, as well as his contemporary opponents.[37]

The New Testament fragments

Porphyry's arguments from Books 1 and 14 will first be presented. The fragments as gathered by Harnack may allow us to get a general sense of the philosopher's intent. By looking first at the content of those fragments alone, it appears that three main groups are targeted by Porphyry, namely the apostles and disciples of Christ, the evangelists, and the heads of the Church, Peter and Paul. First, Porphyry has special charges against the apostles, namely they were

[36] According to A. Cameron, 'The Date of Porphyry's Κατα Χριστιανων', *Classical Quarterly* 18 (1967), 382. 'Callinicus Sutorius, (is) a sophist and historian from Petra who taught with great success in Athens in the late third century.'

[37] See also Cook, *Interpretation of the New Testament*, who comments on all the New Testament fragments and their context in Porphyry's philosophical works. He also includes Jerome's answers, but has less discussion of the cover-text than this study proposes to do.

poor wretches from the countryside,[38] who stupidly followed Christ 'as if they had irrationally followed someone or other who called them'.[39] They boasted about their quite ordinary miracles, when there was nothing so extraordinary about performing magical art, for Apuleius and Apollonius were also skilled in that discipline: Jerome concedes that many people had successfully done magic – in order to attract the money of rich women whom they duped.[40] The apostles, according to Porphyry, used the antiquity of Scripture as a source of authority and abused by their teachings 'the simplicity and ignorance of the listeners'.[41] Porphyry also mocks the lack of faith of the apostles, as they proved unable to perform the miracles ordered by Jesus – like moving mountains, for instance.[42] As for the disciples, they irrationally interpret signs, taking for granted that an easily predicted solar eclipse is directly linked to the Resurrection.[43]

Porphyry does not spare the evangelists. As mentioned above, Jerome says that he criticized their mistakes in his book 14, presumably of the discourses against the Christians.[44] They are guilty of 'falsity', according to Porphyry, in that they are not able to cite properly the Bible on which they rely.[45] In one instance,

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[38] Jerome, *Abridged commentary on the psalms* 81 – Harnack Nr. 4. 'Homines rusticani et pauperes … ' (CCL 78: 89).

[39] Jerome, *Commentary on Matthew* 9.9 – Harnack Nr. 6. 'Arguit in hoc loco Porphyrius et Iulianus Augustus uel stultitiam eorum qui statim secuti sunt Salutorem, quasi inrationabiliter quemlibet uocantem hominem sint secuti … ' (SC 242: 170).

[40] Jerome, *Abridged commentary on the psalms* 81 – Harnack Nr. 4. 'Homines rusticani et pauperes, quoniam nihil habebant, magicis artibus operati sunt quaedam signa. Non est autem grande facere signa. Nam fecere signa in Aegypto magi contra Moysen. Fecit et Apollonius, fecit et Apuleius. Infiniti signa fecerunt. Concedo tibi, Porphyri, magicis artibus signa fecerunt, ut divitias acciperent a divitibus mulierculis, quas induxerant: hoc enim tu dicis' (CCL 78: 89).

[41] Jerome, *Commentary on Joel* 2.28 – Harnack Nr. 5. 'Ut quidquid utile audientibus esse cernebant, et non repugnare praesentibus, de alterius temporis testimoniis roborarent, non quod abuterentur audientium simplicitate et imperitia, ut impius calumniatur Porphyrius' (PL 25: 975).

[42] Jerome, *Commentary on Matthew* 21.21 – Harnack Nr. 3. 'Latrant contra nos gentilium canes in suis uoluminibus quos ad impietatis propriae memoriam reliquerunt, adserentes apostolos non habuisse fidem quia montes transferre non potuerint' (SC 259: 122).

[43] Jerome, *Commentary on Matthew* 27.45 – Harnack Nr. 14.

[44] Jerome, *On the beginning of Mark* 1.1-2 – Harnack Nr. 9. 'Locum istum impius ille Porphyrius, qui adversum nos conscripsit et multis voluminibus rabiem suam evomuit, in XIV volumine disputat et dicit: 'Evangelistae tam imperiti fuerant hominess … '.

[45] Jerome, *Letter* 57.9 *to Pammachius* – Harnack Nr. 2. 'Haec replico, non ut evangelistas arguam falsitatis – hoc quippe impiorum est, Celsi, Porphyrii, Iuliani … ' (Budé 3: 67).

Mark cites Isaiah only and forgets Malachi,[46] and Matthew confuses Isaiah and Asaph,[47] and forgets one generation in the Book of Daniel.[48]

As for the influential Peter and Paul, on whom Jerome preserved the most fragments, Porphyry highlights their dispute in his first book – as Jerome says in his *Commentary on Galatians*[49] – stating that Peter was wrong, creating great disturbances within the Church,[50] and that Paul, led by jealousy,[51] had boldly refuted him, while they both pretended to agree,[52] thus actually making the same mistake. Furthermore, Paul proclaimed himself apostle,[53] refused to share

[46] Jerome, *On the beginning of Mark* 1.1-12 – Harnack Nr. 9. Jerome, quoting directly from Porphyry: 'Evangelistae tam imperiti fuerunt homines, non solum in saecularibus, sed etiam in scriptures divinis, ut testimonium, quod alibi scriptum est, de alio ponerent propheta' (CCL 78: 452). Jerome, *Commentary on Matthew* 3.3 – Harnack Nr. 9. 'Porphyrius istum locum Marci evangelistae principio comparat in quo scriptum est ... Cum enim testimonium de Malachia Esaiaque contextum putemus adsumptum' (SC 242: 90).

[47] Jerome, *Abridged commentary on the psalms* 77 – Harnack Nr. 10. 'Aperiam in parabola os meum ... '. Hoc Esaias non loquitur, sed Asaph. Denique et inpius ille Porphyrius proponit aduersum nos hoc ipsum, et dicit: 'Euangelista uester Matthaeus tam inperitus fuit, ut diceret, quod scriptum est in Esaia propheta, Aperiam in parabola os meum ... ' (CCL 78: 66).

[48] Jerome, *Commentary on Daniel* 1.1.1 – Harnack Nr. 11. 'Et ob hanc causam in euangelio secundum Matthaeum una uidetur desse generatio (Matth. 1.11.12), quia secunda tesseriscedecas in Ioachim desinit filium Iosiae et tertia incipit a Ioiachin filio Ioachim; quod ignorans Porphyrius, calumniam struit ecclesiae, suam ostendens imperitiam, dum evangelistae Matthaei arguere nititur falsitatem' (CCL 75A: 777).

[49] Jerome, *Commentary on Galatians* Prologue – Harnack Nr. 21a. Cited n. 25.

[50] Jerome, *Commentary on Galatians* 3.5.10 – Harnack Nr. 22. 'Sed nec Paulus tam procaci maledicto de Ecclesiae principe loqueretur, nec Petrus dignus qui conturbatae Ecclesiae reus fieret' (PL 26: 430-1).

[51] Jerome, *Letter* 112.6 and 11 *to Augustine* – Harnack Nr. 21b. 'Immo exarsisse Paulum inuidia uirtutum Petri ... ' (Budé 6: 23).

[52] See Jerome, *Commentary on Galatians* 1.2.11 – Harnack Nr. 21c. 'Maxime cum Lucas scriptor historiae, nullam hujus dissensionis faciat mentionem; nec dicat umquam Petrum Antiochiae fuisse cum Paulo, et locum dari Porphyrio blasphemanti; si autem Petrus errasse, aut Paulus procaciter apostolorum principem confutasse credatur' (PL 26: 358); Jerome, *Commentary on Isaiah* 14.26 – Harnack Nr. 21d. 'Qui dispensatoriam inter Petrum et Paulum contentionem (Gal 2) vere dicunt iurgium fuisse atque certamen, ut blasphemanti Porphyrio satisfaciant ... '. Reference follows *Commentaires de Jérôme sur le prophète Isaïe*, R. Gryson, C. Gabriel et al. (eds.), 4 vols. (Freiburg: Verlag Herder Freiburg, 1998); Jerome, *Commentary on Galatians* 3.5.10 – Harnack Nr. 22. 'Occulte, inquiunt, Petrum lacerat, cui supra in faciem restitisse se scribit, quod non recto pede incesserit ad Evangelii veritatem. Sed nec Paulus tam procaci maledicto de Ecclesiae principe loqueretur (Galat 2), nec Petrus dignus qui conturbatae Ecclesiae reus fieret' (PL 26: 430-1).

[53] Jerome, *Commentary on Galatians* 1.1.1 – Harnack Nr. 19. 'Potest autem et oblique in Petrum et in caeteros dictum accipi, quod non ab apostolis ei sit traditum Evangelium.'

his revelation with the people,[54] and his teachings are violent, in comparison with those of Christ.[55] Peter proved to be even more violent when he sentenced to death two people who had not gotten rid of all their money.[56]

Harnack's collection provides us only with these hints, which require either a very good knowledge of the subjects criticized by Porphyry – e.g. the debate between Peter and Paul as found in the epistle to the Galatians and the Acts of the Apostles – or a very good knowledge of Jerome's discussion of these topics. Going back to the 'cover-text' allows us to get a very different sense of the fragments and of the way they are inserted in a debate with Jerome, who has his own views on the biblical texts.

When it comes to answering Porphyry's charges against the evangelists, Jerome makes the point that the errors are not due to the evangelists but to translation issues. In the paragraphs preceding Porphyry's charge, in the *Letter* 57 to Pammachius, Jerome exposes the textual discrepancies between the Hebrew text, the Septuagint, the Vulgate, and the evangelists. He gives precise examples, and attributes the differences to the problem of translation. For instance, Jerome mentions a text from Zachariah that the evangelist John cites: 'they will look at the one they pierced'.[57] The Septuagint says rather: 'and they will look at me, the subject of their insults'.[58] The Latin versions translated: 'and they will look at me, the subject of their games'.[59] Jerome discusses many other discrepancies, and these examples could well mean that Porphyry discussed exactly these issues, that is, Porphyry may have located and discussed the different versions of the OT text. Without the context of the discussion, the 'falsities' noted by Porphyry remain unidentified. This highlights a major problem of the Harnack collection, e.g. his fragment 2 on the evangelists who falsified the Old Testament writings is impossible to understand without the context.[60] As for Matthew, charged with having forgotten one generation of the Book of Daniel, Jerome explains

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[54] Jerome, *Commentary on Galatians* 1.1.16 – Harnack Nr. 20. 'Plerosque de apostolis hoc (*Continuo non acquievi carni et sanguini.* Sive ut in Graeco melius habet: *Non contuli cum carne et sanguine.)* dictum arbitrari. Nam et Porphyrius objicit, quod post revelationem Christi non fuerit dignatus ire ad homines, et cum eis conferre sermonem: ne post doctrinam videlicet Dei, a carne et sanguine instrueretur' (PL 26: 351).

[55] Jerome, *Commentary on Galatians* 3.5.12 – Harnack Nr. 37.

[56] Jerome, *Letter* 130.14 *to Demetrias* – Harnack Nr. 25.

[57] Jerome, *Letter* 57.7 *to Pammachius.* 'Videbunt in quem conpuxerunt' (Budé 3: 63).

[58] Jerome, *Letter* 57.7 *to Pammachius*. 'καὶ ἐπιβλέψονται πρός με ἀνθ᾽ ὧν ἐνωρχήσαντο' (Budé 3: 63).

[59] Jerome, *Letter* 57.7 *to Pammachius*: '"et aspicient ad me pro his quae inluserunt" siue "insultauerunt"' (Budé 3: 63-4).

[60] Jerome, *Letter* 57.9 *to Pammachius* – Harnack Nr. 2.

that the error is that of Porphyry, who confused Jehoiakim with Jehoiakin, the former being the father of the latter. There are thus two men mentioned in Matthew.[61] Jerome alluded to Porphyry while discussing, at the beginning of his *Commentary on Daniel*, the two kings.[62]

Next, the other mistakes that Porphyry noted are not due to the evangelists themselves, but rather to the copyists, according to Jerome. Porphyry had mocked the fact that Mark had misattributed the following passage only to Isaiah when he used it in his Gospel: 'The prophet Isaiah was talking about him when he said: The voice of the one who was shouting in the desert: Pave the way of the Lord, make his paths straight'.[63] This passage is in fact also from Malachi. Relying on the authority of 'the churchmen' – 'ecclesiastici' – Jerome claims that Mark did not make any mistake. The error is that of the copyists who added the name of Isaiah in order to make one whole out of different bible quotations.[64] The next occurrence provides clues as to the presence in Jerome of other possible fragments. In answer to Porphyry's critique on the ignorance of

[61] See Jerome, *Commentary on Daniel* 1.1.1. See also Harnack Nr. 11. '*Anno tertio regni Ioachim regis Iudae, uenit Nabuchodonosor rex Babylonis Hierusalem, et obsedit eam.* Ioachim filius Iosiae, cuius tertio decimo anno prophetare orsus est Hieremias, sub quo etiam Holda mulier prophetauit, ipse est qui alio nomine appellatur Heliachim et regnauit super tribum Iuda et Hierusalem annis undecim, cui successit in regnum filius eius Ioiachin cognomento Iechonias, qui tertio mense regni sui, die decima, captus a ducibus Nabuchodonosor ductusque est in Babylonem, et in loco eius constitutus est Sedecias filius Iosiae patruus eius, cuius anno undecimo Hierusalem capta atque subuersa est. Nemo igitur putet eundem in Danielis principio esse Ioachim, qui in Hiezechielis exordio Ioiachin scribitur: iste enim extremam syllabam 'chim' habet, ille 'chin' – *et ob hanc causam in euangelio secundum Matthaeum una uidetur deesse generatio, quia secunda tesseriscedecas in Ioachim desinit filium Iosiae et tertia incipit a Ioiachin filio Ioachim; quod ignorans Porphyrius, calumniam struit ecclesiae, suam ostendens imperitiam, dum euangelistae Matthaei arguere nititur falsitatem.* Quodque 'traditus' scribitur Ioachim, monstrat non aduersariorum fortitudinis fuisse uictoriam sed Domini uoluntatis (CCL 75A:776-7) [the italicised passage corresponds to Nr. 11 in Harnack].

[62] See Crafer, 'Work of Porphyry against the Christians', 488. He discusses, here and elsewhere, some of the context of Porphyry's fragments in Jerome, but neither extensively, nor exhaustively.

[63] Jerome, *Commentary on Matthew* 3.3. 'Initium evangelii Iesu Christi filii Dei; sicut scriptum est in Esaia propheta: Ecce mitto angelum meum ante faciem tuam qui praeparabit viam tuam. Vox clamantis in deserto: Parate viam Domini, rectas facite semitas eius' (SC 242:88).

[64] Jerome, *Commentary on Matthew* 3.3. 'Nos autem aut nomen Esaiae putamus additum scriptorum uitio quod et in aliis locis probare possumus, aut certe de diuersis testimonies scripturarum unum corpus effectum. Lege tertium decimum psalmum et hoc idem reperies' (SC 242:90).

Matthew, who wrongly attributed a passage to Isaiah – 'and I would open my mouth in parables' – Jerome explains that the passage is from Asaph, but that a copyist, not recognizing this name, changed it to Isaiah, which sounded more familiar to him.[65] Jerome goes on in his text with so many examples that it is possible to infer that he is actually answering Porphyry's points – e.g., the hour of the death of Christ, set to three hours by Matthew and to six hours by Mark.[66] This, of course, remains unnoticed without the context.

As for the charges against the apostles, Jerome uses arguments based on his faith. To Porphyry, who claims that the apostles lured rich women by magical art, Jerome asks why, then, were the apostles crucified, if their ultimate goal was making money? The apostles, Jerome insists, shed their blood so that the Christians' faith would be deemed good.[67] In what concerns the apostles' lack of faith – as they did not move mountains – Jerome again provides a religious explanation when he states that the holy men actually performed miracles, but these are not to be found in any account, for Christians would have been highly criticized on that point by the non-believers. Indeed, when God performed His miracles, the world was so skeptical that Jerome thinks accounting for the apostles' miracles would have done them no good.[68] As for stupidly following

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[65] See, Abridged commentary on the psalms 77 – Harnack Nr. 10. '*Aperiam in parabola os meum*' (CCL 78:66). *See also Jerome, Commentary on Matthew 13.35, where he discusses psalm 77. 'Quod quia minime inueniebatur in Esaia, arbitror postea a prudentibus uiris esse sublatum. Sed mihi uidetur in principio ita editum, quod scriptum est: per Asaph prophetam dicentem ... et primum scriptorem non intellexisse Asaph et putasse scriptoris uitium atque emendasse nomen Esaiae, cuius uocabulum manifestius erat'. (SC 242:284). See Jerome, Abridged commentary on the psalms 77, where he justifies some discrepancies between the Gospels' accounts of Jesus' death.* 'Quomodo illud in Euangelio scriptum est, scriptum est in Matthaeo et Iohanne quod Dominus noster hora sexta crucifixus sit, rursum scriptum est in Marco quia hora tertia crucifixus sit. Hoc uidetur esse diuersum, sed non est diuersum. Error scriptorum fuit: et in Marco hora sexta scriptum fuit, sed multi pro ἐπισήμῳ graeco putauerunt esse gamma. Sicut enim ibi error fuit scriptorum, sic et hic error fuit scrptorum, ut pro Asaph Esaiam scriberent' (CCL 78:67).

[66] Jerome, *Abridged commentary on the psalms* 77 (quoted above).

[67] See Jerome, *Abridged commentary on the psalms* 81 – and Harnack Nr. 4. 'Fecerunt et alii signa magicis artibus: sed pro homine mortuo non sunt mortui, pro homine crucifixo. Sciunt isti hominem esse mortuum, et moriuntur sine causa. Felix ergo nostra uictoria, quae in sanguine apostolorum dedicata est. Fides nostra non probatur, nisi per illorum sanguinem' (CCL 81:89-90).

[68] See Jerome, *Commentary on Matthew* 21.21 – and Harnack Nr. 3. 'Quibus nos respondebimus multa facta esse signa a Domino, iuxta Iohannis euangelistae testimonium, quae si scripta essent mundus capere non posset, non quo mundus uolumina capere non potuerit quae potest quamuis multiplicia sint unum armariolum uel unum capere scrinium, sed quo magnitudinem signorum pro miraculis et incredulitate ferre non possit. Igitur et

Jesus to gain salvation, Jerome says that Matthew, who obtained the status of apostle, actually achieved salvation, and Jesus' call was preceded with signs.[69] With regard to the eclipse of the sun which, according to Porphyry, is wrongly associated with the Resurrection because the ignorant disciples did not know that it could have been easily predicted from moon cycles, Jerome argues that since it is specified in the Gospels that the event lasted three hours, it cannot be taken as a mere eclipse of the sun, and the prophecy was accomplished.[70]

As regards the apostles abusing their hearers, Jerome offers an answer of his own in *Commentary on Joel*.[71] Porphyry seems to have criticized the fact that a psalm was cited in order to strengthen Peter's argument. Jerome is commenting on Joel. 2.28-31, namely on the Joel prophecy quoted by Peter on the day of Pentecost.[72] Jerome goes on and explains that the apostles are not abusing their audience's ignorance and stupidity, as Porphyry claimed, but that, 'Whatever the Apostles judged to be useful to those listening and not inimical to the present, they strengthened with the witness of another time ... .'[73] This they did, as Paul said, in order to preach 'fittingly, and unfittingly'.[74] As Crafer judiciously noted,

haec credimus fecisse apostolos, sed ideo scripta non esse ne infidelibus contradicendi maior daretur occasio' (SC 259: 122).

[69] See Jerome, *Commentary on Matthew* 9.9 – and Harnack Nr. 6. 'Nullum debere salutem desperare si ad meliora conuersus sit, cum ipse de publicano in apostolum sit repente mutatus ... Cum tantae uirtutes tantaque signa praecesserint quae apostolos ante quam crederent uidisse non dubium est' (SC 242: 170).

[70] See Jerome, *Commentary on Matthew* 27.45 – and Harnack Nr. 14. 'Nulli autem dubium est paschae tempore lunam fuisse plenissimam. Et ne forsitan uideretur umbra terrae uel orbis lunae soli oppositus breues et ferrugineas fecisse tenebras, trium horarum spatium ponitur, ut omnis causantium occasio tolleretur' (SC 259: 296). See also Cook, *Interpretation of the New Testament*, 146, on this. 'Jerome clarifies (Porphyry's) somewhat cryptic comment by arguing that an eclipse of the sun only happens at a new moon and not at the full moon of the passover feast.'

[71] Jerome, *Commentary on Joel* 2.28 – Harnack Nr. 5.

[72] Jerome, Commentary on Joel 2.28. *'Et erit post haec, effundam de spiritu meo super omnem carnem, et prophetabunt filii vestri et filiae vestrae, et senes vestri somnia somniabunt, et juvenes vestri visiones videbunt; et super servos meos et super ancillas meas in diebus illis effundam de spiritu meo, et dabo prodigia in caelo, et super terram sanguinem, ignem et vaporem fumi. Sol convertetur in tenebras, et luna in sanguinem, antequam veniat dies Domini magnus et illustris. Et erit, omnis qui invocaverit nomen Domini, salvus erit.* Hunc locum beatus apostolus Petrus impletum tempore Dominicae passionis exposuit, quando descendit die Pentecostes Spiritus sanctus super credentes ... ' (CCL 76:192); see also Crafer, 'Work of Porphyry against the Christians', 487-8 who briefly discusses both the passage and fragment.

[73] Jerome, *Commentary on Joel* 2.28 – Harnack Nr. 5. Cited n. 42.

[74] Jerome, *Commentary on Joel* 2.28. 'Sed juxta apostolum Paulum, praedicarent *opportune, importune*' (CCL 76: 194).

the place of the fragment in the text implies that the philosopher was referring to that event too, and it 'suggests that his attack on the Gospels was followed by a series of objections to the Acts of the Apostles'.[75] What Porphyry means in fragment 5 – as preserved by Harnack – is thus very unclear without the context of Jerome's *Commentary on Joel*, since neither Peter, nor the Acts are mentioned. Going back to the context allowed Crafer to make his inference. It is clear that these critiques are targeting the Christian faith of the followers of Christ, which, in turn, explains why it attracted Jerome's attention.

Finally, the Christian apologist deemed it very important to give attention to Porphyry's attack on the heads of the Church. The main subject of tension is the epistle to the Galatians. It will become clear, from the following arguments, that to fully grasp the content of Porphyry's points as represented in Harnack's collection, Jerome's explanations are required, as well as the context in which he inserted the fragments. The problems between Peter and Paul really bothered Jerome, especially since Porphyry accused Paul of challenging Peter. The apostle Paul was in charge of teaching the Gospel to the uncircumcised (the gentiles), whereas the apostle Peter was in charge of the circumcised (the Jews) (Gal 2.7). Paul explains in the epistle to the Galatians that he 'withstood to Peter's face',[76] because he would eat with the gentiles only when members of the circumcision were not present, for fear of their judgement (Gal 2.12).[77] This conduct was not, according to Paul, in line with the Gospel, for Jews who are faithful to Christ should not live according to the manners of the Jews, but of the Christians, who include non-sinner gentiles (Gal 2.14-16). Paul clearly meant to define the Christian community here. Paul's disagreement with Peter's behaviour makes an easy target for Christian opponents such as Porphyry; it allowed Porphyry to show both that the foundations of the Christian community are not solid and that the teachings of Christ are unclear, for even the heads of the Church cannot agree on definition and conduct.

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[75] Crafer, 'Work of Porphyry against the Christians', 487-8. It is, however, less clear what Crafer, in his brief comment, means when asserting that as regards Paul's above-quoted words, Jerome does not refer to Peter's speech, but does not mention the Acts – besides Acts 19 on Peter and Paul's baptism.

[76] Jerome, *Commentary on Galatians* Prologue – Harnack, Nr. 21a. '... Petrum a Paulo objecit esse reprehensum... '.

[77] It is interesting to note that Macarios (3.22.4) reproduces very closely the passage discussed by Jerome: 'Κατέγνω καὶ Παῦλος Πέτρου λέγων 'Πρὸ τοῦ γὰρ ἐλθεῖν ἀπὸ Ἰακώβου τινάς, μετὰ τῶν ἐθνῶν συνήσθιεν. ὅτε δὲ ἦλθον, ἀφώριζεν ἑαυτὸν φοβούμενος τοὺς ἐκ περιτομῆς. καὶ συνεκρίθησαν αὐτῷ πολλοὶ Ἰουδαῖοι'. (Goulet, *Le Monogénès* 2:151). See Goulet, *Le Monogénès*, 93-4 and 144.

E. Plumer says that Jerome systematically attacked all those who accepted that there was a disagreement between the two chief apostles, even the Christian Marius Victorinus.[78] He also answered Augustine extensively in his famous letter 112. Jerome wants to promote his own explanation of the problems surrounding Jewish Christian and Gentile Christian practices, Peter and Paul having regularly compromised their teachings by promoting abstinence from Jewish Law, but then acting in conformity to the Law. Jerome's explanation is that Paul is not actually blaming Peter (for eating with the Gentiles and then turning away when he realized it was shocking the Jewish Christian community), but that the two men only pretend to be in conflict in order to please both communities.[79] Jerome, in his *Commentary on Galatians*, says that the Christians' answer to Porphyry's attack on Paul is not satisfying. Christians tried to work out a solution to the problem by claiming that Paul was answering another Cephas no one knows of: 'The first answer to these people is that we do not know the name of some other Cephas than the one who in the Gospel, in other Letters of Paul, and in this Letter, is sometimes written "Cephas" and sometimes "Petrus". Not because "Petrus" means one thing and "Cephas" another: but what we call *petra* in Latin and Greek, Hebrews and Syrians name *cephas* because of the closeness of their language.'[80] The place of Porphyry's fragments in the debate further shows that

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[78] Plumer, *Augustine's Commentary on Galatians*, 44.

[79] Jerome, *Letter* 112.8 *to Augustine* Jerome on Peter: 'Prius enim quam uenirent quidam a Iacobo, cum gentibus edebat: cum autem uenissent, subtrahebat se, et segregabat, timens eos qui ex circumcisione errant' (Budé 6: 27); Jerome, *Commentary on Galatians* 1.2.11. 'Sed ut ante jam diximus, restitit secundum faciem publicam Petro et caeteris, ut hypocrisis observandae Legis, quae nocebat eis qui ex gentibus crediderant, correptionis hypocrisi emendaretur, et uterque populus salvus fieret, dum et qui circumcisionem laudant, Petrum sequuntur; et qui circumcidi nolunt, Pauli praedicant libertatem' (PL 26: 364); see Plumer, *Augustine's Commentary on Galatians* 46, on Jerome and how he dealt with the conflict between Peter and Paul; see also Anastos (1966), 429, who also explains that Paul and Peter only pretended to disagree 'in order to facilitate the conversion and rehabilitation of the Jews'. Jerome is answering Augustine who, in his *Letter* 28.3, said that the leaders of the Church actually disagreed as to whether Gentile Christians were required to observe Jewish law.

[80] See Jerome, *Commentary on Galatians* 1.2.11 – and Harnack Nr. 21c. 'Quibus primum respondendum, alterius nescio cujus Cephae nescire nos nomen, nisi ejus qui et in Evangelio, et in aliis Pauli Epistolis, et in hac quoque ipsa modo *Cephas,* modo *Petrus,* scribitur. Non quod aliud significet Petrus, aliud Cephas: sed quod quam nos Latine et Graece *petram* vocemus, hanc Hebraei et Syri propter linguae inter se viciniam, *Cephan* nuncupent. Deinde totum argumentum epistolae quod oblique de Petro, Jacobo, et Joanne dicitur, huic intelligentiae repugnare. Nec mirum esse si Lucas hanc rem tacuerit, cum et alia multa quae Paulus sustinuisse se replicat, historiographi licentia praetermiserit: et non

the philosopher also had a problem with Paul faking obedience to the Law from fear of the Jewish Christians, for example, when he circumcised Timothy, a Gentile. Both men are thus guilty of the same crime.[81] Porphyry also accused the two men of violence: Peter for having cursed two disobedient Christians, and Paul for ordering the 'cutting off' – in both sense of the expression, i.e. circumcision and shutting up – of those who are causing troubles in the Church of Galatia.[82] To answer Porphyry, Jerome says that Peter did not kill the men, as their punishment would come with the judgement of God. Peter was thus merely responsible for prophetically announcing their punishment.[83] As Jerome had stated elsewhere in *On Galatians*, after all, Peter was the head of the Church in Rome.[84] It follows that he might have been right, in Jerome's view. As for Paul, Jerome reports that he says he is condemned to death, which rather shows that the violent ones are the adversaries, whereas love is in the Churches of God.[85] On Paul's refusal to share his revelation 'with flesh and blood', Jerome explains that Paul means by this expression that he will only teach their spirit; he does not mean that he will not share it with human beings.[86]

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statim esse contrarium, si quod alius ob causam dignum putavit relatu, alius inter caetera dereliquit. Denique primum episcopum Antiochenae Ecclesiae Petrum fuisse accepimus, et Romam exinde translatum, quod Lucas penitus omisit. Ad extremum *si propter Porphyrii blasphemiam, alius nobis fingendus est Cephas, ne Petrus putetur errasse, infinita de Scripturis erunt radenda divinis, quae ille, quia non intelligit, criminatur*' (PL 26: 366) [the italicised passage corresponds to Harnack's fragment].

[81] Jerome, *Letter* 112.9 *to Augustine* – see also Harnack Nr. 21b, and *Letter* 112.6.11. Jerome, quoting from Acts 2.17.20-24 and 26, 'et ecce discipulus quidam erat ibi nomine Timotheus, filius mulieris iudaeae fidelis, patre gentili ... Hunc uoluit Paulus secum proficisci. Et adsumens circumcidit eum propter Iudaeos, qui erant in illis locis' (Budé 6: 28).

[82] Jerome, *Letter* 130.14 *to Demetrias* – Harnack Nr. 25. 'Apostolus Petrus nequaquam inprecatur eis mortem'. (Budé 7:185); Jerome, *Commentary on Galatians* 3.5.12 – Harnack Nr. 37.

[83] Jerome, *Letter* 130.14 *to Demetrias* – see also Harnack Nr. 25. 'Sed Dei iudicium prophetico spiritu adnuntiat, ut poena duorum hominum sit doctrina multorum' (Budé 7: 185); here, however, Jerome goes as far as contradicting himself, as Harnack (1916), 55 noted, since in another text – *Letter* 109.3 – he clearly admits that Peter killed the men.

[84] Jerome, *Commentary on Galatians* (PL 26: 366). 'Primum episcopum Antiochenae Ecclesiae Petrum fuisse accepimus, et Romam exinde translatum' – see Plumer, *Augustine's Commentary on the Galatians* 45, who discusses this.

[85] Jerome, *Commentary on Galatians* 3.5.12 – see also Harnack Nr. 37. 'Tradidit autem se morti condemnatus' (PL 26: 432-3).

[86] Jerome, *Commentary on Galatians* 1.1.16 – Harnack Nr. 20. '"carne et sanguine" instrueretur ... Cum talibus qui caro et sanguis erant, quae Petro quoque non revelaverunt Filium Dei, non contulit Apostolus Evangelium quod ei fuerat revelatum, sed paulatim eos de carne et sanguine vertit in spiritum: et tunc demum eis occulta Evangelii sacramenta

Let us now look at a further example: the passages that are extant in Jerome from Porphyry's critique on Jesus. The fragments as they appear in the Harnack collection will first be presented. Jerome preserved passages from Porphyry's anti-Christian discourses relating to Jesus in *Against Vigilantius*, *Against the Pelagians*, *Hebrew Questions on Genesis*, and *Commentary on Matthew*. In *Against the Pelagians*, Porphyry is said to have accused Christ of 'inconsistency'. As has already been mentioned, we know from Jerome's Letter 57 to Pammachius that Porphyry criticized in his book 14 the mistakes of the evangelists, who, he says, are guilty of 'falsity', for they are unable to cite properly the Bible on which they rely. We also know – as has been mentioned above – from Jerome's *Commentary on Matthew* that Porphyry discussed discrepancies between the Gospels' narratives. Therefore the point that Porphyry wanted to make is that the evangelists could not get their story straight, either by agreeing with each other, or by presenting Jesus as acting consistently. As evidence for his claims, Porphyry recalls an episode from John 7.10, where Jesus told his brethren that he will not yet go up to the feast of Tabernacles (7.8). However, it is also said that after his brethen went up to the feast, Jesus also went up, 'not openly, but as if it were a secret'.[87] As Jerome reports it, Porphyry 'barks [and] accuses [him] of inconsistency and change of heart'.[88] Same issue over the Samaritan woman: Jesus had said that he would not go to her, but then did. The wording used by Jerome, namely that Porphyry 'barks', tells us a lot about Jerome's opinion of Porphyry, who is portrayed as being no more than a yapping dog. As for the charge of 'inconsistency', it certainly targeted Christ's intelligence and ability to be a Master. A Eusebian fragment of Porphyry says that the evangelists falsified the record of what Jesus actually did, since Jesus never performed any miracle (*DE* 3.5.1). The disciples thus failed to report honestly the actions of their master, which is a major form of disrespect. Porphyry clearly wished to discredit their claimed relationship as master and disciples.

Porphyry also takes every opportunity to ridicule Jesus. Jerome reports that the philosopher, among others, is of the opinion that the Gospels are full of scandals,

commisit. Dicat quispiam: Si statim non contulit cum carne et sanguine Evangelium, tamen subintelligitur, quod postmodum cum sanguine et carne contulerit: et sensus hic, quo apostoli excusantur, ne caro et sanguis sint, stare non poterit: dum nihilominus qui in principio cum carne et sanguine non contulit, postmodum, ut dixi, cum carne et sanguine contulerit' (PL 26: 351).

[87] Jerome, *Against Pelagius* 2.17. 'Ut autem ascenderunt fratres eius, tunc et ipse ascendit ad sollemnitatem, non manifeste, sed quasi in abscondito' (CCL 80: 76).

[88] Jerome, *Against Pelagius* 2.17 – Harnack Nr. 70. '... latrat Porphyrius, inconstantiae ac mutationis accusat' (CCL 80: 76).

i.e. obstacles to belief. In Matthew 15, there is a passage where Jesus answers the scribes and Pharisees who accuse his disciples of transgressing the tradition of the ancients by not washing their hands before eating. To this charge, Jesus answered that they were themselves doing worse by transgressing the commandment of God 'Honour thy father and mother'. Jesus reminds them of a prophecy from Isaiah which says that their people would honour God with the lips, and not their heart. He argues that 'all that enters into the mouth, goes into the belly, and is then rejected into the privy',[89] and can thus not defile a man; whereas evil thoughts do come directly from the heart and can defile a man. Porphyry jumped on the passage and claimed that Jesus was thus experiencing physiological processes (just like any human being), and Jesus himself acknowledges this. The argument is most probably meant to reduce Christ to a mere human being, and therefore to contest the Christian claim that he is a god.

Next, Porphyry, in an effort to downgrade the miracles performed by Jesus, explains that the Lord cannot have walked on a sea, since the surface he walked on was not a sea, but a lake, namely the Lake Genezareth. Porphyry here does not mean it is easier to walk on a lake than on the sea: he means that the evangelists did not even realize that the 'sea' – 'maria' – was a lake. It follows that, 'The evangelists fashioned a miracle for the ignorant.'[90] Here Porphyry targeted both the evangelists and Christ, reducing the latter to his human condition, and accusing the former of crafting stories in order to delude. This accusation should be associated with other charges made against the apostles, who, according to Porphyry, boasted about their quite ordinary miracles in order to attract the money of rich women whom they duped,[91] and abused by their teachings 'the simplicity and ignorance of their listeners'.[92]

Nr. 49 from *Against Vigilantius* also pertains to Christ's miracles, and its content is unclear without both the biblical context and the context of Jerome's work. This fragment says: 'In the same manner as the Gentiles and the impious, Porphyry and Eunomius, (said that) you pretend that these portents came from demons, and that the demons were not really shouting aloud, but

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[89] Jerome, *Commentary on Daniel* 15.17 – Harnack Nr. 56'.Non intelligitis quia omne quod intrat in os in uentrem uadit et in secessum emittitur?' (CCL 75A).

[90] Jerome, *Hebrew Questions on Genesis* 1.10 – Harnack Nr. 55b. '... evangelistas ad faciendum ignorantibus miraculum eo ... ' (CCL 72: 3).

[91] Jerome, *Abridged commentary on the psalms* 81 – Harnack Nr. 4.

[92] Jerome, *Commentary on Joel* 2.28 – Harnack Nr. 5. '... audientium simplicitate et imperitia ... ' (CCL 76: 194).

were simulating their torments.'[93] What we are missing here in the Harnack collection is the referent of 'these'– '*has*'. We understand that Porphyry might have paired an aspect of Christianity with cosmogony and the *daimones*. We can also deduce that heretics, such as Eunomius, have made this kind of association. The passage's meaning, however, is blurred, and it becomes useless. Harnack, however, clearly retained this fragment because it named Porphyry and could be paired with a passage from the Apocriticos of Macarius Magnes.[94] According to Harnack, there are allusions to passages from Matthew (8.29) and Mark (5) that the Anonymous of the Apocriticos ridiculed. Matthew says that two people possessed by demons came out of tombs to meet Christ. They called out 'Have you come to torment us?' The demons asked Jesus to send them away to a herd of pigs, which leapt from a cliff into the sea. In Mark, the demon says 'My name is Legion, for we are many', and there are two thousand pigs. According to the Anonymous, these stories and their different versions do not show the might of Christ, but that the demons actually got what they were after, namely disturbing the sea and earth, and creating a deadly show. So the connection with the fragment of Porphyry is that the demons said that they were being tortured.

Just as with the NT passages discussed above, Harnack's collection provides us only with these hints, which require either a very good knowledge of the subjects criticized by Porphyry, or a very good knowledge of Jerome's discussion of these topics. Let us now re-insert these passages into their 'cover-text' in order to better understand Jerome's motivations for referring to Porphyry in the way he did.

The allusions to Porphyry that I mentioned are the only clues preserved by Jerome as to what Porphyry wrote about Jesus in his discourses, i.e. that Christ was a mere inconsistent human being, who never performed the miracles attributed to him, and who was fooled by *daimones*. But what are those allusions and references doing in Jerome's *corpus*, and can their meaning become different when they are put back into their original context? One reference to Porphyry in each of the texts does not make a strong case for a refutation. It is clear that these are therefore passing comments. Indeed, Jerome never wanted to formally refute Porphyry, although he does answer some of Porphyry's points against Christianity in passing. As a reminder, Jerome, in his *Commentary on Daniel*, said that his main purpose was to interpret Daniel, not to answer Porphyry.[95]

[93] Jerome, *Against Vigilantius* 10 – Harnack Nr. 49b. 'Nisi forte in morem gentilium impiorumque, Porphyrii et Eunomii, has praestigias daemonum esse configas, et non vere clamare daemones, sed sua simulare tormenta' (PL 23).

[94] See Nr. 49 and Mak. 3.4.1-5.

[95] Jerome, *Commentary on Daniel* Prologue.

We are thus applying this rule to Jerome's other works, and assuming that his primary purpose was not to write formal refutations of Porphyry's ideas. We also remember that Jerome has no intention to transmit the 15 books of *Against the Christians*, especially since extensive responses have already been written by competent Church fathers.[96]

Here again, we observe that the texts in which the passages on Jesus were preserved belong to the specific agenda of Jerome. Jerome associates his opponents with bad people. *Against Vigilantius* was written in 406,[97] and Jerome tells us that he wrote it in one night, following the reading of Vigilantius' treatise.[98] In 404, Jerome had received a letter from Riparius, a priest of Aquitaine, warning him that Vigilantius was condemning the cult of the martyrs in the South-West of Gaul. It had already come to the attention of Jerome that Vigilantius had been spreading rumours about Jerome being an Origenist. Therefore, as soon as he managed to get hold of Vigilantius' writings, two years later, Jerome composed a vitriolic reply, in turn charging the man with heresy. Jerome says that, 'Many monsters have been generated in the world.'[99] Vigilantius is among them. Jerome relates how he is driven by 'a filthy spirit',[100] for he maintains, among other things, that 'no religious honours should be paid to the tombs of the martyrs, that vigils should be condemned, that Alleluia should never be sung except at Easter, that continence is a heresy, and that chastity is a hot-bed for pleasures'.[101]

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[96] Jerome, *Commentary on Daniel* Prologue.

[97] See J.N.D. Kelly, *Jerome: His Life, Writings and Controversies* (London: 1975), 286 n. 14, on the date of composition, and 286-90 on Jerome and Vigilantius.

[98] Jerome, *Against Vigilantius* 1.3. '*Riparius, Desiderius et Sisinnius. Imperitia Vigilantii*. – Sed jam tempus est, ut ipsius verba ponentes ad singula respondere nitamur. Fieri enim potest, ut rursum malignus interpres dicat fictam a me materiam, cui rhetorica declamatione respondeam: sicut illam quam scripsi ad Gallias, matris et filiae inter se discordantium. Auctores sunt hujus dictatiunculae meae sancti presbyteri Riparius et Desiderius, qui paroecias suas vicinia istius scribunt esse maculatas, miseruntque libros per fratrem Sisinnium, quos inter crapulam stertens evomuit. Et asserunt repertos esse nonnullos, qui, faventes vitiis suis, illius blasphemiis acquiescant. Est quidem imperitus, et verbis et scientia, et sermone inconditus; ne vera quidem potest defendere: sed propter homines saeculi et mulierculas oneratas peccatis, semper discentes et numquam ad scientiam veritatis pervenientes, una lucubratiuncula illius naeniis respondebo, ne sanctorum virorum qui ut haec facerem me deprecati sunt, videar litteras respuisse' (PL 23).

[99] Jerome, *Against Vigilantius* 1.1. 'Multa in orbe monstra generata sunt' (PL 23).

[100] Jerome, *Against Vigilantius* 1.10. 'Spiritus ... immundus' (PL 23).

[101] Jerome, *Against Vigilantius* 1.1. 'Exortus est subito Vigilantius, seu verius Dormitantius, qui immundo spiritu pugnet contra Christi spiritum, et Martyrum neget sepulcra veneranda; damnandas dicat esse vigilias: numquam nisi in Pascha Alleluia cantandum: continentiam, haeresim; pudicitiam, libidinis seminarium' (PL 23).

To Vigilantius, who denies the signs and miracles that happen in the basilicas of martyrs, Jerome answers that unclean spirits force people like him to write such things, for they suffer from the signs and miracles.[102] It is in this context that Porphyry and Eunomius, the renowned heretic, are named, since they said that the demons are only pretending to suffer. Jerome is thus associating their ideas with Vigilantius' ideas in order to discredit him. He does not tell us in what context Porphyry talked about the tormented daimones; rather, he uses a general idea that Porphyry expressed in a totally different context. Harnack tried to trace back this context by associating it with the Anonymous Greek of the Apocriticos, as we have said, and his complaints about the story of the dead pigs; but this context cannot be guaranteed if we remember that the Macarios fragments are contested, and that Jerome did not necessarily use these ideas with the same meaning in mind.

Jerome also used Porphyry and the Arians against his adversary Pelagius. Jerome wrote his work against Pelagius in 415.[103] According to him, Pelagius was an impious heretic. He explains that Pelagius and the Pelagians argued that a man could live without sin if he wills it, which was, to Jerome, a non-sense as men are not ruled by their free will, but by the grace of God, which was needed in every act. In the discussion on the sinlessness of Christ, Jerome quotes Jesus in John 5.30: 'By myself I can do nothing; I judge only as I hear.'[104] The Arians, according to Jerome, say something like 'see, Jesus himself acknowledges that God the Father is greater than he', but the Church replies 'here Jesus is speaking in his human nature'.[105] Jerome contrasts what Jesus says, 'by myself I can do nothing', with what (according to him) Pelagius says, i.e. 'by myself I can do anything'.[106] Jerome then recalls John 7.10, where it is said that Jesus attended the feast of Tabernacles even though he had said he would not.[107] Porphyry 'barks' that Jesus

[102] Jerome, *Against Pelagius* 1.10. 'Spiritus iste immundus qui haec te cogit scribere ... ' (PL 23).

[103] Kelly, *Jerome*, 319, on the date of composition, and chapter 26 on Jerome and the Pelagians.

[104] Jerome, *Against Pelagius* 2.17. 'Non possum, ait, ego facere a meipso aliquid; sicut audio, iudico' (CCL 80: 75).

[105] Jerome, *Against Pelagius* 2.17. 'Arriani obiciunt calumniam, sed respondet Ecclesia ex persona hominis hoc dici, qui assumptus est' (CCL 80: 75).

[106] Jerome, *Against Pelagius* 2.17. 'Tu e contrario loqueris: possum sine peccato esse, si voluero. Ille nihil ex se potest facere, ut hominis indicet veritatem: tu potes omnia peccata vitare, ut adhuc in corpore constitutis ἀντίθεον esse te doceas' (CCL 80: 75-6).

[107] Jerome, *Against Pelagius* 2.17. 'Negat fratribus ac propinquis ire se ad scenopegiam, et postea scriptum est: 'Ut autem ascenderunt fratres eius, tunc et ipse ascendit ad sollemnitatem, non manifeste, sed quasi in abscondito' (CCL 80: 76).

was inconsistent. But Jerome has his own explanation for the change of heart of Jesus: Porphyry clearly does not know that 'all stumbling-blocks bring (us) back to the flesh,'[108] i.e. that when we find a problem in what Jesus says and does, for instance when he weeps or is angry, this is because he is behaving as a human being. Jerome, in order to argue against Pelagius, puts him in the same boat with Porphyry and the Arians, obvious opponents who were wrong about Scripture; Jerome thus throws in a reference to the Arians because they were thought to teach that Christ was not fully divine, and a reference to Porphyry because he was known to accuse the Christian scriptures of inconsistency, or simply because he was anti-Christian. He has no intention to answer Porphyry here.

Jerome also uses Porphyry to show his own knowledge in front of Church opponents. In his *Commentary on Matthew* 15.17, Jerome mentions how Porphyry and others used a declaration made by Jesus about the processing of food in the body in the hope of proving his human condition, that is 'everything that goes into the mouth passes into the belly and is discharged into the drain'. Jerome, who certainly has in mind all the attacks that Porphyry made on the ignorance of the evangelists, apostles and disciples, since he has himself preserved many passages on this topic in his letters and commentaries, is pleased to have an opportunity to point out Porphyry's own ignorance. He answers him that 'wanting to point to another's ignorance, men like him show their own ignorance'.[109] Indeed, according to Jerome, the actual food process is as follows: once in us, our food is scattered through our members, veins, marrows and nerves. Evidence for this is that some keep throwing up after their meals and still remain overweight. Jerome argues that upon the first contact with the body, i.e. when it is chewed and swallowed the food is liquefied and scattered in the members. Once assimilated and digested in the veins and members, following secret circuits in the body that the Greek call 'pores', the residue goes down toward the privy. The whole argument is not very logical, but Jerome probably means that Jesus simply did not describe the whole process. What we need to understand is that the brief reference to those who 'unfairly criticised Christ'[110] and to the Gospels are made in the context of the commentary on Matthew 15, not in the context of a refutation of *Against the Christians*.

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[108] Jerome, *Against Pelagius* 2.17. '... Nesciens omnia scandala ad carnem esse referenda' (SC 80: 76).

[109] Jerome, *Commentary on Matthew* 15.17. 'Sed istiusmodi homines, dum uolunt alterius imperitiam reprehendere, ostendunt suam' (CCL 242:328).

[110] Jerome, *Commentary on Matthew* 15.17. 'Et ex hac sententiola quidam calumniantur quod Dominus ... ' (SC 242: 328).

As for the passage on the Lake Genesareth, which was not a sea, it is part of the work *Hebrew Questions on Genesis* written, as Jerome explains himself in the prologue, in order to refute the mistakes that create suspicion toward the Hebrew texts, i.e. to reduce the mistakes of the Latin and Greek versions of the sacred texts. The aim is to make clearer the meaning and origins of things, places, and men that are not familiar to the Latin speakers. Jerome's interests, as has been said above, were mainly textual. While he is commenting on Genesis 1.10 on the Creation and specifically on the sentence: 'And he called sea the gathering of the waters',[111] he explains that any gathering of waters, either salted or fresh, is called a sea in the Hebrew language. Jerome takes the opportunity to mention that, therefore, Porphyry vainly criticized the evangelists for crafting a miracle when they said that Jesus walked on the sea. Any lake or gathering of waters, he adds, is called a sea.[112] This allows Jerome to show superior knowledge of idiom and to point out that 'sea' was also used for lakes. The reference to Porphyry is thus made, once again, in passing, and has little to do with the subject matter, which is the Creation, not Jesus' miracles.

As can be understood from this final point, the fragments as they appear in Harnack's collection do not allow for full comprehension of Porphyry's allusions, or the core of his subject matter. It may also be suspected, from the special attention that Jerome gives to Porphyry's attack on the heads of the Church, that the philosopher was effective in disturbing the Church, and that he clearly wished to ruin the foundations of Christianity.

The Old Testament fragments

According to Jerome, Porphyry couched his attacks on the *Book of Daniel* in book 12 of his discourses. Jerome's *Commentary on Daniel* preserves the most extensive fragments of *Against the Christians*. However, again, it reveals more about Jerome as a citing author than it does about Porphyry's ideas. From what Jerome preserved, it appears that Porphyry meant to challenge the Christians' dating of the book, the identity of its author as a prophet, as

[111] Jerome, *Hebrew Questions on Genesis* 1.10. 'Et congregationes aquarum vocavit maria' (CCL 72: 3).

[112] Jerome, *Hebrew Questions on Genesis* 1.10. 'Notandum quod omnis congregatio aquarum, sive salsae sint sive dulces, iuxta idioma linguae hebraicae maria nuncupentur. Frustra igitur Porphyrius evangelistas ad faciendum ignorantibus miraculum eo, quod dominus super mare ambulaverit, pro lacu Genesareth mare appellasse calumniatur, cum omnis lacus et aquarum congregatio maria nuncupetur' (CCL 72: 3).

well as the Christian, traditional interpretation of the book as announcing the second coming of Christ and the role of the Antichrist. As in the case of the NT fragments, it is very difficult to know the structure of *Against the Christians* from *Commentary on Daniel*, for Jerome seems to cite or paraphrase Porphyry throughout his commentary whenever he sees fit. Jerome cites *Daniel* verse by verse, respecting its structure, and comments on the verses, which he thinks needs to be commented. Some of Porphyry's remarks, to which he replies, are simply added to his commentary, and this method gives the reader the impression that Jerome was working from memory. Here is how the *Commentary on Daniel* is presented: ten chapters with scattered references to Porphyry, but an eleventh one in which the philosopher is paraphrased extensively. Jerome was obviously far more interested in refuting Porphyry's arguments on the Christian allegory of the book as prophesying an Antichrist (this is in *Daniel* 11), than he was in refuting other attacks. And although Porphyry and his main ideas on *Daniel* are presented in the very first sentence of the commentary, Jerome has also taken every opportunity to answer his own detractors; his work was thus not solely targeting Porphyry as the enemy *par excellence*.

According to Scriptures, the prophet Daniel would have lived in the sixth century B.C., under the rule of the Babylonian king Nabouchodonosor (605-561). Daniel claimed to have foreknowledge, a gift which had been divinely granted to him through a series of dreams and visions. To Porphyry, however, the book is a fraud. Its author was not Hebrew, but Greek, and his divinations were not prophecy, but history. Indeed, the author – or authors – lived during the second century B.C., and was therefore contemporary to the events recorded in the book. But to Jerome, Daniel was an authentic prophet, whose prophecies have all been fulfilled until the first coming of Christ. Other prophecies (the second coming and the fight against the Antichrist) have yet to be fulfilled, in due time.

The first six chapters of *Daniel* tell stories that happened at the court of Nabouchodonosor, where Daniel and his companions were subjected to a series of life-threatening challenges. They always emerged victorious, however, having received God's help and protection. Their successes never failed to greatly impress their pagan audience. Chapters 7 to 12 of the book then detail Daniel's visions during the rules of, successively, King Belshazzar, King Darius the Mede and King Cyrus of Persia. It is interesting to note that the only mention of Darius as successor of Balthasar is found in the OT. Historians are otherwise unaware of any other references to this Darius in the contemporary evidence, and some think that there may have been a confusion with Cyrus of Persia, who, according

to the historical records, succeeded to Balthasar in 539, and who decreed that the Jews could then come back from their exile.[113]

Daniel 7 famously records how the prophet saw four beasts emerging in turn from the sea: a lion, a bear, a leopard and a horrible animal with iron teeth and ten horns. While Daniel was contemplating the fourth beast, a small horn grew on its head, uprooting the first three. On this small horn, there were a pair of eyes and a man's mouth. The other three beasts were then killed, and a Son of Man descended from the skies to rule over mankind. According to Daniel, the four beasts represent the four kingdoms, which will succeede to each other until God sends the one who shall rule over all mankind. Similarly, in *Daniel* 11, the prophet speaks of the wars to come between four empires, referred to as the four cardinal points. This prophecy shall only be fulfilled when, according to *Daniel* 12, a prince triumphs over all empires, and the End of Times finally comes. What Daniel foretold, therefore, were interpretations of his visions. To Christians, the Son of Man was obviously Christ, and he will have to fight the small horn of the fourth beast, representing the Antichrist, and emerge victorious, to then rule over all.

But what had Jerome to say about Porphyry and his ideas on *Daniel*? And, more importantly, what had Jerome himself to say on the sacred book? Upon a closer look at his commentary, it becomes evident that he never intended to answer Porphyry at length, and had his own agenda. Indeed, he did not need to refute Porphyry, for this had already been done by three eminent Christian authors, who had already composed satisfying refutations.[114] Jerome explains that he will merely attempt to answer the philosopher briefly and simply.[115] He is more interested, he claims, in interpreting the content of Daniel's message; indeed, Daniel has most clearly talked about Christ, and Porphyry is denying this. Not only did the prophet foretell the first coming of Christ, he even foretold the exact moment.[116] Furthermore, Jerome insists that his commentary will not be detailed, and that he will contend with explaining those passages from *Daniel*, which are obscure.[117] Jerome is very clear about the fact that he

[113] *Bible de Jérusalem* (Paris, 2000), 1277.

[114] Jerome, *Commentary on Daniel* Prologue (Nr 43a). [N.B. All the following Jerome references are from Jerome, *Commentary on Daniel*, unless otherwise specified.]

[115] Prologue (Nr 43b).

[116] Prologue. '... sed ea quae a propheta dicta sunt nostris disserere, id est Christianis, illud in praefatione commoneo, nullum prophetarum tam aperte dixisse de Christo ... ' (CCL 75A: 772).

[117] Prologue. 'Et tamen sicubi se occasio in explanatione eiusdem uoluminis dederit, calumniae illius strictim respondere conabor, et philosophiae artibus, immo malitiae

never intended for his commentary to be read as an answer to Porphyry, but rather as an explanation of the difficulties of Scriptures.[118]

This is confusing. Jerome does start his prologue by mentioning Porphyry and his overall argument, or general thesis, on *Daniel*, which leaves his reader seriously doubting the sincerity of his words. He explains how Porphyry claimed that the author of *Daniel* had lived in Judaea during the time of Antiochos Epiphanes IV, king of the Seleucids (175-64 B.C.), rather than during the time of Nabouchodonosor, and was thus actually recording the past, not foretelling the future.[119] In the words of P.M. Casey, 'Centuries before the advent of biblical criticism, Porphyry already knew that the book of Daniel was a Maccabean pseudepigraph.'[120] Daniel's prophecies were therefore *ex eventu*, that is, they refer to Antiochos as opposed to an Antichrist, as the Christians claim.[121] In his prologue, Jerome did not only preserve the main argument of Porphyry's book 12; he also preserved Porphyry's method for interpreting *Daniel*. Porphyry would have performed a historical exegesis of *Daniel*, using various renowned ancient historians and matching their historical records with the biblical events.[122] Porphyry thus occupies most of Jerome's prologue, and any reader would expect the rest of Jerome's commentary to be focused on Porphyry.

However, throughout the commentary, Jerome is interested in Porphyry only as long as his downdating of *Daniel* is concerned. *Commentary on Daniel*,

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saeculari, per quam subuertere nititur ueritatem, et quibusdam praestigiis clarum oculorum lumen auferre, explanatione simplici contraire' (CCL 75A: 772).

118 4.11.44-5 (Nr 43u).

119 Prologue (Nr 43a). 'Contra prophetam Danielem duodecimum librum scribit Porphyrius, nolens eum ab ipso cuius inscriptus est nomine esse compositum sed a quodam qui temporibus Antiochi, qui appellatus est Epiphanes, fuerit in Iudaea, et non tam Danielem uentura dixisse quam illum narrasse praeterita; denique quidquid usque ad Antiochum dixerit, ueram historiam continere, siquid autem ultra opinatus sit, quae futura nescierit esse mentitum' (CCL 75A: 771).

120 P.M. Casey, 'Porphyry and the Origin of the Book of Daniel', *JThS* 27 (1976): 15.

121 4.11.44-5 (Nr 43u). 'Haec ille in suggillationem nostri artificam sermone composuit, quae, etiamsi potuerit approbare non de Antichristo dicta sed de Antiocho, quid ad nos, qui non ex omnibus scripturarum locis Christi probamus aduentum et Antichristi mendacium? Pone enim haec dici de Antiocho, quid nocet religioni nostrae? Numquid et in superiori uisione, ubi in Antiochum prophetia consummata est, aliquid de Antichristo dicitur?' (CCL 75A: 932).

122 For instance, Prologue (Nr 43c). 'Ad intellegendas autem extremas partes Danielis, multiplex Graecorum historia necessaria est: Sutorii uidelicet Callinici, Diodori, Hieronymi, Polybii, Posidonii, Claudii Theonis et Andronyci cognomento Alipi, quos et Porphyrius secutum esse se dicit, Iosephi quoque et eorum quos ponit Iosephus, praecipueque nostri Liuii, et Pompei Trogi, atque Iustini' (CCL 75A: 775).

indeed, reads as though Jerome had only found Porphyry's ideas on *Daniel* 11.21 threatening; otherwise, the philosopher is hardly mentioned. Jerome's interpretation of *Daniel*, unsurprisingly, differs from that of Porphyry. Jerome argues that Daniel was an authentic prophet, who lived at the time of king Nabouchodonosor. The Son of Man, of which speaks the prophet, is Christ (*Daniel* 7.13-14). Some of Daniel's prophecies have already been fulfilled, which may give the impression that he was talking about the past, not the future, as Porphyry claimed. For instance, if we compare the historical records to *Daniel* 7.7, the small horn matches the life and characteristics of Antiochus Epiphanes IV. However, Jerome argues, Porphyry failed to realize that only some of the events foretold by Daniel were actually fulfilled by Antiochus; because the king's actions were typical of that of an Antichrist, it might have prompted Porphyry to interpret the passage as he did. But the rest of the prophecy concerns the second coming of Christ, and the fall of the Antichrist.[123] According to Jerome, therefore, Porphyry is wrong when he attributes all events to Antiochus, and associates him with the Antichrist; some events are yet to come, and these will be fulfilled by the Antichrist himself. In order to prove his point, Jerome used the same Greek histories that Porphyry had used to perform his own historical exegesis of *Daniel*. He also used a similar historical method of interpretation of the sacred texts. Porphyry, therefore, greatly influenced Jerome. However, Jerome needs to justify his method and use of profane texts; indeed, he claims that it will be necessary for him to read and cite authorities on Greek history.[124] As B. Nugent put it, 'in the midst of Jerome's exuberance, we can detect a note of subdued triumph when the saint justifies his use of profane authors to substantiate the truth of the prophecies of Daniel'.[125] As a result, although Jerome does not fully explain the rationale of his approach to *Daniel*, it is evident that, to him, a convincing refutation of Porphyry requires that one uses a technique similar to that used by the philosopher. Porphyry's importance to Jerome and his *Commentary on Daniel* may, therefore, be greater than what Jerome claims at the beginning of his prologue. Jerome even reminds his readers that whether or

[123] 4.11.21. '... nostri autem haec omnia de Antichristo prophetari arbitrantur qui ultimo tempore futurus est - cumque eis uideatur illud opponi ... ' (CCL 75A: 914). See also 11.28b-30a; 11.31; 11.42-3.

[124] Prologue. '... et siquando cogimur litterarum saecularium recordari et aliqua ex his dicere quae olim omisimus, non nostrae est uoluntatis sed, ut ita dicam, grauissimae necessitatis ut probemus ea quae ante saecula multa a sanctis prophetis praedicta sunt, tam Graecorum quam Latinorum et aliarum gentium litteris contineri' (CCL 75A: 775).

[125] B.P. Nugent, *Jerome's Prologue to His Commentaries on the Prophets* (Austin, 1992), 240.

not Porphyry was right about Antiochos should be of no consequence, and that the Christians' faith should remain unshattered, for there are clear references to the Antichrist and to the Son of Man in *Daniel*.[126] In Jerome's view, what Porphyry said on the prophet Daniel is not threatening to Christians, as long as no one takes seriously the philosopher's misinterpretation of the passage that should be atttributed to the Antichrist, for this is where he was wrong. This is a clear indication of Jerome's agenda: it is important to answer Porphyry on the Antichrist, and it requires a thorough historical exegesis to counter his argument. Whatever else he argued does not need an answer at this point.

It is thus possible to infer that Porphyry may have written a detailed exegesis of *Daniel*, with an emphasis on ethics and history, and that Jerome only recorded extensive passages of his critique of the Christian interpretation of the Antichrist. In the first ten chapters of his commentary, Jerome hardly mentions Porphyry's attacks, just as he had promised in his preface. Indeed, he merely makes passing comments referring to the philosopher's anti-Christian work.[127] This is especially true when *Commentary on Daniel* as a whole is contrasted with its eleventh chapter; Porphyry is paraphrased extensively in chapter 11, but hardly mentioned in the rest of the work, which points to Jerome's interests.

But there may be other reasons for Jerome's lack of references to the philosopher. One passage of *Daniel* in particular was not commented on by Jerome, even though it was certainly discussed by Porphyry. According to R. Wilken, *Daniel* 9.27 – which discusses the abomination of desolation of the Temple of Jerusalem – is conspicuously absent from Jerome's commentary. Jerome, however, stated in *Commentary on Matthew* 24.16 that Porphyry discussed it in detail. The prophecy of the abomination is very important to Christians; it predicts that the Temple shall be destroyed. In *Matthew* 24.12, Jesus announced, in relation to the prophecy, that the Temple would also never be rebuilt. To Christians, this is most significant, for it hampers the legitimacy

[126] 4.11.44-5 (Nr 43u). '... ut et Porphyrii ostendam calumniam quia haec omnia ignorauit aut nescire se finxit, et, scripturae sanctae difficultatem cuius intellegentiam absque Dei gratia et doctrina maiorum sibi imperitissimi uel maxime uindicant ...' (CCL 75A: 935).

[127] See, for instance, 2.7.7b (Nr 43l). '*Dissimilis autem,* inquit, *erat ceteris bestiis quas uideram prius.* In prioribus enim singula, in hac omnia sunt. *Et habebat cornua decem.* Porphyrius duas posteriores bestias, Macedonum et Romanorum, in uno Macedomun, regno ponit et diuidit: pardum uolens intellegi ipsum Alexandrum, bestiam autem dissimilem ceteris bestiis quattuor Alexandri successores, et deinde usque ad Antiochum cognomento Epiphanen decem reges enumerat fuerint saeuissimi, ipsosque reges non unius ponit regni, uerbi gratia Macedoniae, Syriae, Asiae et Aegypti, sed de diuersis regnis unum efficit regnorum ordinem, ut uidelicet ea quae scripta sunt: *Os loquens ingentia,* non de Antichristo sed de Antiocho dicta credantur' (CCL 75A: 843).

of Judaism. Indeed, if sacrifices are no longer possible, then Judaism loses its validity before God. Wilken suggested that Porphyry's views on the question were absent from chapter 9 of Jerome's *Commentary on Daniel*, because Jerome's work is contemporary to the hot debates which followed Julian's fourth century attempt to rebuild the Temple in Jerusalem. Jerome would thus have voluntarily avoided to discuss this topic.[128]

Because Jerome's commentary closely follows the structure of *Daniel*, not of Porphyry's discourse, it is quite difficult to establish whether or not the philosopher was also commenting by following a similar pattern. This question is not new; for instance, R. Courtray has suggested that Porphyry may well have followed the sequence of *Daniel*, but he is cautious with his choice of words.[129] It is only when the reader hits Jerome's commentary on *Daniel* 11.21 that Porphyry is extensively paraphrased, and that passage is precisely on the Antichrist. Perhaps Jerome was unsatisfied with the refutations of Eusebius, Apollinaris and Methodius on this precise point? Furthermore, Jerome's conclusions on *Daniel* do not differ from those of Porphyry until he reaches *Daniel* 11.21.[130] It seems that he was satisfied with Porphyry's historical exegesis of the text up to that point. According to Courtray, we can infer that Porphyry was thus in agreement with the Christian interpretation.[131]

Jerome gives his readers a few hints as to the content of *Against the Christians*, and the method used by Porphyry. When he comments on *Daniel* 2.40, Jerome follows the traditional interpretation of the Church. The passage mentions a dream of king Nabouchodonosor, in which he witnessed a composite statue being destroyed by a rock, which, in turn, became a big mountain. The Church has identified this rock with Christ, who shall conquer the world and rule over it. However, Jerome explains that both the Jews and Porphyry read the text differently; according to them, the rock, which became a mountain represents the Jewish people; the Jews shall thus destroy all kingdoms and reign until the end of times.[132] This is an indication that Porphyry might have used Jewish exegeses of *Daniel* to compose his, and it parallels Porphyry's more general critique of

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128 Wilken, *Christians*, 142-3.

129 Courtray, *Porphète des temps derniers,* 152. 'On peut légitimement supposer que Porphyre suivait, dans ses objections, l'ordre du texte de *Daniel* – c'est du moins ce qui semble ressortir du *Commentaire de Jérôme.*'

130 4.11.21 (Nr 43p).

131 Courtray, *Porphète des temps derniers,* 157.

132 1.2.31-5. '... *Factus est mons magnus, et impleuit uniuersam terram;* quod Iudaei et impius Porphyrius male ad populum referunt Israel, quem in fine saeculorum uolunt esse fortissimum et omnia regna conterere et regnare in aeternum' (CCL 75A: 795).

Christians, as preserved by Eusebius, according to which Christians have gone astray, and are not faithful to ancestral, Jewish traditions as they should.[133]

In another passage, it appears that Porphyry was attacking the book's historicity, as well as its ethically flawed characters. Porphyry has evidently mocked King Nabouchodonosor for worshipping Daniel, a mere prisoner, and Daniel for failing to humble by accepting the king's gifts.[134] Their behaviours are certainly not worthy of a proud king, or of an honorable prophet, which surely, to Porphyry, points to the falsity of the account itself. Nabouchodonosor never performed such acts, for the simple reason that he never met Daniel; the story is not true. This is not how Jerome read the text, however. According to him, the Babylonian king fully realized how, through Daniel, he was actually worshipping God Himself, just as Alexander the Great had (356-323 B.C.) when he faced the clergy of the high priest Jaddua (the last High Priest mentioned in the OT).[135] Furthermore, Daniel's deeds are not different from that of other prophets; indeed, Joseph and Mordecai did exactly as he did when offered royal gifts.[136] Daniel, as a prophet, must rule through the assistance that he provides for the king, and this is what will free his own people.[137] Attacks on the historicity and ethics of *Daniel* obviously bothered Jerome.

Porphyry also mocked *Daniel* 5.10's bad ethics and dubious historicity. In that passage, a queen interrupts a meeting between king Belshazzar and his nobles to provide them all with some crucial piece of information.[138] Porphyry concluded that she must have been Belshazzar's wife, and that she ridiculed her husband by partaking into the political affairs of his kingdom, while being more knowledgeable than he was.[139] Again, this story is highly unlikely to be

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133 Eusebius, *Evangelical Preparation* 1.2.1-5.

134 1.2.46 (Nr 43e). 'Hunc locum calumniatur Porphyrius: quod numquam superbissimus rex captiuum adorauerit ... ' and 2.48 (Nr 43f). 'Et in hoc calumniator ecclesiae prophetam reprehendere nititur: quare non recusarit munera et honorem Babylonium libenter susceperit ...' (CCL 75A: 795).

135 1.2..47. 'Ergo non tam Danielem quam in Daniele adorat deum qui mysteria reuelauit: quod et Alexandrum regem Macedonum in pontifice Ioiade fecisse legimus ...' (CCL 75A: 796).

136 1.2.28 (Nr 43f – ajout). '... quod quidem et in Ioseph apud Pharaonem et Aegytpum factum legimus et in Mardochaeo apud Assuerum ...' (CCL 75A: 796).

137 1.2.48 (Nr 43f – ajout). '... ut in utraque gente haberent captiui et peregrinantes ex Iudaeis solatia ...' (CCL 75A: 796-7).

138 2.5.10 (Nr 43j). 'Regina autem pro re quae acciderat regi et optimatibus eius conuiuii domum ingressa est, et proloquens ait' (CCL 75A: 824).

139 2.5.10. '... euigilet ergo Porphyrius qui eam Baldasaris somniauit uxorem, et illudit plus scire quam maritum' (CCL 75A: 824).

historical. To answer Porphyry, Jerome appeals here to the interpretation of the Jewish historian Josephus (ca. 37-101 B.C.), as well as that of Origen. According to Josephus, the queen in question is the king's grandmother, not his wife, while according to Origen, she is his mother; both interpretations conveniently justify the incident, for a mother or a grandmother had authority over her son or grandson, as opposed to a wife over her husband.[140] The three above mentioned passages are very specific, but they do not show that Porphyry may have conducted a detailed exegesis of *Daniel*. They show, however, that he may have criticized its first ten chapters on points of ethics and historicity by using precise examples.

In order to date and interpret *Daniel*, Jerome tells us that Porphyry used Callinicus Sutorius (whom Jerome calls simply Sutorius), the *Book of the Maccabeans* and the historian Josephus. Porphyry thus identified the small horn of *Daniel* 7.7 – that is, the fourth beast in Daniel's vision – as Antiochus Epiphanes IV, as opposed to the Antichrist, like the Christians did. It follows that the one who obtained his kingdom fraudulently in *Daniel* 11.21 can only be this same Antiochus, brother of king Seleucus IV Philopator (187-75 B.C.), and son of the king of Syria Antiochus III the Great (223-187 B.C.). Antiochus IV ruled over Syria for eleven years after he had assassinated his brother.[141] According to Jerome, Porphyry then followed the lines of Callinicus Sutorius to identify the king of the South – who fought Antiochus IV – with Ptolemy VI Philometor, ruler of Egypt from 180 to 145 B.C., who also was the son of Cleopatra and the nephew of Antiochus IV (*Daniel* 11.25-6).[142] Daniel foretold that the king of

[140] 2.5.10. 'Hanc Iosephus auiam Baldasaris, Origenes matrem scribunt, unde et nouit praeterita quae rex ignorabat ...' (CCL 75A: 824).

[141] 4.11.21 (Nr 43u). '*Et stabit in loco eius despectus, et non tribuetur ei honor regius; et ueniet clam; et obtinebit regnum in fraudulentia.* Hucusque historiae ordo sequitur et inter Porphyrium ac nostros nulla contentio est. Cetera quae sequuntur usque ad finem uoluminis, ille interpretatur super persona Antiochi – qui cognominatus est Epiphanes – fratre Seleuci filio Antiochi Magni, qui post Seleucum undecim annis regnauit in Syria obtinuitque Iudaeam, sub quo legis Dei persecutio et Machabaeorum bella narrantur ...' (CCL 75A: 914-15).

[142] 4.11.21. '"Stabit" inquiunt in loco Seleuci, frater eius Antiochus Epiphanes cui primum, ab his qui in Syria Ptolomaeo fauebant, non dabatur honor regius, sed et postea, simulatione clementiae, obtinuit regnum Syriae. Et brachia pugnantis Polomaei et uniuersa uastantis, expugnata sunt a fade Antiochi atque contrita. "Brachia" autem "fortitudinem" uocat, unde et "manus" appellatur "exercitus multitude". Et non solum, ait, Ptolomaeum uicit in fraudulentia, sed ducem quoque foederis, hoc est Iudam Machabaeum, superauit dolis - siue quod dicit hoc est: cum ipse obtulisset pacem Ptolomaeo et fuisset dux foederis, postea ei est molitus insidias; Ptolomaeum autem hic non Epiphanen significat qui quintus

the South would be defeated by a great army, and this is exactly what happened to Ptolemy VI. According to ancient historians, Antiochus, after he was expelled from Egypt, conquered Judaea, and then pillaged and polluted the Temple. He then proceded to fight the king of the South, however the Romans prevented him from succeeding. The *Book of the Maccabaeans* records how Antiochus vented his rage on the sanctuary, but was greeted by traitors. He then persecuted the Jews, as well as the Laws of God, and the Jews were thus forced to worship an idol.[143] Porphyry thinks that this episode corresponds to the abomination of desolation, for it lasted three and a half years. The *Book of the Maccabaeans*, in turn, records the suffering of the Jews until the Jewish rebel Matthatias, and later on his son Judas, freed them. According to Daniel's vision, the small horn shall be uprooted by a great might, which Porphyry identified as Judas Maccabae. *Daniel* was thus written to raise the morale of the persecuted Jews, who shall then rise under the leadership of Mattathias and Judas. The author of the sacred text, therefore, used a metaphor when he discussed the resurrection of the dead, and the story corresponds to that recorded by Josephus. The Greek historians Polybius (ca. 200-118 B.C.) and Diodorus Siculus (90-21 B.C.) recorded that Antiochus pillaged the temple of Diana, which led to his demise. This confirms, according to Porphyry, what Daniel had prophesied, that is, Antiochus turned against all the gods and was thus subjected to God's wrath.[144]

Jerome, however, is only interested in those arguments as long as they support his thesis. He claims that history does not match some of the deeds accomplished by Antiochus, for only part of *Daniel* 11.21 is recording the past; the rest is foretelling the coming of the Antichrist.[145] Jerome's exegesis of *Daniel*

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regnauit in Aegypto, sed Ptolomaeum Philometora filium Cleopatrae sororis Antiochi cuius hic auunculus erat; et cum, post mortem Cleopatrae, sororis Antiochi cuius hic auunculus erat; et cum, post mortem Cleopatrae, Eulaius eunuchus nutritius Philometoris et Leneus Aegyptum regerent et repeterent Syriam quam Antiochus fraude occupauerat, ortum est inter auunculum et puerum Ptolomaeum proelium; cumque inter Pelusium et montem Casium proelium commisissent, uicti sunt duces Ptolomaei – ' (CCL 75A: 915-16).

143 4.11.21. 'Porro Antiochus, parcens puero et amicitias simulans, ascendit Memphim, et ibi ex more Aegypti regnum accipiens puerique rebus prouidere se dicens, cum modico populo omnem Aegyptum subiugauit et abundantes atque uberrimas ingressus est ciuitates, fecitque quae non fecerunt patres eius et patres patrum illius: nullus enim regum Syriae ita uastauit Aegyptum et omnes eorum diuitias dissipauit, et tam callidus fuit, ut prudentes cogitationes eorum qui duces pueri erant, sua fraude subuerteret.' Haec, Porphyrius sequens Sutorium sermone laciniosissimo prosecutus est, quae nos breui compendio diximus' (CCL 75A: 916-17).

144 4.11.21-36 (Nr 43u).

145 See Courtray (2009), 157-63, for more detailed explanations.

11.21 is thus literal and in agreement with the Church's tradition, but he used Porphyry's method of historical exegesis to counter his attacks and prove him wrong. Indeed, according to Jerome, Porphyry simply misread the works of historians, as well as Scriptures, in order to discredit Daniel as a prophet. Jerome explains that in *Daniel* 11.21, the prophet draws the list of kings and their deeds, and then goes straight to Seleucus and the end of times. According to Jerome, it is a well-known fact that Scriptures regularly leave out a few historical details; a reader should thus not try to match all prophecies with history, as Porphyry tried to do.[146] Therefore, only some of the deeds prophesied by Daniel can rightly be attributed to Antiochus, such as the pollution of the Temple and the persecution of the saints. But what Antiochus never accomplished shall be fulfilled by the Antichrist. Instead of looking into history books to make sense of *Daniel*, Porphyry should have understood the metaphorical language of the prophet. Indeed, he wrongly identified the two uprooted small horns with the Egyptian kings Ptolemy VI (180-45 B.C.) and VII (145-16 B.C.), for those kings had died long before Antiochus was born. Furthermore, the Armenian king Artaxias (190-59 B.C.) continued to rule after the war against Antiochus, therefore Porphyry is also mistaken on this.[147] According to Jerome, the traditional interpretation of the Church is correct; this is a prophecy announcing that ten kings shall share the remnants of the Roman empire. The eleventh king – or the small horn of Daniel's vision – shall then appear and vanquish the kings of Egypt, North Africa and Ethiopia. Its eyes represent the Antichrist, or the sinful man.[148]

[146] 4.11.21. '... nostri autem haec omnia de Antichristo prophetari arbitrantur qui ultimo tempore futurus est - cumque eis uideatur illud opponi: quare tantos in medio dereliquerit sermo propheticus a Seleuco usque ad consummationem mundi, respondent ... cumque multa, quae postea lecturi et expositurí sumus, super Antiochi persona conueniant, typum eum uolunt fuisse Antichristi, et quae in illo ex parte praecesserint, in Antichristo ex toto esse complenda, et hunc esse morem scripturae sanctae ...' (CCL 75A: 914-15).

[147] 2.7.7c-8 (Nr 43m). 'Frustra Porphyrius cornu paruulum, quod post decem cornua ortum est: Ἐπιφανήν Antiochum suspicatur, et de decem cornibus tria euulsa cornua: sextum Ptolemaeum cognomento Philometorem et septimum Ptolomaeum Εὐεργέτην et Artarxiam regem Armeniae, quorum priores multo antequam Antiochus nasceretur mortui sunt' (CCL 75A: 843-2).

[148] 2.7.7c-8. '... Contra Artaxiam uero dimicasse quidem Antiochum nouimus, sed illum in regno pristino permansisse -. Ergo dicamus quod omnes scriptores ecclesiastici tradiderunt: in consummatione mundi, quando regnum destruendum est Romanorum, decem futuros reges qui orbem romanum inter se diuidant, et undecimum surrecturum esse paruulum regem qui tres reges de decem regibus superaturus sit, id est Aegyptiorum regem et Africae et Aethiopiae sicut in consequentibus manifestius discimus, quibus interfectis etiam septem alii reges uictori colla submittent. Et ecce, ait, oculi quasi oculi hominis erant in cornu isto, ne eum putemus, iuxta quorundam opinionem, uel diabolum esse uel daemonem, sed

Daniel 11.21 does not speak of Ptolemy Philometor, as Porphyry claims, but of the Antichrist, who shall be born amongst the Jews of Babylon, and who shall be despised.[149] By his deceitful words, however, he shall rise to power and defeat Rome. He shall then uproot the three horns of the fourth beast, that is, the kings of Egypt, Libya and Ethiopia.[150] Jerome uses the works of historians to show that Antiochus neither ruled over Libya, nor Ethiopia, while Daniel's king took them both.[151] Antiochus thus only partly fulfilled some of the prophecies. The Antichrist, according Jerome, shall then take over Israel and other provinces.[152] He shall pretend to be the guardian of the Laws of God, and shall surround

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unum de hominibus in quo totus satanas habitaturnus est corporaliter. *Et os loquens ingentia*: Est enim *homo peccati, filius perditionis, ita ut in templo Dei sedere audeat faciens se quasi Deum*' (CCL 75A: 844).

149 4.11.21. 'Nostri autem et melius interpretantur et rectius: quod in fine mundi haec sit facturus Antichristus, qui consurgere habet de modica gente, id est de populo Iudaeorum, et tam humilis erit atque despectus, ut ei non detur honor regius; et per insidias et fraudulentiam obtineat principatum; et brachia pugnantis populi romani expugnentur ab eo et conterantur; et hoc faciet quia simulabit se esse ducem foederis, hoc est legis et testamenti Dei. Et ingredietur urbes ditissimas, et faciet quae non fecerunt patres eius et patres patrum illius – nullus enim Iudaeorum absque Antichristo in toto umquam orbe regnauit –, et contra firmissimas cogitationes sanctorum inibit consilium, facietque uniuersa usque ad tempus donec eum Dei uoluntas facere ista permiserit'; (CCL 75A: 917) and 11.25-6. 'Nostri autem secundum superiorem sensum interpretantur omnia de Antichristo, qui nasciturus est de populo Iudaeorum et, de Babylone uenturus, primum superaturus est regem Aegypti qui est unus de tribus cornibus de quibus antea iam diximus' (CCL 75A: 918).

150 4.11.28b-30. 'De Antichristo nullus ambigit quin pugnaturus sit aduersus testamentum sanctum et primum contra regem Aegypti dimicans, Romanorum pro eis auxilio terreatur; haec autem sub Antiocho Epiphane in imaginem praecesserunt: ut rex sceleratissimus qui persecutus est populum Dei, praefiguret Antichristum qui Christi populum persecuturus est unde multi nostrorum putant, ob saeuitiae et turpitudinis magnitudinem, Domitianum, Neronem, Antichristum fore –' (CCL 75A: 920).

151 4.11.42-3. '*Et mittet manum suam in terras, et terra Aegypti non effugiet ; et dominabitur thesaurorum auri atque argenti et in omnibus pretiosis Aegypti, per Libyas quoque et Aethiopas transibit.* Haec Antiochum fecisse ex parte legimus. Sed quod sequitur: *Per Libyas et Aethiopas transibit*, magis nostri asserunt Antichristo conuenire: Antiochus enim Libyam – quam plerique Africam intellegunt – Aethiopiamque non tenuit – nisi forte quia in ipso climate sunt prouinciae Aegypti et longe per deserta uicinae, captis Aegyptiis, etiam istae prouinciae conturbatae sunt –; unde non dicit quod ceperit eas, sed per Libyas Aethiopiamque transierit' (CCL 75A: 930).

152 4.11.40-1a. 'Nostri autem, ad Antichristum et ista referentes, dicunt: quod primum pugnaturus sit contra regem austri, id est Aegyptum, et postea Libyas et Aethiopas superaturus – quae de decem cornibus tria contrita cornuasupra legimus –, et, quia uenturus sit in terram Israel, et multae ei uel urbes uel prouinciae daturae manus' (CCL 75A: 929).

himself with those who will desire to betray God.[153] He will rule over the world and the saints (those who will refuse to follow him) until God wills it. Those who will resist him will flee and attempt to combat him, but the real victory shall come with the second coming of Christ.[154] What Porphyry identified with the fall of Antiochus, as recorded by profane historians, actually represents the fall of the Antichrist, conquered by God.[155] Porphyry was therefore partly wrong when he allegorized *Daniel*, and Christians can preserve their faith in the eternal reign of the Messiah as foretold by the prophet.

While Jerome is correcting Porphyry's mistakes, he also hints at the method that the philosopher used to criticize *Daniel*. Porphyry adapted history as told by historians to make it fit with the content of *Daniel*, in order to prove that the book is not foretelling the future, but is rather telling the past. Jerome's discussion

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153 4.11.21. '... Nostri autem haec omnia de Antichristo prophetari arbitrantur qui ultimo tempore futurus est – cumque eis uideatur illud opponi: quare tantos in medio dereliquerit sermo propheticus a Seleuco usque ad consummationem mundi, respondent: quod et in priori historia, ubi de regibus persicis dicebatur, quattuor tantum reges post Cyrum Persarum posuerit et, multis in medio transilitis, repente uenerit ad Alexandrum regem Macedonum, et hanc esse scripturae sanctae consuetudinem: non uniuersa narrare, sed ea quae maiora uideantur exponere –, cumque multa, quae postea lecturi et exposituri sumus, super Antiochi persona conueniant, typum eum uolunt fuisse Antichristi, et quae in illo ex parte praecesserint, in Antichristo ex toto esse complenda, et hunc esse morem scripturae sanctae: ut futurorum ueritatem praemittat in typis – iuxta illud quod de Domino Saluatore in septuagesimo primo psalmo dicitur qui praenotatur Salomonis, et omnia. quae de eo dicuntur Salomoni non ualent conuenire ...' (CCL 75A: 914-15) and 3.11.28b-30. 'De Antichristo nullus ambigit quin pugnaturus sit aduersus testamentum sanctum et primum contra regem Aegypti dimicans, Romanorum pro eis auxilio terreatur; haec autem sub Antiocho Epiphane in imaginem praecesserunt: ut rex sceleratissimus qui persecutus est populum Dei, praefiguret Antichristum qui Christi populum persecuturus est unde multi nostrorum putant, ob saeuitiae et turpitudinis magnitudinem, Domitianum, Neronem, Antichristum fore –' (CCL 75A: 920).

154 4.11.33. 'Quae futura sub Antichristo nemo quis dubitet, multis resistentibus potentiae eius et in diuersa fugientibus'; (CCL 75A: 923) and 3.11.34-5. '... lege Machabaeorum libros – ; haec autem omnia idcirco sunt facta: ut probentur et eligantur sancti et dealbentur usque ad tempus praefinitum, quia in aliud tempus erat dilata uictoria. Sub Antichristo paruum auxilium nostri intellegi uolunt: quia congregati sancti resistent ei et utentur auxilio paruulo, et postea de eruditis corruent plurimi; et hoc flet ut, quasi in fornace, conflentur et eligantur et dealbentur donec ueniat tempus praefinitum, quia uera uictoria in aduentu Christi erit' (CCL 75A: 923-4).

155 4.11.36. 'Nos autem dicimus, etiamsi acciderit ei, ideo accidisse: quia in sanctos Dei multam exercuerit crudelitatem et polluerit templum eius – non enim pro eo quod conatus est facere et, acta paenitentia, implere desiuit, sed pro eo quod fecit punitus esse credendus est – ' (CCL 75A: 926).

of the abomination of the desolation (*Daniel* 12) further highlights Porphyry's method. According to Daniel, the desolation lasted for time, times, and half a time. Both Jerome and Porphyry interpreted this duration as meaning three and a half years. However, Jerome does not believe that this desolation stemmed from any of Antiochus' actions against the Temple.[156] To prove his point, he used the same sources as Porphyry, that is, he cited from the *Book of the Maccabaeans*, as well as Josephus.[157] Both *Maccabaeans* and Josephus say that the desolation which followed Antiochus's actions lasted three years, not three and a half years. Porphyry, therefore, clearly tampered with the historical records in order to make them match his thesis. This, according to Jerome, points to his bad faith.

Porphyry does not think that a literal interpretation of *Daniel* is appropriate. According to Jerome, this approach to the text led him to struggle with the details he could not match with reality. For instance, Porphyry could not find any evidence for the existence of the sacred mountain Apedno mentioned in *Daniel* 11.44-5. This is the mountain, situated between two seas, where the Antichrist shall die, according to Christians. Jerome thinks that as a result, Porphyry tried to avoid discussing the conflict between Antiochus and the North and the East of *Daniel* 11.44-5.[158] The philosopher identified this story with the wars between

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[156] 4.12.7a. '... legimus in Machabaeorum libris – Iosephus quoque in eandem consentit opinionem – quod tribus annis templum pollutum fuerit in Hiemsalem et in eo Iouis idolum steterit, sub Antiocho Epiphane centesimo quadragesimo quinto anno regni Macedonum a Seleuco: mense eiusdem anni nono usque ad mensem nonum centesimi quadragesimi octaui anni, qui faciunt annos tres; sub Antichristo autem non tres anni, sed tres et semis – hoc est mille ducenti nonaginta dies desolationis templi et euersionis – futuri esse dicuntur – ' (CCL 75A: 941) and 3.12.11. ' '... ut diximus, liber tribus tantum annis fuisse commemorant; ex quo perspicuum est: tres istos et semis annos de Antichristi dicit temporibus, qui tribus et semis annis, hoc est mille ducentis nonaginta diebus, sanctos persecuturus est et postea corruiturus in monte inclyto et sancto. A tempore igitur ἐνδελεχισμοῦ – quod nos interpretati sumus "iuge sacrificium" – quando Antichristus orbem obtinens Dei cultui interdixerit, usque ad interfectionem eius, tres semis anni, id est mille ducenti et nonaginta dies, complebuntur' (CCL 75A: 943).

[157] 4.12.11. 'Hos mille ducentos nonaginta dies Porphyrius in tempore uult Antiochi, et in desolatione templi esse completos quam et Iosephus et Machabaeorum' (CCL 75A: 943).

[158] 4.11.44-5 (Nr 43u). 'Haec quae manifesta sunt praeterit, et de Iudaeis asserit prophetari quos usque hodie semire cognoscimus; et dicit eum, qui sub nomine Danielis scripsit librum, ad refocillandam spem suorum fuisse mentitum: non quo omnem historiam futuram nosse potuerit, sed quo iam facta memoraret; et in ultimae uisionis calumniis immoratur, "flumina" ponens pro "mari" et "montem inclytum et sanctum Apedno" quem ubi legerit nullam potest proferre historiam ... ut et Porphyrii ostendam calumniam quia haec omnia ignorauit aut nescire se finxit, et, scripturae sanctae difficultatem cuius intellegentiam absque Dei gratia et doctrina maiorum sibi imperitissimi uel maxime uindicant – ...' (CCL 75A: 932-5).

the Aradians – Jerome says they lived closed to Phoenicia – and the Armenians, so that he could justify the location of the mountain Apedno, which lies between the rivers Tigrus and Euphrates, where the army of Antiochus was based.[159] This is where he pillaged the Temple of Diana, before dying, guilt-stricken, in Persia.[160] Jerome, however, reminds us that the sacred text mentions two seas, not two rivers. Furthermore, Porphyry used the version of Theodotion – which Jerome considers flawed – for his exegesis, when he should have used the Septuagint.[161] And whether Porphyry was right or wrong about the two rivers, he still failed to explain why the mountain in question was sacred. Jerome argues that this 'mountain' is not even mentioned in the Septuagint; the word used means, either in Latin or Greek, 'his throne', therefore the text should be read literally here, not metaphorically to mean an actual 'mountain'.[162] Porphyry's historical method of allegory thus led him to misinterpret *Daniel*. Indeed, he was not even able to find a proper historical reference for what he believed should be interpreted as a 'mountain'.[163]

When it comes to the End of Times in *Daniel* 11.40-45, Porphyry's and Jerome's interpretations are also irreconcilable. *Daniel* 7.13-14 mentions a Son of Man who will be granted an eternal kingdom. In *Daniel* 11.40, it is written that this Son of Man will defeat all kings. According to Porphyry, the 'Son of Man' is an allegory for the man who freed the Jews from Antiochus, namely Judas.

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159 4.11.44-5. 'Et in hoc loco Porphyrius tale nescio quid de Antiocho somniat: "Pugnans" inquit "contra Aegyptios et Libyas Aethiopasque pertransiens, audiet sibi ab aquilone et oriente proelia concitari; unde et regrediens capiet Aradios resistentes et omnem in littore Phoenicis uastabit prouinciam ... ' (CCL 75A: 931).

160 4.11.44-5 (Nr 43u). '"*Et ueniet*" inquit "*usque ad summitatem montis*, in Elymaide prouincia, quae est ultima Persarum ad orientem regio; ibique uolens templum Dianae spoliare quod habebat infinita donaria, fugatus a barbaris est qui mira ueneratione fanum illud suspiciebant, et mortuus est maerore consumptus in Tabes oppido Persidis"' (CCL 75A: 931-2).

161 4.11.44-5. '... Theodotio uero sic uertit: *Et figet tabernaculum suum Apedno inter maria in monte Saba sancto, et ueniet usque ad partem eius* ... soli Septuaginta, omni se nominis quaestione liberantes, interpretati sunt: *Et statuet tabernaculum suum tunc inter maria et montem uoluntatis sanctum, et ueniet hora consummationis eius* ...' (CCL 75A: 934-5). For a discussion of Porphyry's sources, see also Cook, *The Interpretation of the Old Testament in Greco-Roman Paganism* (Tübingen: 2004), pp. 188-91 and 193-5.

162 4.11.44-5. '"Apedno" uerbum compositum est quod, si diuidas, intellegi potest θρόνου ἀυτου id est "solii sui", et est sensus: "Et figet tabernaculum suum et throni sui inter maria super montem inclytum et sanctum"' (CCL 75A: 934).

163 14.1.44-5. '... ut et Porphyrii ostendam calumniam quia haec omnia ignorauit aut nescire se finxit, et, scripturae sanctae difficultatem cuius intellegentiam absque Dei gratia et doctrina maiorum sibi imperitissimi uel maxime uindicant ...' (CCL 75A: 935).

This is further evidence that his downdating of *Daniel* is accurate. The *Book of Daniel*, indeed, should be read as an historical text, which records allegorically the Maccabaean revolt and thus needs deciphering. To Jerome, however, the text should be read literally. Judas has certainly not come on heavenly clouds as the Son of Man, in order to eternally rule over all peoples, as Daniel claims;[164] the text is rather referring to Christ.[165] Jerome also thinks that the passage on the Resurrection of the dead should be read literally. The Resurrection shall happen just as told in *Daniel*, that is, while the Righteous will be granted eternal life, the others will be shamed.[166] Jerome is thus challenging Porphyry's allegorical and historical expertise.

Porphyry's downdating of *Daniel* also led him to misidentify key historical characters from *Daniel*. For instance, Jerome explains that in *Daniel* 9, verses 1 and 2 pertains to the king Darius the Mede, who conquered the Chaldeans and Babylonians along with Cyrus, king of Persia. Porphyry, however, thinks

[164] 2.7.14b. '*Et omnis populus, tribus ac linguae ipsi seruient: potestas eius potestas aeterna quae non auferetur, et regnum eius quod non corrumpetur.* Hoc cui potest hominum conuenire, respondeat Porphyrius. aut quis iste tam potens sit qui cornu paruum – quem Antiochum interpretatur – fregerit atque contriuerit; si responderit Antiochi principes a Iuda Machabaeo fuisse superatos, docere debet quomodo cum nubibus caeli ueniat quasi filius hominis, et offeratur uetusto dierum, et detur eipotestas et regnum, et omnes populi ac tribus seruiant illi, et potestas eius aeterna sit quae nullo fine claudatur' (CCL 75A: 848); and 2.7.18b. '*Et obtinebunt regnum usque in saeculum, et in saeculum saeculorum.* Si hoc de Machabaeis intellegitur, doceat, qui ista contendit, quomodo regnum eorum perpetuum sit' (CCL 75A: 849).

[165] 2.7.27a. '*Regnum autem et potestas et magnitudo regni quae est super omne caelum.* Hoc de Christi imperio quod sempiternum est' (CCL 75A: 850).

[166] 4.12.1. 'Hactenus Porphyrius utcumque se tenuit, et tam nostrorum imperitus quam suorum male eruditis imposuit; de hoc capitulo quid dicturus est – in quo mortuorum describitur resurrectio, "aliis suscitatis in uitam aeternam, et aliis in opprobrium sempiternum" –? Non potest dicere qui fuerint, sub Antiocho, "fulgentes quasi splendor firmamenti, et alii quasi stellae in perpetuas aeternitates"... Tempore autem Antichristi talem tribulationem fore qualis numquam fuit ex eo quo gentes esse coeperunt, uerius intellegitur; ponamus enim uicisse Lysiam qui uictus est, et penitus oppressos esse Iudaeos qui uicerunt: numquid fuit tanta tribulatio quanta eo tempore quo Hierusalem capta est a Babyloniis templumque subuersum et omnis populus ductus in captiuitatem? Oppresso igitur Antichristo et spiritu Saluatoris exstincto, saluabitur populus qui scriptus fuerit in libro Dei; et, pro diuersitate meritorum: alii resurgent in uitam aeternam, alii in opprobrium sempiternum, magistri habebunt similitudinem caeli, et qui alios erudierint stellarum fulgori comparabuntur: non enim sufficit scire sapientiam nisi et alios erudias, tacitusque sermo doctrinae, alium non aedificans, mercedem otii recipere non potest ...' (CCL 75A: 936-8).

that the sacred text refers to Darius, under whose rule the Temple was built.[167] Later on in his commentary, Jerome identifies the successor of the king of the North from *Daniel* 11.20 with Seleucus IV Philopator (187-75 B.C.), son of Antiochus III the Great, king of Syria (223-187 B.C.). Porphyry, on the other hand, had identified him with Ptolemy V Epiphanius, king of Egypt (205-180 B.C.).[168] Jerome, therefore, clearly used history to challenge Porphyry.

While Jerome criticizes the Church for reading the *Daniel* version of Theodotion, as opposed to the Septuagint's, we also learn that this is what Porphyry did too, which may have contributed to his opinions being more easily discredited by Christians.[169] As J. Cameron explains, 'disputes over the extent to which the historical person of Jesus fulfilled the prophecies that Jews had discerned in their Scriptures provided the primary cause of the emergence of an alternative 'Way' or 'Ways'.[170] The Septuagint version was adopted as canonical by the early Latin Church, for it recognizes its authenticity, as well as its divine inspiration.[171] Because the Jews have rejected Christ, the versions of Scriptures that pre-dates the first parousia were believed to be more divine than the later Hebrew versions circulating during Porphyry's times.[172] According to Jerome, Theodotion (second c. A.D.) was an Ebionite Jew, who therefore did not believe in the coming of Christ.[173] Origen, in his Greek edition of the Old Testament (Hexapla), noted the differences between Aquila's version, Symmachus', the Septuagint, Theodotion's and the Hebrew's.[174] Because the Greeks have access

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[167] 3.9.1. '*In anno primo Darii filii Assueri de semine Medorum, qui imperauit super regnum Chaldaeorum.* Hic est Darius qui cum Cyro Chaldaeos Babyloniosque superauit; ne putemus illum Darium cuius secundo anneau templum aedificatum est – quod Porphyrius suspicatur, ut annos Danielis extendat –, uel eum qui ab Alexandro Macedonum rege superatus est' (CCL 75A : 860).

[168] 3.11.20. 'Porro Porphyrius hunc non uult esse Seleucum, sed Ptolomaeum Epiphanen qui Seleuco sit molitus insidias et aduersum eum exercitum praepararit ...' (CCL 75A : 913).

[169] See, for instance, 4.11.44-5. '... quia secutus est Theodotionis interpretationem ...' (CCL 75A: 931).

[170] J. Cameron, 'The Rabbinic Vulgate?', in *Jerome of Stridon: His Life, Writing and Legacy*, eds. A. Cain and J. Lössl. Farnham: Ashgate, 2009, p. 117.

[171] A. Kotzé, 'Augustine, Jerome, and the Septuagint', in *Septuagint and Reception: essays prepared for the Association for the Study of the Septuagint in South Africa*, ed. J. Cook (Leiden: Brill, 2009), p. 246.

[172] J. Braverman, *Jerome's Commentary on Daniel. A Study of Comparative Jewish and Christian Interpretations of the Hebrew Bible* (Washington: 1978), pp. 15-17.

[173] Jerome, *De virus illustribus* 54.

[174] N.F. Marcos, *The Septuagint in Context: Introduction to the Greek Version of the Bible* (Leiden: 2000), pp. 208-9.

to what he thought was a better version of *Daniel*, Jerome decided to provide the Latin world with an equally good version of most of the OT, in light of the work of Origen on Hebrew.[175]

Because Jerome tells us about his views on Theodotion, and because he can further criticize Porphyry for having read it, it becomes clear that Jerome did not mean to simply answer Porphyry in his commentary, and that he had a bigger agenda. When Jerome discusses the authorship of *Daniel*, he does mention Porphyry's critique, but he also discusses the arguments brought up by other Church Fathers. Jerome records how Porphyry believed that the sacred book had been composed by a variety of anonymous authors, all contemporary to Antiochus, and that their texts had later been collected to produce the book.[176] Porphyry noted that the story of Susanna contained a wordplay, which is characteristic to Greek, not Hebrew. This implies that a part of the text was originally written in Greek and, to Porphyry, it proves that there was more than one author to *Daniel*. To refute Porphyry, Jerome rehashes the argument made by Eusebius and Apollinaris, that is, the story of Susanna is merely apocryphal, and should thus not be used to draw conclusions on *Daniel*. The same goes for the story of Bel and the Dragon; because none of these texts are canonical, Jerome simply ignores them, and leaves them out of his commentary.[177]

In *Commentary on Daniel*, it seems that Jerome was equally – if not more – concerned with critiques directed against his own *corpus*. In support of his views, Jerome uses the authority of prominent Church Fathers, namely Origen, Eusebius and Apollinaris, as well as other theologians, whose names he does not mention, who have all challenged the canonicity of the stories of Susanna and Bel and the Dragon.[178] Indeed, some have accused Jerome of considering those tales as apocryphal, when he signalled them in the Vulgate as not belonging

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[175] R.G. Wooden, 'The Role of the "Septuagint" in the Formation of the Biblical Canon', in *Exploring the Origins of the Bible: Canon Formation in Historical, Literary, and Theological Perspective*, eds C.A. Evans and E. Tov (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), pp. 129-46.

[176] Prologue (Nr 43b); and 1.3.98 (Nr 43g). 'Epistola Nabuchodonosor in prophetae uolumine ponitur, ut non fictus ab alio postea liber B sicut sycophanta mentitur –, sed ipsius Danielis esse credatur' (CCL 75A: 809).

[177] Prologue (Nr 43b). 'Cui et Eusebius et Apollinaris pari sententia responderunt, Susannae Belisque ac draconis fabulas non contineri in hebraico, sed partem esse ... ' (CCL 75A: 773).

[178] Prologue (Nr 43b). '... cum et Origenes et Eusebius et Apollinaris aliique ecclesiastici uiri et doctores Graeciae has, ut dixi, uisiones non haberi apud Hebraeos fateantur, nec se debere respondere Porphyrio pro his quae nullam scripturae sanctae auctoritatem praebeant' (CCL 75A: 774).

to the Hebrew version of the OT.[179] Jerome's position on the Jewish biblical tradition was thus more radical than Origen's, his predecessor, for he refused to consider any text absent from the Hebrew version.[180] Origen defends his dual position – that is, he respects both the authority of Scriptures and the Church's tradition – in a letter addressed to Julius Africanus.[181] To Jerome, however, the Hebrew version only should be considered as canonical, and the motivation for his explanations on the various versions of the OT can be found in his opponents' criticism.[182] Jerome's attitude toward the Hebrew version could also have served to silence Jewish attacks on the Christian version of the OT. In any case, Jerome's position *vis-à-vis* his critics allows us to find out more about the content of *Against the Christians*.

Finally, Jerome also responded to non-Christian critics. In *Commentary on Daniel*, Jerome mentions opponents, whom he does not name, and who agreed with Porphyry's identification of the small horn of *Daniel*'s beast with Antiochos Epiphanius IV, as opposed to an Antichrist. Jerome refers to those people as Porphyry and the 'other [adversaries of Christians]'.[183] Here Jerome could possibly be referring to the school of Plotinus, for he had commissioned Porphyry to write against a group of Christian Gnostics.[184] It is also possible that Porphyry's argument was being commonly used to criticize Christianity during Jerome's time, and that Jerome, when he mentions those 'adversaries', actually means contemporaries, who are rehashing the philosopher's views. This, as we shall see later, is the case with Augustine as well.

Jerome seems to clearly differentiate between the critiques which are originally Porphyrian, and other critiques. There is a group of adversaries in *Commentary on Daniel*, which is not associated with Porphyry. Some have presumably independently challenged the historicity of a few passages from *Daniel* regarding the king Nabouchodonosor. Those critics find it impossible to

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179 Prologue. '... *Prophetiae Abacuc filii Iesu de tribu Leui*, sicut iuxta LXX interpretes in titulo eiusdem Belis fabulae ponitur: *Homo quidam erat sacerdos, nomine Daniel filius Abda, conuiua regis Babylonis*, cum Danielem et tres pueros de tribu Iuda fuisse, sancta scriptura testetur. Vnde et nos ante annos plurimos cum uerteremus Danielem, has uisiones obelo praenotauimus, significantes eas in hebraico non haberi; et miror quosdam μεψιμοίρους indignari mihi, quasi ego decurtauerim librum ...' (CCL 75A: 773-4).

180 Braverman, *Jerome's Commentary on Daniel*, 44.

181 Origen, *Letter to Africanus* 5; the letter is mentioned by Eusebius, *Church History* 6.31.1.

182 Braverman, *Jerome's Commentary on Daniel*, 47.

183 4.11.36 (Nr 43p). 'Porphyrius autem et ceteri qui sequuntur eum, de Antiocho Epiphane dici arbitrantur ...' (CCL 75A: 925).

184 Porphyry, *Vita Plotini* 16.

believe that someone of his rank and status could have been treated so poorly as to be rendered 'bad' for seven years and have his throne returned to him by the grace of God, whom he would then have glorified.[185] On this occasion, Jerome also defended Scriptures against those detractors by using a historical method of exegesis. He was thus not solely concerned with answering Porphyry in his commentary, but also with answering different sets of Christian and personal opponents. In any case, this example is interesting to us, for it makes it possible to be confident about the authorship of the Porphyrian fragments preserved in Jerome.

To conclude, from what he preserved of Porphyry, we can see what concerned Jerome, but that does not always tell us about what concerned the philosopher. Porphyry probably did engage with texts, but we cannot claim that Porphyry did a verse-by-verse commentary. The contextualization of the fragments of *Against the Christians* shows to what extent these are embedded in the broader work of Jerome, based on his interest in textual analysis, his concern for defending the Old and New Testaments, and his Christian faith. The length of the fragments dedicated to the heads of the Church and to the Antichrist indicates that Jerome considered it more important to cite Porphyry on these topics than on, say, the attack on the apostles and evangelists.

But while some fragments need to be re-inserted in their 'cover-text', others need serious re-assessment, as is the case with the Augustinian fragments. We shall thus next concentrate on the *Letter* 102, which, although in great part challenged by several scholars, continues to be an integral part of any collection of Porphyry's *Against the Christians*.

[185] 1.2.23a. '*Nibi, Deus patrum meorum, confiteor teque laudo.* Ne sui uideatur meriti quod impetrauit, refert ad patrum iustitiam et ad ueritatem Dei, qui seminis eorum etiam in captiuitate miseretur' (CCL 75A: 789).

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Chapter 4
Augustine's Letter 102

The case of the Augustinian fragments is not as straightforward as actual fragment collections would have us believe. Upon looking closely at Augustine's letter 102 to Deogratias, as well as his *On the Harmony of the Gospels*, it appears that no fragments, or passages, in Augustine are explicitly from a lost work of Porphyry, although the letter, and, since recently, *On Harmony*, have been considered as sources for fragments of *Against the Christians*. Even the most extensive passage of Augustine – in which Porphyry is (possibly) cited on the oracles pertaining to the divinity of Christ (*City of God* 19.23) – is explicitly not from *Against the Christians*, but from *Philosophy from Oracles*. And if those oracles were used by Porphyry in *Against the Christians* as well as in *Philosophy from Oracles*, or if Augustine was aware of the discourses (which, as we will see, cannot be proved), then why would he not say that in a work against the Christians, Porphyry's gods acknowledge Christ? Because this is precisely what the entire passage is about: Hecate and Apollo are both expressing their views on Christ, but nowhere in his corpus does Augustine acknowledge the existence of *Against the Christians*. The aim of the next two chapters is to re-evaluate the fragments ascribed to Porphyry in Augustine by giving a fresh look at them and by studying the bishop of Hippo's rhetorical strategies, as well as his use of Porphyry.

The Augustinian fragments, which Harnack included in his collection of *Against the Christians*, are from a letter that Augustine wrote to his friend Deogratias (*ep*. 102) in late A.D. 408 or 409, i.e. about one year prior to the famous sack of Rome by Alaric.[1] In the introduction to the letter 102 to Deogratias, Augustine mentions a letter written by a common acquaintance of himself and Deogratias, whom he says he loves, and in which the anonymous author asks Deogratias a series of questions pertaining to fundamental questions on Christianity. But Deogratias referred those questions to charismatic Augustine, who, in turn, argues that the anonymous author of the questions,

[1] See I. Bochet, 'Les quaestiones attribuées à Porphyre dans la Lettre 102 d'Augustin', in Le traité de Porphyre contre les chrétiens: un siècle de recherches, nouvelles questions, ed. S. Morlet (Paris: Collection des Études Augustiniennes. Série Antiquité – EAA 190, 2012), 371-94, on the date.

having neglected to reply to his last letter for a reason which, as Augustine put it, 'he knows best',[2] is unlikely to want him to be in touch again. Augustine will thus advise Deogratias, so that he can answer the man in question himself. From what Augustine says, we can deduce that the unnamed man may have been somewhat offended by the proselytizing content of Augustine's letter, for the bishop says 'how great is (his, i.e. Augustine's) grief that he should not yet be a Christian'.[3] We remember that Augustine also expressed grief towards Porphyry in the *City of God*.[4] And it is precisely from the anti-Christian writings of Porphyry that the Anonymous drew his questions about Christianity – the Porphyrian authorship will be discussed later, for it has been much debated.

Porphyry is said to be the fiercest opponent to Christianity, but Augustine's portrayal of the man in *City of God* gives us the impression that he was one step short of being a Christian himself, if only he had been less proud.[5]

The format of Augustine's letter 102 follows a series of questions – six in total – asked by the unnamed pagan. What needs to be addressed here is how are authors normally citing from their sources when it comes to questions and

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[2] Augustine, *Letter* 102, 1: ' ... viderit quam ob causam.' Note that all Latin quotations for Augustine are from: Sant'Agostino: http://www.augustinus.it/latino/lettere/index2.htm.

[3] Augustine, *Letter* 102, 1 : '... quantoque mihi dolori sit, quod nondum christianus est.'

[4] Augustine, *City of God* 10.28: 'Mittis ergo homines in errorem certissimum, neque hoc tantum malum te pudet, cum virtutis et sapientiae profitearis amatorem; quam si vere ac fideliter amasses, *Christum Dei virtutem et Dei sapientiam* cognovisses nec ab eius saluberrima humilitate tumore inflatus vanae scientiae resiluisses.'

[5] Augustine, *City of God* 10.28; see also, for instance, Augustine, *City of God* 10.23, where Porphyry's ideas are presented as though he was describing the Trinity: 'Dicit etiam Porphyrius divinis oraculis fuisse responsum nos non purgari lunae teletis atque solis, ut hinc ostenderetur nullorum deorum teletis hominem posse purgari. Cuius enim teletae purgant, si lunae solisque non purgant, quos inter caelestes deos praecipuos habent? Denique eodem dicit oraculo expressum principia posse purgare, ne forte, cum dictum esset non purgare teletas solis et lunae, alicuius alterius dei de turba valere ad purgandum teletae crederentur. Quae autem dicat esse principia tamquam Platonicus, novimus. Dicit enim Deum Patrem et Deum Filium, quem graece appellat paternum intellectum vel paternam mentem; de Spiritu autem Sancto aut nihil aut non aperte aliquid dicit; quamvis quem alium dicat horum medium, non intellego. Si enim tertiam, sicut Plotinus, ubi de tribus principalibus substantiis disputat, animae naturam etiam iste vellet intellegi, non utique diceret horum medium, id est Patris et Filii medium. Postponit quippe Plotinus animae naturam paterno intellectui; iste autem cum dicit medium, non postponit, sed interponit. Et nimirum hoc dixit, ut potuit sive ut voluit, quod nos Sanctum Spiritum, nec Patris tantum nec Filii tantum, sed utriusque Spiritum dicimus. Liberis enim verbis loquuntur philosophi, nec in rebus ad intellegendum difficillimis offensionem religiosarum aurium pertimescunt. Nobis autem ad certam regulam loqui fas est, ne verborum licentia etiam de rebus, quae his significantur, impiam gignat opinionem.'

answers. The questions from letter 102 seem to be drawn from the discourses against the Christians, but this is controversial. A statement made by Augustine himself is the root of the polemic. In his *Retractationes*, the bishop of Hippo writes:

> Meanwhile, six questions were sent to me from Carthage. A friend whom I wanted to be Christian put them forward, so that they could be resolved in answer to the pagans, especially as he said that several of them had been put forward by Porphyry the philosopher. But I do not think that this was Porphyry the Sicilian, whose reputation is very well known.[6]

A. von Harnack included the six questions in his fragment collection. The questions go as follows (briefly summarized):

1. Will the promised Resurrection be in the form of that of Christ or Lazarus? (Harnack Nr. 92)
2. If Christ is the only way to salvation, then what about all those who were born before him? (Harnack Nr. 81)
3. Why do Christians reject sacrificial rituals, when this is what the God of the Jews, who is also theirs, dictates? (Harnack Nr. 79)
4. Why is Christ contradicting himself when he both threatens the unfaithful with eternal punishment and with punishment according to measure? (Harnack Nr. 91)
5. Did Solomon say or not that God has no Son? (Harnack Nr. 85)
6. How can the story of Jonah, who spent three days in the belly of a whale, be true? (Harnack Nr. 46)

Since Harnack, some scholars have argued that almost all of the questions were Porphyrian (with, in most cases, the exception of question 6, while P. Labriolle argued that only questions 1, 2, 3 should be attributed to Porphyry, and R. Goulet that question 2 should be classified as from a disciple of Porphyry, and question 5 as an allusion to Porphyry.[7]

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[6] Augustine, *Retractationes* 2.31: 'Inter haec missae sunt mihi a Carthagine quaestiones sex, quas proposuit amicus quidam, quem cupiebam fieri christianum, ut contra paganos soluerentur, praesertim quia nonnullas earum a Porphyrio philosopho propositas dixit. Sed non eum esse arbitror Porphyrium Siculum illum, cuius celeberrima est fama' (CCL 57: 115).

[7] See P. Vaguanay, 'Porphyre', *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique* 22, 1935, col. 2569; P. Courcelle, *Les Lettres grecques en Occident. De Macrobe à Cassiodore* (Paris: 1943), 175 n. 8 and 197 n. 2; P. Courcelle, 'Propos antichrétiens rapportés par saint Augustin',

Meredith does not reject the *quaestiones* from his analysis of the content of Porphyry's discourses.[8] He even outlines parallels between a few passages and other Porphyrian criticisms, as well as earlier Christian views. For instance, Porphyry underlines, in Nr. 91 and 92, a contradiction between Mark 16.6 and Matthew 7.2, for Mark speaks of eternal punishment, while Matthew rather speaks of punishment proportional to crime. 'Here we can trace again the Porphyrian technique of trying to discredit the gospel by discovering within its text minor discrepancies and apparent contradiction.'[9] Meredith also sees a parallel between fragment 92 on the Resurrection and Porphyrian ideas on the question as reported by Augustine in *The City of God* 12.27, namely that the Resurrection of the body is in contradiction with the entirely spiritual life of the soul after death. However, he does not further develop his argument about the authenticity of the fragments from *Letter* 102 traditionally ascribed to Porphyry.

I. Bochet scrutinized the language of the Latin text and looked for occurrences of the questions' themes in the *City of God*. She thinks that many arguments in *City of God* respond to Porphyry, so if they also respond to the *quaestiones*, that suggests that the *quaestiones* are from Porphyry. She thus concluded that all of the six questions should be considered as Porphyrian: 'Les *quaestiones* transmises par l'ami païen d'Augustin me paraissent donc avoir déterminé des développements importants de la *Cité de Dieu* et les réponses qu'Augustin leur donne dans la *Lettre* 102 esquissent sans aucun doute déjà des thèmes majeurs de la *Cité de Dieu*.'[10]

However, Augustine himself seems to have thought otherwise. Bochet exposed the main difficulty as follows: The letter 102 has been catalogued under two different names, *Quaestiones contra Porfyrium expositae sex*

Recherches Augustiniennes 1, 1958, 185-6 n. 190; J. Pépin, *Théologie cosmique et théologie chrétienne,* p. 460 n. 3; G. Madec, 'Augustin et Porphyre. Ébauche d'un bilan des recherches et des conjectures', *ΣΟΦΙΗΣ ΜΑΙΗΤΟΡΕΣ. Hommage à Jean Pépin*, M.-O. Goulet-Cazé, G. Madec, D. O'Brien, eds, (Paris: 1992), 376-7; *La Bibbia di Pagani, 2. Testi e Documenti,* Bologne, EDB, 1998, 383-9, 392-6, 165-7, 409-10, 191-2, 244-6; P. Labriolle, *La réaction païenne. Études sur la polémique antichrétienne du I^er^ au VI^e^ siècle*, Paris, *L'artisan du livre*, 1934, 250 n. 3, 277 and 440-42; R. Goulet, ed. and trans., *Macarios de Magnésie. Le Monogénès* (Paris: 2003) vol. 1, 132 and vol. 2, 380. On this, see I. Bochet, 'Les *quaestiones* attribuées à Porphyre dans la *Lettre* 102 d'Augustin'. Less recent, Anglo-Saxon literature shows the same level of disagreement. See, for instance, Wagenmann (accepts four questions); Kleffner (questions 2, 3, 4 and perhaps 1 and 6); Georgiades (2, 3, 4), and Crafer (accepts all six questions, although he admits that question 1 is less likely to be from Porphyry).

[8] Meredith, 'Porphyry and Julian', 1134-6.

[9] Meredith, 'Porphyry and Julian', 1135.

[10] Bochet, 'Les *quaestiones*', 16.

(Six questions set forth against Porphyry) in the *Indiculus*[11] and *Quaestiones expositae contra paganos, numero sex* (Six questions set forth against the pagans), in the *Retractationes*.[12] The first title attributed to the letter is found in an earlier version of the *Indiculus* (from 420; there were two versions),[13] which is conspicuously full of mistakes, and a statement made by Augustine in *Retract*. 2.41 prompted Bochet to conclude that it was the work of a secretary, not of Augustine. In *Retractationes*, Augustine has corrected the title to 'against the pagans', and said he did not think those questions were from Porphyry the Sicilian. Furthermore, Bochet's translation for 'item alia proposuerunt, quae dicerent de Porphyrio contra Christianos tamquam ualidiora decerpta'[14] is: 'ils disaient [ces objections] tirées de Porphyre *Contre les chrétiens* comme pour les rendre plus fortes' (they – the opponents to Christianity – were saying that (these objections) were from Porphyry's anti-Christian discourses so as to make them stronger). She thus suggests that opponents took each of the six questions from a treatise that they claimed was by Porphyry in order to make their objections stronger. But because Augustine did not think they were actually from Porphyry, he changed the title of his treatise to 'Six questions set forth against the pagans', the former title having been attributed by a secretary earlier on. Bochet concludes that Augustine could not recognize the philosopher whom he admired so dearly in these objections, and, therefore, chose to downgrade their value by not crediting Porphyry as their author.[15]

But this is only an assumption. From the material that we have, it seems more likely that Augustine was directly responding to a text, which he knew only in extracts made by someone else. Furthermore, it also seems that he disagreed with that person on the authorship of the text – he did not think it was by Porphyry. What then is left of Porphyry in the Letter 102?

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[11] Augustine, *Indiculum* 1.21.

[12] Augustine, *Retractationes* I2. 31.

[13] See F. Dolbeau, 'La survie des œuvres d'Augustin. Remarques sur *l'Indiculum* attribué à Possidius et sur la bibliothèque d'Anségise', *Du copiste au collectionneur. Mélanges d'histoire des textes et des bibliothèques en l'honneur d'André Vernet*, D. Nebbiai-Dalla and J.-F. Genest, eds (Turnhout: 1999), 3-22, cited by Bochet, 'Quaestiones'.

[14] *Letter* 102.2-8. Her translation is very satisfying, although there are other possible ones.

[15] Bochet is thus giving credit to A. von Harnack's argument in Porphyrius, '*Gegen die Christen*', 39: 'Seine Bemerkung: 'Non esse arbitror Porfyrium Siculum', ist daher wertlos und aus seiner Hochschätzung des Philosophen Porphyrius zu erklären', and agrees with G. Bardy, 'L'indulgence de saint Augustin à l'égard de Porphyre', *BA* 34, 632; but she disagrees with J. Pépin, *Théologie cosmique et théologie chrétienne*, 460, n. 1.

Numerous studies have been written on the intellectual relationship between Porphyry and Augustine, but most of them are mainly interested in Porphyry's Neoplatonic influence on Augustine's portrayal of paganism, and, therefore, Christianity, especially in *City of God*.[16] The other studies are concerned, as has been said, with the authenticity of the so-called Porphyrian fragments in the epistle 102. However, no one seems to be primarily interested in looking at Augustine's citation method in that letter.

We are facing here a type of intertextuality, which is different from the ones we have studied so far. Eusebius was using Porphyry to give more credit to his claims, while Jerome was citing Porphyry *en passant*, in the midst of his *corpus*. Augustine is answering questions that have been sent to him as excerpts of a work, and he presents them in the form of questions/answers, or 'quaestiones', a *genre* used by the early Christians, which has its own literary pattern.[17] As far as our methodological approach is concerned, Bochet did not take into consideration Augustine's citation practices, nor did she consider the *quaestiones* as a literary genre, when assessing the authorship of the Letter 102. What is of interest to us is whether Augustine reproduced the questions exactly as they were presented to him. Did he transcribe the *quaestiones* without alteration, and did the man who sent them to him also transcribe them from Porphyry, or even a translation of Porphyry? Or did either Augustine, or Deogratias's correspondent, shape them into *quaestiones*? To answer such questions, we shall first look at the '*quaestiones*' as a genre, because we need to identify the rhetorical strategies it employs, in order to link passages to *Against the Christians.*

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[16] See, for instance, G. Madec, 'Augustin, disciple et adversaire de Porphyre', *RE Aug* 4 (1964); P. Hadot, 'Citations de Porphyre chez Augustin', *RE Aug.* 6 (1960): 205-44; D. O'Meara, '*Porphyry's Philosophy from Oracles in Augustine* (Paris: 1959); O'Connell, *Porphyrianism in the Early Augustine: Olivier du Roys's contribution*, *From Augustine to Eriugena Festschrift for John J O'Meara* (Washington, 1991); Richey, 'Porphyry, Reincarnation and Resurrection in de Civitate dei "De civitate Dei"', *AuSt* 26 (1995): 129-42; W. Theiler, 'Porphyrios und Augustine' (Halle:1933).

[17] C. Zamagni, 'Porphyry est-il la cible principale des "questions" chrétiennes des IVe et Ve siècles? ' in *Le traité de Porphyre contre les chrétiens: un siècle de recherches, nouvelles questions*, ed. Sébastien Morlet (Paris: 2012), 357-70 [cf. C. Zamagni, 'Is the Question-and-Answer Literary Genre in Early Christian Literature a Homogeneous Group?' in *La littérature des questions et réponses dans l'Antiquité profane et chrétienne: de l'enseignement à l'exégèse. Actes du séminaire sur le genre des questions et réponses tenu à Ottawa les 27 et 28 septembre 2009*, M.-P. Bussière, ed. (Turnhout: 2009), 241-68., and A. Volgers and C. Zamagni, eds, *Erotapokriseis. Early Christian Question-and-Answer Literature in Context.* Proceedings of the Utrecht Colloquium, 13-14 October 2003 (Contributions to Biblical Exegesis and Theology, 37) (Leuven: 2004), 7-24].

The first Christian to use that method was Eusebius of Caesarea with his *Questions and Answers on the Gospels*.[18] Innovating here as in other fields – such as History – Eusebius took into account the Greek heritage. Zamagni insists that defining the *quaestiones* as a genre is a hefty task, and that one should speak of a questions and answers literature rather than of a specific literary genre. The problem is that many Christian works include a series of questions and answers, while belonging to another, specific genre. Zamagni suggests that we should differentiate between the literary genre and the literary process, the former requiring that we only include those texts which consist in a series of questions and answers, and the latter comprising all the texts whose rhetorical structure comprises a question and its answer, but belonging to a specific genre.

R.J. Teske, in a paper on the *quaestiones*, exposes the problems with identifying the Augustinian works that belong to the 'genre'. Some of Augustine's works clearly belong to it, given their title; *Quaestiones expositae contra paganos* is thus among them.[19] This work is also known as *epistula* 102, but Augustine listed it as a separate work in *Retractationes* (2.31.58). Teske argues that to the nine works identified as questions and responses in Augustine's corpus (eight – *Expositio quarumdam propositionum ex Epistula ad Romanos*, *De diversis quaestionibus octoginta tribus liber unus*, *De diversis quaestionibus ad Simplicianum*, *Quaestiones Evangeliorum*, *Quaestiones sedecim in Matthaeum*, *De octo quaestionibus ex Veteri testamento*, *Quaestiones in Heptateuchum* and *De octo Dulcitii quaestionibus liber unus* – by G. Bardy and the ninth – *Quaestiones expositae contra paganos* – by Pollastri), we should add a further nine, namely *Ad inquisitiones Januarii*, *De gratia Novi Testamenti*, *Contra Faustum*, *Letters* 135, 136, and 137 (which constitute, according to him, a book of responses to pagans), *Letter* 199 *De fine mundi*, *De cura pro mortuis gerenda*, *De peccatorum meritis et remissione et de baptismo parvulorum*, *De spiritu et littera* and *Contra Priscillianistas et Origenistas ad Orosium*. In order to include more works to G. Bardy's and Pollastri's list, Teske has had to rethink the rules of the questions and answers genre, which he thought had not been clearly defined. According to him, the questions can come from 'one single person at one time', as is the case with Deogratias. They may also come from various persons over an extended or unspecified period of time, from a group of people at one time, or 'by the author himself over an

[18] C. Zamagni, 'Une introduction méthodologique à la littérature patristique des questions et réponses: le cas d'Eusèbe de Césarée', in A. Volgers and C. Zamagni, eds, *Erotapokriseis* (Paris: 2004), 7.

[19] R.J. Teske, 'Augustine of Hippo and the Quaestiones et Responsiones Literature', in A. Volgers and C. Zamagni, eds, *Erotapokriseis* (Paris: 2004), 127.

extended period of time'.[20] Teske further argues that, 'some of the "questions" are not really questions, that some of their answers are syllogistic arguments or short treatises, and that some of the questions are simply questions without answers. Some of the questions are simply quotations from other authors, and many scriptural responses can be traced to earlier commentators on the Bible.'[21] Teske suggests that Augustine may have kept copies of these works and listed them in the *Retractationes*, knowing that they would or could be used in the future as 'theological textbooks for the next generations'.[22] But he is also concerned about the rules he proposes for the questions and answers genre, stating that it will become possible to include more and more Augustinian works into that category if a more rigorous definition than his is not established.[23]

C. Jacob has looked into the reasons why an author will choose to use the questions and answers literary method.[24] Going back to Plato, he explains that Plato opted for the use of the 'dialogue' – or dialectical method – to communicate his philosophical ideas. Plato argued, via Socrates (*Phaedrus* 275D), that the text, being fixed in time, could never defend itself against or provide further explanations to its readers. The solution was thus, according to him, to set in place a dialogue, in which all aspects of an argument would be explored, and which would answer the reader's interrogations. The point is to mime an oral dialogue. This implies, therefore, that the author of such a dialogue has set the questions in order to confound opponents before they could raise any objection. As we shall see in the next section of this chapter, Augustine uses this strategy extensively in *De consensu*; it follows that one should not identify the questions he asks with a specific opponent. In *epistula* 102, Augustine gives every indication that he is answering the questions sent to Deogratias and forwarded to him. However, the technique of questions and answers demands that an author should both expose and defend his views. In this case, the questions asked are clearly polemical, and, in some cases, have incurred laughter at the expense of Christians (question 6 on Jonah). It is thus impossible to tell the origin of such questions in the first place – where did the anonymous pagan find them? In a specific anti-Christian work? Were they known from hearsay? Or were they a combination of questions regularly asked by the unfaithful? We have every reason to think that both Deogratias and Augustine are seeking to answer just what they were asked,

[20] Teske, 'Augustine', 142.

[21] Teske, 'Augustine', 142.

[22] Teske, 'Augustine', 143.

[23] Teske, 'Augustine', 144.

[24] C. Jacob, 'Questions sur les Questions', in A. Volgers and C. Zamagni, eds, *Erotapokriseis* (Paris: 2004), 33.

for it is here, in the end, a matter of gaining possible converts. But we cannot assume that any of them has reproduced the questions as they were presented to them, without adapting their wording to an argument, which was meant to defend Christianity against fundamental attacks. In that case, considering these as 'fragments' from a work, whichever it is, is simply wrong.

Since scholars have established that there were no strict 'rules' for the *quaestiones* that would allow us to classify it as a proper genre, we shall look at Augustine's style when he uses the question and answer method of arguing, in order to determine whether or not he might have shaped the six questions that were sent to him to make them fit his usual structure. Zamagni has determined that Eusebius had his own style when writing his questions, it would thus be interesting to verify whether this is the case with Augustine.[25] Zamagni has noted that all of Eusebius' questions start with either διὰ τί or πώς. He traced back their use to classical authors such as Plato, Philo of Alexandria, Aristotle and Plutarch,[26] and noted that other Christians also used these words to introduce their questions in their dialogues (διὰ τί in the case of Diogenes).[27] He concludes that the words used by Eusebius in his questions may belong to the question and answer genre, and represent a tradition in the Church fathers' corpus. It would, however, be beyond the scope of the present study to make an exhaustive research on similar wording used in the Latin world. This question is of course complicated by the fact that the genre, if there is one, originated from the Greeks. Furthermore, A. Volgers has observed in relation to the answers section of various Latin fathers that there does not seem to be much consistency within them, which might mean we must rule out the existence of a specific set of rules traditionally used in the Latin corpus.[28] But let us look at Augustine's style. If it is consistent within his work, then we might be inclined to think that he has reformulated the questions presented to him.

In letter 102, Augustine appears to be enlarging on each of the six general questions he received from Deogratias. For instance, the first question is set as follows:

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[25] C. Zamagni, 'Existe-t-il une terminologie technique dans les *questions* d'Eusèbe de Césarée?' in A. Volgers and C. Zamagni, eds, *Erotapokriseis* (Paris: 2004), 81-98.

[26] Zamagni, 'Questions', 88-97.

[27] Zamagni, 'Questions', 93. Note that we do not have evidence that Diogenes was a Christian.

[28] A. Volgers, 'Ambrosiaster : Persuasive Powers in Progress', in A. Volgers and C. Zamagni, eds, *Erotapokriseis* (Paris: 2004), 109.

> It (the resurrection) bothers certain people, and they ask which of the two kinds of resurrections corresponds to the one promised to us, is it that of Christ, or that of Lazarus? If it is Christ's, they say, (then) how can that resurrection be the same for those who were born from seed, when He was not born from any seed? But if the resurrection of Lazarus corresponds to ours, it too seems not to fit: (since) the resurrection of Lazarus was realised from a body not yet decayed, but from the body in which he was said to be Lazarus; ours, however, is put back together after many centuries out of the things with which it has been mingled. Then, if after the resurrection our state is going to be fortunate, in that there are no injuries to the body, no necessity for hunger, what does it mean that Christ took food, and showed his injuries? For if he did this for the unbelieving, he was deceiving them: if, however, he displayed the truth, the wounds we have received will remain in the resurrection.[29]

First, this reasoning reminds us of that of the Anonymous from Macarios' Apocriticos:

> In fact, anyone who is willing to reflect on what follows will find out that this Resurrection is mere silliness: many, indeed – and this is often the case! – perished at sea and their body was eaten by fishes; many others were eaten by wild beats and birds of prey. How is it possible, then, that their body should come back? Ah! Let's look at this assertion in detail; for instance, someone has been shipwrecked, and sea swallows have eaten their body; fishermen have then caught them and consumed them; dogs have then killed and devoured those men; ravens and vultures enjoyed the dead dogs without leaving any remains. How, then, will the body of the shipwrecked man be re-assembled after being decomposed in so many animals? And let's imagine another body consumed by fire, and another one eaten by vermin; how could they come back to their original substance?[30]

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[29] Augustine, *Letter* 102.2 – Harnack Nr. 92: 'Movet quosdam, et requirunt de duabus resurrectionibus quae conveniat promissae resurrectioni, utrumnam Christi an Lazari? Si Christi, inquiunt, quomodo potest haec convenire resurrectioni natorum ex semine, eius qui nulla seminis conditione natus est? Si autem Lazari resurrectio convenire asseritur, ne haec quidem congruere videtur: siquidem Lazari resurrectio facta sit de corpore nondum tabescente, de eo corpore, quo Lazarus dicebatur; nostra autem multis saeculis post ex confuso eruetur. Deinde si post resurrectionem status beatus futurus est, nulla corporis iniuria, nulla necessitate famis, quid sibi vult cibatum Christum fuisse, et vulnera monstravisse? Sed si propter incredulum fecit, finxit: si autem verum ostendit, ergo in resurrectione accepta futura sunt vulnera.' Please note that the editor marked the passage starting from 'Si Christi ... ' as if it were a citation, but there is no evidence for this.

[30] Macarios, *Apocriticos* 4.24.3-4: 'Εἰ δὲ κἀκεῖνό τι<ς> ἐθέλοι κατανοεῖν, εὑρήσει μεστὸν ἀβελτηρίας πρᾶγμα τὸ τῆς ἀναστάσεως Πολλοὶ γὰρ ἐν θαλάττῃ πολλάκις ἀπώλοντο καὶ ὑπὸ

The Anonymous in Macarios does not refer to Lazarus anywhere. If, however, both the *Letter* 102 and the Apocriticos have the discourses as their source, then why is the content of the attacks not similar? The resurrection was a common target for Christian opponents, for it was at the centre of the Christian belief system, but yet it was very easy to display its lack of rationality. Objections to a crude resurrection of the body also stem from Origen. It follows that whatever the source of the polemic, whether it be Porphyry or Origen, none of these passages should be deemed as 'fragments' *per se*.

Next, let us look at the method used by Augustine for setting the questions. In *De consensu evangelistarum*, as we shall see in the next section, Augustine incorporates a series of questions into his argument, as though he were anticipating them. He introduces them by common interrogatives, such as *quid*, *an*, *si*, *quae*, *qualia*, *quomodo*, *cur*, *qui*, *nunquid*, *quodlibet* (*cons.* 7.12-13; 8.13; 14.22, 15.23, 16.24). Let us take, as an example, the following passage, in which there is a series of conditional sentences:

> Verumtamen diligentius ab istis quaerendum est, quemnam putent esse Deum Israel. Cur eum colendum non receperunt sicut aliarum gentium deos, quas Romanum subegit imperium, praesertim cum eorum sententia sit omnes deos colendos esse sapienti? Cur ergo a numero ceterorum iste reiectus est? Si plurimum valet, cur ab eis solus non colitur? Si parum aut nihil valet, cur contritis eorum simulacris ab omnibus gentibus solus pene iam colitur? Nunquam huius quaestionis eximi vinculo poterunt, qui cum maiores et minores deos colant, quos deos putant, hunc Deum non colunt, qui praevaluit omnibus, quos colunt. Si enim magnae virtutis est, cur existimatus est improbandus? Si parvae nulliusve virtutis est, cur tantum potuit improbatus? Si bonus est, cur a ceteris bonis solus separatur? Si malus est, cur a tot bonis unus non superatur? Si verax est, cur eius praecepta respuuntur? Si mendax est, cur eius praedicta complentur?[31]

ἰχθύων ἀνηλώθη τὰ σώματα, πολλοὶ δ' ὑπὸ θηρίων καὶ ὀρνέων ἐβρώθησαν πῶς οὖν τά σώματα αὐτῶν ἐπανελθεῖν οἷόν τε; Φέρε γὰρ τὸ λεχθὲν λεπτῶς βασανίσωμεν οἷον, ἐναυάγησέ τις, εἶτα τρίγλαι τοῦ σώματος ἐγεύσαντο, εἶθ' ἁλιεύσαντές τινες καὶ φαγόντες ἐσφάγησαν καὶ ὑπὸ κυνῶν ἐβρώθησαν, τοὺς κύνας ἀποθανόντας κόρακες παμμελεὶ καὶ γῦπες ἐθοινήσαντο πῶς οὖν συναχθήσεται τὸ σῶμα τοῦ ναυαγήσαντος διὰ τοσούτων ἐξαναλωθὲν ζῴων; Καὶ δὴ ἄλλο πάλιν ὑπὸ πυρὸς ἀναλωθὲν καὶ ἕτερον εἰς σκώληκας λῆξαν, πῶς οἷόν τε εἰς τὴν ἐξ ἀρχῆς ἐπανελθεῖν ὑπόστασιν' (Goulet 316:6).

[31] Augustine, *On the Harmony of the Gospels*, 1.17.25: 'This is, however, a problem that should be evaluated more carefully by them; namely, what they take for the God of Israel, and why have they not admitted him into the pantheon of the deities that they worship, just like they have done with the other nations' gods that they have subjected to Rome's imperial rule? This must be answered, especially since they think that all the gods should be

These conditionals are used to survey all possibilities of a given problem. Augustine has set the first question of *Letter* 102 in a similar fashion:

> Si Christi, inquiunt, quomodo potest haec convenire resurrectioni natorum ex semine, eius qui nulla seminis conditione natus est? Si autem Lazari resurrectio convenire asseritur, ne haec quidem congruere videtur: siquidem Lazari resurrectio facta sit de corpore nondum tabescente, de eo corpore, quo Lazarus dicebatur; nostra autem multis saeculis post ex confuso eruetur. Deinde si post resurrectionem status beatus futurus est, nulla corporis iniuria, nulla necessitate famis, quid sibi vult cibatum Christum fuisse, et vulnera monstravisse? Sed si propter incredulum fecit, finxit: si autem verum ostendit, ergo in resurrectione accepta futura sunt vulnera.[32]

It is thus reasonable to infer that Augustine has shaped the way the pagan question was reproduced according to his own argumentative style. And, as a result, there is no evidence that the whole passage should be seen as an authentic fragment from a lost work. Augustine's method is more efficient than a mere rehash of the old anti-Christian argument: by reformulating it, he can enlarge on the original interrogation in a way that announces the kind of responses he will provide, and he also appropriates it fully, thus showing his level of understanding of the problem and his superiority.

This question of translation from Greek to Latin is not new to the debate on Porphyrian authorship. Scholars who have attributed the questions of *Letter* 102 to Porphyry have already raised concerns about the wording of the *quaestiones*. Crafer argued a long time ago that the questions were not his actual words, because of their brevity (except for question 2, which is lengthy).[33] He

worshiped by the man of wisdom. Why, then, has He been excluded from this pantheon? If He is very powerful, why is he the only god, who is not worshiped by them? If He has little or no power, why are all the nations smashing the images of other gods, while He is now almost the only god worshiped by those nations? These men will never be able to escape the toils of this question, they who worship both the greater and the lesser divinities, that they consider to be gods, while, at the same time, they refuse to worship the God of Israel, who has proved to be stronger than all the gods they worship. If He is very virtuous, why would he only be rejected? And if He is a God of little or no power, how come he has managed to accomplish so much, even when rejected? If He is good, why is He the only divinity not worshiped with the other gods? If He is evil, why is He not, being alone, subjected by the other good divinities? If He is truthful, why are His precepts ignored? And if He lies, why are His predictions fulfilled?' [my translation].

[32] Augustine, *Letter* 102.2 (see n. 29 for a translation).

[33] Crafer, 'Work of Porphyry', 491.

even went as far as suggesting that, 'Perhaps the statement that it is scarcely his (Porphyry's) only means that it is part of the stock in trade of every heathen opponent.'[34] Crafer, who was interested in reconstructing *Against the Christians*, notes that the six questions cannot be from the same part of the treatise, for their content is not at all homogeneous.[35]

Not only does the genre *quaestiones* makes it improbable that Augustine reproduced faithfully the words of his source, it is not even possible confidently to identify one single source. As A. Meredith already noted, the content of Nr. 81 (*Letter* 102.8) – which it asks what will happen to all those born before Christ, since they are not eligible, according to John 1.7, for Salvation – can also be found in Celsus and Julian.[36] This echoes Courcelle's argument about the attacks presented in *De consensu*: they could consist in a melting-pot of ideas originating from different sources.[37]

Porphyry is named three times in the letter, and, as has been said, there were six questions asked. Only question 6 is explicitly not from Porphyry. Augustine did not name the work *Against the Christians*. The content of the *Quaestiones* leaves little doubt as to the intention of their author; they were either meant to be purposely vexing to Deogratias, or genuine interrogations. What Augustine says in 102.38 implies that the man wants to become a Christian, but is hesitating because of certain Scriptural difficulties: '... let the person who proposed them (the questions) now become a Christian, unless if he delays until he is done with discussing all the difficulties related to Scripture, before he finishes his life, and passes from death to life'.[38] Augustine also confronts stories, such as Jonah and the whale, which are, according to him, widely ridiculed among pagan circles. A thorough and convincing answer was thus required, so that Deogratias was neither losing a possible convert nor losing face in his community. Either way, Deogratias opted for a very common habit in the clergy of that time: he sought Augustine's advice.

Augustine is, according to Bochet, aware of the work *Against the Christians*, and is answering Porphyry at the same time as he is answering the pagan's

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[34] Crafer, 'Work of Porphyry', 492.

[35] Crafer, 'Work of Porphyry', 492.

[36] Meredith, 'Porphyry and Julian', 1134; see also Origen, *Against Celsus* 4.7; Julian, *Against the Galilaeans* 106 A-E.

[37] P. Courcelle, 'Propos anti-chrétiens', *Recherches Augustiniennes* vol. 4 (1958): 184-5.

[38] Augustine, *Letter* 102*,* 102.38: 'sed ille qui proposuit, iam sit christianus, ne forte cum exspectat ante Librorum sanctorum finire quaestiones, prius finiat vitam istam, quam transeat a morte ad vitam'.

questions.[39] Those questions further show that at the time of Augustine, pagans were using the same old arguments against the Christians, and that Porphyry's attacks were most probably still read. Only question 6 is not from Porphyry, says Augustine: 'The last question proposed is on Jonah, and this one is not as from Porphyry, but as from pagan jokes.'[40]

Furthermore, as the style of other remaining Porphyrian fragments, extant in Eusebius and Jerome shows, there is no indication that Porphyry has himself used the question-and-answer method when formulating his attack on Christianity. However, the letter 102 is misleadingly presented as such by Augustine.

The questions are centred around important, central Christian themes: the Resurrection, the Revelation, apostasy from Judaism, eternal punishment, Christ as the Son of God and miracles. Let us look at the *quaestiones* and look for corresponding passages in extant pagan works in order to decide whether they could have been drawn from different sources than the discourses against the Christians.

It is on the Resurrection that the pagan asks his first question. The question is twofold: Will the Resurrection occur in the form of that of Christ or of that of Lazarus, and what about all those who died ages ago and whose bodies have already perished?[41] As has been said, it is well-known that objections to this type of resurrection come from Origen. The same questions were also addressed by the anonymous Hellene in fragment 94 from Macarius Magnes' *Apocriticos*, and Methodius' *On the Resurrection*.[42] The questioning thus sounds either like a rehash of the usual pagan complaints about the Resurrection, or like the issues raised by Origen. They should therefore be considered as part of contemporary objections raised against the Resurrection. Celsus also expresses his views on Resurrection, when he ridiculed the Christians' teaching on this topic. He argues that the Christians derive their doctrine from what they have misunderstood of Plato, thinking that it will allow them to know God and even to see Him.[43] The

[39] Bochet, '*Quaestiones*'.

[40] Augustine, *Letter* 102.30: 'Postrema quaestio proposita est de Iona, nec ipsa quasi ex Porphyrio, sed tamquam ex irrisione Paganorum'; see also Bochet, '*Quaestiones*', who questions the fact that Augustine did not think that question 6 was not from Porphyry, on the grounds that the sentence sounds like a deduction that Augustine is making about that question.

[41] Augustine, *Letter* 102.2 (cited n. 29).

[42] According to Benjamins, 'Methodius von Olympus, 'Über die Auferstehung': gegen Origenes und gegen Porphyrius?' 97, passages of *On Resurrection* are from Porphyry.

[43] See Origen, Against Celsus,7.31-33: "Ὥσπερ δὲ αὐτὸς τὴν διήγησιν ἀνατίθεται τοῦ παρὰ Πλάτωνι μύθου, κειμένου <ἐν> τῷ Φαίδωνι, λέγων τάδε·Τί δὲ διὰ τούτων ἐμφανίζει, οὐ παντὶ γνῶναι ῥᾴδιον· εἰ μὴ ὅστις ἐπαΐειν δύναιτο, τί ποτ' ἐστὶν ἐκεῖνο ὅ φησιν· 'ὑπ' ἀσθενείας καὶ

philosopher has also asked what form the resurrected body would take, in case of a reconstitution of body parts.[44]

Next, according to Augustine, the anonymous author of the questions uses, according to Augustine, a selection of the more powerful arguments of Porphyry against the Christians to formulate his question 2, which pertains to the Revelation and fideism, i.e. how can men who lived prior to Christ be saved, when they did not have the chance to hear his word? (102.8). 'Rome itself was for no less time, for a long succession of centuries, without knowing the Christian word. What, they asked, happened to the innumerable souls, who were not at all guilty? If only they had been able to believe in him, not yet arrived to favour his men.'[45] Men were very pious towards their gods in Rome and Latium, but the Romans only received their Revelation at the time of the Caesars.[46] What about all these souls, he asks? Again, we find similar views expressed in Celsus' *On the True Doctrine*, when the philosopher asked why Christ's advent happened at a particular place and time, as well as in Julian's *Against the Galilaeans*, who asks why God only cared about the land of the Jews.[47]

Question 3 blames the Christians for condemning pagan sacrifices and worship in temples, when they too practise a religion which has its roots in ancient times, revering a God requesting exactly this type of worship 'and first-fruits' (Latin 'primitiae' – Greek 'ἀπαρχή').[48] The anonymous writer is here repeating a well-known attack, which states that Christianity originates from

βραδυτῆτος οὐχ οἵους τε εἶναι διεξελθεῖν ἐπ' ἔσχατον τὸν ἀέρα'· 'καὶ εἰ ἡ φύσις ἱκανὴ εἴη ἀνασχέσθαι θεωροῦσα, γνῶναι ἂν ὅτι ἐκεῖνός ἐστιν ὁ ἀληθῶς οὐρανὸς καὶτὸ ἀληθινὸν φῶς' ... ὅτι οὐχ, ὡς οἴεται Κέλσος, τῆς μετενσωματώσεως παρακούσαντες τὰ περὶ ἀναστάσεώς φαμεν ... . Οἰόμενος δ' ἡμᾶς διὰ τὸ γνῶναι καὶ ἰδεῖν τὸν θεὸν πρεσβεύειν τὰ περὶ τῆς ἀναστάσεως συνείρει ἑαυτῷ ἃ βούλεται καὶ τοιαῦτά φησιν· Ὅταν δὴ πάντοθεν ἐξείργωνται καὶ διελέγχωνται, πάλιν ὥσπερ οὐδὲν ἀκηκοότες ἐπανίασιν ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ ἐρώτημα Πῶς οὖν γνῶμεν καὶ ἴδωμεν τὸν θεόν; Καὶ πῶς ἴωμεν πρὸς αὐτόν' (SC 150: 82-8).

[44] Origen, *Against Celsus* 5.14 and 8.49.

[45] Augustine, *Letter* 102.8. 'Non paucioribus saeculis ipsa Roma, longo saeculorum tractu sine christiana lege fuit. Quid, inquit, actum de tam innumeris animis, qui omnino in culpa nulla sunt. siquidem is cui credi posset, nondum adventum suum hominibus commodarat?'

[46] Augustine, *Letter* 102.8. 'Quid igitur actum de Romanis animabus vel Latinis, quae gratia nondum advenientis Christi viduatae sunt, usque in Caesarum tempus?' (So what happened to the Roman or Latin souls, which were bereft of the grace of Christ who did not yet come, until the time of the Caesars?)

[47] Celsus, *On the True Doctrine* 4.7 and Julian's *Against the Galilaeans* 106D and 141C.

[48] Augustine, *Letter* 102. 'Accusant, inquit, ritus sacrorum, hostias, thura, et caetera, quae templorum cultus exercuit; cum idem cultus ab ipsis, inquit, vel a Deo quem colunt exorsus est temporibus priscis, cum inducitur Deus primitiis eguisse.'

Judaism, but does not even respect the Laws of Moses. Augustine says that those first-fruits are mentioned in the story of Cain and Abel; we could infer that someone referring to it would have a good knowledge of Scripture, and therefore recognize Porphyry as the author of the question. However, it was also a word commonly used in Antiquity to designate offerings to the gods, and thus would have been present in any pagan work. There are no known mentions of the 'first-fruits' in the Eusebian fragments, when he accounts for the philosopher's attack on apostasy from Judaism, but then Eusebius does not mention the attack on sacrifices. When we look at Celsus, on the other hand, we do find very similar grievances in relation to sacrifice. Celsus puts his criticism in the mouth of the Jews: '[His] Jew continues to talk to those of his people who have become believers: "It was yesterday or the day before, when we punished the man who was leading you like a flock, that you have deserted the law of our fathers".'[49] Further on in the text, Celsus reminds the Christians that the divine must be honoured with proper rituals, for they must be grateful for the things over which it presides.[50] In Julian's *Against the Galilaeans*, the emperor insists that Christians ought to sacrifice to their God: 'Moses knew all the ways to make a sacrifice, and in order to prove that they were not polluted, according to him and contrary to what you think, listen to what he himself says: "But the soul that eateth of the flesh of the sacrifice of peace-offerings that pertain unto the Lord, having his uncleanness upon him, even that soul shall be cut off from his people."'[51] There is therefore no clear indication that Porphyry is the sole author of the charge of Christian apostasy and refusal to sacrifice.

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[49] Origen, *Against Celsus* 2.3-4: 'Εἶτα λέγει ὁ παρ' αὐτῷ Ἰουδαῖος πρὸς τοὺς ἀπὸ τοῦ λαοῦ πιστεύσαντας ὅτι *χθὲς καὶ πρώην καὶ ὁπηνίκα τοῦτον ἐκολάζομεν βουκολοῦντα ὑμᾶς, ἀπέστητε τοῦ πατρίου νόμου* ... ' (SC 132: 288).

[50] Origen, *Against Celsus* 8.55: ' Ἐξῆς δὲ τούτοις φησὶν ὁ Κέλσος· *Δυοῖν θάτερον αἱρεῖ λόγος. Εἰ μὲν ἀπαξιοῦσι θεραπεύειν τὰ εἰκότα τοὺς τῶνδε ἐπιστάτας, μήτ' εἰς ἀνδρὸς ἰέναι μήτ' ἄγεσθαι γυναῖκα μήτ' ἀναιρεῖσθαι τέκνα μήτ' ἄλλο πράττειν μηδὲν ἐν τῷ βίῳ, χωρεῖν δ' ἔνθεν πασσυδὶ μηδὲν σπέρμα ἐλλειπομένους, ὡς ἂν ἐρημωθείη πάμπαν ἐπὶ γῆς τὸ τοιοῦτον γένος. εἰ δὲ καὶ γυναῖκας ἄξονται καὶ παῖδας ποιήσονται καὶ καρπῶν γεύσονται καὶ τῶν ἐν τῷ βίῳ μεθέξουσι καὶ κακῶν τῶν ἐπιτεταγμένων ἀνέξονται – φύσις μὲν γὰρ αὕτη πάντας ἀνθρώπους πειρᾶσθαι κακῶν· εἶναι μὲν γὰρ ἀνάγκη κακά, χώραν δ' ἄλλην οὐκ ἔχει – , ἀποδοτέον δὴ τὰς προσηκούσας τοῖς ταῦτ' ἐπιτετραμμένοις τιμὰς καὶ τῷ βίῳ λειτουργητέον τὰ πρέποντα, μέχρι ἂν τῶν δεσμῶν ἀπολυθῶσι, μή καὶ ἀχάριστοι πρὸς τούσδε εἶναι δοκῶσι. Καὶ γὰρ ἄδικον μετέχοντας ὧν οἵδε ἔχουσι μηδὲν αὐτοῖς συντελεῖν*' (SC 150: 298).

[51] Julian, *Against the Galilaeans* book 1: 'ὡς μὲν οὖν τοὺς τῶν θυσιῶν ἠπίστατο τρόπους Μωυσῆς, εὔδηλόν ἐστι που διὰ τῶν ῥηθέντων. ὅτι δὲ οὐχ ὡς ὑπεῖς ἀκάθαρτα ᾽νόμισεν αὐτά, πάλιν ἐκ τῶν ἐκείνου ῥημάτων ἐπακούσατε᾽ Ἡ δὲ ψυχή, ἥτις ἐὰν φάγῃ ἀπὸ τῶν κρεῶν τῆς θυσίας τοῦ σωτηρίου, ὅ ἐστι κυρίου, καὶ ἡ ἀκαθαρσία αὐτοῦ ἐπ᾽ αὐτῷ, ἀπολεῖται ἡ ψυχὴ ἐκείνη ἐκ τοῦ λαοῦαὐτῆς᾽. αὐτὸς οὕτως εὐλαβὴς ὁ Μωυσῆς περὶ τὴν τῶν ἱερῶν ἐδωδήν' (LCL 157: 404).

When the anonymous detractor asks his fourth question, he again displays knowledge of Scripture, this time of the NT (102.22). Augustine tells us his question refers to passages from the Gospels of John and Matthew. The pagan questions the threats of eternal punishment which are inconsistent, according to him, for punishment for sin ought to be made according to measure, and this measure is based on time, and is, in turn, limited by the end of time. Here there are no corresponding passages that seem available in other pagan sources.

Augustine presents the fifth question raised by the anonymous man as follows: 'After these questions, which were proposed as from Porphyry, he added: "Will you please tell me, he asked, whether Solomon truly said or not that God had no Son?"[52] This problem was treated extensively by Celsus, who raised, among others, the following question: "You (Jesus) pretend that, during your baptism by John, a bird appeared from the sky and flew towards you ... ; What credible witness saw that appearance? Who heard a voice from the sky adopting you as Son of God? Who other than you and one of your torture companion can you offer as a witness?"[53] Julian also addresses this issue in *Against the Galilaeans*: " ... But if the Word is God, was born from God and was produced from the substance of the Father, then why would the Virgin be the mother of God? Indeed, how could she, as a human being, conceive a god?" And when God says "I am he and no other god can produce except me", are you still calling her son the Saviour?'[54]

Finally, Porphyry himself, in *Philosophy from Oracles*, has challenged the divinity of Christ: 'Hecate, it is said, also said about Christ, when asked whether he was a god: "you actually know the condition of the soul after leaving the body, and also that when it breaks away from wisdom it is always in error. That soul (you mention) is the soul of a supremely pious man, they worship it for they are wrong about the truth."'[55] There is thus no evidence that the problem of the divinity of Christ was raised by Porphyry in *Against the Christians.*

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[52] Augustine, *Letter* 102.28. 'Post hanc quaestionem, qui eas ex Porphyrio proposuit, hoc adiunxit: "Sane etiam de illo, inquit, me dignaberis instruere, si vere dixit Salomon, Filium Deus non habet."'

[53] Origen, *Against Celsus* 1.41: '*Λουομένῳ,* φησί, *σοὶ παρὰ τῷ Ἰωάννῃ φάσμα ὄρνιθος ἐξ ἀέρος λέγεις ἐπιπτῆναι.* Εἶτα πυνθανόμενος ὁ παρ᾽ αὐτῷ Ἰουδαῖός φησι· *Τίς τοῦτο εἶδεν ἀξιόχρεως μάρτυς τὸ φάσμα, ἢ τίς ἤκουσεν ἐξ οὐρανοῦ φωνῆς εἰσποιούσης σε υἱὸν τῷ θεῷ; Πλὴν ὅτι σὺ φῂς καί τινα ἕνα ἐπάγῃ τῶν μετὰ σοῦ κεκολασμένωντῶν μετὰ σοῦ κεκολασμένων'* (SC 132: 186).

[54] Julian, *Against the Galilaeans* book 1: 'ἀλλ᾽ εἰ θεὸς ἐκ θεοῦ καθ᾽ ὑμᾶς ὁ λόγος ἐστὶ καὶ τῆς οὐσίας ἐξέφυ τοῦ πατρός, θεοτόκον ὑμεῖς ἀνθ᾽ ὅτου τὴν παρθένον εἶναί φατε; πῶς γὰρ ἂν τέκοι θεὸν ἄνθρωπος οὖσα καθ᾽ ὑμᾶς; καὶ πρός γε τούτῳ λέγοντος ἐναργῶς θεοῦ ''Εγώ εἰμι καὶ οὐκ ἔστι πάρεξ ἐμοῦ σώζων', ὑμεῖς σωτῆρα τὸν ἐξ αὐτῆς εἰπεῖν τετολμήκατε'; (LCL 157: 400).

[55] Augustine, *City of God*, 19.23. 'De Christo autem, inquit, interrogantibus si est Deus, ait Hecate: Quoniam quidem immortalis anima post corpus ut incedit, nosti; a sapientia

Augustine tells us that the last and sixth question asked by the pagan is not put as being from Porphyry, but as being 'a pagan joke', and therefore can be considered as a rehash of existing charges.[56] It pertains to the story of Jonah, who would have spent three days in the belly of a whale, fully clothed, and was then vomited up by the 'fish' ('piscis'). Meanwhile, a gourd sprang up above his head. Augustine says that he has heard that story surrounded by laughter in many pagan circles. It is therefore not interesting to look for cross-references in other texts in this case.

As for our interest in the methodology of fragment gathering, it appears useless to attempt to preserve the context in which these anti-Christian attacks were preserved. Indeed, the content of the criticisms are clearly identified by Augustine, who set them apart for the purpose of presenting a dialogue in the tradition of the question-and-answer. Here the context does not add to our understanding of the charges raised against Christianity. Let us look at the contexts of question 1 and 2, for instance. In response to the first question on Resurrection, Augustine points out that that which is promised is the Resurrection of Christ, for Lazarus died twice; 'The way in which you were born does not make a difference to the way in which you will die or resurrect.'[57] He further explains that in nature, some bodies are not generated by parents (102.4), and that as for our bodies resurrected after a long time from an undistinguishable mass, both these things are impossible to man, but are also very easy to divine power.[58] Christ had the power to eat even though his body was not real (same for angels) (102.6) and Christ also had the power to create illusion of wounds to convince the unfaithful (102.7). 'What reason could be invoked to say (this). That if he did this to convince the incredulous, he faked it?'[59] To which Augustine replies that a perfectly healed wound cannot be a deception.

Upon responding to question 2, which questioned the universalism of Christianity via the Revelation, appearing at a certain time and place, and therefore probably not including past generations, Augustine points out that Christianity is actually very close to paganism. Augustine first replies to his

autem abscissa semper errat. Viri pietate praestantissimi est illa anima; hanc colunt aliena a se veritate.'

[56] Augustine, *Letter* 102.30 (cited n. 39).

[57] Augustine, *Letter* 102.3. 'Sicut autem ad mortis sic nec ad resurrectionis differentiam valet diversa nativitas.'

[58] Augustine, *Letter* 102.5. 'Humanae facultati utrumque impossibile est, divinae autem potestati utrumque facillimum.'

[59] Augustine, *Letter* 102.7. 'Quid est ergo quod dicitur. *Si propter incredulum fecit, finxit?*'

opponent that the same reasoning applies to paganism, for many novelties have been witnessed over time: 'If they say that the gods themselves have in fact always existed, and that they were able to liberate worshippers in every place equally, but wanted service to be offered to them differently in different times and places, in accordance with the diversity of temporal and earthly things which they knew to be suitable for certain times and places ... .'[60]

Augustine does not miss an opportunity to warn the pagans against false belief. The only difference with paganism, he says, is that the Christians are guided in their worship by the True God, and are therefore on the right side.[61] Christ was announced by the prophets, so the Christians now believe in Him as flesh, and previous men believed in Him as coming into flesh.[62] Quite adroitly, Augustine suggests that the Christians do not raise objections to any Roman religion – thus pointing to the multitude of cults – even those which appeared at a certain time and place, such as Pythagoranism (just like Christianity). What bothers the Christians is 'whether these gods are true (gods), or should be worshipped, and whether that philosophy benefits the salvation of souls'.[63] Augustine explains that this is this very reasoning, which is uprooting the pagan 'sophistries', for time and the universe are ruled by divine Providence, and we should worship the divinity, which transcends the ages. Pythagoras' philosophy cannot save souls, because he was a man. He does not have Christ's power; 'Can they even say that at the time when he lived, and in the places where that philosophy flourished, all those who were able to hear him chose to believe and follow him?'[64] Those who refuse to believe are resisting divine authority, as well as what is so clear and conspicuous, for the message is clearer to us now than at the time of the prophets, Augustine warns.

Augustine also uses Porphyry's arguments themselves to counter his opponent. To the third question, in which the anonymous pagan blames the Christians for rejecting sacrifices, Augustine replies that sacrifices to God are for

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[60] Augustine, *Letter* 102.10. 'Hic si dicunt deos quidem ipsos semper fuisse, et ad liberandos cultores suos pariter ubique valuisse, sed pro varietate rerum temporalium ac terrenarum, quae scirent certis temporibus locisque congruere, in his alias atque alias, alibi atque alibi, aliter atque aliter sibi voluisse serviri ... .'

[61] Augustine, *Letter* 102.10.

[62] Augustine, *Letter* 102.11-12.

[63] Augustine, *Letter* 102.13. 'sed utrum illi dii, veri, aut colendi sint, et utrum illa philosophia animarum saluti aliquid prosit'.

[64] Augustine, *Letter* 102.14. 'numquid hoc etiam dicere possunt, eo ipso tempore quando fuit, et terrarum locis ubi illa philosophia viguit, omnes qui eum audire potuerunt, etiam credere sectarique voluisse?'

our own good, not His. He adds that the Jews, '... who have discussed the divine oracles before we did, have spoken abundantly about the symbols of sacrifices in the Old Testament as shadows and figures of things to come.'[65] It follows that Christians are not blaming pagans because they have priests, temples, and sacrifices, but because they are aware of the Old and New Testaments, but still continue to worship 'idols and demons' ('idolis et daemoniis' – which are false gods and lying angels), instead of directing their worship towards the true God.[66] This argument is in accordance with Porphyry's argument on bad demons and proper worship in *On Abstinence*.[67]

To conclude, contextualization may not always be relevant to fragment collectors. In the case of letter 102, we learn more about the rhetorical strategies used by Augustine when countering his opponents than we learn about the content of the attacks themselves. However, as my argument has shown, it was necessary to identify these strategies in order to argue against the Porphyrian authorship of the fragments.

As a broader conclusion, the closest we can get to Porphyry's discourses is thus the *Quaestiones* from letter 102, which may derive from Porphyry, even though Augustine thought they did not. But the problem here is twofold: Augustine (or a copyist) has probably reshaped the questions, and these may be standard anti-Christian arguments ascribed to Porphyry. Therefore, the questions are not 'fragments', though they may illustrate the kind of arguments Porphyry would have used. We can thus say that the anti-Christian ideas presented by Augustine in *letter* 102 are part of the general criticism still addressed to the Christians in the early fifth c. A.D.

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[65] Augustine, *Letter* 102.17. 'Et qui ante nos Dei eloquia tractaverunt, de similitudinibus sacrificiorum Veteris Testamenti, tamquam umbris figurisque futurorum copiose locuti sunt.'

[66] Augustine, *Letter* 102.18.

[67] Porphyry, *On Abstinence* 1.

Chapter 5
Augustine's *On the Harmony of the Gospels*

Letter 102 has been linked to the discourses against the Christians in the scholarship since Harnack. It is included in all of the fragment collections so far published. Porphyry is named in chapters 8, 28 and 30 only, but this seemed satisfying to fragment collectors. However, there is another work by Augustine, which also mentions Porphyry by name, but which has been generally ignored by fragment collectors: *On the Harmony of the Gospels*.

Just as in the previous section, it will be shown that the context – or 'cover-text' – of fragments is necessary to any discussion on the authorship of fragments. Indeed, a closer look at Augustine's *De consensu evangelistarum*, his intentions, the reasons why he wrote, and what he tried to achieve – the 'cover-text' – will allow us to rule out all of the Porphyrian fragments that have been recently ascribed to *Against the Christians.* It will also be shown that contrary to other contested fragments, such as those from the *Letter* 102, it will actually not be possible to include any part of *De consensu* into the broader anti-Christian argument to which Porphyry contributed. First, only a few passages can be linked with what we find elsewhere in Augustine (*City of God*) – as will be discussed – but these have already been linked to the *Philosophy from Oracles*. Second, a study of Augustine's rhetorical style will show that the bishop intentionally presented his work as a possible dialogue between pagans and Christians. Those who consider *On the Harmony* as being a source for Porphyry's discourses take for granted that it belongs to the genre of the *quaestiones*. However, as C. Zamagni argued, this is a false assumption, as is too often the norm as regards the genre, he argues.[1] Instead, looking at Augustine's rhetoric and the way he asks and answers the questions put forward, should make it clear that the bishop of Hippo mainly uses a common Christian exegetical literary genre; that is, most of the questions present in the text are his own, and he is merely anticipating the questions from pagans or the shaken faithful.

[1] Zamagni, 'Questions', 81.

De consensu evangelistarum and Porphyry

Let us look at the reasons why *De consensu* looks like a good source of Porphyrian fragments. R. Wilken noticed that, 'Augustine mention(ed) Porphyry several times ...'[2] in *On the Harmony*, and suggested that Augustine was answering Porphyry's discourses against the Christians in that work, while R. Berchman included several passages from *De consensu* in his recent fragment collection of the discourses. Augustine does actually mention Porphyry by name, but only in the following passage:

> But what shall be said to this, if those vain eulogizers of Christ, and those crooked slanderers of the Christian religion, lack the daring to blaspheme Christ, for this particular reason that some of their philosophers, as Porphyry of Sicily has given us to understand in his books, consulted their gods as to their response on the subject of [the claims of] Christ, and were constrained by their own oracles to laud Christ? Nor should that seem incredible.[3]

However, the above-mentioned excerpts refer to the oracle, which in *City of God* 19.23, is clearly ascribed to the *Philosophy from Oracles*. In *The City of God*, Augustine preserved the same Porphyrian ideas as in *De Consensu*, but he paired them with a book title:[4]

> Finally, he is the God whom Porphyry himself, the most knowledgeable philosopher, but the bitterest enemy of the Christians, acknowledged as the greatest god, even through the oracles of those he thinks to be gods ... . For in his book, which is entitled *The Philosophy from Oracles*, in which he interprets and writes about the supposedly divine responses on matters pertaining to philosophy ... .[5]

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[2] Wilken, 'Christians', 145.

[3] See also Augustine, *On the Harmony of the Gospels* 1.15.23.

[4] According to Madec, 'Augustin et Porphyre. Ébauche d'un bilan des recherches et des conjectures', *ΣΟΦΙΗΣ ΜΑΙΗΤΟΡΕΣ. Hommage à Jean Pépin,* M.-O. Goulet-Cazé, G. Madec, D. O'Brien, eds (Paris: 1992), 371, the first mention of Porphyry in Augustine was made in 400 in *On Harmony*.

[5] Augustine, *City of God*, 19.22-3: 'Postremo ipse est Deus, quem doctissimus philosophorum, quamvis Christianorum acerrimus inimicus, etiam per eorum oracula, quos deos putat, deum magnum Porphyrius confitetur ... Nam in libris, quos *Ex logion filosofias* appellat, in quibus exequitur atque conscribit rerum ad philosophiam pertinentium velut divina response ... .'

Further on in the text, Augustine goes into details about the content of these oracles, and how Porphyry used them:

> To the person who was asking about what god he should appease to recall his wife from Christianity, Apollo said these lines ... . 'You will be more able to write letters impressed on water or to fly through the air as a light bird, wafting light wings, than to recall your impious wife to her senses once she has been polluted. She should go on in what manner she wants, persevering in void fallacies and singing mournfully in error the death of her God, who was rightly sentenced by judges and died a bad death, in public view, bound by iron.' Then, after these lines, (Porphyry) said: 'In these words Apollo made clear the incurability of their belief, saying that the Jews uphold God, rather than the Christians ... ,' This same philosopher also said good things about Christ ...: 'What we will say, he said, will certainly seem unexpected to some people. The gods declared that Christ, indeed, was very pious, and they said that he became immortal, and they mention him in favourable terms; but (he says) they say that the Christians were polluted, contaminated, and involved in error, and they make use of many other such blasphemies against them (the Christians).' He also said that Hecate, when asked about whether Christ was a god, said: 'You know that the immortal soul goes on its way after the body, but when it is broken off from wisdom it wanders for ever. That soul is of a man outstanding in piety, but (the Christians) worship it because truth is estranged from them ... .'[6]

Just as in *The City of God*, in *On Harmony*, Augustine reiterates that, 'They think, indeed, that he should be honoured like the wisest of men, but they also

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[6] Augustine, *City of God* 19.23. 'Interroganti, inquit, quem deum placando revocare possit uxorem suam a Christianismo, haec ait versibus Apollo ... . Forte magis poteris in aqua impressis litteris scribere aut adinflans leves pinnas per aera avis volare, quam pollutae revoces impiae uxoris sensum. Pergat quomodo vult inanibus fallaciis perseverans et lamentari fallaciis mortuum Deum cantans, quem iudicibus recta sentientibus perditum pessima in speciosis ferro vincta mors interfecit. Deinde post hos versus Apollinis, ... , subiunxit atque ait: In his quidem irremediabile sententiae eorum manifestavit dicens, quoniam Iudaei suscipiunt Deum magis quam isti ... . Dicit etiam bona philosophus iste de Christo ... .: praeter opinionem, inquit, profecto quibusdam videatur esse quod dicturi sumus. Christum enim dii piissimum pronuntiaverunt et immortalem factum et cum bona praedicatione eius meminerunt; Christianos vero pollutos, inquit, et contaminatos et errore implicatos esse dicunt et multis talibus adversus eos blasphemiis utuntur ... . De Christo autem, inquit, interrogantibus si est Deus, ait Hecate: Quoniam quidem immortalis anima post corpus ut incedit, nosti; a sapientia autem abscissa semper errat. Viri pietate praestantissimi est illa anima; hanc colunt aliena a se veritate ... .'

deny that he should be worshipped as a god ... They do not keep silent that He (Christ) was even said to be the wisest of men by the testimony of their [the pagans'] god Apollo.'[7] Therefore, it is clear that Augustine is referring to the *Philosophy from Oracles* in *On Harmony*, although both Wilken and Berchman's conclusions suggest otherwise. Berchman is the first scholar who included *On the Harmony of the Gospels* in a fragment collection. However, as will be shown, he does it in a very arbitrary manner.

Augustine's agenda

A single mention of Porphyry by name is not sufficient to show that Augustine uses *Against the Christians* (whether directly or indirectly). We should thus dig into Augustine's agenda in order to better understand what was the aim he had set up for himself when writing *De consensu*; as will be shown, the bishop was not writing a refutation of Porphyry.

On the Harmony of the Gospels was written ca. 399-400 and is thus an early work of Augustine, whose dates are 354-430, and who converted to Christianity in 386. It is also earlier than letter 102 and the *City of God*, in which Porphyrian attacks are preserved. The Porphyry presented here is a serious enemy, for though he 'dares not blaspheme Christ',[8] his aim is 'to destroy the Christian faith'.[9]

However, Augustine explains that he wrote *On Harmony* to defend the evangelists and to protect Christians from anxiety. It is in book 1 that Augustine couched the criticisms against which he wishes to defend the evangelists. He says that, '... some people assault them with calumnies, in impious vanity or ignorant temerity, to deprive them of trust in their truthful account ... '.[10] Augustine argues that at the core of the attacks on the gospel writers lies the charge that they 'are not in harmony with each other'.[11] As a result, opponents to Christianity are

[7] Augustine, *On the Harmony of the Gospels* 1.7.11-12. 'Honorandum enim tamquam sapientissimum virum putant, colendum autem tamquam Deum negant ... , ita ut testimonio quoque dei sui Apollinis omnium sapientissimum pronuntiatum esse non taceant.'

[8] Augustine, *On the Harmony of the Gospels* 1.15.23. 'non audent blasphemare Christum'.

[9] Augustine, *On the Harmony of the Gospel* 1.16.24. 'ita volentes christianam fidem Christum ... convellere'.

[10] Augustine, *On the Harmony of the Gospels* 1.7.10. 'quidam vel impia vanitate vel imperita temeritate calumniis appetunt, ut eis veracis narrationis derogent fidem'.

[11] Augustine, *On the Harmony of the Gospels* 1.7.10. ' ... quod ipsi evangelistae inter se ipsos dissentiant'.

preventing some from converting, and challenge the faith of those converted.[12] This is why, Augustine says, 'We have undertaken to show in this work the error or the temerity of those who think they are advancing clever accusations against the four books of the Gospels, which the four evangelists wrote separately.'[13] In order to achieve his goal, Augustine explains that he must prove that these four writers 'are not in disharmony with each other'.[14] To do so, he will, in books 2, 3 and 4 of *On Harmony*, proceed to group all four gospels and write one, single narrative out of them. Augustine, therefore, does not say that he wrote this work to answer one specific challenge, such as Porphyry's attacks as found in *Against the Christians*.

What are those 'apparent' contradictions identified by the pagans? In order to read the Gospels properly, Augustine points to the evangelists' method. Once one is acquainted with it, he argues, then their faith will remain unshattered. The issue here is obviously over the well-known discrepancies between the four Gospels that are part of the canon. Pagans used them at their convenience in order to discredit the Church. To Augustine, those who believe that the Gospels are not truthful will easily think that the evangelists actually contradict each other.[15] However, there are excellent reasons for what should only be seen as 'apparent contradictions'. First, let us look at the problem of omissions and chronology. When the deeds of Christ differ in the accounts, namely when one evangelist records something, while another accounts for a different event that would have taken place at the same time, Augustine argues that both incidents actually took place, but were recorded separately.[16] When incidents are recorded in the same order by any number of evangelists, these should never be suspected of 'a want of harmony', i.e. they did so naturally, without consulting each other.[17] It may also be the case that when Jesus said the same things at varying moments, according to different evangelists, the explanation is that He actually repeated Himself.[18]

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[12] Augustine, *On the Harmony of the Gospels* 1.15.23.

[13] Augustine, *On the Harmony of the Gospels* 1.7.10. ' ... hoc opere demonstrare suscepimus errorem vel temeritatem eorum, qui contra Evangelii quattuor libros, quos evangelistae quattuor singulos conscripserunt, satis argutas criminationes se proferre arbitrantur'.

[14] Augustine, *On the Harmony of the Gospels* 1.7.10. 'quam non sibi adversentur idem scriptores quattuor'.

[15] Augustine, *On the Harmony of the Gospels* 2.65.126.

[16] Augustine, *On the Harmony of the Gospels* 2.50.105.

[17] Augustine, *On the Harmony of the Gospels* 2.58.116.

[18] Augustine, *On the Harmony of the Gospels* 2.61.119.

Variations among the Gospel stories may also be attributable to 'order of recollection', according to Augustine.[19] By that he means that an evangelist has introduced an event into his account whenever he recalled it while writing. One example of such apparent error can be found in Mark:

> ... No one should think that Peter received that name at the time when he said to him: 'You are Peter, and on that rock I will build my Church.' Indeed, he did not receive that name except where John records that it was said to him: 'You will be called Cephas, which is translated as Peter.' So it should also not be thought that Peter received that name in the passage where Mark, naming the twelve Apostles, says that Jacob and John were called the sons of thunder: he said there that [Christ] gave him that name, so that he should be called Peter, because he recalled it, not because it happened on that occasion.[20]

Again, Augustine has found a convenient way to explain the discrepancies between the Gospel stories. Following his line of argument, we should not conclude that Mark and John are contradicting each other and crafting stories, but that the differences between their accounts are due to the normal functioning of their memory.

Most importantly, Augustine argues that the meaning remains the same even if the order of events differs in the accounts.[21] For instance, Matthew and Mark do not have the same sequence of actions in the story of the Pharisees claiming that Jesus had cast out devils in the power of Beelzebub, the prince of the devils. Indeed, Mark does not mention this charge right after the story of the blind and dumb man possessed with the Devil, but after other matters, that he alone recorded. Augustine explains that this may be due to Mark mentioning the charge at that point in connection to other matters: 'he recalls it in another place and adds it, or he omitted something and then returns to this sequence'.[22] As for

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[19] Augustine, *On the Harmony of the Gospels* 2.53.109.

[20] Augustine, *On the Harmony of the Gospels* 2.53.109. ' ... ne quis arbitretur quod hic Petrus nomen accepit, ubi ait illi: *Tu es Petrus et super hanc petram aedificabo Ecclesiam meam*. Non enim accepit hoc nomen, nisi ubi Ioannes commemorat ei dictum esse: *Tu vocaberis Cephas, quod interpretatur Petrus*. Unde nec illo loco, ubi Marcus duodecim discipulos nominatim commemorans, dixit appellatos Iacobum et Ioannem filios tonitrui, arbitrandum est nomen accepisse Petrum, quia dixit illic quod imposuerit ei nomen, ut vocaretur Petrus; hoc enim recolendo dixit, non quod tunc factum sit.'

[21] Augustine, *On the Harmony of the Gospels* 2.38.85.

[22] Augustine, *On the Harmony of the Gospels* 2.38.85. 'sed post alia quaedam quae solus commemorat hoc quoque subnectit sive alio loco id recolens et adiungens, sive aliquid praetermittens et deinde ad hunc ordinem rediens'.

Luke, here his account is very close in language to that of Matthew, except that he calls the Holy Spirit the 'finger of God',[23] which Augustine argues, does not convey a different meaning to the passage, but rather enlightens us as to how we should interpret the expression 'finger of God' when we come across it elsewhere in Scripture. Any discrepancy, in this respect, only appears to be one; in fact, the sense remains the same, and the evangelists have not diverged 'in the sequence itself, even though one differs somewhat from another',[24] and are therefore not in contradiction.

Augustine raises the following question, which was most probably inspired by both contemporary and older critiques: How can all the matters recorded in the four Gospels be truthful if they differ from one another?[25] Augustine answers this by pointing out that what is important is the intention of the speaker, not the words recorded. There is a genuine harmony between the Gospels,[26] and those who are not paying sufficient attention to the text are attacking the evangelists inconsiderately.[27] In any case, the authority from which the Gospel accounts have been spread throughout the world is the Word of God, which is unchangeable and eternal, and therefore cannot be unreliable.[28] Only those who believe that Gospels are unveracious will easily think that the evangelists really contradict each other.[29] It is morally important, to Augustine, that we understand this, so that our faith is not troubled and so that we do not believe in false things. The theme is more important than the words.[30] When a difficulty is encountered, therefore, the instinctive response from a believer should be to always remember that the evangelists meant to speak the truth, not to be dishonest : ' ... provided the truth of the Evangelists is agreed'.[31]

Apparent discrepancies may also be explained by what Augustine calls 'recapitulation' ('recapitulatio' – e.g. 3.6.24, 3.9.36, 3.13.50, 3.19.56, 3.25.71) When the evangelists account for a series of events in varying orders, Augustine argues that they are going back to some events from a given starting point:

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[23] Augustine, *On the Harmony of the Gospels* 2.38.85. 'digitum Dei'.

[24] Augustine, *On the Harmony of the Gospels* 2.41.88. 'Nec in ipso ordine, quamvis aliquanto diversum alius alium teneat... . '

[25] Augustine, *On the Harmony of the Gospels* 2.46.96.

[26] Augustine, *On the Harmony of the Gospels* 2.46.97.

[27] Augustine, *On the Harmony of the Gospels* 2.46.98.

[28] Augustine, *On the Harmony of the Gospels* 2.12.28.

[29] Augustine, *On the Harmony of the Gospels* 2.65.126.

[30] Augustine, *On the Harmony of the Gospels* 2.66.128.

[31] Augustine, *On the Harmony of the Gospels* 3.5.17. ' ... dum tamen Evangelistarum veritas constet'.

> So, he says, six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus had died, whom Jesus had resurrected. In that place they made him dinner. This is what Matthew and Mark remember by recapitulating, because they have said that Passover would be after two days. As a result of their recapitulation, they return to the day in Bethany, which was six days before Passover, and narrate what John said about the dinner and the ointment.[32]

In the example above, the process of recollection is used to show how the Gospels are not in contradiction.

The evangelists may also skip a few events for the sake of brevity, as in: 'But if we accept that this was included in what the evangelist in person said, the saying will necessarily be a little obscure because of its brevity, but intact',[33] or: 'It is obvious that Matthew and Mark, who recall his (Jesus') exit, have not mentioned his return, for the sake of brevity.'[34]

Augustine sometimes goes to great lengths to make sense of apparent discrepancies between the Gospel versions. Some contradictions may be attributable to figures of speech, according to him. For instance, Augustine says he is facing 'a question which is not to be despised',[35] namely the exact hour at which the women came to Jesus' sepulchre. The bishop is struggling here, for Matthew clearly says 'on the evening of the Sabbath' (therefore when it is dark),[36] whereas the other evangelists use different expressions to mean early in the morning, when it is still dark, at dawn. There is thus an obvious and problematic contradiction between the texts. As usual, Augustine comes up with a clever explanation: 'it is a mode of speech often used in divine Scripture, to signify the whole by the part'[37] (Augustine will use the same mode of explanation in 3.24.66

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[32] Augustine, *On the Harmony of the Gospels* 2.78.153. '*Iesus ergo ante sex dies,* inquit, *Paschae venit in Bethaniam, ubi fuerat Lazarus mortuus, quem suscitavit Iesus. Fecerunt autem ei cenam ibi*. Hoc est illud quod commemorant recapitulantes Matthaeus et Marcus, cum iam dixissent post biduum futurum Pascha. Recapitulando ergo ad illum diem redeunt in Bethania, qui erat ante sex dies Paschae, et narrant quod Ioannes de cena et unguento ... .'

[33] Augustine, *On the Harmony of the Gospels* 2.80.157. 'Quod si ex persona dictum evangelistae illud interpositum acceperimus, erit quidem necessitate brevitatis subobscura locutio, sed tamen integra.'

[34] Augustine, *On the Harmony of the Gospels* 3.6.24. ' ... Matthaeum autem et Marcum, qui commemoraverunt exisse eum foras, regressum eius brevitatis causa tacuisse'.

[35] Augustine, *On the Harmony of the Gospels* 3.24.65. ' ... non contemnenda exoritur quaestio'.

[36] Augustine, *On the Harmony of the Gospels* 3.24.65. '*Vespere ... sabbati*.'

[37] Augustine, *On the Harmony of the Gospels* 3.24.65. 'Et usitatus loquendi modus est divinae Scripturae est, a parte totum significare.'

when dealing with the problem of the three days before Resurrection). Matthew chose the word 'evening' ('vespere') when he actually meant the whole night, which solves the problem of a possible contradiction. The women thus came to the sepulchre at some point during the night, when it was dark.

Not only does Augustine not say that he wrote to answer one specific challenge, but he also refers to opponents in the plural, and we know that writers other than Porphyry advanced some of the same criticisms. There are clear instances where Augustine refers to one or more pagan opponents. When he mentions oppositions to the Gospels, he uses the same wording. The expressions he uses are: 'certain persons ... impious ... or ignorant';[38] 'But first we must remove a problem which upsets some people: why the Lord Himself did not write anything';[39] 'some of their most celebrated philosophers';[40] 'these persons' (e.g. 1.8.13 and 1.9.14);[41] 'if there are people who claim that they have read such books written by Christ ... ';[42] 'these gods of the Gentiles, whom the philosophers of the pagans may have consulted'.[43] 'As a result, let those evil eulogizers of Christ say ...';[44] 'the perverse eulogizers of Christ and the detractors of Christians'.[45] A word of caution is necessary here, for Augustine does sometimes use a plural when he has one person in mind, e.g. he will say 'most acute and learned men' when talking about Varro.[46] However, it cannot be implied here that he is addressing Porphyry only.

What is misleading is that Augustine only mentions Porphyry by name once, but it may sound as if he is used as a spokesperson for the group that Augustine calls the 'philosophers': 'some of their philosophers, such as Porphyry of Sicily

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[38] Augustine, *On the Harmony of the Gospels* 1.7.10. 'quidam ... vel impia ... imperita'.

[39] Augustine, *On the Harmony of the Gospels* 1.7.11. 'Sed illud prius discutiendum est, quod solet nonnullos movere, cur ipse Dominus nihil scripserit ... .'

[40] Augustine, *On the Harmony of the Gospels* 1.7.12. 'de quibusdam nobilissimis philosophis'.

[41] Augustine, *On the Harmony of the Gospels* 1.9.14. ' ... isti desipiunt ... '.

[42] Augustine, *On the Harmony of the Gospels* 1.8.13. 'Et certe qui tales Christi libros legisse se affirmant ... . '

[43] Augustine, *On the Harmony of the Gospels* 1.15.23. ' ... quod illi dii gentium, quos philosophi paganorum consulere potuerunt, ... '.

[44] Augustine, *On the Harmony of the Gospels* 1.31.47. 'Desinant ergo dicere mali laudatores Christi ... .'

[45] Augustine, *On the Harmony of the Gospels* 1.32.49. ' ... perversi laudatores Christi et christianorum obtrectatores'.

[46] Augustine, *City of God* 6.2: 'hominem acerrimum ac peritissimum'.

revealed in his books, ...'.[47] There is also evidence of the aim of the attackers: ' ... these persons (some of their philosophers – see 1.15.23), ... thus want to tear the Christian faith to pieces by honouring and praising Christ'.[48] Although the 'device' mentioned is from the *Philosophy from Oracles*, tearing the Christian faith to pieces is precisely what Porphyry meant to do with *Against the Christians*.

Augustine mentions the opponents in the plural form even if he may mean 'Porphyry'. But why would Porphyry be named in chapter 15 of book 1 only? It could be that Augustine uses the same method as the evangelists, i.e. '(they) have reached these stories according to what each had recollected',[49] and that he only remembered to name him at that point of his writing. It is also possible that Augustine did not wish to present his work as being '*Against Porphyry*', thus giving too much importance to the man. But it remains difficult to attribute the authorship to Porphyry only, for, as Augustine points out, 'it is agreed that by these things [i.e. the acts and words of Christ reported by his disciples] the Christian religion is opposed to these few [pagans] ... '.[50] The pagans Augustine refers to may have been simply rehashing old attacks against Christianity, as well as including more recent ones. P. Courcelle made, in 1958, a survey of all anti-Christian attacks found in Augustine. Courcelle's work not only includes *Letter* 102 and *On the Harmony*, but also many of Augustine's sermons. Although he does not formally identify the pagan criticisms from *On Harmony* with any particular source, he concluded that all attacks were not necessarily dating from Augustine's time.[51]

Finally, because we know that writers other than Porphyry advanced some of the same criticisms, it is impossible to argue that Augustine would have been responding to him only. Celsus did not directly attack the evangelists, but expressed concerns that later Christians had changed the content of the Gospel: 'Some believers, just like people who are drunk and hit themselves with their own hands, modified the original text of the Gospels three or four times, or even more, and altered it so that they would be able to answer its critics.'[52] But Celsus

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[47] Augustine, *On the Harmony of the Gospels* 1.15.23. ' ... quia quidam philosophi eorum, sicut in libris suis Porphyrius siculus prodit ... '.

[48] Augustine, *On the Harmony of the Gospels* 1.16.24. ' ... ita volentes christianam fidem Christum honorantes laudantesque convellere ... '.

[49] Augustine, *On the Harmony of the Gospels* 2.12.28. ' ... cui recordanti tale aliquid acciderit'.

[50] Augustine, *On the Harmony of the Gospels* 1.16.24. ' ... quibus constat religio christiana adhuc istis iam paucissimis ... '.

[51] P. Courcelle, 'Propos anti-chrétiens', *Recherches Augustiniennes* vol. 4 (1958): 184-5.

[52] Origen, *Against Celsus* 2.27. 'Μετὰ ταῦτά τινας τῶν πιστευόντων φησὶν *ὡς ἐκ μέθης ἥκοντας εἰς τὸ ἐφεστάναι αὐτοῖς μεταχαράττειν ἐκ τῆς πρώτης γραφῆς τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τριχῇ καὶ τετραχῇ καὶ πολλαχῇ καὶ μεταπλάττειν, ἵν' ἔχοιεν πρὸς τοὺς ἐλέγχους ἀρνεῖσθαι*' (SC 132: 356).

was more preoccupied with issues of diverging meaning between the OT and the NT – thus blaming the evangelists for misinterpreting the OT – than he was with the lack of harmony between the Gospel writers:

> Are they not going to think about that point too? If the prophets of the God of the Jews had predicted that Jesus would be His child, how come God, through Moses, is giving them for laws to grow rich, to fill the earth, to slay their enemies without sparing the youth, to exterminate their entire race, which is what He Himself is doing in front of the Jews, according to Moses' testimony? And if they do not obey, He threatens to treat them as enemies? While His Son, the man from Nazareth, professes laws that are in contradiction to these, namely that the rich man will have no access to the Father, nor will the one who pretends to be wise and successful; we should not be more concerned with food and the granary attic than the crows are, and be less concerned with clothes than the lily and we must offer the person who struck us to strike again! Who, then, is lying, Moses or Jesus? Has the Father, when He sent Jesus, forgot what He had commanded to Moses? Has He denied His own laws, changed His mind, and sent His messenger for a contradictory purpose?[53]

The emperor Julian raised the same concerns as Celsus as regards the OT versus the teachings of the NT:

> You have now heard Moses himself and the other prophets. Moses declares many things about this in many places: 'Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God and him only shalt thou serve.' How come the Gospels say: 'Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost', unless they were supposed to serve Him as well?[54]

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[53] Origen, *Against Celsus* 7.18: "Ἐξῆς δὲ τούτοις τοιαῦτά φησιν ὁ Κέλσος· *Ἐκεῖνο δ' οὐκ ἐνθυμηθήσονται πάλιν; Εἰ προεῖπον οἱ τοῦ Ἰουδαίων θεοῦ προφῆται τοῦτον ἐκείνου παῖδα ἐσόμενον, πῶς ἐκεῖνος μὲν διὰ Μωϋσέως νομοθετεῖ πλουτεῖν καὶ δυναστεύειν καὶ καταπιμπλάναι τὴν γῆν καὶ καταφονεύειν τοὺς πολεμίους ἡβηδὸν καὶ παγγενεὶ κτείνειν, ὅπερ καὶ αὐτὸς ἐν ὀφθαλμοῖς τῶν Ἰουδαίων, ὥς φησι Μωϋσῆς, ποιεῖ, καὶ πρὸς ταῦτα, ἂν μὴ πείθωνται, διαρρήδην αὐτοὺς τὰ τῶν πολεμίων δράσειν ἀπειλεῖ, ὁ δ' υἱὸς ἄρα αὐτοῦ, ὁ 'Ναζωραῖος' ἄνθρωπος, ἀντινομοθετεῖ μηδὲ παριτητὸν εἶναι πρὸς τὸν πατέρα τῷ πλουτοῦντι ἢ φιλαρχιῶντι ἢ σοφίας ἢ δόξης ἀντιποιουμένῳ, δεῖν δὲ σίτων μὲν καὶ ταμείου μὴ μᾶλλόν τι φροντίζειν ἢ 'τοὺς κόρακας', ἐσθῆτος δὲ ἧττον ἢ 'τὰ κρίνα', τῷ δ' ἄπαξ τυπτήσαντι παρέχειν καὶ αὖθις τύπτειν; Πότερον Μωϋσῆς ἢ Ἰησοῦς ψεύδεται; Ἦ ὁ πατὴρ τοῦτον Πότερον Μωϋσῆς ἢ Ἰησοῦς ψεύδεται; Ἦ ὁ πατὴρ τοῦτον πέμπων ἐπελάθετο, τίνα Μωϋσεῖ διετάξατο; Ἦ καταγνοὺς τῶν ἰδίων νόμων μετέγνω καὶ τὸν ἄγγελον ἐπὶ τοῖς ἐναντίοις ἀποστέλλει;* " (SC 150: 52-4).

[54] Julian, *Against the Galilaeans* book 1. 'αὐτου τε Μωυσέως καὶ τῶν ἄλλων ἐπηκούσατε προφητῶν. ὁ οὖν Μωυσῆς πολλὰ τοιαῦτα καὶ πολλαχοῦ λέγει 'Κύριον τὸν θεόν σου φοβηθήσῃ

Even if these passages seem dissimilar in content from the questions raised by Augustine, we must bear in mind that what remains of Celsus comes from Origen and what remains of Julian from Cyril of Alexandria. As Wilken pointed out, Cyril does say that Julian attacked the Gospels, but does not specify how.[55] It is therefore difficult to completely rule out Celsus and Julian as possible sources. On the other hand, it is an entirely different story in the case of Macarios' *Apocriticos.* The Anonymous Hellene preserves most of the points mentioned in Augustine: 'The evangelists were the inventors and not the historians of the deeds accomplished around Jesus. Indeed, each of them composed a story of the Passion, which, instead of agreeing, is completely contradictory.'[56] 'All the details that they gave about his (Jesus') death were mere conjectures':[57]

> These words, uttered likewise for a long time, are, as it is often the case, very unpleasant, and each point brought forward create against itself a fight on contradiction. Indeed, if a man in the street want to explain the other word from the Gospels that Jesus addresses to Peter, when he says: 'Get thee behind me, Satan, thou art an offence unto me, for thou mindest not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men', and then in another place: 'Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church, and I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven' ... [58]

We have already discussed the controversy surrounding the Macarios fragments; both he and Augustine may be using the same source(s), but, as we shall demonstrate, it is more likely that Augustine raised himself many of the issues he mentions.

καὶ αὐτῷ μόνῳ λατρεύσεις'. Πῶς οὖν ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἐν τοῖς εὐαγγελίοις παραδέδοται προστάττων 'Πορευθέντες μαθητεύσατε πάντα τὰ ἔθνη, βαπτίζοντες αὐτοὺς εἰς τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ πατρὸς καὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ καὶ τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος', εἴπερ μὴ καὶ αὐτῷ λατρεύειν ᾽μελλον ;' (LCL 157: 402).

[55] Wilken, 'Christians', 178.

[56] Macarios, *Apocriticos* 2.23.1-2. ' Ὁ δὲ δρίμυξας καὶ λίαν βλοσυρὸν εἰσαθρήσας πληκτικώτερον ἡμῖν ᾽φησε νεύσας τοὺς Εὐαγγελιστὰς ἐφευρετὰς, οὐχ ἵστορας τῶν περὶ τὸν Ἰησοῦν γεγενῆσθαι πράξεων. Ἕκαστος γὰρ αὐτῶν οὐ σύμφωνον ἀλλ᾽ ἑτερόφωνον μάλιστα τὸν λόγον περὶ τοῦ πάθους ᾽γραψεν' (Goulet: 34).

[57] Macarios, *Apocriticos* 2.24.1. ' Ὅτι τὰ περὶ τοῦ τέλους αὐτοῦ πάντα κατεστοχάσαντο, ἐξ ἑτέρου κεφαλαίου τοῦτ᾽ ἀποδειχθήσεται.'

[58] Macarios, *Apocriticos* 3.19.1. 'Ταῦτα μὲν χὐδην οὕτω μακρηγούμενα πολλήν, ὡς εἰκος, ἔχει τὴν ἀνδίαν. Καὶ ὥσπερ αὐτὰ πρὸς ἑαυτὰ τῆς ἀντιλογίας ἀνακαίει τὴν μάχην. Εἰ γὰρ ἐθέλει τις ὡς ἐκ τριόδου κἀκ εἴνον τῶν εὐαγγελιῶν ἀφηγήσασθαι τὸν λόγον, ὅν ὁ Ἰησοῦς τῷ Πέτρῳ διαφθέγγεται φάς ' ᾽Ὕπαγε ὀπίσω μου, Ζατανᾶ, σκάνδαλόν μου εἶ, ὅτι οὐ φρονεῖς τὰ τοῦ θεοῦ, ἀλλὰ τὰ τῶν ἀνθρώπων' εἶτ᾽ ἐν ἑτέρῳ τόπῳ 'Ζὺ εἶ Πέτρος, καὶ ἐπι ταύτῃ τῇ πέτρᾳ οἰκοδομήσω μου τὴν Ἐκκλησίαν' ... ' (Goulet: 146).

The problem of Augustine's rhetorical practice

In *De consensu*, Augustine uses several rhetorical devices, and understanding them will allow us to acquire a better knowledge of Porphyry's place in Augustine's work. One of those devices is the 'forensic technique', which consists of challenging one's opponent. Caroline Humfress explains that mastering the practice of forensic rhetoric was a necessary skill for educated, late antique Churchmen wishing to have influence on imperial politics.[59] The technique involved citing opponents out of context in order to turn their works against themselves. As Humfress's work shows, the forensic argument could be used to settle a case by an advocate before it goes to court, but before the charges are made.[60] This may explain why so many passages in *De consensu* sound like answers to actual charges; what Augustine is actually doing is foreseeing possible accusations, and responding to them before they are formally raised by an opponent.

Other studies suggest that Augustine could be following the sequence of argument of one opponent, but without acknowledging it. G. Clark pointed out that Augustine used a tactic established by Christian apologists, 'of citing authorities that non-Christians did accept'.[61] In *City of God*, he may be using Porphyry in the same way as he uses Varro, namely as authorities whose writings present a hidden religious truth. The question further raised by Clark is whether Augustine uses Porphyry because he was an acknowledged authority, or whether Augustine found him a convenient opponent (a Platonist in Latin translation). Clark argues that Varro's account of Roman polytheistic religion suited Augustine's purposes, because he wanted to show that pagans were actually monotheists; Porphyry could be used as an example of Platonist philosophy, but Augustine also portrayed him as almost Christian. Ultimately, Augustine wished to demonstrate that pagan religion was not irreconcilable with Christianity, and that Christianity could guarantee salvation to all. Varro was commonly studied at school, not for his written style, but because he provides explanations of traditional Roman cults. Therefore, those reading Augustine would have been familiar with Varro. Furthermore, he wrote in Latin, and Augustine could

[59] C. Humfress, *Orthodoxy and the Courts in Late Antiquity* (Oxford: 2007), 140-44.

[60] Humfress, *Orthodoxy*, 97.

[61] G. Clark, 'Augustine's Varro and Pagan Monotheism', in *Monotheism in Late Antiquity Between Christians and Pagans*, S. Mitchell and P. van Nuffelen, eds (Leuven: 2010), 183.

not read Greek very fast, although he was getting better at it over time.[62] As for Porphyry, some of his works had been translated into Latin and were thus accessible to Augustine (*De regressu animae*), and in Milan, he would have heard a lot about the philosopher on Platonism. Using the most famous anti-Christian thinker and presenting him as a Christian is certainly a powerful rhetorical tool. In both the cases of Varro and Porphyry, scholars have to rely on Augustine for Varro on religion, and Porphyry's *De regressu anima*, hence the importance of understanding Augustine's citation method.

Theory in practice

How do these ideas apply to *On the Harmony of the Gospels*? Let us look more closely at the work in order to decide whether we should consider any of the questions put forth as being actually part of the general anti-Christian argument. In *On Harmony*, Augustine shows that pagan beliefs are really very close to Christian beliefs (even though the pagans are confused about this), and in *City of God* he uses exactly the same strategy for Porphyry. Could Augustine have Porphyry in mind when writing *On Harmony*?

First, following Humfress's and Clark's views on how Augustine cites his opponents out of context and turns their ideas against them, it can be observed that in *On Harmony*, Augustine presents Porphyry's philosophical views as being consistent with those of Christians.

Augustine was out to do more in book 1 than defend the evangelists. He demonstrates how God is not only a god, but also the supreme God, and proves how He asked to be worshipped, i.e. alone and without idols.[63] According to Augustine, the Roman treatment of the God of the Hebrews was unusual. The Romans normally propitiated the deities of the nations they conquered by worshipping them, and by undertaking the charge of their sacred rites. However, they always refused to do likewise with the God of the Hebrews, who have, according to Augustine, sinned when they put Christ to death, for they had been commissioned to prophesy Christ). Augustine argues that the reason lies in the nature of the worship required by God: 'I believe that they perceived that, if they admitted the devotion to this God, who ordered that He only should be worshipped, and that images should be destroyed, they would have to reject all

[62] On Augustine and Greek, see J. Loessl, 'Augustine in Byzantium', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 51 (2000): 267-95.

[63] Augustine, *On the Harmony of the Gospels* 1.12.18.

that they had formerly taken up for worship; and to these cults they think they owe the growth of their empire.'[64]

Not only did the Romans believe that their empire had grown because of their worship of the gods, but they also believed that they needed to placate the gods for their protection.[65] Worshipping only one of them in the province of Judaea was therefore too risky. The usual view is that the Romans decided to leave the Jews alone on the basis of the antiquity of their religion, which inspired respect. But Augustine offers a better explanation. He is actually helping us to understand the incompatibility of paganism and Christianity. As S. Mitchell and P. van Nuffelen argue in the introduction to *Monotheism in Late Antiquity Between Christians and Pagans*, the main question that late antique people had to struggle with was 'Who do I worship?'[66] To the bishop of Hippo, the answer certainly lies in God, and proving this is part of his agenda in *On Harmony of the Gospels*. The evidence for God's supremacy is to be found in the fulfilment in the New Testament of the prophets' sayings.[67] In contrast the pagan prophecies were never fulfilled, and this testifies to the power and authority of the God of the Christians.[68]

In order to properly answer all the above-mentioned attacks, Augustine interprets the idea that the pagans might have of God. Augustine starts with an investigation of pagan ideas on the God of the Jews. He reports that to some unnamed pagans, God is simply Saturn, possibly, Augustine infers, because the Sabbath day is on the day of Saturn.[69] To the philosopher he famously uses in *The City of God*, Varro, the God of the Jews is Jupiter, but 'the name which is used is not important, provided that the same thing is understood'.[70] The philosopher Varro's dates are 116-27 B.C.E., therefore he was never in contact with Christians, and is not commenting on them. Augustine interprets Varro's view in the light of Roman theogony: Jupiter being the supreme God, equating God with him betrays how respectful Varro was and how impressed the philosopher was with

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[64] Augustine, *On the Harmony of the Gospels* 1.12.18. 'Credo quod videbant, si eius Dei sacra reciperent, qui se solum deletis etiam simulacris coli iuberet, dimittenda esse omnia quae prius colenda susceperant, quorum religionibus imperium suum crevisse arbitrabantur ... .'

[65] See Porphyry, *On Abstinence* 1.

[66] S. Mitchell and P. van Nuffelen, 'Introduction', in *Monotheism in Late Antiquity Between Christians and Pagans*, S. Mitchell and P. van Nuffelen, eds (Leuven: 2010), 9.

[67] Augustine, *On the Harmony of the Gospels* 1.20.28.

[68] Augustine, *On the Harmony of the Gospels* 1.20.28.

[69] Augustine, *On the Harmony of the Gospels* 1.22.30.

[70] Augustine, *On the Harmony of the Gospels* 1.22.30. '... quo nomine nuncupetur, dum eadem res intellegatur ... '. For Ausgutine's interpretation of Saturn and Jupiter, see also Plotinus, *Enneads* 5.8.13 and Porphyry, *Cave of the Nymphs* on the binding of Cronos.

Him.[71] Here Augustine follows his usual line of argument, for he uses Varro, an eminent pagan philosopher, in order to make a point against the pagans, just in the same way as he uses Porphyry in *City of God*. Next, it would make sense, says Augustine, to identify Jupiter with God, in that, as Virgil writes in *Eclogues* 3.5.60, 'All things are full of Jove.'[72] This is also true of God who 'fills heaven and earth'.[73] Augustine then asks himself who Virgil names as Ether in Georgics 2.325, for he is said to be 'the omnipotent father descended (from the sky) into the bosom of his happy wife, with fruitful showers'.[74] The pagans say, according to Augustine, that Ether is not spirit, but a 'body they say is lofty and in which the sky is stretched out above the air'.[75] Therefore, the bishop of Hippo concludes, Virgil is at times following Plato, who says that God is spirit, and at times following the Stoics, who say that God is a body. Augustine uses the example of Jupiter in order to underline the contradictions in paganism as to the nature of the gods: 'If (what they worship in the Capitol) is a spirit, or if it is in fact the corporeal sky itself, then what is the shield of Jupiter doing there, which they call the Aegis?'[76] Augustine later explains that this shield was made of the skin of a she-goat in honour of Jupiter's nurse.[77] Here he certainly implies that if the pagans are not clear about the nature of their gods, this is because it is twofold. Jupiter thus has two natures. Augustine argues that the pagans appear to be drawing their ideas on the gods from the books of philosophers, but worshipping them in temples according to their poets. Augustine pushes the argument even further by demonstrating that the pagans are worshipping deities that once were men. He uses the example of the Egyptian priest Leon, 'who revealed to Alexander of Macedon an account of the origin of those gods which differed from the opinion of the Greeks'.[78] This implies that they are indeed worshipping dead men.

After having shown how the pagans, just like the Christians, worship dead men who have a divine spirit – which implies that pagans do in fact

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[71] Augustine, *On the Harmony of the Gospels* 1.22.30.

[72] Augustine, *On the Harmony of the Gospels* 1.23.31. '*Iovis omnia plena … .*'

[73] Augustine, *On the Harmony of the Gospels* 1.23.31. '*Caelum et terram ego impleo.*'

[74] Augustine, *On the Harmony of the Gospels* 1.23.31. '*… pater omnipotens fecundis imbribus aether, coniugis in gremium laetae descendit*'.

[75] Augustine, *On the Harmony of the Gospels* 1.23.31. '... sed corpus esse dicunt sublime, quo caelum super aerem distenditur'.

[76] Augustine, *On the Harmony of the Gospels* 1.23.31. 'Si spiritum, si denique ipsum caelum corporeum, quid illic facit scutum illud Iovis, quod appellant Aegida?'

[77] Augustine, *On the Harmony of the Gospels* 1.23.34.

[78] Augustine, *On the Harmony of the Gospels* 1.23.33. '... qui macedoni Alexandro diversam quidem a Graecorum opinione istorum deorum originem verumtamen ita prodit'.

share Christian beliefs and cannot blame Christians for worshipping a dead man with a divine spirit – Augustine comes back to Saturn. By a very skilled analogy and by using Virgil's *Aeneid* 8.320-24, he manages to demonstrate that the pagan gods are temporal, and emanated from a main deity, Time. He first equates Saturn with Chronus, who is 'universal Time' in Greek, and 'Saturn' in Latin, 'as though filled with years'.[79] Augustine thus adroitly shows that the pagans' main deity is Time, and therefore that all the gods, who issued from him are temporal. But Augustine's argument does not end here. He pushes it even further in a bid to demonstrate that the pagans, too, worship a holy trinity similar to the Christians'. He first explains how the Neoplatonists, disagreeing with the interpretation of the major deity as Time, say that Chronus is actually 'the fulness of intellect', 'koros' meaning 'satiety', and 'nous' meaning intellect.[80] It follows that Saturnus is a combination of the Latin 'satur' and the Greek 'nous'. This implies that Jupiter, the son of Saturn, is the spirit engendered by the supreme intellect, 'the soul of this world, .., filling all heavenly and earthly bodies', in the words of Augustine.[81] The bishop of Hippo then brings back the words of Maro, 'all things are full of Jove', and interprets them as meaning that Jove is the soul of the world. He concludes that the pagans are wrong to worship Jupiter as a supreme deity, when they should be worshipping Saturn as such, for he is the source of all souls. Instead, they place Saturn at the level of the stars as an evil deity,[82] as though they had no understanding at all of their own theogony. In sum, Augustine showed that the pagans were worshipping a mortal soul, issued from the supreme soul, and having been part of a world filled with Jove. Besides, they are adding to the insult against their main deity by downgrading it to a far lesser rank. The Christians, as a result, naturally emerge as a religiously superior group. However, Augustine thinks none of these gods could correspond to God, for they never forbade the worship of other deities.[83]

The pagans, in turn, are very close to being Christians, says Augustine. Their only mistake lay in not worshipping Saturn as their main deity, as their interpretations logically require.[84] Augustine maintains that although the pagans worship all the gods, they deny Christ, 'because their pride made them

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79 Augustine, *On the Harmony of the Gospels* 1.23.34. '... quasi saturetur annis'.

80 Augustine, *On the Harmony of the Gospels* 1.23.35. '... velut a satietate intellectus ... . '

81 Augustine, *On the Harmony of the Gospels* 1.23.35. '... animam mundi huius omnia caelestia et terrena corpora implentem'.

82 Augustine, *On the Harmony of the Gospels* 1.23.36.

83 Augustine, *On the Harmony of the Gospels* 1.22.30.

84 Augustine, *On the Harmony of the Gospels* 1.24.37.

ashamed to be humble under Christ about the remission of their sins'.[85] This argument reminds us of the point that Augustine made in *City of God* (10.32) as regards Porphyry's own religion. The pagans seem to be ambivalent in their choice of deity. Even though they claim to be worshipping all gods, since they do not worship the God of the Hebrews, then this claim is false. But if they were worshipping God, because he forbade the worship of other deities, they cannot be also worshipping other gods. It follows that their religious claims are wrong, one way or another, for as long as they refuse to become Christians.

A great part of Augustine's evidence for God being the true God lies in his interpretation of the relationship between various deities. Saturn and Jupiter cannot exclude the worship of one another:

> If indeed Jupiter does not prohibit the worship of Saturn, because he is not a man, who expelled another man, his father, out of his kingdom, but is either the body of the sky, or spirit filling both heaven and earth, and therefore he cannot prohibit the worship of the supernal mind, from which he is said to have emanated; if, in the same way, Saturn cannot prohibit the worship of Jupiter, because he was not conquered by his rebellion, as the man Saturn was by some Jupiter or other, whose weapons he fled when he came to Italy, but the first mind favours the soul which originated from it.[86]

This gives further support to Augustine's previous argument; Saturn and Jupiter are inter-dependent, just like the Christian God and Christ. But as far as the other gods are concerned, they should logically not approve of other gods being worshipped. For instance, Diana the virgin should not accept Venus or Priapus, for these deities can only undermine her influence.[87] Since all these contradictory deities co-exist, Augustine concludes that none of them can be considered as true.

Augustine points to a familiar pagan attack: the pagans do not give credit to all of God's works. He cites examples taken from the Old Testament, such as the

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[85] Augustine, *On the Harmony of the Gospels* 1.24.37. '... cum eos superbos puderet pro peccatorum remissione humilari sub Christo'.

[86] Augustine, *On the Harmony of the Gospels* 1.25.38. 'Si enim Iuppiter non prohibet Saturnum coli, quia non est ille homo, qui illum hominem patrem de regno expulit, sed aut caeli corpus aut spiritus implens caelum et terram, et ideo non potest prohibere coli mentem supernam, ex qua dicitur emanasse, si ea ratione nec Saturnus Iovem coli prohibet, quia non ab eo rebellante superatus est, sicut ille a Iove nescio quo, cuius arma fugiens venit in Italiam, sed favet prima mens animae a se genitae ... '.

[87] Augustine, *On the Harmony of the Gospels* 1.25.38.

Flood and the Creation, which hints at the pagan's denial of the God of Israel.[88] In his letter 102, Augustine notes the same kind of problem as regards the story of Jonah and the whale, which was mocked in his time in pagan circles.[89] To Augustine, however, God's miraculous works, and especially the fulfilment of the prophecies of the OT, are evidence that God is the true One.

Another point raised by Augustine implies that some pagans considered the God of Israel as not being theirs, but the Hebrews'. Augustine explains that the God of Israel is called such, because Abraham received the following promise: 'In your seed all races will be blessed', and so did his son, Isaac, and then his grandson Jacob, who was also called 'Israel', but adds, 'Not that he is not also the God of the Gentiles himself, ..., but because in this people he wanted the excellence of his promises to appear more manifestly.'[90] The greater implication here is that the God of Israel is also not the God of the Christians, most of whom come from the Gentile community. Augustine reports that the pagans are accusing the Christians of not worshipping the God of Israel appropriately, for they are not worshipping idols like the Jews do.[91] According to Augustine, the point of such attacks is to argue that the Christians claim that God had promised to rid the earth of superstitions and idol worship, i.e. paganism, in order that Christianity can rule.[92] By giving more credit to the Jews for their respect of God's commands, the pagans are thus downgrading the Christians. In sum, the pagans are clearly distancing themselves from the God of Israel, and further discredit the Christians for not knowing how to placate Him. Augustine thus needs to explain that in the OT, God actually forbade that a likeness of Himself be worshipped.[93]

Augustine mentions a philosopher who wrote that he had come to know what God the Jews worshipped. He does not provide a reference or name for that writer. The latter said that, '[they must be subordinate to] him who holds authority over all the elements and the mass of the universe.'[94] Once again, Augustine uses a 'philosopher' – whoever he is the title bears authority – against

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88 Augustine, *On the Harmony of the Gospels* 1.25.39.

89 Augustine, *Letter* 102.30.

90 Augustine, *On the Harmony of the Gospels* 1.25.39. '*In semine tuo benedicentur omnes Gentes* ... non quod ipse non sit Deus omnium gentium ... , sed quia in isto populo voluit manifestius apparere virtutem promissorum suorum.'

91 Augustine, *On the Harmony of the Gospels* 1.26.41.

92 Augustine, *On the Harmony of the Gospels* 1.26.41.

93 Augustine, *On the Harmony of the Gospels* 1.26.41.

94 Augustine, *On the Harmony of the Gospels* 1.29.45. ' ... ut sub illo sint qui omnium elementorum et universae huius molis praepositurum gerit'.

the pagans to argue that if the God of Israel is such, than he should be considered as the supreme God. He therefore questions why the pagans have decided, for their sakes, not to worship Him, thinking that if they did so, they would lose the protection of other deities, however lesser. Next, Augustine uses the pre-Christian poet Lucan, who, failing to discover who the God of the Jews was, did not deny his divine status, when he called Him the 'uncertain God'.[95] Augustine has thus demonstrated that one may find in the pagan books the evidence for God's existence, and what deity He is, and that, as a result, it does not make sense to deny Him over lesser divinities. In sum, Augustine does not ascribe these arguments to Porphyry; sometimes he ascribes them to other sources; sometimes, arguments are similar to arguments ascribed elsewhere to Porphyry, but it does not follow that he is the source.

Since Augustine may well be challenging one opponent, while following his sequence of argument without acknowledging it, how many of the arguments he counters in *On Harmony* are known to have been used, or likely to have been used, by Porphyry? In order to answer this question, we need to identify the passages in which a response to an opponent was made, and see whether or not they can be attributed to Porphyry. As we shall see, this is not at all straightforward.

Wilken's insight was sound, for we have evidence that Porphyry's criticisms as found in *On Harmony* have points in common with his criticisms preserved elsewhere, namely the evangelists being inconsistent and misleading. Wilken associated some of the criticism found in *On Harmony* with fragments traditionally ascribed to *Against the Christians*. I am proposing here to develop his argument by looking at the text in greater detail. Although Porphyry is named – in relation to the *Philosophy from Oracles* – and is the only Christian opponent ever named in the entire work, and although the nature of the attacks accounted for in Augustine resemble the kind of attacks that are usually found in Porphyry, there are important clues in Augustine's rhetoric that do not allow us to conclude Porphyrian authorship.

According to existing fragment collections, Porphyry made four main charges against the evangelists. He accused them of being ignorant, of lying and falsifying the historical record, of presenting Jesus as an inconsistent man, and of adapting the story of Jesus to their own needs in order to make him appear as divine (in *Philosophy from Oracles*). We know from Jerome that, ' ... The famous impious Porphyry, who wrote against us and vomited his rage in numerous

[95] Augustine, *On the Harmony of the Gospels* 1.29.46. 'incertum Deum'.

volumes, argues in book 14: "The evangelists were such ignorant men."'[96] We also know from Jerome that Porphyry said the evangelists claimed that Jesus had walked on the sea, when he actually walked on the Lake Genezareth. They were thus confusing a sea with a lake, either out of ignorance or because they wanted to exaggerate the deeds of Jesus. To Porphyry, the gospel writers proposed a miracle for ignorant people.[97] Next, Porphyry equates 'miracles' with 'magical art'.[98] The gospel writers are also guilty of 'falsity', for they could not even cite the Bible properly.[99] In one instance, Mark cites Isaiah only and forgets Malachi,[100] and Matthew confuses Isaiah and Asaph,[101] and forgets one generation in the Book of Daniel.[102] A Eusebian fragment of the discourses against the Christians goes even further and says that the evangelists falsified the record of what Jesus

[96] Jerome, *From the beginning of Mark* 1.1-2 – Harnack Nr. 9. 'Locum istum impius ille Porphyrius, qui adversum nos conscripsit et multis voluminibus rabiem suam evomuit, in XIV volumine disputat et dicit: "Evangelistae tam imperiti fuerant homines ... "'. (CCSL 78: 452).

[97] Jerome, *Abridged commentary on the psalms* 81– Harnack Nr. 4.

[98] Jerome, *Abridged commentary on the psalms* 81 – Harnack Nr. 4. 'Homines rusticani et pauperes, quoniam nihil habebant, magicis artibus operati sunt quaedam signa. Non est autem grande facere signa. Nam fecere signa in Aegypto magi contra Moysen (Exod. 7). Fecit et Apollonius, fecit et Apuleius. Infiniti signa fecerunt. Concedo tibi, Porphyri, magicis artibus signa fecerunt, ut divitias acciperent a divitibus mulierculis, quas induxerant: hoc enim tu dicis' (CCSL 78: 89).

[99] Jerome, *Letter* 57.9 *to Pammachius* – Harnack Nr. 2. 'Haec replico, non ut evangelistas arguam falsitatis – hoc quippe impiorum est, Celsi, Porphyrii, Iuliani ... ' (Budé 3: 67).

[100] Jerome, *From the beginning of Mark* 1.1-12 – Harnack Nr. 9. Jerome, quoting directly from Porphyry: 'Evangelistae tam imperiti fuerunt homines, non solum in saecularibus, sed etiam in scriptures divinis, ut testimonium, quod alibi scriptum est, de alio ponerent propheta' (CCSL 78: 452). Jerome, *Commentary on Matthew* 3.3 – Harnack Nr. 9. 'Porphyrius istum locum Marci evangelistae principio comparat in quo scriptum est: ... Cum enim testimonium de Malachia Esaiaque contextum putemus adsumptum' (SC 242: 90).

[101] Jerome, *Abridged commentary on the psalms* 77 – Harnack Nr. 10. 'Aperiam in parabola os meum ... .' Hoc Esaias non loquitur, sed Asaph. Denique et inpius ille Porphyrius proponit aduersum nos hoc ipsum, et dicit: 'Euangelista uester Matthaeus tam inperitus fuit, ut diceret, quod scriptum est in Esaia propheta, Aperiam in parabola os meum ... ' (CCSL 78: 66).

[102] Jerome, *Commentary on Daniel* 1.1.1 – Harnack Nr. 11. 'Et ob hanc causam in euangelio secundum Matthaeum una uidetur desse generatio (Matth. 1.11.12), quia secunda tesseriscedecas in Ioachim desinit filium Iosiae et tertia incipit a Ioiachin filio Ioachim; quod ignorans Porphyrius, calumniam struit ecclesiae, suam ostendens imperitiam, dum evangelistae Matthaei arguere nititur falsitatem' (CCSL 75A: 777).

actually did, since Jesus never performed any miracle.[103] Finally, we know from Jerome that the evangelists could not get their story straight, either by agreeing with each other, or by presenting Jesus as acting consistently. In John 7.10, Jesus told his brethren that he will not yet go up to the feast of Tabernacles (7.8). However, after his brethen went up to the feast, Jesus also went up 'not openly, but as if it were a secret'. According to Jerome, Porphyry 'barks [and] accuses [him] of inconsistency and change of heart'.[104]

Against the link between Judaism and Christianity, we know from Eusebius *HE* 6.19 that Porphyry did not think highly of the Old Testament, whose content he calls 'Jewish riddles'. It has been long established that the pagans wished to undermine Christianity by presenting it as a new religion, therefore Christians had been trying to identify themselves with the older, Jewish religion in order to gain recognition with the pagan community. One strategy to counter that claim was thus to criticize the Jews themselves. As a result, the Christians are left with no legitimacy. Therefore, Porphyry praised the Jews for worshipping their God appropriately, but maintains that the Christians have gone astray from their peers in their understanding of what their God requires.[105]

Augustine, in *On Harmony*, reports exactly the same general criticism on many occasions. We read that, 'Although they (the evangelists) appear to have each kept their own order of narration, this does not mean that each of them chose to write as if in ignorance of what their predecessors had done.'[106] Next, the pagans have accused Christ of performing miracles by magical art: '… Those who are deranged enough to say that He was able to accomplish that much by magical arts, and that by this art he made his name sacred for the conversion of peoples to himself, should consider this … .'[107]

Augustine tells us how he undertook that project in order to counter the claim that 'the evangelists do not agree between themselves'.[108] It is clear from

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[103] Eusebius, *Proof of the Gospels* 3.5.1. Note that this passage is not in Harnack, but is an addition that I have made.

[104] Jerome, *Against Pelagius* 2.17 – Harnack Nr. 70. ' … latrat Porphyrius, inconstantiae ac mutationis accusat' (CCL 80: 76).

[105] See Augustine, *City of God* 19.22, on oracles.

[106] Augustine, *On the Harmony of the Gospels* 1.1.4. 'Et quamvis singuli suum quemdam narrandi ordinem tenuisse videantur, non tamen unusquisque eorum velut alterius praecedentis ignarus voluisse scribere reperitur … .'

[107] Augustine, *On the Harmony of the Gospels* 1.11.17. 'Illud quoque attendant, qui magicis artibus tanta potuisse et nomen suum ad populos in se convertendos arte ipsa consecrasse delirant … .'

[108] Augustine, *On the Harmony of the Gospels* 1.7.10. ' … quod ipsi evangelistae inter se ipsos dissentiant'.

many passages of *On Harmony* that the evangelists were criticized for presenting contradictory accounts of Jesus' life and sayings. For instance, Mark claims that Jesus was crucified at the third hour on the Sabbath day, while the other three evangelists claim that he was crucified at the sixth hour. Augustine reports their interrogation: 'If Jesus, therefore, was delivered to the Jews for crucifixion at about the sixth hour, while Pilate sat on the tribunal, how come he was crucified at the third hour, as some have thought because they did not understand the words of Mark?'[109]

The evangelists are also ignorant men, who cannot cite the Bible accurately. This is, for instance, the case with Matthew:

> ... it has been acutely observed that Matthew ... named forty men in the series of generations with the exception of Christ himself. He (Matthew) began with Abraham, and enumerated forty men ... He distinguished four times ten generations, dividing them into three groups, saying that from Abraham to David there were fourteen generations, from David to the migration to Babylon another fourteen, and yet another fourteen generations until the birth of Christ, but he did not add them up and say: they make forty-two in total.[110]

Matthew thus enumerates forty men, but the total count, according to his calculation, should be 42. But Augustine does not say who 'acutely observed' that, so we cannot assume that it was Porphyry. In another instance, Matthew attributed to Jeremiah a passage which is actually in Zechariah: 'If anyone is disturbed by this, that the evidence is not found in the writings of the prophet Jeremiah, and thinks for that reason that faith in the evangelist is to be lessened ....'[111]

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[109] Augustine, *On the Harmony of the Gospels* 3.13.40. 'Si igitur hora quasi sexta Pilato sedente pro tribunali traditus est crucifigendus Iudaeis, quomodo hora tertia crucifixus est, sicut verba Marci non intellegentes quidam putaverunt?'

[110] Augustine, *On the Harmony of the Gospels* 2.4.8-10. 'Acute quippe animadversum est Matthaeum ... excepto ipso Christo quadraginta homines in generationum serie nominasse ... . Cum enim quater denas generationes tribus distinxisset articulis dicens ab Abraham usque ad David generationes esse quattuordecim et a David usque ad transmigrationem Babyloniae alias quattuordecim totidemque alias usque ad nativitatem Christi, non tamen eas duxit in summam ut diceret: fiunt omnes quadraginta duae.'

[111] Augustine, *On the Harmony of the Gospels* 3.7.29. 'Si quis autem movetur, quod hoc testimonium non invenitur in scriptura Ieremiae prophetae, et ideo putat fidei Evangelistae aliquid derogandum ... .'

According to Jerome, Porphyry pointed out a similar mistake in Matthew, who, according to the philosopher, confuses Isaiah and Asaph.[112]

Augustine says that, 'These persons (the pagan philosophers) are thus so deluded as to claim that these books they reckon that he wrote contain the arts by which they think he performed those miracles, the fame of which spread (everywhere).'[113] The evangelists are thus not accounting for Jesus' miracles, for he performed none. What he was performing was actually magic. Again, this attack is attested, as has been mentioned, in Jerome and Eusebius.

The only mention by Augustine of the feast of Tabernacles is the following: 'But, where they (the other evangelists) are silent, he (John) said that he (Christ) went up to Jerusalem on the day of the feast, and there performed a miracle on a man, who had been ill for thirty-eight years.'[114] Augustine is not concerned with answering Porphyry on Jesus' inconsistent behaviour here, but with explaining why John only recounts this event, and not the others. In the text, no passage meant to defend Christ against the charge of inconsistent behaviour could be found, because Augustine is more concerned with harmony between the gospels. Porphyry used the event of the feast of Tabernacles to mock Jesus, and certainly would have noticed that all other three evangelists omitted to mention it. The nature of the attacks found in the traditional fragment collections certainly have parallels with the attacks mentioned by Augustine, although similar points are not addressed.

Augustine also reports on an attack, which we know very well: That the fulfilment of the Old Testament prophecies in the New Testament is a Christian invention. Jerome's *Commentary on Daniel* is the best reference to use, for it preserved what might have been the thesis of Porphyry's twelfth book of the discourses that we call *Against the Christians*. In this book, Porphyry challenged the Christian claim that Daniel was an actual prophet by demonstrating how the *Book of Daniel* had actually been written in the second century B.C.E. by

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[112] Jerome, *Abridged commentary on the psalms* 77 – Harnack Nr. 10. 'Aperiam in parabola os meum ... .' Hoc Esaias non loquitur, sed Asaph. Denique et inpius ille Porphyrius proponit aduersum nos hoc ipsum, et dicit: 'Euangelista uester Matthaeus tam inperitus fuit, ut diceret, quod scriptum est in Esaia propheta, Aperiam in parabola os meum ...' (CCSL 78: 66).

[113] Augustine, *On the Harmony of the Gospels* 1.9.14. 'Ita vero isti desipiunt, ut illis libris quos eum scripsisse existimant, dicant contineri eas artes, quibus eum putant illa fecisse miracula, quorum fama ubique percrebruit ... .'

[114] Augustine, *On the Harmony of the Gospels* 2.45.94. 'Sed sane, quod illi tacuerunt, dicit ascendisse eum in die festo Hierosolymis et fecisse ibi miraculum illud de homine, qui triginta octo annos habebat in infirmitate ... .'

contemporaries of Antiochus Epiphanes IV's Jewish persecution. Porphyry did so by matching prophecy and history to date the text, and by analysing the language in which the book was written, concluding that two stories (*Suzanna* and *Bel and the Dragon*) had been written in Greek rather than in Hebrew, like the rest of *Daniel*. Augustine, in *On Harmony of the Gospels*, reports that the Christians are being blamed for holding illegitimate views on their religion:

> I omit to mention that the things which are read in their books, which they say are testimony on behalf of our own, that is, the Christian, religion, they could have heard from the holy angels and from our prophets ... . But I omit these things, which they say are fictions when we produce them from our books.[115]

This accusation certainly brings back to memory the argument found in Jerome, where it is more developed, namely that the Old Testament prophets were false prophets.[116] It can also be paired with Porphyry's complaint about how Christians misused the allegorical method of interpretation to decipher their sayings,[117] and ended up reading Scripture in a self-interested manner.

The pagans also claim that the Christians are wrong to pretend that what was prophesied in the Old Testament was actually fulfilled in the name of Christ. 'But I omit these things (says Augustine), which they say are fictions when we produce them from our books.'[118] This accusation thus parallels the opponents' idea that the disciple of Christ forfeited history.

Finally, Augustine seems to be answering old attacks on Christian identity: 'But who says that Christ and the Christians have nothing to do with Israel?'[119] The pagans – just as Porphyry did – want to set apart Christians and Jews, in an effort to discredit Christianity as an ancient religion. This is an accusation of fideism with which Eusebius was already confronted when he wrote *Evangelical Preparation*.[120] The pagans would also not credit the early work of God as

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115 Augustine, *On the Harmony of the Gospels* 1.20.28. 'Omitto enim dicere quod ea quae in illorum libris leguntur pro nostra, hoc est, christiana religione testimonium dicunt, quod a sanctis angelis et ab ipsis Prophetis nostris audire potuerunt ... Sed haec omitto, quae cum proferimus a nostris ficta esse contendunt.'

116 Jerome, *Commentary on Daniel* Prologue.

117 See Eusebius, *HE* 6.19.

118 Augustine, *On the Harmony of the Gospels* 1.20.28. 'Sed haec omitto, quae cum proferimus a nostris ficta esse contendunt.'

119 Augustine, *On the Harmony of the Gospels* 1.26.41. 'Quis autem dicat Christum atque christianos non pertinere ad Israel ... .'

120 Eusebius, *PE* 1.2.1-5.

depicted in Genesis, nor would they credit 'that he took away Enoch, eradicated the impious with the flood, and freed the righteous Noah and his house from the flood with the ark of wood'.[121]

Other attacks can be traced back to Porphyry. First, Augustine mentions that Jesus is criticized by the pagans for not having recorded his deeds himself, and for leaving us only with the testimony of other people that we must accept.[122] This was clearly a means to further downgrade the evangelists, and show that they were free to adapt the record of Jesus' history at their own convenience. This was certainly done by Porphyry, for Augustine, in 1.7.11, refers to the *Philosophy from Oracles*, as has been discussed, and in 1.7.12, mentions that this attack was done by 'certain of their most excellent philosophers' – note also that, as has been said, Augustine uses the example of Pythagoras' biographers, and that Porphyry was one of them. In *City of God*, Augustine also calls Porphyry 'the most learned of the philosophers',[123] which further allow us to equate him with the philosopher of *On Harmony* 1.7.

Other attacks, however, cannot be traced back to Porphyry. Augustine suggests that some even went as far as asserting that they possessed books written by Jesus.[124] Because the bishop of Hippo challenges those retaining such books 'to reveal them to (the Christians)',[125] it would be reasonable to assume that he is referring to contemporaries here, and not to Porphyry; however, Augustine is not clear, for he also says that, 'They assert that he is the wisest of men.'[126] The same persons, says Augustine, allege that in those books Jesus would have written about the magical art he used to perform miracles – an art which is illegal, as Augustine adds[127] – and even worse, that the books 'are addressed to Peter and Paul as with the heading of a letter'.[128] Again, the bishop asks Christ's detractors to submit those books,[129] and therefore the authors of

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121 Augustine, *On the Harmony of the Gospels* 1.25.39. 'Quod Enoch transtulit, quod impios diluvio delevit, quod Noe iustum domumque eius per lignum inde liberavit.'

122 Augustine, *On the Harmony of the Gospels* 1.7.11-12.

123 Augustine, *City of God* 19.22. 'doctissimus philosophorum'.

124 Augustine, *On the Harmony of the Gospels* 1.8.13.

125 Augustine, *On the Harmony of the Gospels* 1.8.13. ' ... uos eum scripsisse asserant, prodant eos nobis'.

126 Augustine, *On the Harmony of the Gospels* 1.8.13. 'Deinde dicant, unde saltem quod sapientissimus fuerit nosse vel audire potuerunt.' ['Let them say how they could know or hear that he was the wisest of men'.]

127 Augustine, *On the Harmony of the Gospels* 1.9.14.

128 Augustine, *On the Harmony of the Gospels* 1.10.15. ' ... ut eosdem libros ad Petrum et Paulum dicant tamquam *epistula*ri titulo praenotatos'.

129 Augustine, *On the Harmony of the Gospels* 1.9.14.

such accusations are not clearly identified. We know from Jerome, however, that the chief apostles Peter and Paul were discredited by Porphyry.[130] As far as magic is concerned, we already knew that Porphyry had accused Jesus of using magic – and Celsus did so famously in *The True Doctrine*[131] – but Augustine adds that the same opponents claimed that, '... he had been able to do so much by magical arts and by that art had made his name sacred to make people convert to him'.[132] This assertion implies that Jesus's reputation as a miracle-worker and a divine man was a creation of his disciples, for they wrongly recounted his deeds.

Another question raised by the opponents is that of why the Romans, who would usually adopt the deities of the land under their dominion, never adopted the God of the Hebrews, the nation that was meant to announce the coming of Christ?[133] On this topic, Augustine offers us his insight as to how the pagans perceived the God of the Christians. According to him, if the Romans had admitted God into their pantheon, they would have needed to give up the worship of all their other gods and to destroy all images, for God has to be worshipped alone. In the Romans' view, they could only do so at the expense of their own safeguard, for that meant losing the protection from their gods. But the pagans went further in showing their lack of faith and trust in God, and here Augustine seems to report the authentic question asked:

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[130] Jerome, *Commentary on the Galatians* (see chapter 1 on Jerome). Berchman's selection is not logical. Opponents to Christianity argue that Christ did not teach that the pagan gods had to be abandoned, as well as their images destroyed (1.31.47). The passage reads: 'Neque enim temporibus christianis, sed tanto ante praedictum est quod per christianos impletur. Ipsi Iudaei qui remanserunt inimici nominis Christi, de quorum etiam futura perfidia in illis propheticis litteris tacitum non est, ipsi habent et legunt prophetam dicentem: *Domine Deus meus et refugium meum in die malorum, ad te Gentes venient ab extremo terrae et dicent: Vere mendacia coluerunt patres nostri simulacra et non est in illis utilitas*. Ecce nunc fit, ecce nunc Gentes ab extremo terrae veniunt ad Christum ista dicentes et simulacra frangentes. Et hoc enim magnum est, quod Deus praestitit Ecclesiae suae ubique diffusae, ut gens Iudaea merito debellata et dispersa per terras, ne a nobis haec composita putarentur, codices Prophetarum nostrorum ubique portaret et inimica fidei nostrae testis fieret veritatis nostrae. Quomodo ergo discipuli Christi docuerunt quod a Christo non didicerunt, sicut stulti desipiendo iactitant, ut deorum gentilium et simulacrorum superstitio deleretur? Numquid et illas prophetias, quae nunc leguntur in codicibus inimicorum Christi, possunt dici finxisse discipuli Christi?'

[131] See Origen, *Against Celsus* 1.28.

[132] Augustine, *On the Harmony of the Gospels* 1.11.17. ' ... qui magicis artibus tanta potuisse et nomen suum ad populos in se convertendos arte ipsa consecrasse delirant'.

[133] Augustine, *On the Harmony of the Gospels* 1.12.18-19.

> Why, then, has the God of the Hebrews, whom you claim to be the highest and true god, not only not subjected the Romans to them, but also not helped the Hebrews so that they would not be subject to the Romans?[134] Christian detractors clearly did not think they would get appropriate protection if left alone with God, 'but they dare not deny that he is (a) god'.[135]

Attacks on religious practice also seem new. The pagans argue that the God of the Old Testament never expected people to give up the making of idols and the worship of the gods, according to opponents: 'So these wretched men, in vain, wish to estrange from him that teaching by which the Christians dispute against idols and eradicate all those false religions whenever they have the power (to do so).'[136] But as Augustine points out, Christ instructed Christians to abandon the gods and idols through the record of his teachings in the writings of the evangelists.[137] And the fact that the pagan deities are not forbidding the worship of God is further evidence that these know very well who is the master.[138]

Other charges are directed against Christ himself. Why did he not record his life and sayings himself, but rather let others do it for him? Augustine answers that surprisingly, the pagans seem to be prepared to believe anything Jesus would have said himself, but nothing that others said about him.[139] He also points out that most Greek philosophers did not leave their own writings. Here he uses the example of Pythagoras.

Augustine also reports that the pagans 'more than any' claim that Christ, although they only consider him to be a man, and therefore were denying his divine nature, was the wisest of men (see matching passage in *City of God*), but that his disciples 'conferred greater things on their master than he actually was'.[140] We have already linked this passage with Porphyry, based on a fragment from the *Philosophy from Oracles*. But when Augustine carries on with his argument

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[134] Augustine, *On the Harmony of the Gospels* 1.13.20. 'Cur ergo Deus Hebraeorum, quem summum et verum Deum dicitis, non solum Romanos eis non subiugavit, sed nec ipsos Hebraeos, ne a Romanis subiugarentur, adiuvit?'

[135] Augustine, *On the Harmony of the Gospels* 1.25.39. ' ... Deum tamen esse negare non audent.'

[136] Augustine, *On the Harmony of the Gospels* 1.26.41: 'Frustra ergo miseri, ... volunt ab eo doctrinam istam facere alienam, qua christiani contra idola disputant easque omnes falsas religiones, ubi potuerint, eradicant.'

[137] Augustine, *On the Harmony of the Gospels* 1.31.47.

[138] Augustine, *On the Harmony of the Gospels* 1.21.29.

[139] Augustine, *On the Harmony of the Gospels* 1.7.11.

[140] Augustine, *On the Harmony of the Gospels* 1.7.11. ' ... discipulos vero eius dicunt magistro suo amplius tribuisse quam erat ... '.

in book 1 and refers to 'they' who question 'why he has not written himself', and later on 'those persons',[141] and then again in 1.8.13, for instance, it cannot be inferred that he is referring to Porphyry's criticism.

Furthermore, pagans allege that Christ wrote books on magic, and that he was the wisest of men precisely because he was practising 'illicit arts'.[142] His so-called miracles were actually performed by the means of magic. On this point, we can associate the attack with fragments found in Jerome and Eusebius, in which the miracles performed by Jesus are seriously questioned.

In conclusion, there are, in *On the Harmony of the Gospels*, two references to Porphyry, one explicit and the other implicit. The implicit reference, however, is to *De regressu* (which might be part of *Against the Christians*). Furthermore, *On Harmony* cannot be considered as a response to Porphyry; arguments from apparent contradictions might come from Porphyry, but need not. And the fact that Porphyry commends the Hebrews and their notion of God in the *Philosophy from Oracles* shows that he is not the object of all of Augustine's criticisms. In addition to this, Augustine himself uses the forensic technique of answering likely objections. And even if he is citing Porphyry in the process, it probably is not word for word. As a result, it is impossible to conclude that there are 'fragments' *per se* of *Against the Christians* in that work, or even passages, for that matter. *On Harmony* has therefore been wrongly associated with the anti-Christian discourses by Berchman, whose argument is, in any case, unconvincing.

[141] Augustine, *On the Harmony of the Gospels* 1.7.12. 'quare ipse non scripserit'; 'quibusdam'.

[142] Augustine, *On the Harmony of the Gospels* 1.9.14. 'artes '... 'illicita'.

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Conclusion[1]

Upon using the method of contextualization to recover fragments from Eusebius, Jerome and Augustine, it became evident that the methodology for fragment collecting needed to be adapted to each individual author, and that there was no straightforward approach to the problem of recovering a lost work, which survives in a polemical context.

In the case of Eusebius, Jerome and Augustine, the context was used to assess the quality of each fragment, and this context varies according to their individual style and motivations for quoting, paraphrasing or referring to Porphyry's attacks on Christianity. Eusebius did answer Porphyry at length, we simply do not have his *Against Porphyry* anymore. He writes at a time when Christianity must be defended against its detractors, for failure to do so efficiently could result in further fatalities. Eusebius' *corpus* is dedicated to explaining Christianity to the non-believers, as well as detailing the history of the Christians as a legitimate race. *Against Porphyry* was embedded in that context, and so are the passages from Porphyry's anti-Christian discourses, which are still extant in Eusebius. Because we cannot read *Against Porphyry*, it is difficult to identify the kind of ideas that Eusebius felt he had to answer. We know from Jerome that Eusebius wrote extensively in response to Porphyry's book 12 on *Daniel*. And Jerome has preserved Porphyry's main argument: *Daniel* was not written by a prophet, but by several individuals recording history, rather than announcing the future. Such a thesis, if well-argued, would have no doubt destabilized the Church, for its foundations rested on the fulfilment, recorded in the New Testament, of the Old Testament's prophecies, and one of the pivotal books used was precisely *Daniel*, for it predicts the second coming of Christ. We also know, from what is extant in Eusebius, that he reported how Porphyry criticized Origen for apostatizing from Hellenism, and living contrary to traditional customs and ideas. In that passage, Porphyry expresses contempt towards the Jews, whose sacred text is comprised of 'riddles', and especially towards the Christians, who are trying to give meaning to

[1] Portions of this conclusion were first published by Peeters Publishers in 'How Important were Porphyry's Anti-Christian Ideas to Augustine?' *Studia Patristica* 70 (2013): 55-61.

those riddles by using the Greek allegorical method of interpretation. But here, he uses Porphyry only to show how he commended the man, saying how educated and well-reputed he was. The same is true of the passage on Sanchuniathon, the historian of the Jews: Porphyry is brought up, because he credited the work of that historian, and Eusebius needs him for his argument. When he discusses the obvious victory of Christ over the demons, again, he needs Porphyry's testimony. And when Eusebius mentions Porphyry's dating of Moses in his *Chronicle*, he is trying to establish that Christianity is not a new religion. These are the main ideas that Eusebius transmitted to us via his work.

As a citing author, Eusebius is probably the most reliable one when it comes to the quality of the passages from Porphyry's anti-Christian discourses. However, this is very difficult to prove. Those who have looked at the way he cites from extant works have found that he was not always the impartial writer he claims to be; therefore, if he is not always reliable on purpose, it is in a very subtle manner. We do not have the discourses against the Christians, so we cannot tell. Taking for granted that his citations are faithful to the original, and that the passages that he preserves were of prime importance to Porphyry is misleading. These are mistakes that have been commonly made both by fragment collectors – as Johnson and Morlet's studies on Nr. 1 and 73 have shown – and that are, in turn, reproduced by those who are using the fragment collections. Contextualization has, in this case, allowed us to nuance our understanding of the Eusebian fragments, because it reveals Eusebius' agenda, and identifies his rhetorical strategies. The immediate context of each 'fragment' thus contains, as a general rule, the reasons why Eusebius needs to refer to Porphyry.

As for Jerome, he is credited with being the author who preserved the most extensive parts of Porphyry's discourses – with the exception of Macarius, who has not been discussed at length here. When we look at any fragment collection of *Against the Christians*, it sounds like a perfectly reasonable assumption to make: for instance, in the 2006 collection of the Spanish team, the Jerome fragments occupy about nineteen pages, while the Eusebian ones occupy only eight, and that is when we included the very long, controversial Nr. 1. However, when we read Jerome further, i.e. when we look at the context of each passage where he refers to Porphyry, we realize that contrary to Eusebius, he never wrote a refutation of Porphyry: 'But we shall fight against Porphyry in another work, if Jesus Christ commands it.'[2] How could he, then, be considered as one of the best sources for Porphyry's anti-Christian writings? Although he might have read

[2] Jerome, *Commentary on the Galatians*, 2.11. 'Sed et adversum Porphyrium, in alio, si Christus jusserit, opere pugnabimus.'

either the discourses themselves, or one of the refutations (or both), he certainly did not put great efforts on the problem, like Eusebius did. Jerome's situation is also different from Eusebius': his work does not have to be apologetic, but to participate in edifying the canon, and to ensure that Scripture is interpreted correctly and made accessible to the Latin world. Jerome also has many detractors; his interest in languages has led him toward the Hebrew versions of Scripture, and he needs to distance himself from Origen, whose work he used extensively. In other words, he needs to show that he is no heretic. Indeed, at the time when he writes, Christianity must be defended against heresy more than against a pagan philosopher, whose anti-Christian ideas have already received careful attention from eminent members of the Church. Upon looking closely at Jerome's Porphyry on the New Testament, it thus becomes evident that he did not preserve much of *Against the Christians*. He is useful, because he indicates a few book numbers and part of their contents. However, we can mainly find passing comments in Jerome. The attacks on the evangelists, apostles, disciples, followers and on Christ himself are clearly part of a wider argument. Jerome writes from the perspective of a man who is well-versed in languages, therefore, a lot of the material he preserves from Porphyry is present in his work, because it provides him with an opportunity to show his ability to explain all the different versions of the Bible, and the consequences of copying manuscripts. Furthermore, Jerome's main task is to comment on Scripture, verse by verse, and in so doing, he answers a variety of personal opponents, not just one adversary of Christianity.

While Jerome writes (or dictates), he seems to experience what Augustine would call 'recollection', i.e. several sacred passages are reminiscent of Porphyrian attacks, and he mentions them in the course of his composition. Not only are the New Testament fragments quite rare in his impressive corpus, but they are also misleading. Jerome never even says that he is quoting from Porphyry, like Eusebius would do; he contends with reporting what looks like a summary of some of his attacks – for instance, 'I'm going over these things, not to accuse the evangelists of falsity; this indeed is the argument of the impious Celsus, Porphyry, and Julian.'[3] It is therefore very difficult to draw conclusions on the quality of the fragments found in Jerome. On one hand, because he almost always names Porphyry, he does provide us with testimonia; this is evidenced by the absence of scholarly debates on the Porphyrian authorship of the Jerome fragments. On the other hand, the theoretical problems raised in the New Methods chapter apply very well to Jerome. With Jerome, we do not have authentic 'fragments'

[3] Jerome, *Letter* 57.9 *to Pammachius* – Harnack Nr. 2. 'Haec replico, non ut evangelistas arguam falsitatis, hoc quippe impiorum est, Celsi, Porphyrii, Iuliani.'

of the anti-Christian discourses, for we do not even have what could possibly be intact passages, as is the case with Eusebius. This is where contextualization becomes a necessary tool. Jerome seems to simply expect his readers to have read Porphyry's discourses, or refutations of it, and to know what he is talking about. What he preserves are 'samples' of ideas. A fragment collection such as those existing right now cannot offer that perspective. The advantages of the methodology developed by Schepens et al. are thus more evident in the case of Jerome than in the case of Eusebius and Augustine. The immediate context – or 'cover-text' – of each reference to Porphyry actually adds to our understanding of the 'fragment' as found in current fragment collections, because Jerome is always very clear about his motivations.

Last, but not least, is the case of Augustine. It is not a coincidence that he should occupy such a vast amount of space in this book, only to be challenged as a source for Porphyry. With Augustine, the immediate context of a reference cannot be sufficient to assess the quality of a fragment, or even to decide that we have a fragment at all. Augustine is by far the most subtle and treacherous of the three authors discussed here. His agenda is well-hidden. He obviously wants to promote Christianity, explain the faith to the unfaithful, and reinforce the faith of those who may have been shaken by pagan detractors, who are still scornfully mocking the Christians in intellectual circles (as evidenced by the sixth question Augustine received about Jonah in the belly of the whale and the laughter the story would cause). Augustine therefore writes in good faith and in the hope that he leads souls toward salvation. But Augustine's skilful use of the rhetorical art makes him misleading when it comes to recovering the fragments of a lost work. Not only does he tamper with the original text, he also consciously plays with its meaning in order to make it fit his argument. He establishes Porphyry's credibility by presenting him as the wisest of men, and then twists his ideas to the point that he makes him sound almost Christian. As far as the sixth questions of the anonymous pagan are concerned, we have established that because of the rhetorical style that Augustine chose, namely the question and answer genre, as well as the doubts he himself expresses as regards the Porphyrian authorship of question 6 and his general lack of interest in *Against the Christians*, which he never mentions in his corpus, it is impossible to determine whether Augustine is preserving actual passages from the anti-Christian discourses. At best, he may be preserving ideas, but he is certainly not citing Porphyry. This challenges all the scholarship on Porphyry since Harnack. The *Letter* 102 should be part of a fragment collection of the discourses against the Christians, because of its content, but it should be noted that the five questions that have been unquestionably

associated with Porphyry in the literature may need a more nuanced approach, and far less enthusiasm, for they are more likely to belong to the wider anti-Christian argument, encompassing other authors than Porphyry alone.

As for *On the Harmony of the Gospels*, unfortunately, it is not a source for new fragments. However attractive the idea may sound, upon closer examination the work merely confirms the content of *City of God*'s 19.23 on pagan oracles and the divinity of Christ, as well as Augustine's admiration for Porphyry as a philosopher. This passage (1.15.23) is actually the only one in which Porphyry is named in *On Harmony*. We have established with Eusebius that a passage did not need to include Porphyry's name to allow us to link it with Porphyry, even if remotely, for the reference to an attack against Christianity can be considered as part of the wider anti-Christian argument to which Porphyry contributed. But in this case, it is impossible to link any passage other than 1.15.23 (which pertains to Hecate and Apollo on Christ) of *On Harmony* with a specific work of Porphyry, or with Porphyry at all. Augustine uses a generic vocabulary to mention those who criticized the Gospels, and most of the attacks that he refers to can be found in a variety of Christian opponents, such as Celsus and Julian. On many occasions, Augustine also uses the question and answer genre, and seems to be anticipating the questions that could be raised by some passage that he comments on, rather than reporting and responding to a specific challenge. In sum, many have been questioning the historical reliability of the Gospels, including Porphyry, and the entire work is devoted to proposing a new perspective on what Augustine argues are 'apparent contradictions' between the evangelists. Indeed, Augustine goes to great lengths to detail the various reasons why we can find discrepancies between the four writers. Differences may be due to a divine factor – the Holy Spirit dictated the word of God to each individual evangelist – and to a human factor – the complexities of memory and the processes involved in the composition of a text. While Compagnon describes the biases interceding with the reading and processing of a text, Augustine describes those related to writing. Did Augustine have Porphyry in mind when writing *On Harmony*? It is possible, just as he had him in mind when writing *City of God*. But before a refutation of his arguments, Augustine was skilfully using the main views of various pagans on the gods against themselves, in order to show that Christianity was not as foreign to paganism as they pretend it to be. *On Harmony* cannot be read as a response to one single view.

How can we explain Augustine's lack of interest in Porphyry's discourses against the Christians? One theory that could be put forward is that the *Letter* 102 was written in 409, just before the sack of Rome of 410. It was thus

written before the pagans had renewed their anti-Christian discourse, blaming the Christians' rejection of the gods for Rome's calamities. It follows that Augustine did not need to pay much attention to Porphyry before writing *The City of God*. Another theory is that there was no Latin translation of *Against the Christians*, and Augustine was slow when reading Greek. The best source for Augustine would have been Jerome, but he himself never wrote a refutation of Porphyry, and we know all too well by now how his work does not convey much information about Porphyry's work against the Christians. Therefore, it is possible to deduce that although Augustine must have known Porphyry's main points against Christianity as well as his reputation as a Christian opponent, he had simply not read them, and therefore did not engage with them. Augustine is an important author, because he chooses Porphyry as an opponent in *City of God*, but as G. Clark argues, it is very unclear which works of Porphyry he has read.[4] It follows that at the time when Augustine writes, Porphyry had most probably become an emblematic figure encapsulating the 'anti-Christian opponent', and his argument was tangled in those of earlier and contemporary pagan commentators. Augustine's Porphyry thus becomes a name for the anti-Christian discourse of his time.

What does this thesis add or subtract from the current discussion of Porphyry and of the pagan-Christian debate? First, the traditional methodological approach to fragments is not sufficient to highlight all the nuances exposed here. The benefits of contextualization are twofold: it allows us to better understand what a specific fragment means to the citing author, and also why it may be present in their work. As a result, not only does contextualization illuminate the fragment, but it also sheds light on the citing author. Authors used to be completely ignored by fragment collectors until recently, when the importance of studying their rhetorical style was put forward by Schepens et al. The method is already being used on various ancient texts but it had yet to be tested on Porphyry's anti-Christian remains. Second, the Porphyry emerging from such an analysis seems even further away than he ever was. Literary theories and a new methodology have made the debate on Porphyrian authorship far more complex than it used to be, but we are still left in a position where we do not know exactly what we are dealing with. The evolution of responses to Porphyry over time tells us, at least, that the discourses against the Christians were no longer important in the early fifth century. Lastly, the argument proposed here also exposed the

[4] G. Clark, 'Acerrimus inimicus? Porphyry and the City of God', in S. Morlet, ed., *Le traité de Porphyre contre les chrétiens* (2011), 371-94.

extent of our lack of knowledge of the anti-Christian argument, and the literary and rhetorical tools used by the Christians to appropriate the pagans' discourse.

Were the 'fragments ... set free from the potential biases of the text in which [they] survive', as promised by Schepens?[5] There is one simple answer to that question: no – at least as long as polemical contexts are concerned. The only way we could set a fragment free from its 'cover-text' would be by comparing it to the original, word by word. For the subjectivity of each citing author brings in too many biases, related to their cultural, intellectual, and religious backgrounds, as well as their language and motivations for tampering or not with the original text, and, quite importantly, the human factor, namely memory and reading. So what can the 'cover-text' tell us about a 'fragment' (or passage)? In the case of Porphyry, unfortunately, it tells us how little we actually know about his lost treatise. To conclude on a more positive note, however, it also prevents us from making wrong and enthusiastic assumptions, and it certainly illuminates the work of those Christian authors, who have used Porphyry, and the way in which a polemical, pagan text was received in the Christian literature throughout Late Antiquity.

[5] Schepens, 'Jacoby's *FgrHist*', 168-9.

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