PAUL A. PATTERSON

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Studien und Texte zu
Antike und Christentum
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Studies and Texts in Antiquity and Christianity

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The Anthropomorphite Controversy of 399 CE

Mohr Siebeck

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For Jessica & Cole,

I owe you both a million!

Preface

I first encountered the Egyptian anthropomorphites in a seminar during the early years of my doctoral studies at Saint Louis University. I remember being intrigued by this quirky band of monks who supposedly believed that God has a body and (if the ancient sources are any indication) were willing to take up arms in defense of that belief. They had somehow endured all of these centuries as bit players on the grand stage of the Origenist controversy; nobody had ever written a book about *them*, and I wasn't particularly interested in doing so.

However, as I continued researching, I began to realize that there is more to these 'anthropomorphites' than meets the eye. First of all, Christian tradition (the tradition shared by the anthropomorphites and their opponents) teaches that God *does* have a body – in the assumed humanity of Jesus Christ. Second, numerous patristics scholars, after a bit of digging around, have come to the conclusion that the anthropomorphites were not *really* anthropomorphites; that is to say, they were not ascribing a body to the Father or to the divine nature. Rather, they were supposedly defending bedrock doctrines like the Incarnation and the *imago Dei* against Origenists (like Evagrius and John Cassian) who were rejecting such doctrines.

Now, I didn't know much at that time about Origenism (and I strongly suspect that I still don't!), but I had once read Cassian's entire corpus for a seminary class. From this reading I was pretty sure that Cassian did not hold the 'Origenist' ideas being attributed to him; if he was being mischaracterized, then perhaps the anthropomorphites were too. However, if they were not ascribing a body to God, and if they were not merely defending the Incarnation, then what were they doing?

Answers started coming to me in another doctoral seminar at SLU – one dealing with early Christian gospels. It was then that I first (seriously) encountered *The Gospel of Thomas*, with its notions of a divine Anthropos appearing in the primordial light of creation and the connecting of that figure with the Logos/Christ. I soon discovered that these concepts were common currency in late antiquity (especially in Egypt), appearing in numerous other Nag Hammadi documents, in a good deal of Jewish-mystical literature, and even in Hermetic texts. It made sense to bring these ideas to bear on my understanding of the anthropomophites, for it explained much

of what their opponents had to say about them. Alas, I had a thesis for my doctoral dissertation, and now (thanks to Mohr Siebeck) the anthropomorphites have their own book.

This work would not have seen the light of day (primordial or otherwise) without encouragement and assistance from numerous individuals. Dr. Robert F. Rea of Lincoln Christian Seminary first introduced me to the writings of John Cassian. More importantly, he ignited in me a passion for historical theology and specifically for patristics. Much of what I have been up to over the past 20 years or so is a direct result of his inspiration. Dr. Valerie A. Karras introduced me not only to the anthropomorphites, but also to many of the historical-critical tools I would need in order to understand them. Dr. Cornelia B. Horn, who served on my dissertation committee, provided invaluable feedback and suggestions. Her careful reading and correcting of my dissertation made for a much better work in the long run. Dr. James A. Kelhoffer was an encouragement to me nearly every step of the way on this project – as teacher, mentor, dissertation committee member, and friend. I am grateful to him for suggesting that I publish with Mohr Siebeck, and then for helping to bring it about. I am also indebted to Fr. Kenneth B. Steinhauser, who directed my dissertation. His advice and criticism were always timely and constructive. Without his guidance this work might not have survived as a dissertation, let alone as a book.

I would like to thank the kind people at Mohr Siebeck (particularly Jana Trispel, Nadine Schwemmreiter-Vetter, and Mirjam Fesser) who oversaw production of this book. Thanks also to my copy-editor brother, Jeff Patterson, to whom I gave my manuscript for last minute proofreading. If not for his mad editing skills, a number of rather silly errors would have made their way into this book. Of course, what all of this amounts to is that I am solely responsible for any mistake, inconsistencies, logical fallacies, etc. that do remain.

Finally, this book is dedicated to my wife Jessica and our five-year-old son, Cole. Many a night I literally put Jessica to sleep rambling on and on about this sort of -ism, that sort of -ology, or what's-his-face of Alexandria (I do tend to process this stuff out loud). And I'm sure Cole can never remember a time when he didn't have to hear the words 'Sorry, daddy's working on his book right now' (but hopefully not too often). For their love and support I owe them more than words can say.

St. Louis, July 2012 Paul A. Patterson

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Chapter 1

Introduction

A. Problem and Thesis

In his festal letter of 399 CE, announcing the dates for Lent and Easter, Theophilus of Alexandria (c. 345–412) launched a written assault against a group of monks who would become known to their opponents as 'anthropomorphites.' He thereby ignited a controversy that would rage in the Egyptian desert for some time. Our primary witnesses to this 'anthropomorphite' controversy are John Cassian (c. 360–c. 435) and the historian Socrates (c. 379–c. 440). By their account, the antagonists in the controversy were naïve, uneducated monks who foolishly believed that God has a body and were easily manipulated by larger, more sinister forces (namely, Theophilus of Alexandria, who would later enlist their efforts in his struggle against Origenism[1]). The protagonists were those who (like Cassian and Socrates) were sophisticated enough to know better than to believe that God has a body.

Modern scholarship has, with good reason, challenged this traditional account of the controversy, calling into question the characterization of the anthropomorphites as simplistic rustics who believed the divine nature to be corporeal, as well as the motivations of those who so characterized them. Nevertheless, until recently, historians have failed to make much progress in reconstructing the controversy in a manner that is consistent with all the evidence. This failure is attributable to the fact that they have not considered *all* of the evidence, ignoring in particular the full corpus of Cassian's writings as well as later fifth-century reports of anthropomorphism.

Progress toward a viable reconstruction of the controversy was made last decade in a trilogy of articles published by Alexander Golitzin.[2] He

[1] As will be seen in Chapter 2, the 'Origenist' controversy in Egypt was actually a controversy about the teachings of Evagrius Ponticus (c. 345–399). The degree to which these teachings actually approximated to those of Origen (185–254) is well beyond the scope of this study; nevertheless, I often follow convention in using the term 'Origenism' to describe the supposed views of Evagrius' followers.

[2] Alexander Golitzin, "The Form of God and Vision of the Glory: Some Thoughts on the Anthropomorphite Controversy of 399 AD," published in Romanian translation by I.

argues that the anthropomorphites were bearers of an ancient Christological tradition that appears in numerous Jewish-Christian apocalyptic texts – namely, that the eternal Word of God (in whose image human beings were created) is the visible, corporeal manifestation of the invisible, incorporeal Father. Golitzin traces the roots of this tradition along numerous paths, but he points only in passing to one particular path that I take up in this study – the Nag Hammadi corpus and its roots in Jewish mysticism.

Building on Golitzin's work, I intend to demonstrate the following thesis: the anthropomorphites were seeking in prayer the vision of the eternal, divine body of Christ – that is, a pre-incarnate body belonging to the Son's unique divinity, and not merely to the assumed humanity. Comparison with other Egyptian texts (certain works discovered at Nag Hammadi and the writings of Philo) reveals the background of the anthropomorphite Christology – a Christianized interpretation of Genesis 1 in which the Logos functions as the image of God and the archetype of humanity, appearing in the form of a primordial Anthropos in the light of the first day of creation.

B. Review of Relevant Literature

There is little in the way of literature pertaining to the anthropomorphite controversy; the events of 399 have, for the most part, been relegated to the footnotes of the larger Origenist controversy. What little literature there is can be divided conveniently into three categories: the traditional account of the controversy, the twentieth-century revision of the traditional account, and the more recent rethinking of the controversy, advanced primarily by Golitzin.

Ica Jr. in *Mistagogia: Experienta lui Dumnezeuin Orthodoxie* (Sibiu: Deisis, 1998), 184–267, ET online at http://www.marquette.edu/maqom/morphe.html (on 16 June 2011); "'The Demons Suggest an Illusion of God's Glory in a Form': Controversy over the Divine Body and Vision of Glory in Some Late Fourth, Early Fifth Century Monastic Literature," *Studia Monastica* 44.1 (2002): 13–43; "The Vision of God and the Form of Glory: More Reflections on the Anthropomorphite Controversy of AD 399," *Abba: the Tradition of Orthodoxy in the West: Festschrift for Bishop Kallistos (Ware) of Diokleia*, ed. by John Behr, Andrew Louth, and Dimitri Conomos (Crestwood, N.Y.: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2003), 273–297.

1. Traditional Account of the Anthropomorphite Controversy

John Cassian's tenth *Conference*[3] and Socrates' *Ecclesiastical History*[4] epitomize the traditional account of the anthropomorphite controversy. Cassian offers what he claims to be an eyewitness account of the controversy. While he and his traveling companion Germanus were visiting the monastic community of Abba Paphnutius (in Scetis), the annual festal letter (of 399) arrived from Bishop Theophilus of Alexandria, announcing the dates for the celebration of Lent and Easter.[5] This particular letter "also argued at length against the absurd heresy of the anthropomorphites and destroyed it in an eloquent discourse."[6] Cassian reports that the letter was received with "great bitterness by nearly all the various sorts of monks," and that a majority of the elders decided to anathematize Theophilus.[7] The reason for their animosity was that the letter "seemed to go against the sense of Holy Scripture by denying that almighty God has been fashioned (as if by composition) in human form, when Scripture very clearly testifies to Adam having been created in God's image."[8] Only Abba Paphnutius agreed with the content of Theophilus' letter and allowed it to be read in his community.[9]

Cassian tells the story of an elderly 'anthropomorphite' monk named Serapion who is convinced of his error only when a deacon named Photinus, visiting from Cappadocia, confirms the teaching of the Catholic churches throughout the East – that they interpret Genesis 1:26–27 "not

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[3] Cassian, *Conlatio* 10 in *Johannis Cassiani Conlationes XXIIII*, ed. Michael Petschenig, CSEL 13 (1886), 286–312.

[4] Socrates, *Historia ecclesiastica* 6.7, ed. Günther Christian Hansen, GCS n.s. 1 (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1995), 322–324.

[5] Unfortunately, this letter is not extant; it would go a long way in revealing what the controversy was all about. However, Gennadius of Marseille, *De viris inlustribus* 34, ed. E. C. Richardson (Leipzig, J. C. Hinrichs: 1896), 74, provides an intriguing summary of the letter, which I discuss on pp. 12–13 and in Chapter 2. For a complete list of Theophilus' extant works, cf. CPG 2 (1974), nos. 2580–2684 and CPG 6 (1998), nos. 2585–2681.

[6] Cassian, *Conlatio* 10.2: "*contra ineptam quoque Anthropomorphitarum haeresim longa disputatione disseruit eamque copioso sermone destruxit*." CSEL 13:287. Throughout this study, unless otherwise noted, all English translations from Latin and Greek texts are my own.

[7] Cassian, *Conlatio* 10.2: "*tanta est amaritudine ab uniuerso propemodum genere monachorum*." CSEL 13:287.

[8] Cassian, *Conlatio* 10.2: "*inpugnare scripturae sanctae sententiam uideretur, negans omnipotentem deum humanae figurae conpositione formatum, cum ad eius imaginem creatum Adam scriptura manifestissime testaretur*." CSEL 13:287.

[9] Cassian, *Conlatio* 10.2, CSEL 13:287.

according to the lowly sound of the letter, but spiritually."[10] Photinus insists:

> Nothing of this sort could be referred to that immeasurable and incomprehensible and invisible majesty – that it could be circumscribed in a human form and likeness, or obviously, that an incorporeal and uncomposed and simple nature could be observed by the eyes or appraised by the mind.[11]

Serapion gives his consent to this teaching but later finds himself unable to pray with confidence and exclaims, "Woe is me! They have taken my God from me, and now I have no one to hold onto and I no longer know whom I should adore or address."[12]

In a private conversation with Cassian and Germanus, Abba Isaac (Cassian's primary mouthpiece in the ninth and tenth *Conferences*) attempts to identify the source and nature of anthropomorphism. He first attributes Serapion's error to the fact that the latter "was never fully instructed about the substance and nature of the Godhead."[13] Furthermore, he characterizes Serapion's way of thinking as "ancient" (*antiqui*) and not "a new delusion of the demons."[14] In fact, it could be found among the "earliest pagans," who "used to worship demons in human form."[15] Not that Serapion himself has been influenced by "pagan superstition" (*gentilicia superstitione*); rather, owing to his "ignorance and naivete" (*inperitia seu rusticitate*), he has been misled by a simplistic interpretation of Genesis 1:26–27.[16] It was on the basis of such an interpretation that "the heresy known as 'anthropomorphism' emerged, which insists with stubborn perversity that the immeasurable and simple substance of the Godhead is composed of our features and a human shape."[17] Finally, Isaac claims that the anthropomorphites are somehow "held fast in Jewish weakness."[18]

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[10] Cassian, *Conlatio* 10.3: "*non secundum humilem litterae sonum, sed spiritaliter*." CSEL 13:288.

[11] Cassian, *Conlatio* 10.3: "*nec posse in illam inmensam et inconprehensibilem atque inuisibilem maiestatem aliquid huiusmodi cadere quod humana conpositione ualeat ac similitudine circumscribi, qippe quae incorporea et inconposita simplexque natura sit quaeque sicut oculis deprehendi, ita mente non ualeat aestimari*." CSEL 13:288.

[12] Cassian, *Conlatio* 10.3: "*heu me miserum! Tulerunt a me deum meum, et quem nunc teneam non habeo uel quem adorem aut interpellem iam nescio*." CSEL 13:289.

[13] Cassian, *Conlatio* 10.5: "*de substantia ac natura diuinitatis numquam penitus eruditum*." CSEL 13:290.

[14] Cassian, *Conlatio* 10.5: "*recenti ... daemonum inlusione*." CSEL 13:290.

[15] Cassian, *Conlatio* 10.5: "*pristinae gentilitatis ... daemonas hominum figura conpositos excolebant*." CSEL 13:290.

[16] Cassian, *Conlatio* 10.5, CSEL 13:291.

[17] Cassian, *Conlatio* 10.5: "*haeresis quae dicitur Anthropomorphitarum ... emerserit, quae inmensam illam ac simplicem diuinitatis substantiam liniamentis nostris et humana figuratione conpositam pertinaci peruersitate contendit*." CSEL 13:291.

[18] Cassian, *Conlatio* 10.6: "*Iudaica infirmitate detenti*." CSEL 13:291.

Socrates reveals quite a bit more about the controversy, placing it within the broader context of the Origenist controversy. He reports that the question had actually been raised "a little before" (μικρὸν ἔμπροσθεν) Theophilus' letter, "whether God is a body and has a human form, or whether he is incorporeal and far removed from human or (generally speaking) any other bodily form."[19] He contends that "very many of the simple monks" (μάλιστα μὲν πολλοὶ τῶν ἁπλοϊκῶν ἀσκητῶν) held to divine corporeality, while "most others" (πλεῖστοι τούτων) condemned their position.[20] When Theophilus heard of the debate, "he attacked those who ascribed a human form to the divine" – not only in his festal letter, but "in the church before the people."[21]

According to Socrates, Theophilus' opposition to anthropomorphism was a natural product of his Origenist training. As evidence of Theophilus' Origenism, Socrates points to his longstanding disdain for the works of Epiphanius, who (in Socrates' words) "entertained low thoughts concerning God, supposing him to be human in form."[22] In actuality, it is doubtful that Epiphanius was an anthropomorphite of any stripe (see the discussion of Jerome's *Against John of Jerusalem* in Chapter 2 and of Epiphanius' *Panarion* in Chapter 3). Nevertheless, he was a longstanding opponent of Origenism, and in Socrates' mind, that was enough to qualify as an 'anthropomorphite' and to earn the ire of Theophilus.

Upon reading Theophilus' festal letter, a throng of anthropomorphite monks arrived at Alexandria, accusing the bishop of heresy and threatening him with death. Theophilus, after some consideration, went to the monks and addressed them in a conciliatory tone: "I see you as the face of God."[23] This statement, along with a condemnation of Origen's works, satisfied the monks and they left.[24]

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[19] Socrates, *HE* 6.7: "πότερον ὁ θεὸς σῶμά ἐστιν καὶ ἀνθρώπου ἔχει σχῆμα ἢ ἀσώματός ἐστι καὶ ἀπήλλακται ἀνθρωπίνου τε καὶ παντὸς (ἁπλῶς εἰπεῖν) σωματικοῦ σχήματος." GCS n.s. 1:322.

[20] Socrates, *HE* 6.7, GCS n.s. 1:322.

[21] Socrates, *HE* 6.7: "ἐπὶ τῆς ἐκκλησίας ἐπὶ τοῦ λαοῦ καταδραμεῖν μὲν τῶν ἀνθρωπόμορφον λεγόντων τὸ θεῖον." GCS n.s. 1:322.

[22] Socrates, *HE* 6.10: "μικρὰ φρονοῦντι περὶ θεοῦ, ὅτι ἀνθρωπόμορφον αὐτὸν εἶναι ἐνόμιζεν." GCS n.s. 1:327. This is Socrates' own portrayal of Epiphanius; he does not claim to be quoting Theophilus on this point. There is nothing in Theophilus' extant works that would indicate whether or not he ever thought Epiphanius to be an 'anthropomorphite.' See also Palladius, *Dialogus de vita S. Joannis Chrysostomi* 16, ed. Malingrey and P. Leclercq, SC 341 (Paris: Cerf, 1988), 321, who reports that Theophilus, sometime in the 380s, went so far as to bring formal charges of heresy against Epiphanius.

[23] Socrates, *HE* 6.7: "ὑμᾶς εἶδον ὡς θεοῦ πρόσωπον." GCS n.s. 1:322.

[24] Socrates, *HE* 6.7, GCS n.s. 1:322.

Socrates claims that the whole dispute would have ended there had it not been for an episode that immediately followed involving four "devout men" (ἄνδρες εὐλαβεῖς) known as the Tall Brothers or the Tall Monks (Dioscorus, Ammonius, Eusebius, and Euthymius). Their reputation for sanctity and learning was such that Theophilus named Dioscorus Bishop of Hermopolis in lower Egypt and appointed two of the others to clerical office in Alexandria. However, when they discovered improprieties in the way he managed the affairs of the church, they declared their preference for solitude and departed for Nitria.[25]

When Theophilus discovered the real reason for their departure he sought revenge. He knew from many conversations that the Tall Brothers maintained divine incorporeality – a view he secretly continued to hold himself and, incidentally, that they had all learned by reading Origen. However, having already convinced the anthropomorphites that he was on their side in this dispute, he was able to use the Tall Brothers' (and his own!) views against them. He publicized their opinions in the monasteries to which they had retreated, easily inciting the majority of the monks – men "ignorant in speech" (ἰδιώτας τῷ λόγῳ) and "illiterate" (ἀγραμμάτους) – against them.[26]

In the meantime, those of "cultivated mind" (γεγυμνασμένον τὸν νοῦν) continued to support the Tall Brothers and adhere to the teaching of Origen. Violence ensued between these 'Origenists' and 'anthropomorphites,' ending only when Theophilus went to Nitria, armed the anthropomorphites, and purged the monasteries of Origenists.[27] The Tall Brothers (along with many other monks) fled the persecution, ultimately landing in Constantinople, where they sought refuge with John Chysostom.[28] According to Socrates, once Theophilus had engineered the excommunication of Chrysostom, he began once again "holding communion" (ἐκοινώνησεν) with the Tall Brothers[29] and returned to his study of Origen's works. When asked how he could now countenance what he had so recently condemned, he responded that he was able to pluck the beautiful flowers from the meadow of Origen's books while stepping over the thorns.[30] Socrates clearly intended for his readers to conclude that Theophilus was motivated throughout the entire affair by political, rather than theological, concerns.[31]

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[25] Socrates, *HE* 6.7, GCS n.s. 1:323.
[26] Socrates, *HE* 6.7, GCS n.s. 1:323–324.
[27] Socrates, *HE* 6.7, GCS n.s. 1:324.
[28] Socrates, *HE* 6.9, GCS n.s. 1:326.
[29] Socrates, *HE* 6.16, GCS n.s. 1:338.
[30] Socrates, *HE* 6.17, GCS n.s. 1:340.
[31] Palladius, *Dialogus* 6, SC 341:138–140; and Sozomen, *Historia ecclesiastica* 8.11–12, ed. Joseph Bidez, GCS n.s. 4 (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1995), 363–366, also tell the story of the controversy. Sozomen merely follows Socrates. Palladius offers little addi-

Several observations should be made at this point that will be significant for the rest of this study. First, both Cassian and Socrates want their readers to believe that the anthropomorphites were not simply arguing for the reality of the Incarnation or for the continuation (after his Resurrection) of Christ's bodily, human nature. Rather, it is "almighty God" (*Deus omnipotens*) who has a human form – the "immeasurable and simple substance of the Godhead" (*inmensam illam ac simplicem diuinitatis substantiam*). If the anthropomorphites *were* merely contending for the reality of the Incarnation, then Cassian and Socrates misunderstood them, or they were trying hard to mislead their readers.

Second (and related to the first), Cassian traces Serapion's error – and presumably that of anthropomorphism in general – to ignorance regarding the "substance and nature of the Godhead" (*substantia ac natura diuinitatis*). It is plausible that he is here attempting to place the controversy in the context of the Nicene-Constantinopolitan settlement and that there is something about the anthropomorphites' theology (to his mind, anyway) that runs afoul of Nicene orthodoxy.

Third, it is clear from Cassian's account that a major focus of the controversy was the correct interpretation of Genesis 1.26-27 (and therefore of the *imago Dei*); he makes mention of the passage three times in a brief space. This is not so clear with Socrates, although Theophilus' answer to the anthropomorphite monks – "I see you as the face of God" (ὑμᾶς εἶδον ὡς θεοῦ πρόσωπον) – would seem to corroborate that the controversy had something to do with the image of God in humans.

Finally, in addition to repeatedly characterizing the anthropomorphite monks as simplistic rustics, Cassian further attributes their views to "Jewish weakness" (*Iudaica infirmitate*). Certainly these words can legitimately be read as nothing more than a common heresiological trope meant to discredit his opponents without taking them seriously. Nevertheless, it is worth exploring the possibility that Cassian is actually revealing something here about anthropomorphite theology – that it had something in common with certain Jewish ways of thinking.

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tional information, but it is interesting that he makes no mention of anthropomorphism and only one mention of Origenism. Rather than being characterized as Origenists, in his account the Tall Brothers have the singular misfortunate of being associated with Isidore of Alexandria. According to Palladius, Isidore had kindled the wrath of Theophilus by secretly spending a donation on the poor rather than passing it along to Theophilus (who would have allegedly squandered it on building projects). Although Palladius is clearly aware of the Origenist dimension of the controversy, it would seem that he wishes to downplay it; he reminds his readers more than once that Theophilus' ire toward the monks had *solely* to do with their support of Isidore.

2. Revision of the Traditional Account

In the twentieth century, the traditional account of the anthropomorphite controversy began to receive serious scrutiny as historians started questioning the characterization of the anthropomorphites as "ignorant," "naïve," and "illiterate," as well as the ascription of "Jewish weakness." At the same time, researchers began to note that all of the sources for the traditional account of the controversy (Cassian, Socrates, Sozomen, and Palladius) had decidedly Origenist leanings – they were writing their 'histories' within a definite polemical context. Finally, the traditional account was challenged by the discovery and publication of *The Life of Apa Aphou of Pemdje*, a Coptic hagiographic work written anonymously some time during the fifth century. *The Life of Aphou* recounts the controversy from an anthropomorphite point of view, yet it seems to exhibit none of the ideas attributed to the monks in the traditional account; rather, it argues that post-lapsarian humanity retains the *imago Dei* against those who would claim that it is lost. In the words of Graham Gould, "the 'Coptic anthropomorphite' may be more elusive than historians of early Christianity have thought."[32]

a) Drioton and The Life of Apa Aphou of Pemdje

First published in 1883,[33] *The Life of Apa Aphou of Pemdje* was republished in 1915–1917 by Etienne Drioton, along with a French translation and extensive comments.[34] The text relates the story of a visit paid to

[32] Graham Gould, "The Image of God and the Anthropomorphite Controversy in Fourth Century Monasticism," *Origeniana Quinta* (Leuven: University Press, 1992), 554.

[33] The history of the text's publication is offered by Georges Florovsky, "Theophilus of Alexandria and Apa Aphou of Pemdje," *Aspects of Church History* 4 (Belmont, Massachussetts: Nordland Publishing Company, 1975), 97–98. *The Life of Aphou* was first published by Eugene Revillout, "La Vie du bienheureux Aphou, Evêque de Pemdje (Oxyrinque)," *Revue Egyptologique* 3.1 (1883): 27–33, without translation and only with a brief preface. In the following years it was republished by F. Rossi, "Trascrizione di tre manoscritti Copti del Museo Egizio di Torino, con traduzione italiana," *Memorie della Reale Accademia delle Scienze di Torino* 37 (1886): 67–84 and 145–150, with an Italian translation, and V. Bolotov, "Iz tserkovnoj istorii Egipta: II. Zhitie blazhennago Afu, episkopa Pemdzhskago," *Khristianskoe Chtenie* 3.4 (1886): 334–377, with a Russian translation and an introduction. Bolotov was apparently the first to express in writing the significance of *The Life of Aphou*, suggesting that it "throws a totally new and peculiar light on the Anthropomorphite controversy .... Only now the history of the Anthropomorphites becomes really comprehensible" (Florovsky, "Theophilus of Alexandria," 98). Drioton's was the first major study (see following note).

[34] Etienne Drioton, "La discussion d'un moine anthropomorphite audien avec le patriarche Theophile d'Alexandrie," *Revue de l'orient chretien* 20 (1915–1917): 92–100 and 113–128; ET: G. Florovsky, "Theophilus of Alexandria," 97–129.

Theophilus by its hero (Apa Aphou), whose mission is to protest a festal letter in which Theophilus has argued that humans, on account of their weakness, lack the image of God. Aphou confronts the bishop with three arguments: (1) the Bible (particularly Gen 1:26–27 and 9:6) insists that humans bear the image of God, even after the Fall; (2) just as it is necessary to have faith that the bread of the Eucharist is the body of Christ, even though it lacks all appearances, so it is necessary to have faith that humanity bears the image of God; (3) just as a king's subjects are commanded to believe that painted wood – despite its weakness – is the image of the king, so Christians are commanded to believe that humanity – despite its weakness – bears the image of God.[35]

Drioton's analysis of *The Life of Aphou* has been faulted for being overly simplistic.[36] First, he regards it as an Audian work signaling the triumph of their views in Pemdje (Oxyrynchus), even though there is no credible evidence that the Audians ever flourished in Egypt.[37] Moreover, he believes the encounter between Aphou and Theophilus to be historical, but the hagiographic nature of the document would caution against such a reading.[38] Finally, he persists in characterizing Aphou as a 'genuine' anthropomorphite (i.e., as ascribing a body to God the Father), while all subsequent scholarship will call that characterization into question. Nevertheless, Drioton's publication served the function of alerting other historians to the immense value of *The Life of Aphou* and the need to rethink the anthropomorphite controversy.

b) Guillaumont

Important progress was made with the publication of Antoine Guillaumont's *Les "Képhalaia gnostica" d'Évagre le Pontique et l'histoire de*

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[35] *The Life of Aphou* in Drioton, "La discussion d'un moine," 98–100.

[36] For instance, by Elizabeth Clark, *The Origenist Controversy: The Cultural Construction of an Early Christian Debate* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992), 51–52.

[37] Epiphanius, *Panarion* 70 in *Epiphanius*, ed. Karl Holl, corrected by Jürgen Dummer (Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs; Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1985), GCS 3:248–249, places them in Mesopotamia and Syria. For a thorough critique of Drioton on this point, see Florovsky, "Theophilus of Alexandria," 109–112.

[38] Cf. Clark, *Origenist Controversy*, 52; and Tito Orlandi, "Theophilus of Alexandria in Coptic Literature," *Studia Patristica* XVI, ed. by Elizabeth A. Livingstone (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1985), 101, *contra* Florovsky, who believes that *The Life of Aphou* is "generally reliable" ("Theophilus of Alexandria," 100–101), although he does concede that "the story may be embellished a bit" ("Theophilus of Alexandria," 127) and that it presents events in the context of Aphou's biography "and not in the perspective of the history of his time" ("Theophilus of Alexandria," 119).

l'origénisme chez les Grecs et chez les Syriens.[39] Although Guillaumont makes the mistake of taking the traditional characterization of the anthropomorphites at face value,[40] he also makes a crucial (perhaps even *the* crucial) observation: the anthropomorphite controversy was actually a debate about how to pray. Guillaumont points out that Cassian inserts the episode involving Serapion precisely in the middle of his two conferences on prayer. Furthermore, Cassian is endorsing a particular form of prayer in these conferences – the 'pure' prayer of his teacher Evagrius, in which the mind is purged of all representations or images. Cassian's use of Serapion the 'anthropomorphite' as a foil to such teaching leads Guillaumont to conclude that anthropomorphism was a reaction against this Evagrian understanding of prayer.[41] In my view, it was actually the other way around – the anthropomorphites represented an ancient tradition, and (many of) Evagrius' comments on prayer were directed against their attempts to preserve that tradition. Nevertheless, Guillaumont's analysis has proven to be extremely helpful and influential.

c) Florovsky

Georges Florovsky built upon Guillaumont's line of reasoning in an article entitled "The Anthropomorphites in the Egyptian Desert."[42] He presents the controversy as a debate over the following question: "To what extent, and in what manner, should prayer be constantly anchored in the 'memory' of the historic Jesus, of Jesus 'in the flesh'?"[43] Florovsky here argues that what the anthropomorphites were actually promoting was a mental image of Jesus in prayer, against those (like Evagrius and Cassian) whose tendency was "to move away from the 'historic' Gospel."[44] He suggests that they may have reasoned in a manner similar to Irenaeus: humanity was shaped in the image of the Word incarnate, and therefore the image of God

[39] Antoine Guillaumont, *Les "Kephalaia Gnostica" d'Evagre le Pontique et l'histoire de l'Origenisme chez les Grecs et chez les Syriens*, Patristica Sorbonensia 5 (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1962), 59–61.

[40] Guillaumont refers to the monks as "simple people who ... portrayed God in the image of man (gens simples qui ... se représentaient Dieu à l'image de l'homme)." *Képhalaia gnostica,* 59.

[41] Guillaumont, *Képhalaia gnostica*, 61. Guillaumont offers no suggestions as to what the anthropomorphites were offering in the place of 'pure' prayer; nevertheless, his study is invaluable insofar as it marks the first attempt to place anthropomorphism in its proper historical and theological context.

[42] Georges Florovsky, "The Anthropomorphites in the Egyptian Desert," *Aspects of Church History* 4 (Belmont, Massachussetts: Nordland Publishing Company, 1975), 89–96.

[43] Florovsky, "The Anthropomorphites," 93.

[44] Florovsky, "The Anthropomorphites," 94.

in humanity is fully manifested only in the Incarnation.[45] According to Florovsky, "this emphasis encourages the use of 'visible' and '*somatic*' images in theological thought and language, without committing Christians to any 'anthropomorphite' conception of Divinity."[46]

Florovsky points out that in *Conference* 10, Cassian explicitly rules out the validity of seeking such images of Christ:

> They will not be able to look upon Jesus coming in his royalty who, still (as it were) being held fast in Jewish weakness, cannot say with the Apostle: 'Even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we no longer do.' But they alone see his divinity with purest eyes who, climbing from lowly and earthly toils and thoughts, depart with him to the lofty mountain of the desert ....[47]

According to Florovsky, Cassian here comes close to identifying the real views of monks like Serapion, while elsewhere he purposely obscures their Christological focus. Instead, he portrays them as simplistic "anthropomorphites" – a "derogatory label, invented in the heat of the strife and used as a demagogical weapon."[48] He concludes that the controversy was a conflict between two traditions, the anthropomorphites representing "Evangelical realism" and Cassian and Socrates representing "Origenistic symbolism."[49]

In a later article entitled "Theophilus of Alexandria and Apa Aphou of Pemdje," Florovsky argues that it is *The Life of Aphou* – rather than Cassian and Socrates – that accurately represents the theology of the anthropomorphites. He characterizes Cassian's and Socrates' accounts as "biased and onesided" and accuses them of polemically misrepresenting the case of the anthropomorphites.[50] He argues that "this is true especially of John

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[45] Florovsky, "The Anthropomorphites," 95. Florovsky cites *Adv. haeres*. 5.16.2: "In the times long past, it was said that man was created after the image of God, but it was not yet manifested. For the Word was as yet invisible, after whose image man was created. Wherefore also man has easily lost the similitude. When, however, the Word of God became flesh, He confirmed both these: for He showed forth the true image, since He became Himself what was His image; and He re-established the similitude after a sure manner, by assimilating man to the invisible Father through the means of the visible Word." Critical ed.: Norbert Brox, ed., *Adversus Haereses*, vol. 5 (Freiburg/New York: Herder, 1993), 134–136.

[46] Florovsky, "The Anthropomorphites," 96.

[47] Cassian, *Conlatio* 10.6: "*non enim poterunt intueri Iesum uenientem in regno suo, qui adhuc sub illa quodammodo Iudaica infirmitate detenti non queunt dicere cum apostolo: et si cognoimus secundum carnem Christum, sed nunc iam non nouimus, sed illi soli purissimis oculis diuinitatem ipsius speculantur, qui de humilibus ac terrenis operibus et cogitationibus ascendentes cum illo secedunt in excelso solitudinis monte*." CSEL 13:291–292.

[48] Florovsky, "The Anthropomorphites," 90.

[49] Florovsky, "The Anthropomorphites," 96.

[50] Florovsky, "Theophilus of Alexandria," 127.

Cassian" and proceeds to identify the root of Cassian's prejudice as his "Origenism."[51]

It is significant to Florovsky that Aphou "did not develop or defend any 'Anthropomorphite' thesis. The sting of his argument was directed against the denial of God's image *in man*, and there was no word whatever about any 'human form' *in God*."[52] From this Florovsky argues that the major question in the anthropomorphite controversy was not about God at all but about humans: should humanity, even in its fallen state, still be regarded as bearing the image of God? To support this view, he points out that Epiphanius was making arguments identical to those of Aphou, as early as the 370s, against the Origenists (who would deny the image of God in humanity). Florovsky suggests that Aphou may have depended directly upon Epiphanius. He also believes that this understanding of the controversy best explains the "rather enigmatic phrase" by which Theophilus is said to have satisfied the angry monks: "In seeing you, I see the face of God."[53] If the controversy centered on the question of the image of God in post-lapsarian humanity, then the phrase was "just to the point."[54]

Taken together, Florovsky's two articles make the following claim: the anthropomorphite controversy had both an anthropological and a Christological component. On one side were the anthropomorphites, arguing that fallen humanity has retained the image of God and that Christ (the Word incarnate) can be imaged in prayer; on the other side were the Origenists, arguing that Christ should not be imaged and that humanity has lost the image of God.

d) Gould

Graham Gould, in his article "The Image of God and the Anthropomorphite Controversy in Fourth Century Monasticism," builds on Florovsky's position. His aim is to examine sources besides Cassian and Socrates that might provide clues as to what the controversy was about. He first draws on a summary of Theophilus' festal letter by Gennadius of Marseilles that seems to suggest that Theophilus' letter "was not concerned solely with the refutation of anthropomorphism."[55] According to Gennadius' summary, Theophilus argued that God is incorporeal and therefore "nothing in creatures is like him in substance ... but all intellectual natures are corporeal, all are corruptible, all are mutable, so that he alone should not be subject to

[51] Florovsky, "Theophilus of Alexandria," 127.
[52] Florovsky, "Theophilus of Alexandria," 119.
[53] Socrates, *HE* 6.7: "ὑμᾶς εἶδον ὡς θεοῦ πρόσωπον." GCS n.s. 1:322.
[54] Florovsky, "Theophilus of Alexandria," 126.
[55] Gould, "The Image of God," 551.

corruptibility and change, who alone possesses immortality."[56] Gould suggests that Theophilus could safely have defended the incorporeality of God, but it was the second part of his argument – that human beings lack the image of God – that raised the ire of the monks.[57]

Gould then argues from the silence of a number of sources – letters of Theophilus preserved by Jerome (c. 347–420), Jerome's own writings about the Origenist controversy, Palladius' *Dialogue on the Life of John Chrysostom*, the *First Greek Life*, the *Apophthegmata Patrum*, and the *Letters of Antony* – that the controversy had little to do with true anthropomorphism. Even Evagrius (who, according to Gould, would have been well aware of the views of Egyptian monks in the 390s) makes no explicit reference in his writings to anthropomorphism. On the other hand, Gould regards as significant Evagrius' teaching on 'pure' prayer, in which Evagrius warns against the attempt to form mental images of God – including images of Christ – in prayer.[58] It is just such a vision of Christ that Serapion is seeking and that Cassian opposes in *Conference* 10, and Gould argues that this was the "real" reason for the controversy. He concludes by suggesting that Socrates and Cassian's accounts are nothing more than "serious misrepresentations of their opponents' theological outlook."[59]

e) Clark

Elizabeth Clark offers a slightly different account of the controversy in the second chapter of her book, *The Origenist Controversy: The Cultural Construction of an Early Christian Debate*. Following Guillaumont's suggestion, she seeks to place the controversy in the context of Evagrian theology.[60] She begins by tracing two poles of Evagrius' thought: (1) the elevation of 'pure prayer,' in which the mind is purged of all emotions and im-

[56] Gennadius, *De viris inlustribus* 34: "*nihil ei in creaturis simile per substantiam ... sed esse omnes intellectuales naturas corporeas, omnes corruptibiles, omnes mutabiles, ut ille solus corruptibilitati et mutabilitati non subiaceat qui solus habet inmortalitatem*." Ed. Richardson, 74. John A. McGuckin, "Cyril of Alexandria: Bishop and Pastor," in *The Theology of St. Cyril of Alexandria: A Critical Appreciation*, ed. by Thomas G. Weinandy and Daniel A. Keating (London and New York: T & T Clark, 2003), 219, assumes that Gennadius is summarizing a *different* letter – perhaps one published a few years before his death in 412. However, he provides no argument for this position and I see no justification for it. Gennadius' summary fits neatly with other descriptions of the festal letter of 399 – although it could be characterized as defending the doctrine of divine incorporeality against anthropomorphites (cf. Cassian), it could just as easily be characterized as arguing that human beings lack the image of God (cf. Aphou).

[57] Gould, "The Image of God," 551–552.

[58] Gould, "The Image of God," 552–554.

[59] Gould, "The Image of God," 554.

[60] Clark, *Origenist Controversy*, 66–74.

ages, especially images of God (the source of which is demonic); and (2) the correlative teaching that humans possessed the image of God "only when we existed as unembodied minds: with the precosmic fall, we lost it."[61] Clark goes on to identify these doctrines as the two poles of the anthropomorphite controversy:

> There was a direct correlation between the Anthropomorphite and anti-Anthropomorphite positions regarding the imaging of God, on the one hand, and the debate over whether humans had retained or lost the 'image of God' with sin, on the other. For the Anthropomorphites, humans retain the 'image of God' despite sin, and they likewise can form an 'image' of God in their minds; for anti-Anthropomorphites, neither claim holds.[62]

Clark suggests, however, that the controversy's theological component was slightly more complex than is indicated by the traditional account – the anthropomorphites did not simplistically maintain that God has a body; rather, on the basis of the teaching that the human person is the image of God, they argued that it is appropriate to seek an image of God in prayer. Clark's analysis may thus be regarded as an attempt to synthesize the traditional account of the anthropomorphite controversy with that of Florovsky and Gould, retaining the properly theological dimension as well as the anthropological dimension.[63]

f) Critique of the Revision

Collectively, these studies made considerable progress toward successfully reconstructing the anthropomorphite controversy. First, it makes sense to take *The Life of Aphou* seriously. Although the event it narrates need not be regarded as historical, the document lacks the polemical context of Cassian's and Socrates' writings,[64] placing it in a reasonably good position to characterize (at least in part) the nature of the debate.[65] Moreover, it confirms the suspicion that the traditional account is not entirely fair toward the anthropomorphites – Aphou is by no means the naïve simpleton we encounter in the character of Serapion. Second, it makes sense to understand the anthropomorphites in terms of their opposition to the Evagrian doctrine of 'pure' prayer – especially given the fact that Cassian places the contro-

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[61] Clark, *Origenist Controversy*, 73–74.

[62] Clark, *Origenist Controversy*, 75.

[63] Clark does not address the potential Christological dimension of the controversy.

[64] Although, as Golitzin points out, *The Life of Aphou* is not entirely free of polemics: "The ease with which Apa Aphou triumphs in his exchange does somewhat resemble Deacon Photinus' dispatch of poor Abba Serapion." "The Vision of God," 289.

[65] Gould argues that one need not take *The Life of Aphou* as a "verbatim record" in order to affirm that it "preserves a genuine recollection from within monastic circles of what doctrinal questions were believed to have been raised by Theophilus' letter." "The Image of God," 550.

versy precisely in the middle of his explication of that doctrine, while Socrates reports that it was a condemnation of Origen's works that satisfied the angry monks. Finally, it makes sense to place the controversy in the context of Christology, the point at which debate about God (i.e., whether or not God has a body) and debate about humanity (i.e., whether or not post-lapsarian humanity retains the *imago Dei*) intersect.

Nevertheless, the twentieth-century account of the controversy encounters some serious problems: it fails to do justice to Cassian's full system of thought, as well as to other fifth-century reports of anthropomorphite thinking. With regard to Cassian, the revision requires (1) that he understood 'pure' prayer to be an escape into blankness, (2) that he thought it heretical to seek the vision of Christ in prayer, and (3) that he thought that the image of God is lost in fallen humanity. However, a careful reading of *Conference* 10 demonstrates that the vision of the glorified Christ was *precisely* what he was seeking in prayer. Moreover, a careful reading of Cassian's works will reveal that he did *not* believe the image of God is lost in fallen humanity. Florovsky, Gould, and Clark make much of Cassian's Origenism (i.e., Evagrianism), and from it they assume that he would have held all that was attributed to Origenists of his day. But Origenism *per se* is not entirely relevant here. What is relevant is whether or not Cassian accepted the 'Origenist' ideas attributed to him. If it can be shown that he did not, then the modern revision of the controversy loses much of its force.

The twentieth-century revision also fails to account fully for other fifth-century reports of anthropomorphism. According to Florovsky and Gould, the anthropomorphites were actually mainstream, perfectly 'orthodox' monks who were contending for the reality of the Incarnation and the *imago Dei* against those Origenists who were denying these doctrines – that is to say, they were simply anti-Origenists. In fact, according Florovsky and Gould, the term 'anthropomorphite' was nothing other than a derogatory label invented by Origenists to discredit their otherwise formidable monastic opponents. The difficulty with this view is that the anthropomorphites were consistently opposed by both Origenist and non-Origenist alike.

For instance, a careful reading of Theophilus' writings demonstrates that he was no Origenist – certainly not in the sense of denying the Incarnation or the *imago Dei*. He even goes so far as to stake out 'middle ground' between anthropomorphites and Origenists; in a letter dated to 403 he condemns both Origenism and anthropomorphism, describing the anthropomorphites as uncultivated, simpleminded, and heretical (it is safe to say that, by 403, Theophilus no longer needed them as political allies).[66]

[66] A fragment of the letter has been preserved, presented as Fragment 7 in Marcel Richard, "Nouveaux Fragments de Theophile d'Alexandrie," *Nachrichten der Akademie*

Likewise, Jerome indicates in several works that anthropomorphite views were in circulation around the beginning of the fifth century in Palestine, and he also condemns them as heretical.[67] Significantly, among these works is his anti-Origenist treatise *Contra Johannem*.

Many years later (late 420s–early 430s), both Augustine (354–430)[68] and Cyril of Alexandria (376–444)[69] contend against those whom they identify as 'anthropomorphites.' Augustine seems to rely entirely on pseudo-Jerome for his knowledge of anthropomorphite theology, so he is not a significant independent witness. Cyril's writings, however, are significant for at least three reasons: (1) he does not rely upon other witnesses for his information, because he has apparently come into contact with anthropomorphites on his own; (2) he interprets his anthropomorphites as teaching that the Son is *eternally* embodied and visible (not only in the assumed humanity of the Incarnation); and (3) he associates his anthropomorphites, to some degree, with 'Arianism.' Not only do these later authors challenge the picture of anthropomorphism as some sort of Origenist creation; they (especially Cyril) also point in some interesting directions for research into the controversy.

3. Rethinking of the Controversy

In the past decade or so, three authors – Columba Stewart, Guy Stroumsa, and Alexander Golitzin – have begun a process of rethinking various aspects of the twentieth-century account of the controversy. This new revision, while building upon the work of previous scholarship, seeks to do justice to Cassian's full system of thought, as well as to other fourth- and fifth-century witnesses to anthropomorphism.

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der Wissenschaften in Göttingen (1975) 2:63. For a discussion, see Clark, *The Origenist Controversy*, 120; I provide my own analysis in Chapter 2, pp. 33–34.

[67] Cf. Jerome, *In Amos* I.ii.1/3, ed. Marcus Adriaen, CCSL 76 (Turnholt: Brepols, 1969–1970), 230; *Tractatus in Psalmos* 93, ed. Germain Morin, CCSL 78 (Turnholt: Brepols, 1958), 144–145; *Contra Johannem* 11, ed. J. L. Feiertag, CCSL 79A (Turnholt: Brepols, 1999), 20. For a discussion, see Clark, *The Origenist Controversy*, 149–150, and Chapter 2, pp. 35–38 of this study.

[68] Cf. Augustine, *Ep*. 148, ed. Alois Goldbacher, CSEL 44 (New York: Johnson Reprint Corp., 1961), 332–347, and *De haeresibus* 50 in *The De haeresibus of Saint Augustine: A Translation with an Introduction and Commentary*, ed. and trans. Liguori G. Muller (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1956), 98–99.

[69] Cf. Cyril of Alexandria, *Answers to Tiberius*; *Doctrinal Questions and Answers*; *Letter to Calosirius* in *Cyril of Alexandria: Select Letters*, ed. and trans. Lionel R. Wickham (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), 132–221.

a) Stewart

Columba Stewart, in *Cassian the Monk*, was among the first authors to begin rethinking the twentieth-century account of the anthropomorphite controversy.[70] His interest lies primarily in examining Cassian's doctrine of prayer – not in reconstructing anthropomorphite belief. In fact, he is noncommittal as to "whether such a group existed or would have recognized itself as believing what Cassian and others attribute to them."[71] For instance, he doubts the veracity of Cassian's story of Abba Serapion and is probably right to do so. In the story, the arrival of Theophilus' festal letter (and Serapion's attending prayer crisis) conveniently takes place at a critical point in Cassian's ninth and tenth *Conferences*, which happen to deal with the question of how to pray. Furthermore, Stewart notes the contrast between Serapion and Photinus:

> Sarapion's very name is redolent of pagan antiquity (derived as it is from Serapis), while Photinus, whose name means 'shining,' stands ready to dispel the darkness of Sarapion's error.... Photinus comes not from Egypt with its highly visible pagan heritage but from Christian Cappadocia with its new repute for theological erudition (which, of course, produced Evagrius).[72]

The Serapion story (even if fabricated) is nevertheless critical to Stewart's examination, for the elderly monk no doubt functions as a foil to Cassian's own views on prayer. Furthermore, the story (and Stewart's helpful analysis of it) may also reveal something about actual anthropomorphite belief. After all, Theophilus *did* send a festal letter refuting ideas that came to be known as 'anthropomorphism'; the letter *did* create a crisis among certain monks; and Cassian was obviously opposing someone or something (as Stewart himself seems to assume).

Stewart begins his analysis by pointing out that Cassian never states whether the object of Serapion's prayer is "God the Father conceived anthropomorphically or God the Son venerated solely in his incarnate humanity;" he "writes simply of *divinitas* or *deitas*."[73] Like Florovsky, he sees clues in the text indicating that Cassian was thinking of prayer to Christ. First, Serapion's cry of despair echoes that of Mary Magdalene upon discovering Christ's empty tomb: "They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him" (John 20:13).[74] Second, the story of Serapion is followed immediately by that passage (cited only partially by Florovsky) in which Cassian contrasts the vision of Christ "still

[70] Columba Stewart, *Cassian the Monk* (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 85–99.

[71] Stewart, *Cassian the Monk*, 193, n. 16.

[72] Stewart, *Cassian the Monk*, 87.

[73] Stewart, *Cassian the Monk*, 88.

[74] Unless otherwise noted, all biblical citations are from the NRSV.

humble and in the flesh (*humilem adhuc et carneum*)" with the vision of him "glorified and coming in the glory of his majesty (*glorificatum et in maiestatis suae gloria uenientem*)."[75]

Stewart seeks (unlike Florovsky) to identify the biblical context of the latter vision – the Transfiguration of Jesus recorded in the synoptic gospels.[76] He writes, "Cassian believed that in prayer one is meant to 'see' God in the glorified Christ."[77] This belief was grounded, of course, in the (Nicene) principle that "to know Christ is to know God, and to be with Christ is to be with him and the Father."[78] On this analysis, Cassian was not the opponent of "Evangelical realism" portrayed by Florovsky. Rather, his doctrine of prayer was immersed in the Jesus of the gospels as the text leads its (monastic) readers from the humility of Christ's earthly ministry to the mountaintop of his Transfiguration. Again, for Stewart,

> Jesus' earthly ministry and teachings were meant to point beyond themselves to a larger and ultimate reality. The life of Jesus was not simply a pattern relevant for this world only but a starting point for contemplation, the way to begin the passage from the mortal and the material to the longed-for beatitude.[79]

Thus Cassian would not have opposed the anthropomorphites merely for promoting a mental image of the earthly Jesus in prayer (as Florovsky would have it), for he regarded such an image as a legitimate vision of Christ – at least for those in the early stages of contemplation. Rather, Cassian opposed the anthropomorphites for promoting a mental image of Jesus as the *only* vision available to the seer and as the goal of the monastic life: "it was fatal for Sarapion to foreclose, even through ignorance, the possibility of knowing something now of the reality of heaven."[80] Stewart concludes: "Cassian condemns not the desire of the Anthropomorphites to see God but their misunderstanding of what that means. They have reduced an encounter with a divine person to an imaginative depiction, which for Cassian means replacing Someone with something."[81]

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[75] Cassian, *Conlatio* 10.6, CSEL 13:291.

[76] I explore this crucial point more fully in Chapter 2, pp. 46–47.

[77] Stewart, *Cassian the Monk*, 95.

[78] Stewart, *Cassian the Monk*, 97.

[79] Stewart, *Cassian the Monk*, 88–89.

[80] Stewart, *Cassian the Monk*, 89.

[81] Stewart, *Cassian the Monk*, 95. Stewart is certainly correct that Cassian portrays the anthropomorphites as contemplating Christ "only in his earthly, pre-Resurrection humanity" (*Cassian the Monk*, 88). According to my thesis, Cassian's portrayal is a mischaracterization of actual anthropomorphite thought, in which Christ's body is intrinsic to his divinity and transcends (although is somehow related to) his earthly life. In either case, Stewart's point stands: Cassian regarded the refusal to go beyond an embodied Christ as a denial of the true *visio Dei*.

In addition to the Christological dimension of the controversy, Stewart acknowledges that this was also a debate about the image of God; he identifies Genesis 1:26–27 as the "crux of the saga," and he characterizes Cassian as worrying that "if the human mind conceives of God in human form, God is thereby reduced to the human level."[82] However, he fails to show how these two dimensions of the controversy were connected; in fact, on his analysis of the Christological question, it is difficult to see why Cassian would have brought up the Genesis text at all. This connection is made, however, by Stroumsa and Golitzin.

b) Stroumsa

In the same year as Stewart's *Cassian the Monk*, Guy Stroumsa (in "Jewish and Gnostic Traditions Among the Audians") began to explore new avenues for understanding anthropomorphism.[83] The article, as the title suggests, deals primarily with Audianism.[84] However, Stroumsa makes two valuable contributions regarding the anthropomorphites of Egypt. First, in his treatment of Epiphanius' refutation of the Audians (who appear to have been drawing upon the same traditions as the anthropomorphites), he makes an important distinction – and one that I repeat throughout this study – between a 'concrete' mysticism (in which God is visible to the eyes of the body)[85] and a 'metaphorical' mysticism (in which God is visible, without any image, only to the eyes of the purified mind/heart).[86] Indeed, this was one of the important issues dividing Evagrians from anthropomorphites. Both sides agreed that the *visio Dei* is the goal of the monastic life; but while the anthropomorphites sought that vision in mental im-

[82] Stewart, *Cassian the Monk*, 88. There can be no question that Genesis 1:26–27 was the key text in the debate; Cassian cites it, as does Aphou. Furthermore, Theophilus' reply to the angry monks recorded by Socrates ("In seeing you I behold the face of God") strongly implies that the controversy had to do with the meaning of the image of God in humans.

[83] Guy Stroumsa, "Jewish and Gnostic Traditions Among the Audians" in *Sharing the Sacred: Religious Contacts and Conflicts in the Holy Land*, ed. A. Kofsky and G. G. Stroumsa (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, 1998), 97–108.

[84] For reasons he does not state, Stroumsa believes that Egyptian anthropomorphism had its origin in Audianism (cf. "Jewish and Gnostic Traditions," 107). As far as I can tell, there is no direct relationship between the two sects (although they likely shared common, widely-held traditions).

[85] Epiphanius, *Panarion* 70, GCS 3:239, accuses the Audians of believing that God may literally be seen with the eyes. The Egyptian anthropomorphites were accused only of forming a *mental* image of God, but that image took a shape or form that could be (and, if Golitzin is right, often was) described so that others could picture it. In theory, the image could have been drawn or painted so that others could literally see it. In this sense, it was visible to the eyes of the body.

[86] Stroumsa, "Jewish and Gnostic Traditions," 101.

ages, the Evagians insisted on an interiorized, 'imageless' vision. Second, Stroumsa makes an important suggestion:

> One should read anew some sources dealing with the anthropomorphist monks of Egypt.... It is a distinct possibility ... that the anthropomorphism of these monks does not reflect a simplistic conception of the divinity, as is usually thought. Rather, this anthropomorphism might preserve an archaic Christian conception of the Divinity, and of the mystical *visio Dei*, directly received from early Jewish esoteric traditions.[87]

One finds just such a reading in the writings of Alexander Golitzin.

c) Golitzin

Building upon the work of Stroumsa, Golitzin developed the following thesis regarding the controversy: the anthropomorphites were adherents of an ancient tradition having to do with the vision of God's glory and the divine body – a tradition with deep roots in Judaism, but one that the Nicene-Constantinopolitan settlement had rendered "a theological anachronism."[88] He agrees with Florovsky that the subject of the debate was the Second Person of the Trinity; he therefore also agrees that Cassian misconstrued the anthropomorphite position by giving his readers the false impression that the monks were ascribing a body either to the Father or to the divine substance.

However, Golitzin takes issue with Florovsky on two points. First, he cannot accept the idea that 'anthropomorphism' was nothing more than an Origenist invention devised to discredit more 'orthodox' monks. He points out that Epiphanius, 50 years before Cassian, was making similar arguments against a similar theological opponent (the Audians), and Epiphanius was certainly no Origenist.[89] Second, Golitzin is not convinced that the Christ under discussion is, exclusively, the Second Person *incarnate*. He argues that the anthropomorphites believed in a divine body belonging to the pre-incarnate Son, who functions as the visible manifestation of the invisible Father. To be sure, such an idea would have been out of step with the emerging Nicene orthodoxy, which required "that the Second Person make his own the Father's hidden divinity."[90] However, Golitzin argues that this way of thinking about God's Son was neither novel

[87] Stroumsa, "Jewish and Gnostic Traditions," 107–108.

[88] Golitzin, "The Demons Suggest an Illusion," 15. Cf. "The Vision of God," 285–286, in which he adds that the anthropomorphites were slow to become aware of this shift, "especially since most of them doubtless considered themselves orthodox communicants and defenders of the Great Church."

[89] Golitzin, "The Form of God," online at http://www.marquette.edu/maqom/morphe.html (on 16 June 2011).

[90] Golitzin, "The Form of God," online at http://www.marquette.edu/maqom/morphe.html (on 16 June 2011).

nor strange at the turn of the fifth century; rather, it belonged to an ancient and widespread exegetical tradition whose roots could be traced deeply within Judaism.

Golitzin traces this tradition to the Hebrew Bible itself, starting with Ezekiel 1:26–28 – the prophet's vision of God's chariot throne. In the vision, Ezekiel sees "seated above the likeness of a throne ... something that seemed like a human form," later described as "the appearance of the likeness of the Glory of the Lord." This conjunction of likeness, divine glory, and human form leads Golitzin to a consideration of Genesis 1:26–27. He writes:

> The *imago* of Genesis 1:26–27 is linked ... to the theophany tradition, in particular, I would add, to the *kevod YHWH*, and carries a definite physical sense, that is, it refers to the human body and so at the very least suggests that God himself also has a body.[91]

Golitzin sees the continuation of this anthropomorphic tradition in both rabbinic and apocalyptic literature. As a chief example of the former he cites an early saying attributed to R. Hillel the Elder who, when asked why he regards bathing as a religious duty, refers to the making of humankind in the image of God; for Hillel, God's image seems to reside (at least in part) in the human body.[92] With regard to apocalyptic literature, Golitzin turns to 2 Enoch 39:5-6:

> You, my children, you see my right hand beckoning you ... but I, I have seen the right hand of the Lord beckoning me, who fills heaven. You, you see the extent of my body ... but I, I have seen the extent of the Lord, without measure and without analogy.[93]

For Golitzin, this vision is "perhaps the most uncompromisingly anthropomorphic of any such in the ancient literature."[94]

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[91] Golitzin, "The Vision of God," 277–278. He is not alone in this assessment; he cites James Barr: "the naturalness or propriety of the human likeness for divine appearances ... may have been one element in the thinking of those who developed the thought of the *tselem elohim* [image of God]." "Theophany and Anthropomorphism in the Old Testament," *Supplements to Vetus Testamentum VII* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1960), 37.

[92] Golitzin, "The Vision of God," 27 (for full quotation cf. p. 58 of this study). In support of this point, Golitzin cites Alon Goshen-Gottstein: "In all of rabbinic literature there is not a single statement that categorically denies that God has a body or form." "The Body as Image of God in Rabbinic Literature," *Harvard Theological Review* 87.2 (1994): 171–195, here 172.

[93] Golitzin, "The Vision of God," 280, citing *2 Enoch*, tr. F. I. Andersen, in *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, ed. J. H. Charlesworth (New York: Doubleday 1983), 1:163.

[94] Golitzin, "The Vision of God," 280. However, that assessment may be challenged by *The Ascension of Isaiah* 3.8–9: "And Isaiah himself has said, 'I see more than the prophet Moses.' Now Moses said, 'There is no man who can see God and live,' but Isaiah has said, 'I have seen God and behold I live.'" Tr. R. McL.Wilson in *New Testament Apocrypha*, ed. Wilhelm Schneemelcher (Cambridge; Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1991), 2:607.

Golitzin argues that this tradition was assimilated into early Christian literature with one important modification – the vision of God's glory was now associated specifically with the Son. He points to numerous passages in the Pauline corpus, most importantly Philippians 2:5–11 ("Who though he was in the form of God ...")[95] and Colossians 1:15–20 ("He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; for in him all things in heaven and on earth were created ..."),[96] but most of the evidence he marshals is from monastic literature. He cites three examples from the fourth/fifth centuries. The Syriac *Liber Graduum* states, "the Glory of God Almighty was revealed to Moses on the mountain like a man," and later, "our Lord was revealed to all the prophets like a man."[97] Golitzin concludes that the author of the *Liber* takes it for granted that "it is the Son of God who is the divine Glory and who appeared to Moses and the other saints of Israel in human form, 'like a man.'"[98]

The *Bohairic Life of Pachomius* contains three relevant theophany narratives, all conspicuously absent from the Greek *Vita Prima*. In the first vision, Pachomius sees "a large icon, like a large picture [of someone] wearing a crown on [his] head.... Before the icon were two great and very august archangels, motionless and contemplating the Lord's image that had appeared in the assembly room."[99] In the second, Pachomius and his disciple Theodore see "a great throne on which the Lord was seated under the form in which he chose to be seen by them."[100] In the third, Theodore is told by an angel to "go to the church, for the Lord is there;" but he is "unable to look at His face because of the great light which unceasingly flashed forth from Him," the vision reminding Theodore of "Israel long

[95] Golitzin, "The Vision of God," 282, cites Gilles Quispel, commenting on Philippians 2: "The implication of the *morphe* is obviously that it is the divine body, identical with the *kavod*, Glory, and equivalent with the *eikon*." "Ezekiel 1:26 in Jewish mysticism and Gnosis," *Vigiliae Christianae* 34.1 (1980), 9.

[96] Golitzin, "The Vision of God," 283, cites Jarl Fossum, who writes that in Colossians 1, Christ functions as "the physical embodiment of divinity ... the *kavod* of God which could be seen ... the Heavenly Man." "The Magharians: A Pre-Christian Jewish Sect and Its Significance for the Study of Gnosticism and Christianity," *Henoch IX* (1987), 338–339.

[97] Golitzin, "The Demons Suggest an Illusion," 20 citing *Liber Graduum* 28.10–11, ed. M. Kmosko, PS 3:802.

[98] Golitzin, "The Demons Suggest an Illusion," 21.

[99] Golitzin, "The Demons Suggest an Illusion," 21 citing *BoLife* 73 in *Pachomian Koinonia*, tr. Armand Veilleux (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1980), 1:95.

[100] Golitzin, "The Demons Suggest an Illusion," 22 citing *BoLife* 76 in Veilleux, *Pachomian Koinonia*, 1:99.

ago in the desert ... when the Lord revealed himself to them."[101] Golitzin points out that all three accounts are of throne visions,

> reminiscent not only of the biblical manifestations of the *kavod YHWH*, but of the throne visions characteristic of later Second Temple era apocalypses and ... Rabbinic literature with their ascent to a vision of the glorious form of God enthroned in the highest heaven. The one great difference, of course, is that these Christian texts identify that glorious form with Christ.[102]

On this reading, the anthropomorphites certainly did not consider themselves to be "foreclosing" the possibility of knowledge of heaven (which, according to Stewart, Cassian accused them of doing). On the contrary, they believed heaven to be precisely where the embodied Christ of their visions is enthroned.

Finally, Golitzin places *The Life of Aphou* in this tradition. The definitive passage is that in which Aphou responds to Theophilus' apparent devaluing of the human body:

> As for the Glory of the Greatness of God, which it is impossible for anyone to see because of its incomprehensible light, and as for human weakness and imperfection ... we think that it is like a king who orders the making of an image which everyone is to acknowledge as the image of the king.[103]

On Golitzin's reading, Aphou "clearly believed in a divine body, 'clothed with incomprehensible light'."[104] I do not think Aphou's belief in a "divine body" is so explicit; however, an argument can be made (which I do make in Chapter 2) that he is here locating the *imago Dei* in the human body – implying a divine body as well.

For Golitzin, this reconstruction of anthropomorphite belief explains a number of features of Cassian's *Conference* 10: (1) the charge that Serapion is uninstructed in the "divine nature and substance" (i.e., the doctrine recently made official at Constantinople); (2) the insistence that he is, therefore, not merely a simpleton, but a heretic; and (3) the use of the phrase "Jewish weakness." With regard to the latter, Golitzin notes that it "also appears in Origen, and by now we should recognize it as a code for a

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[101] Golitzin, "The Demons Suggest an Illusion," 22 citing *BoLife* 184 in Veilleux, *Pachomian Koinonia*, 1:219–220.

[102] Golitzin, "The Demons Suggest an Illusion," 23.

[103] *The Life of Aphou* in Drioton, "La discussion d'un moine," 99–100. ET Golitzin, "The Demons Suggest an Illusion," 24.

[104] Golitzin, "The Demons Suggest an Illusion," 25. He also makes this argument in "The Form of God," online at http://www.marquette.edu/maqom/morphe.html (on 16 June 2011); and in "The Vision of God," 291. I examine *The Life of Aphou* in detail in Chapter 2.

real exegetical tradition, whose outlines Cassian may well have known, but he is not about to give it a hearing."[105]

C. The Contribution of This Study

In this study I seek to confirm, clarify, and expand upon the work of these recent authors (especially that of Golitzin). In Chapter 2 I take a closer look at (purported) witnesses to the events that took place in 399 – *The Life of Aphou*, Cassian, Theophilus, and Jerome (while Golitzin discusses the former two at length, he does not address the writings of the latter two). My study confirms the suspicions that 'anthropomorphism' was no mere Origenist codeword; that the anthropomorphite monks were not merely forming mental images of the *incarnate* Christ in prayer; and that the theory best accounting for all the evidence is that they were seeking the vision of the divine body of the eternal Word.

In Chapter 3 I provide a detailed analysis of later, fifth-century witnesses to anthropomorphism – namely, Cyril of Alexandria and Augustine. Golitzin provides only a brief (albeit helpful) discussion of these two bishops,[106] and there is room for much more work to be done. My analysis demonstrates that these authors (especially Cyril) understood the anthropomorphites (or their spiritual descendants) to be seeking visions not merely of the incarnate Christ, but of the eternal Word.

In Chapter 4 I turn to the Nag Hammadi corpus. Golitzin calls special attention to these writings as embodying certain traditions also cherished by the anthropomorphites – notably *merkabah* mysticism and ascent to the Presence; however, he limits his discussion to the theme of heavenly ascent hinted at in *The Gospel of Thomas* 16 and 23.[107] More relevant (in my

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[105] Golitzin, "The Vision of God," 288. He cites Elliot Wolfson, commenting on Origen's rejection of the actual (i.e., not mischaracterized) rabbinic interpretation of Isaiah 66:1: "Origen's report regarding those who posit a literal reading ... is not simply a stock phrase against Jewish literalism or anthropomorphism but represents a very specific exegesis that appears in the relevant sources." "Images of God's Feet: Some Observations on the Divine Body in Judaism," in *People of the Body: Jews and Judaism from an Embodied Perspective*, ed. Howard Eilberg-Schwartz (Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 1992), 152.

[106] Golitzin's discussion of Cyril and Augustine amounts to no more than a few paragraphs in "The Form of God," online at http://www.marquette.edu/maqom/morphe.html (on 16 June 2012).

[107] Cf. Golitizin, "The Form of God," online at http://www.marquette.edu/maqom/morphe.html (on 16 June 2012). He also hints at this connection in "The Vision of God," 295, stating that it is not "so very difficult to see how Apa Aphou's 'body of the glory' might begin to explain the marks of Pachomian manufacture on the Nag Hammadi codi-

view) is saying 77, in which Jesus identifies himself with the light of the first day of creation, in which he appears in the form of the primordial Anthropos. I examine saying 77 in detail, as well as relevant passages from five other Nag Hammadi texts: *Eugnostos the Blessed*, *The Sophia of Jesus Christ, On the Origin of the World*, *The Apocryphon of John*, and *The Teachings of Silvanus*.

Chapter 5 is devoted to Philo's Logos doctrine and interpretation of Genesis 1. Golitzin is right to identify Philo as a predecessor of Evagrius and Cassian, particularly in terms of the interiorization of the vision of God.[108] However, I argue that in other ways Philo (or, at any rate, the brand of Jewish mysticism that Philo represents) also influenced the Nag Hammadi corpus and possibly the anthropomorphites themselves. Golitzin does not consider this possibility, but I believe it is worth exploring (especially if – as I argue – the anthropomorphite controversy was really a battle within a tradition in which Philo also stood).

D. Methodology

Methodologically, this study consists first of construction and then of comparison. In Part 1 (Chapters 2 and 3), I propose a construction of anthropomorphite Christology that takes account of all the available data: contemporary witnesses to the controversy (including John Cassian and the historians), the one extant pro-anthropomorphite text (*The Life of Apa Aphou of Pemdje*) and later witnesses to anthropomorphite belief (Augustine and Cyril of Alexandria). Yet how is one to glean one group's theology from the texts of their opponents? First, I regard as less reliable those texts that are fully embedded in the immediate polemical context – the writings of Cassian and the historians. Nevertheless, I do not entirely dismiss these earlier witnesses' characterizations of the controversy, polemical tropes notwithstanding. Cassian's charge of "Jewish weakness," for instance, may reveal something important about the anthropomorphite point of view. Second, I regard as more reliable those texts that, like *The Life of Aphou*, are somewhat removed from the immediate polemical context – the later texts produced by Augustine and Cyril of Alexandria (not

ces." However, apart from alluding to Thomas' "encratite mysticism of the divine form," he does not pursue the connection further.

[108] Golitzin writes: "Regarding interiorization, it is also true that the fourth and fifth century opponents of 'anthropomorphism,' as I have sketched the latter, had precedents of their own ... in the great Alexandrian tradition of Philo, Clement, and Origen." "The Form of God," online at http://www.marquette.edu/maqom/morphe.html (on 16 June 2011).

that they are devoid of polemics!). Finally, where the anthropomorphites' opponents agree with *The Life of Aphou* (for instance, on the question of which biblical texts were being debated), I take them to reproduce anthropomorphite beliefs in a reliable manner.

In Part 2 (Chapters 4 and 5), I compare anthropomorphite Christology (as I have constructed it) with other traditions that are known to have circulated in Egypt. This comparative analysis serves two functions: (1) it corroborates the findings of my construction by demonstrating that similar ideas were current in Egypt, and (2) it places the anthropomorphite Christology more firmly in its historical context. The comparison proceeds along the lines of what has been called the inter-developmental model of comparative theology, which studies the historical settings in which one tradition develops out of, or in relation to, another.[109] First, I compare anthropomorphite Christology with that of six Nag Hammadi texts, with a view to demonstrating their similarity. It cannot be proven that the anthropomorphites relied upon these Nag Hammadi texts (let alone the actual Nag Hammadi codices) for their Christological views; a common reliance on certain Jewish-mystical concepts is enough to explain their resemblance. Nevertheless, I demonstrate the strong possibility that these texts were known to the anthropomorphites, and therefore provided one of the channels through which they learned their Christology. Second, with a view to tracing the shared traditions of the anthropomorphites and these Nag Hammadi texts back to a common source, I examine the Logos tradition represented by Philo of Alexandria. The myriad ways in which Philo influenced Origen and his followers (the anthropomorphites' enemies) are well documented.[110] By showing that Philo *also* had an influence on certain Nag Hammadi texts and therefore (indirectly) on the anthropomorphites themselves, I demonstrate just how interconnected all of these traditions were.

E. Summary

The thesis of this study – that the anthropomorphites were seeking in prayer the vision of the eternal, divine body of Christ – is built upon five propositions: (1) the anthropomorphite controversy had to do with prayer,

[109] John Renard, "Comparative Theology: Definition and Method," *Religious Studies and Theology* 17 (1998): 7.

[110] Cf., for instance, David T. Runia, *Philo in Early Christian Literature: a Survey* (Assen: Van Gorcum; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993) and David T. Runia, *Philo and the Church Fathers: a Collection of Papers* (New York: Brill, 1995).

the anthropomorphites being opposed to the Evagrian doctrine of imageless prayer; (2) it had to do with Christology, the anthropomorphites seeking in their prayer life the specific image of the Second Person of the Trinity; (3) it had to do with the pre-incarnate Word, the anthropomorphites arguing that the Son is the visible 'glory' and 'form' of the invisible Father – not merely in his assumed humanity, but from all eternity; (4) it had to do with the recent Nicene-Constantinopolitan settlement, the anthropomorphite distinction between visible Son and invisible Father violating the spirit of the *homoousion* (a fact not lost on their opponents, Origenist and non-Origenist alike); (5) it pitted against each another two groups who actually shared the traditional notion that the vision of God's glory is available, through the Son, in this life. Between these groups there were three major areas of disagreement: (a) for the anthropomorphites the vision is specifically of Christ, the visible member of the Trinity, while for the Evagrians the vision is of the invisible light of the consubstantial Trinity, glimpsed through the glorified Christ; (b) for the anthropomorphites the vision is exterior, having a form perceptible (at least in theory) to the eyes of the body, while for the Evagrians it is interior, perceptible only to the eyes of the purified *nous*; (c) for the anthropomorphites the vision is of a human shape, while for the Evagrians it is formless and bodiless. The situation was thus more complex than previously realized: the anthropomorphites were indeed reacting against Evagrius' doctrine of 'pure' prayer (as noted by Guillaumont), but that doctrine was itself an attempted Nicene adjustment to an age-old tradition – a tradition shared by anthropomorphites and Evagrians, but that the anthropomorphites were seeking to preserve intact.

Chapter 2

Witnesses to the Anthropomorphite Controversy

A. Introduction

In this chapter I examine witnesses to the anthropomorphite controversy of 399: Theophilus of Alexandria, Jerome, John Cassian, and *The Life of Apa Aphou of Pemdje*. Theophilus and Cassian were, of course, participants in the controversy; Theophilus played a large role in it, and Cassian was one of those 'Origenist' monks caught up in its aftermath. Their testimony, although biased, is therefore invaluable. *The Life of Aphou* presents a much later account of the controversy but is also invaluable as the only extant text written from the anthropomorphite point of view. Although Jerome does not specifically mention the events of 399, he makes several references to the anthropomorphites (as an identifiable sect) and was in a relatively good position to know what was taking place in the monasteries of Egypt at the time.

These witnesses provide such conflicting portrayals of anthropomorphism that recent scholarship has struggled to decipher what the controversy was really all about. Many suggestions have been offered, and a careful analysis of the primary texts confirms some of them while eliminating others. For instance, it is true that the anthropomorphites were not really anthropomorphites – at least not in the sense of ascribing a body to God the Father or to the consubstantial Trinity; rather, they were seeking mental images of Christ in prayer. However, they were not merely defending the reality of the Incarnation and the *imago Dei* against Origenists (like Cassian and Socrates) who rejected these doctrines, for among their opponents were anti-Origenists (namely, Theophilus and Jerome) who likewise found their views to be unorthodox. The theory that best accounts for all of the evidence is the one put forward in this study: the anthropomorphites were seeking in prayer the vision of the divine body of the eternal Word.

B. Theophilus of Alexandria

Theophilus figures prominently in any account of the anthropomorphite controversy. When it comes to his relationship with the anthropomorphites, the primary sources are unanimous on two points: (1) anthropomorphism (of some sort) was the target of his festal letter of 399; yet, (2) he later formed an alliance with the anthropomorphites in his campaign against Origenism. According to the traditional account of the controversy (particularly as found in Socrates), Theophilus' behavior is easily explained by the fact that he was himself an Origenist who was naturally opposed to the anthropomorphites but needed their support (for a brief time) in a matter of ecclesiastical politics (namely, the engineering of the downfall of the Tall Brothers and John Chrysostom). On this point at least, the twentieth-century reconstruction of the controversy (as found in Florovsky, Gould, and Clark) follows the traditional account.

Of course, the traditional and modern accounts disagree as to what it was in anthropomorphism that Theophilus found offensive. According to the traditional account, the anthropomorphites were simple monks who believed, quite crudely, that God had a body, and no right-thinking follower of Origen could countenance such an opinion. Modern scholarship has shown, however, that the anthropomorphites most certainly did *not* crudely believe that God has a body. Rather, a consensus has emerged that their views had to do with Christology and the image of God *in humans*. More specifically, according to Florovsky and Gould, the anthropomorphites were actually mainstream, perfectly 'orthodox' monks who were defending the reality of the Incarnation and the *imago Dei* – doctrines supposedly repugnant to Origenists. In fact, the term 'anthropomorphite' was merely a derogatory label invented by Origenists to discredit their opponents. On this reading, Theophilus was himself an Origenist, and – in particular – a denier of the Incarnation and the image of God in humans.

There are three difficulties with this view: (1) in his own writings Theophilus is consistently anti-Origenist, an ardent defender of the doctrines of the *imago Dei* and the Incarnation; (2) the evidence of his Origenism is weak, located almost entirely in the writings of his enemies; and (3) in a letter dating to 403, he claims to be both anti-Origenist and anti-anthropomorphite, implying that it was at least possible to occupy some sort of theological middle ground.

1. Theophilus' Writings

According to Norman Russell, Theophilus was consistent in his anti-Origenism, and his opposition was actually grounded in theological concerns.[1] Just as there is good reason to mistrust the early historians' characterization of anthropomorphism, Russell also mistrusts their portrayal of Theophilus.[2] He writes, "we cannot assume" that the personal animosities reported by Socrates, Sozomen, and Palladius "exhaust the truth of the matter.... Any attempt to represent the reality of the situation must do justice to the theological issues underlying the rhetoric."[3] Those theological issues had to do, of course, with Origenism.

Theophilus was no Origenist – certainly not as he understood the Origenism of his day (i.e., Evagrianism), and certainly not in the sense of denying the Incarnation or the image of God in humans. On his reading, Origenism regarded the soul's acquisition of a body as the penalty of the Fall and held that salvation is achieved by training the soul so that it can shed its material covering and return to its original, innate union with the divine. Throughout his corpus, Theophilus consistently condemns such notions as heretical.[4] His own views are revealed most succinctly in his *Homily on the Mystical Supper*,[5] probably delivered on Holy Thursday of 400 –

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[1] Norman Russell, "Bishops and Charismatics in Early Christian Egypt," *Abba: the tradition of Orthodoxy in the West: Festschrift for Bishop Kallistos (Ware) of Diokleia,* ed. John Behr, Andrew Louth, and Dimitri Conomos (Crestwood, N.Y.: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2003), 99–110; Norman Russell, "Theophilus and Cyril of Alexandria on the Divine Image: A Consistent Episcopal Policy Towards the Origenism of the Desert?," *Origeniana Octava* (Leuven: University Press, 2003), 939–946; Norman Russell, *Theophilus of Alexandria* (London; New York: Routledge, 2007). Cf. Clark: "That theological controversy ... played a more significant role than is suggested by the accounts of the church historians seems clear." *The Origenist Controversy*, 50.

[2] Susanna Elm shares Russell's mistrust: "Outright accusations of doctrinal irregularity could ... not be made easily, unless clear-cut heresy could be proven. It was more effective ... to resort instead to charges of a more limited and personal nature, namely those of administrative misconduct, especially if such charges also happened to be true." "The Dog That Did Not Bark: Doctrine and Patriarchal Authority in the Conflict between Theophilus of Alexandria and John Chrysostom of Constantinople," *Christian Origins: Theology, Rhetoric and Community*, ed. Lewis Ayres and Gareth Jones (London and New York: Routledge, 1998), 69.

[3] Russell, *Theophilus of Alexandria*, 21.

[4] Theophilus' understanding of Origenism is revealed primarily in the festal letters for 401, 402, and 404. These are preserved only in Jerome's Latin translations in *Epp*. 96, 98, and 100, ed. I. Hilberg (Vienna: F. Tempske, 1896), CSEL 55:159–181; 185–211; 213–232. ET: Russell, *Theophilus of Alexandria*, 101–139; 143–159.

[5] Theophilus, *Hom. in mysticam coenam*, PG 77:1016C–1029B. ET: Russell, *Theophilus of Alexandria*, 52–60. The homily was printed among the works of Cyril of Alexandria but certainly belongs to Theophilus. The author warns against "the nonsense-talking, yet deceptive ministers of Satan ... those clothed in the eremitical but unquiet garment of

just fourteen months after the festal letter of 399.[6] In the homily, Theophilus identifies the *imago Dei* with the attributes of immortality and incorruptibility – lost through the Fall[7] but restored through the Incarnation. Christ became what we are in order that we might become what he is.[8] The Eucharist is the particular means of reversing the damage caused by the Fall, enabling human nature to recover its former state of immortality as it participates in the divine nature.[9] Of course, this means that humans are "saved as embodied beings, not as detached souls."[10] Christ's Resurrection and the Eucharist ensure that the divine image (although incorporeal) belongs to the body as well as to the soul.

Theophilus derived his doctrine of the image not from Origen (as Socrates would have us believe), but from Athanasius. The latter argues that created nature, by virtue of being brought from non-being into being, is weak and mortal, subject to dissolution – if composed only of itself. Yet

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the new wisdom ... those who have disturbed our spiritual brotherhood and beloved peace, and in no small measure have thrown our God-guarded city into confusion ... for they have thought wickedly concerning Christ our true God and have attempted to destroy the hope of salvation that we have in Christ – I mean the Resurrection (… οἱ κενολόγοι καὶ φρεναπάται διάκονοι τοῦ Σατανᾶ … οἱ τὸ ἐρημικὸν καὶ οὐκ ἤρεμον κολόβιον τῆς νέας σοφιστείας περιβεβλημένοι … οἱ τὴν πνευματικὴν ἡμῶν ἀδελφότητα καὶ τὴν εἰρήνην ἀσπαζομένην θωρήξαντες, καὶ τὴν θεοφύλακτον ἡμῶν πόλιν οὐ μετρίως θορυβήσαντες … ὅπερ κακῶς ἐφρόνησαν περὶ Χριστοῦ τοῦ ἀληθινοῦ ἡμῶν θεοῦ, καὶ τὴν ἐλπίδα τῆς σωτερίας ἡμῶν ἣν ἔχομεν ἐν Χριστῷ, φημὶ ἀνάστασιν, διασκεδάσαι κατεπεχείρησαν.)" PG 77:1028C. This warning must refer to the Origenist monks who, in Theophilus' day, were causing "disturbances" both in the monasteries and in Alexandria. Moreover, the author of this homily associates the image of God with immortality, whereas Cyril will associate it with rationality, compassion, sovereignty, and virtue (see Chapter 3, p. 65). Marcel Richard, "Une homélie de Théophile d'Alexandrie sur l'institution de l'Eucharistie," *Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique* 33 (1937): 46–54, was the first to attribute the homily to Theophilus.

[6] Richard, "Une homélie," argues for this date based on the fact that, at this time, the Origenist "disturbance" in Alexandria would have been in full swing.

[7] Theophilus writes that Adam "took off the immortality he possessed by grace and of his own free will put on corruption (μετημφιάσατο τῆς κατὰ χάριν ἀθανασίας, τὴν ἐκ θελήματος φθοπάν)." *Hom. in mysticam coenam*, PG 77:1020B; ET: Russell, *Theophilus of Alexandria*, 54.

[8] Speaking in the person of Christ, Theophilus writes: "For your sake I became as you are, though without changing my nature, that you might become through me 'partakers of the divine nature' (Γέγονα δι᾽ ὑμᾶς καθ᾽ ὑμᾶς, καὶ τῆς ἐμῆς φύσεως οὐκ ἠλλοιώθην, ἵνα ὑμεῖς γένησθε θείας κοινωνοὶ φύσεως δι᾽ ἐμοῦ)." *Hom. in mysticam coenam*, PG 77:1021B; ET: Russell, *Theophilus of Alexandria*, 55.

[9] Theophilus urges his readers to "eat the bread that restores your nature. Drink the wine that restores the exultation of immortality (Φάγετε ἄρτον ἀνακαινοποιοῦντα ὑμῶν τὴν φύσιν. Πίετε οἶνον ἀθανασίας γάνυσμα)." *Hom. in mysticam coenam*, PG 77:1021B.

[10] Russell, "Theophilus and Cyril," 944.

God, in his kindness, creates and sustains the world "by his own eternal Word" (τῷ ἑαυτοῦ καὶ ἀϊδίῳ Λόγῳ) so that it "may be able to remain firm" (βεβαίως διαμένειν δυνηθῇ) in existence.[11] Theophilus' teaching is a natural extension of Athanasius': The same Word who conferred the image of God (variously understood as immortality, incorruptibility, and existence) at creation is the one who restored it in the Incarnation – for those who participate in the sacramental life of the Church.

2. Evidence of Origenism

The evidence of Theophilus' Origenism is largely circumstantial. For instance, his extant anti-Origenist writings are confined to the brief period between 400 and 404, which Clark takes as indicating that his anti-Origenism was disingenuous and short-lived.[12] However, his corpus is not well preserved, and nothing in *any* of his extant writings indicates that he was an Origenist.

Socrates reports further evidence of Theophilus' Origenism (cited in Chapter 1, pp. 5-6). First, he notes that Theophilus opposed the anti-Origenist Epiphanius early in his career – sure proof (in Socrates' estimation) of Thophilus' Origenist credentials.[13] However, Epiphanius certainly had many detractors who were not Origenists! Second, Socrates reports that, just after engineering the deposition of John Chrysostom, Theophilus reconciled with the Tall Brothers – another sure sign of his Origenism.[14] However, this reconciliation (as well as his original support of them) can be explained just as easily as a matter of political expediency, as is the case in so many of Theophilus' dealings. Third, according to Socrates, Theophilus himself engaged in the study of Origen's writings, claiming the ability to distinguish what was edifying from what was not.[15] However, studying (and even admiring certain aspects of) Origen's works does not necessarily make one an Origenist; as discussed on pp. 35-38, Jerome likely took a similar view of Origen's writings, and he was no Origenist.

Perhaps the most compelling evidence for Theophilus' Origenism is contained in Gennadius' summary of the festal letter of 399. He reports that Theophilus wrote against:

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[11] Athanasius, *Contra gentes* 41. Greek text and ET in Robert W. Thompson, ed. and trans., *Athanasius:* Contra Gentes *and* De Incarnatione (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), 112–115.

[12] Clark, *Origenist Controversy*, 44. Along with Florovsky and Gould, Clark accepts – too readily, in my view – the ancient historians' portrayal of Theophilus as a lifelong Origenist.

[13] Socrates, *HE* 6.10, GCS n.s. 1:327.

[14] Socrates, *HE* 6.16, GCS n.s. 1:338.

[15] Socrates, *HE* 6.17, GCS n.s. 1:340.

the anthropomorphite heretics who say that God has a human form and limbs, refuting them in a long discussion and arguing convincingly with testimonies from Divine Scripture. He shows that, according to the faith of the fathers, God is to be thought of as incorporeal, not formed with any outline of limbs at all, and therefore nothing in creatures is like him in substance. Nor has the incorruptibility, immutability, or incorporeality of his nature been given to any one; but all intellectual natures are corporeal, all are corruptible, all are mutable, so that he alone should not be subject to corruption and change, who alone possesses immortality.[16]

Given the views expressed in the *Homily on the Mystical Supper*, Theophilus certainly would have wished to maintain the distinction between incorporeal divine nature and corporeal human nature. Yet Gennadius also has him teaching that incorruptibility and immortality belong to God alone, not having been given to any creature. Such a view is at odds with Theophilus' stated position, unless it be understood that no creature possesses these attributes in its own nature, but only insofar as it participates in the divine nature. Of course, it must be remembered that Gennadius is presenting a Latin summary of a Greek text; it is possible that his summary is not entirely accurate. Furthermore, Gennadius portrays Theophilus not only as anti-anthropomorphite, but also as anti-Origenist, and apparently *he* did not see any evidence to the contrary in the festal letter.

It is entirely plausible, based on this evidence, that Theophilus harbored sympathies for this or that aspect of Origen's writings. It is even plausible that he was an admirer of Origen, but not of Evagrius. However, the evidence hardly indicates that Theophilus denied the reality of the Incarnation or of the *imago Dei* – particularly in light of the fact that he contends so passionately and thoughtfully for these doctrines in a number of his own writings.

3. Theological Middle Ground

In a letter dated to 403,[17] Theophilus claims to have been both anti-Origenist and anti-anthropomorphite all along:

We not only anathematized Origen's heresies, but ... since certain of the more rustic and ignorant monks kept insisting that it is necessary to conceive of God in human form, we

[16] Gennadius, *De viris inlustribus* 34: "*Anthropomorphitas haereticos, qui dicunt Deum humana figura et membris constare, disputatione longissima confutans et Divinarum Scripturarum testimoniis arguens et convincens ostendit Deum et incorporeum iuxta Patrum fidem credendum neque ullis omnino membrorum lineamentis conpositum, et ob id nihil ei in creaturis simile per substantiam, nec cuiquam incorruptibilitatem uel inmutabililitatem aut incorporalitatem suae dedisse naturae; sed esse omnes intellectuales naturas corporeas, omnes corruptibiles, omnes mutabiles, ut ille solus corruptibilitati et mutabilitati non subiaceat qui solus habet inmortalitatem*." Ed. Richardson, 74.

[17] For the date of the letter cf. Richard, "Nouveaux Fragments," 58.

did not remain silent but also refuted this heresy, Christ having granted us vigilance, with written proofs in ecclesiastical letters.[18]

One might be inclined to doubt Theophilus' sincerity on this point; after all, he did enter into an alliance with the anthropomorphites, even if (as this letter shows) it was temporary. Nevertheless, his claim is important in that it implies the existence, at least, of some sort of middle ground between Origenism and anthropomorphism. According to the traditional account of the controversy, there was no middle ground: all anti-Origenists (including so prominent a figure as Epiphanius) qualified as 'anthropomorphites.' There was likewise no middle ground according to the twentieth-century reconstruction of the controversy: 'anthropomorphite' was understood as an Origenist codeword for anyone who insisted upon the reality of the Incarnation and the *imago Dei*, while anyone who opposed these doctrines was classified as an 'Origenist.' Of course, on either of these accounts, Theophilus' readers would have *known* that there was no middle ground; therefore his claim would have come across not only as disingenuous, but also as nonsensical.

I am arguing, of course, that the anthropomorphites were not merely contending for the reality of the Incarnation and the *imago Dei*, but for the visibility and corporeality of the Son from all eternity. In this view, it is entirely plausible that Theophilus occupied a theological middle ground between anthropomorphism and Origenism. He could defend (with the anthropomorphites and against the Origenists) the doctrines of the *imago Dei* and the Incarnation while rejecting (with the Origenists and against the anthropomorphites) divine corporeality and the identification of the *imago Dei* with the human body.

Russell notes that Theophilus' "theological sympathies lay more with the literalists [anthropomorphites] than the allegorizers [Origenists]."[19] I am inclined to agree; however, my examination of Theophilus' thought reveals that, while he was no Origenist, he was not quite an anthropomorphite. On my reading, the anthropomorphites were raising two questions with regard to the *imago Dei* and answering both of them in the affirmative: (1) whether humans bear the image of God, even after the Fall; and (2) whether the image of God is to be located in the body. Theophilus likewise would have answered both questions in the affirmative but

[18] Theophilus, *Fragment* 7: "Οὐ μόνας τὰς Ὠριγενοῦς αἱρέσεις ἀνεθεματίσαμεν, ἀλλὰ ... ἐπείπερ ἀγροικότεροί τινες καὶ ἰδιῶται ἀνθρωπόμορφον τὸν θεὸν φρονεῖν ἐθρυλοῦντο ἀναγκαῖον, οὐκ ἀπεσιωπήσαμεν, ἀλλὰ καὶ ταύτην τὴν αἵρεσιν, Χριστοῦ δεδωκότος νῆψιν, γραφικαῖς ἀποδείξεσιν ἐν ἐκκλησιαστικαῖς ἐπιστολαῖς ἀνετρέψαμεν" (Richard, "Nouveaux Fragments," 63). The latter would no doubt include the festal letter of 399.

[19] Russell, "Bishops and Charismatics,"106.

with some important qualifications. First, the image of God – defined as immortality and incorruptibility – was lost through the Fall but is now (potentially) restored through the Incarnation. Second, although the image is not to be identified with the body, the body (along with the soul) does share in immortality as it participates in Christ (i.e., although the body is not to be confused *with* the image, it does bear the marks *of* the image).

This assessment of Theophilus' theology makes sense of two features of the controversy. First, it explains Theophilus' reply to the angry monks recorded by Socrates ("In seeing you I behold the face of God"). While not endorsing anthropomorphism (certainly not its Christological point of view), Theophilus could legitimately assure them that he did not deny the *imago Dei*. In the process, he was able to secure them as allies in his anti-Origenist campaign.[20] Second, it explains a curious fact about the debate – both sides attempted to appropriate Theophilus for themselves. Socrates could portray him as a 'crypto-Origenist' insofar as he did maintain divine incorporeality and resisted identifying the *imago Dei* with the human body. The author of *The Life of Aphou* could claim him as an anthropomorphite 'convert' insofar as he maintained that humans do possess the divine image and even connected it (albeit indirectly) to the body. In short, the construction of anthropomorphite belief put forward in this study is consistent not only with Theophilus' own writings, but also with the manner in which his enemies portrayed him.

C. Jerome

Theophilus was no Origenist, yet he opposed anthropomorphism; this fact challenges the notion that the term 'anthropomorphite' was merely a codeword invented and employed by Origenists to describe mainstream, anti-Origenist monks. It may have functioned as such a codeword, but the anthropomorphites clearly held to doctrines that were offensive to Origenist and non-Origenist alike. Like Theophilus, Jerome also opposed both Origenism and anthropomorphism.

Jerome began his career as an admirer of Origen; in his biographical work *Lives of Famous Men*, dated to 392 or early 393, he praises the Alex-

[20] Cf. Russell, "Bishops and Charismatics," 105. While focusing on theological issues, Russell by no means wishes to dismiss the obvious political maneuvering that was taking place throughout the affair. He writes, "Theophilus could not tolerate so close to Alexandria a circle of ascetics [the Origenists] who seemed to hold the faith of the ordinary Christians in contempt, especially when the local bishop [Dioscorus, one of the Tall Brothers] through whom he would normally have communicated with them was one of their number." ("Bishops and Charismatics," 107).

andrian exegete for his "immortal genius (*immortali ingenio*)."[21] Shortly thereafter, however, Jerome's attitude toward Origen took a sudden about-face. Early in 393, Epiphanius (the elderly bishop of Salamis, revered by many for his holiness) sent a delegation of monks to Jerome's monastery in Bethlehem (as well as to Rufinus' on the Mount of Olives) seeking a condemnation of Origen. J. N. D. Kelly remarks that "Jerome complied without hesitation," puzzling historians with the apparent ease of his conversion – often attributed to his eagerness to avoid suspicion of unorthodoxy or his desire to remain on Epiphanius' good side.[22] He points out, however, that Jerome probably "felt he could disavow the 'dogmas of Origen' with a clean conscience since his veneration for him had been largely based on his marvelous exegesis, not on his dogmatic writings, which up to the present he does not seem to have studied closely."[23] Indeed, Jerome's praise of Origen in *Lives of Famous Men* has to do almost entirely with Origen's mastery of Scripture.

In his anti-Origenist treatise *Against John of Jerusalem*,[24] Jerome recounts an event that occurred later in 393. During a visit to Jerusalem,[25] Epiphanius preached a sermon ostensibly against Origenism, but whose real target was John. John responded first by sending one of his archdeacons to silence Epiphanius and later by preaching a sermon of his own "against the anthropomorphites, who, with rustic simplicity, believe God actually has the members by which he is depicted in Scripture."[26] John made clear that he had Epiphanius in view and "wished him to be sus-

[21] Jerome, *De viris inlustribus* 54, ed. E. C. Richardson (Leipzig, J. C. Hinrichs: 1896), 33. Kelly, *Jerome: His Life, Writings, and Controversies* (New York: Harper and Row, 1975), 174, provides the date for the text, noting that Jerome twice places it in the fourteenth year of the reign of Theodosius (who was proclaimed Augustus in January 379).

[22] Kelly, *Jerome*, 198. Cf. Thomas P. Halton: "It is not quite certain that the position of Jerome toward Origenism changed substantially because of the polarization over the Origenist quarrel. He valued and translated Origen's works both before it and after. The fact that in the controversy he took the side of Epiphanius could be imputed in the beginning to purely personal motives." Introduction to *St. Jerome: On Illustrious Men* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1999), xxviii.

[23] Kelly, *Jerome*, 198.

[24] *Contra Johannem*, CCSL 79A. Kelly, *Jerome*, 207 dates the text to early 397. Cf. Pierre Nautin, "Etudes de chronologie hiéronymienne (393–397)," *Revue des études augustiniennes* 18 (1972): 210–215.

[25] Kelly, *Jerome*, 199, dates the visit to mid-September 393, during the Dedication festival, when clergy from miles around would have gathered in Jerusalem. Cf. Pierre Nautin, "Etudes de chronologie hiéronymienne (393–397) (suite)," *Revue des études augustiniennes* 19 (1973): 69–73.

[26] Jerome, *Contra Johannem* 11: "*contra anthropomorphites, qui simplicitate rustica deum habere membra, quae in diuinis libris scripta sunt, arbitrantur*." CCSL 79A:20.

pected of that most foolish heresy."[27] Epiphanius responded cleverly by endorsing John's sermon: "All that has been spoken by my brother in the episcopate – but my son in years – against the heresy of the anthropomorphites has been well and faithfully spoken. That heresy is condemned by my voice, too."[28] From this it is clear that Jerome wished to place Epiphanius (and himself) in the 'orthodox' middle ground between Origenism and anthropomorphism.

Jerome opposed anthropomorphism in at least two other contexts. Commenting (in a homily) on Psalm 93(94):8–9,[29] he states: "This passage speaks especially against the anthropomorphites, who say God has body parts just as we do."[30] After citing Genesis 3:8 ("They heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden"), he adds: "The anthropomorphites hear these words simplistically and refer human weaknesses to the magnificence of God."[31] In his commentary on Amos, he describes:

> heretics who think God sits, in the manner of human likeness, on a throne high and exalted, and places his feet upon the earth ... has a nose with which he smells fragrances, eyes with which he sees, hands with which he works, feet with which he walks, ears with which he hears, a mouth with which he speaks, and teeth with which he chews food.[32]

This comment is particularly interesting in light of the fact that the divine throne-room is precisely the context of many of the anthropomorphic visions Golitzin identifies in rabbinic, apocalyptic, and monastic literature (see Chapter 1, pp. 21–23). It therefore seems plausible that Jerome actu-

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[27] Jerome, *Contra Johannem* 11: "*uolens illum suspectum facere stultissimae haereseos*." CCSL 79A:20.

[28] Jerome, *Contra Johannem* 11: "*Cuncta ... quae locutus est collegio frater, aetate filius meus, contra anthropomorphitarum haeresim, bene et fideliter est locutus. Quae mea quoque damnatur uoce*." CCSL 79A:20.

[29] The text reads: "Understand, O dullest of the people; fools, when will you be wise? He who planted the ear, does he not hear? He who formed the eye, does he not see?"

[30] Jerome, *Tractatus in Psalmos* 93: "*Iste locus aduersus eos maxime facit, qui Anthropomorphitae sunt, qui dicunt deum habere membra quae etiam nos habemus* (literally, "who say God has members, which we also have")." CCSL 78:144–145. The homily can be dated no earlier than the completion of his monastery (where it would have been preached) in 389, and no later than 413, when Augustine cites it in his *Ep*. 148.

[31] Jerome, *Tractatus in Psalmos* 93: "*Haec simpliciter audiunt, et humanas inbecillitates ad Dei magnificentiam referunt*." CCSL 78:145.

[32] Jerome, *In Amos* I.ii.1/3: "*haeretici, qui uolunt in modum humanae similitudinis sedere Deum in solio excelso et eleuato, et pedes ponere super terram, ne scilicet pendeant ... habere nasum, quo odoretur odorem bonae fragrantiae, oculos, quibus uideat, manus, per quas operetur, pedes, per quos ambulet, aures quibus audiat, os, quo loquantur, dentes, quibus cibos conterat*." CCSL 76:230. According to Kelly, *Jerome*, 290–291, Jerome completed the commentary in 406 but had been working on it (along with commentaries on Zechariah, Malachi, Hosea, and Joel) for some years.

ally knew something about the anthropomorphites – and knew as well that anthropomorphism was no mere figment of the Origenist imagination.

D. John Cassian

Cassian's anti-anthropomorphite comments in *Conference* 10 are likewise most easily explained by the thesis put forward in this study – that the anthropomorphites were seeking the vision of the divine body of the eternal Word. Previous studies of Cassian's *Conferences* 9 and 10 have yielded three important observations: (1) Cassian was deeply indebted to Evagrius – particularly to the Evagrian doctrine of 'pure' prayer; (2) he regarded anthropomorphism not merely as a heretical way of praying, but as a heretical way of praying *to Christ*; and (3) he regarded Genesis 1:26–27 as a key text in the debate, accusing the anthropomorphites of an ascending, backward reading of the text, which ascribed to God a human form. In this section I intend to correct three misconceptions that often accompany these observations. First, 'pure' prayer is no escape into blankness or nothingness – not for Cassian, and not for Evagrius, either. To be sure, such prayer is *image*less, but it is not *vision*less; that is to say, what one seeks in prayer is the vision of the glorified Christ, which is the vision of God. Second, Cassian would not have opposed the anthropomorphites merely for seeking mental images of the incarnate Christ, for he regarded such images as appropriate in the early stages of contemplation. Rather, he opposed them because they rejected the possibility of going *beyond* somatic images of Christ – which, for Cassian, meant rejecting the possibility of the true vision of God. Third, his critique of the anthropomorphite reading of Genesis 1:26–27 was not a 'cover' for his own rejection of the image of God in humans, for he affirmed the *imago Dei*. Rather, he could accuse the anthropomorphites of believing that God had a body because the vision they sought was of the Son in his unique divinity.

1. Cassian and Evagrius

Evagrius (c. 345–399) was, in Clark's words, "the prime theoretician of late fourth-century Origenism."[33] As a young man, Evagrius was mentored by Basil of Caesarea and Gregory Nazianzen; it is likely that he first encountered the writings of Origen through them.[34] In 379 he accompanied

[33] Clark, *Origenist Controversy*, 22.

[34] Although, as Columba Stewart, "Imageless Prayer and the Theological Vision of Evagrius Ponticus," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 9:2 (2001): 174, points out, Evagrius' theology evidences much more than Basil's or Gregory's the influence of Origen –

Gregory to Constantinople, but a love affair with a married woman forced him to flee to Palestine (probably in 382). He stayed for a while at the monastery of Melania the Elder and Rufinus of Aqulileia on the Mount of Olives where he was converted to the ascetic life by Melania. He eventually made his way to Egypt (probably in 383) to live out his days among the monks of Nitria and Kellia (The Cells).[35]

Cassian never once in his entire corpus mentions Evagrius by name.[36] By the time of his writing (mid–420s), he must have regarded any overt association with such a prominent Origenist as a liability. Stewart writes, "Even after twenty-five years, with the fiercest of the anti-Origenists dead and doctrinal controversy now focused on other issues, Cassian felt constrained to downplay his links with the Evagrian Origenism of Nitria and Kellia."[37] Steven Driver notes that Origen's entire corpus had been condemned by Anastasius I (Bishop of Rome) in 400, and Jerome's writings (decidedly anti-Origenist) enjoyed wide circulation in Gaul. Thus Cassian's audience would have been hostile to anything 'Origenist.'[38] However, Driver writes:

> It was not an aversion to conflict that led to Cassian's relative silence about his monastic and theological forebears, for he participated in other theological controversies of his day. Instead, Cassian's caution was dictated by the intended audience of his monastic writings. If his potential readers were to abandon reading his corpus at the first sign of Origenist heresy, then Cassian would not have been able to convey the wealth of his monastic experience and thought.[39]

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an influence likely encouraged by his friendship with Melania the Elder and Rufinus of Aquileia.

[35] For these dates cf. Robert E. Sinkewicz, Introduction to *Evagrius of Pontus: The Greek Ascetic Corpus* (Oxford: University Press, 2003), xvii–xviii. The details of Evagrius' life are recorded by Palladius, *Historia Lausiaca* 38, ed. Cuthbert Butler, *The Lausiac History of Palladius*, 2 vols. (Cambridge University Press, 1898 and 1904), 2:119–120. For the Armenian version of Palladius' *vita* (with ET), cf. Monica J. Blanchard, Carl Griffin, Cornelia B. Horn, and Janet A. Timbie, trans., "The Armenian Version of the 'Life of Evagrius of Pontus,'" *St. Nersess Theological Review* 5–6 (2000–2001): 25–37.

[36] He does, however, tell the story of a "brother from Pontus" in *De institutis coenobiorum et de octo principalium vitiorum remedies* 5.32, ed. Michael Petschenig, CSEL 17 (1888), 105, possibly a veiled reference to Evagrius.

[37] Stewart, *Cassian the Monk*, 11–12. Stewart also points out the possibility that Abba Isaac, the mouthpiece of *Conferences* 9 and 10, is actually Isaac the Presbyter of Kellia known from the *Apophthegmata Patrum*. If this is the case, then by moving Abba Isaac to Scetis, Cassian is further obscuring his own links with Kellia and the Evagrianism taught there (136–137).

[38] Steven Driver, *John Cassian and the Reading of Egyptian Monastic Culture* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 5.

[39] Driver, *John Cassian and the Reading of Egyptian Monastic Culture*, 12.

Nevertheless, Cassian must certainly have known Evagrius. They had a mutual friend in Palladius,[40] and Cassian reports that he and Germanus, during their fifteen-year sojourn in Egypt (mid–380s to around 400), spent some time at Kellia.[41] The question of personal acquaintance aside, Evagrius' influence on Cassian's writings is indisputable. Owen Chadwick sums up the scholarly consensus on this point: "Evagrius was Cassian's master. The general ideas which Cassian propagated to the Latin church were the general ideas found in Evagrius. In the *Institutes* or *Conferences* there are few leading ideas which cannot find parallels in Evagrius."[42]

2. 'Pure' Prayer

This dependence is nowhere more evident than in the doctrine of 'pure' prayer. Evagrius divides the monastic life into two modes or stages: the active life, marked by the practice of virtue, and the contemplative life, marked by knowledge of God (although it is important to note that, while a monk in the active stage is not yet ready for contemplation,[43] the monk who has achieved *gnosis* must still engage in *praktikos*[44]). He further divides the contemplative life into two stages. The ascetic is first granted contemplation of created natures, involving both "secondary natural contemplation" (perception of visible natures in their ultimate principles) and "primary natural contemplation" (perception of invisible and intelligible natures). Only then does he or she move beyond created realities to "theology" – the direct knowledge of God, granted during moments of 'pure' prayer.[45] In his treatise *Chapters On Prayer*,[46] Evagrius[47] defines and de-

[40] Palladius reveals his personal acquaintance with Evagrius in *Historia Lausiaca* 38 (*The Lausiac History of Palladius* 2:119–120) and with Cassian in *Dialogus de vita S. Joannis Chrysostomi* 6 (SC 341:131–132).

[41] Cassian, *Conlatio* 6.1, CSEL 13:154.

[42] Owen Chadwick, *John Cassian*, second ed. (Cambridge: University Press, 1968), 92.

[43] Evagrius, *Gnostikos* 25, gives the following advice: "to the young, one must say nothing about things that pertain to knowledge nor allow them to handle books of that kind, for they cannot resist the perils that such contemplation entails." Syriac version, ed. Wilhelm Frankenberg, *Euagrius Ponticus* (Berlin: Weidmann, 1912), 548; ET: Stewart, "Imageless Prayer," 178.

[44] Cf. Sinkewicz: "The monk who has entered upon the gnostic life does not leave the practical life behind. Far from it, he must labour all the more vigorously to overcome the passions of the soul, especially those of anger, vainglory and pride, and he is by no means exempt from the passions of the body, for such a fall is always a possibility." Introduction to *Evagrius of Pontus*, xxxvi.

[45] Evagrius outlines these stages often, but perhaps most succinctly in *Kephalaia Gnostika* 6.49: "*Egypt* signifies evil; the *desert* the practical life; the land of *Judah* the contemplation of the bodies; *Jerusalem* that of the incorporeals; and *Zion* is the symbol of the Trinity." Syriac version, ed. Antoine Guillaumont, *Les Six Centuries des "Kepha-*

scribes such prayer. It is "the ascent of a mind toward God,"[48] "the most excellent and pure activity and use of the mind."[49] It occurs only when the mind is purged of all images – not only images of created objects, both visible and invisible, but also images of God.[50] Significantly, Evagrius warns against desiring to see even Christ "with the senses (αἰσθητῶς)."[51]

Cassian follows Evagrius closely. If Serapion is his representative of erroneous, anthropomorphic prayer, then his representative of 'pure' prayer is Antony the Great. In a saying Cassian attributes to Antony, the saint declares, "It is not perfect prayer in which a monk understands himself or the

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laia Gnostica" d'Evagre le Pontique, PO 28:236–237; ET: Sinkewicz, *Evagrius of Pontus*, xxxiv, n. 99. Cf. *Kephalaia Gnostika* 2.4, PO 28:60–63; *Praktikos* 1–3, ed. Antoine and Claire Guillaumont, *Evagre le Pontique: Traité pratique ou la moine*, SC 171:482–486; ET: *The Monk: A Treatise on the Practical Life* in Sinkewicz, *Evagrius of Pontus*, 97. For further discussion, cf. Chadwick, *John Cassian*, 88–90; Antoine Guillaumont, "La vie gnostique selon Evagre le Pontique," *Annuaire du college de France* 80 (1979–1980): 467–470; Gabriel Bunge, "Aktive und kontemplative Weise des Betens im Traktat *De oratione* des Evagrios Pontikos," *Studia Monastica* 41 (1999): 211–227; Stewart, "Imageless Prayer," 178; Sinkewicz, *Evagrius of Pontus*, xxxiv–xxvii.

[46] There is no critical edition of *De oratione*. The Greek text appears in PG 79:1165–1200 and *Philokalia* I (Athens, 1957), 176–189 with numerous differences. For instance, PG lacks *Philokalia* chapter 35, while *Philokalia* combines PG chapters 76–77, with the result that the PG numbering is one less than *Philokalia* from chapters 35–77. The best ET is considered to be *Chapters on Prayer* in Sinkewicz, *Evagrius of Pontus*, 183–209, who makes use of *Philokalia* and PG, and suggests numerous textual emendations (pp. 301–303). I will use the text (and numbering) of PG, taking into account the *Philokalia* and Sinkewicz's emendations.

[47] Arguments for Evagrian authorship were first put forward by Irénée Hausherr in three articles: "Le *De oratione* de Nil et Evagre," *Revue d' Ascétique et de Mystique* 14 (1933): 196–198; "Le *Traité de l'Oraison* d'Evagre le Pontique (pseudo-Nil)," *Revue d' Ascétique et de Mystique* 15 (1934): 34–39; "Le 'De oratione' d'Evagre le Pontique en syriaque et en arabe," *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 5 (1939): 7–71. Hausherr showed that, although the text was transmitted in Greek under the name of Nilus of Ancyra, the Syriac and Arabic traditions recognized Evagrius as its author. Furthermore, Evagrius makes clear reference to it in *De malignis cogitationibus* (*On the Thoughts*) 22: "The reason why the persistence of mental representations of sensible objects destroys knowledge will be discussed in the *Chapters on Prayer*." *Evagre le Pontique: Sur les pensées*, Paul Géhin, Claire Guillaumont, and Antoine Guillaumont, eds., SC 438 (Paris: Cerf, 1998), 232; ET: Sinkewicz, *Evagrius of Pontus*, 183, n. 3. To my knowledge, Evagrian authorship is universally accepted today.

[48] Evagrius, *De oratione* 35: "ἀνάβασις νοῦ πρὸς θεόν." PG 79:1173.

[49] Evagrius, *De oratione* 84: "ἡ κρείττων καὶ εἰλικρινὴς ἐνέργεια αὐτου καὶ χρῆσις (as opposed to the terse and enigmatic PG 79:1185: κρείττων, καὶ εἰλικρινὴς κρίσις αὐτου). Sinkewicz, *Evagrius of Pontus*, 303.

[50] For the purging of mental representations of created objects, cf. *De oratione* 4, 10, 44–46, 53–57, 61, 70–72, 114, 117, 142; for the purging of images of God, cf. *De oratione* 66–73, 115–116.

[51] Evagrius, *De oratione* 115, PG 79:1192.

very thing that he is praying."[52] This statement is not known from any other source but is conceptually similar to a saying of Evagrius: "Just as when we are sleeping we do not know that we are asleep, so also when we are contemplating we do not know that we have entered into contemplation."[53] As in Evagrius, such prayer obviously rules out images of created objects. Cassian writes: "First, anxiety about fleshly matters in general should be banished; then, not only the concern for but even the memory of business affairs should be offered no entry."[54] However (again, as in Evagrius), it also rules out images of God. Cassian insists:

> One firmly planted in Catholic teaching ... will arrive at that purest form of prayer which not only will mix no likeness of divinity or bodily feature into its supplication, which is sinful even to mention, but indeed will admit to itself neither the memory of any word nor the appearance of any deed nor the shape of any character.[55]

Evagrius can, at times, give the impression that during such prayer the mind is blank. He writes, "Strive to have your mind stand deaf and dumb at the time of prayer, and you will be able to pray;"[56] and "Blessed is the mind that, at the time of prayer, acquires perfect anesthesia."[57] Cassian follows suit, describing the mind that is advanced in purity:

> It pours out to God inexpressible prayers of the purest vigor, which the Spirit itself makes to God, intervening with indescribable groans unbeknownst to us and expressing in that moment such great things ... that they not only cannot pass through the mouth, but cannot even be remembered by the mind at a later time.[58]

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[52] Cassian, *Conlatio* 9.31: "*non est, inquit, perfecta oratio, in qua se monachus uel hoc ipsum quod orat intellegit*." CSEL 13:277.

[53] Evagrius, *Scholia on Psalms* 126:2: "ὥσπερ ὑπνοῦντες οὐδ αὐτὸ τοῦτο γινώσκομεν, ὅτι ὑπνοῦμεν, οὕτω καὶ θεωροῦντες μηδ᾽αὐτὸ τοῦτο γινώσκομεν, ὅτι ἐν θεωρίᾳ γεγόναμεν." PG 12:1644A.

[54] Cassian, *Conlatio* 9.3: "*prium sollicitudo rerum carnalium generaliter abscidenda est, deinde nullius negotii causaue non solum cura, sed ne memoria quidem penitus admittenda*." CSEL 13:252.

[55] Cassian, *Conlatio* 10.5: "*catholicis dogmatibus institutus ... ab illam orationis purissimam perueniet qualitatem, quae non solum nullam diuinitatis effigiem nec liniamenta corporea, quod dictu quoque nefas est, in sua supplicatione miscebit, sed ne ullam quidem in se memoriam dicti cuiusquam uel facti speciem seu formam cuiuslibet characteris admittet*." CSEL 13:292.

[56] Evagrius, *De oratione* 11: "᾽Αγωνίζου στῆσαι τὸν νοῦν σου, κατὰ τὸν καιρὸν τῆς προσευχῆς κωφὸν, καὶ ἄλαλον, καὶ δυνήσῃ προσεύξασθαι." PG 79:1169. ET Sinkewicz, *Evagrius of Pontus*, 194.

[57] Evagrius, *De oratione* 120: "Μακάριός ἐστιν ὁ νοῦς, ὁ κατὰ τὸν καιρὸν τῆς προσευχῆς τελείαν ἀναισθησίαν κτησάμενος." PG 79:1193.

[58] Cassian, *Conlatio* 9.15: "*ineffabiles ad deum preces purissimi uigoris effundere, quas ipse spiritus interpellans gemitibus inenarrabilibus ignorantibus nobis emittit ad deum, tanta scilicet in illius horae momento concipiens ... quanta non dicam ore percurrere, sed ne ipsa quidem mente ualeat alio tempore recordari*." CSEL 13:263.

However, neither Evagrius nor Cassian intend to convey that the mind engaged in 'pure' prayer escapes into blankness or nothingness, for both authors make perfectly clear that in such prayer there is an experiential encounter with God. Writing about Evagrius, Stewart makes an important distinction (that applies equally to Cassian):

> Although the mind is blessed when it has perfect *anaisthesia* at the time of prayer, Evagrius writes about spiritual "sensation" in prayer. What Evagrius means is the trading of one kind of sensation or experience for another, the sensory for the intellectual. Adopting *anaisthesia* toward sensory things allows for the *sunaisthesis* of "spiritual prayer."[59]

This observation is confirmed by the *Chapters on Prayer*, in which Evagrius repeatedly "resorts to the language of sensation even as he insists most fiercely that true prayer lies beyond all depiction, shape, form, and image."[60] For instance, Evagrius writes, "When praying, guard your memory with all your might, so that ... it may move you toward the knowledge of the manifestation (of God)."[61] He also asserts that the Word "is in the habit of appearing during the state of prayer"[62] and that "through true prayer a monk becomes equal to the angels, longing to see the face of the Father who is in heaven."[63] Furthermore, he warns:

> When the mind is praying purely, steadily and truly, then the demons attack no longer from the left, but from the right. For they suggest to it the glory of God, along with some form pleasing to the senses, so that it thinks it has perfectly attained the goal of prayer.[64]

This is a significant passage, for Evagrius here affirms the (intellectual, not sensory!) vision of God's glory as the goal of prayer.[65] Hence the grav-

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[59] Stewart, "Imageless Prayer," 192.

[60] Stewart, "Imageless Prayer," 193.

[61] Evagrius, *De oratione* 44: "Προσευχόμενος, τὴν μνήμην σου δυνάμει φύλαττε, ἵνα ... πρὸς τὴν γνῶσιν τῆς παραστάσεώς σε κινῇ (replacing PG's παρατάσεώς with *Philokalia*'s παραστάσεώς; the reading makes more sense, and Evagrius had just used παραστάσει in chapter 40)." PG 79:1176.

[62] Evagrius, *De oratione* 51: "οὗτος δὲ ἐν τῇ καταστάσει τῆς προσευχῆς ἀναφαίνεσθαι εἴωθε." PG 79:1177.

[63] Evagrius, *De oratione* 113–114: "Ἰσάγγελος γίνεται μοναχὸς διὰ τῆς ἀληθοῦς προσευχῆς ... ἐπιποθῶν ἰδεῖν τὸ πρόσωπον τοῦ Πατρὸς τοῦ ἐν οὐρανοῖς." PG 79:1192.

[64] Evagrius, *De oratione* 72: "Ἐπὰν καθαρῶς λοιπὸν, ἁπλανῶς καὶ ἀληθῶς προσεύχηται ὁ νοῦς τὸ τηνικαῦτα, οὐκ ἔτι ἐκ τῶν ἀριστερῶν ὑπέρχονται οἱ δαίμονες, ἀλλ' ἐκ τῶν δεξιῶν· ὑποτίθενται γὰρ αὐτῷ δόξαν θεοῦ, καὶ σχηματισμόν τινα τῶν τῇ αἰσθήσει φίλων, ὡς δοκεῖν τελείως τετεύχθαι αὐτὸν τοῦ περὶ προσευχῆς σκοποῦ." PG 79:1181.

[65] Cf. Golitzin, who suggests that Evagrius is here "at one with the traditions represented both by the *merkavah* texts of the Rabbis and by Pachomius and Apa Aphou," while simultaneously negating "that vision as in any way of a human form." "The Demons Suggest an Illusion," 32–33.

ity of the error of those (anthropomorphite) monks who insist on seeing God in a "form pleasing to the senses," for they are exchanging the true *visio Dei* – and the whole point of the monastic life – for a lie.

The vision of God is formless and imageless; nevertheless, Evagrius routinely uses two metaphors to describe it: light, and the 'place of God.' He describes in numerous texts the light that appears to the mind during 'pure' prayer. In some of these texts the mind sees its own light,[66] but in others, Evagrius emphasizes the light's divine origin[67] as coming from "the face of God,"[68] the Trinity,[69] or Christ.[70] Evagrius uses the metaphor 'place of God' to describe the mind engaged in 'pure' prayer:

> If then, by the grace of God, the intellect both turns away from these [i.e., the passions] and puts off the old man, then it will see its own constitution at the time of prayer like a sapphire or the color of heaven,[71] which recalls as well what the Scripture names "the place of God" seen by the elders on Mt. Sinai [Ex. 24:10].[72] It calls this place and the vision the peace [cf. Ps. 75:3][73] by which one sees in oneself that peace which surpasses

[66] Cf. Evagrius, *Praktikos* 64, SC 171:648; *Gnostikos* 45, SC 356:178; *Eulogios* 30, PG 79:1133A–B.

[67] Clark, *The Origenist Controversy*, 70–71, sees in this an ambiguity exemplified by Evagrius' account of himself and Ammonius (one of the Tall Brothers) journeying to ask John of Lycopolis (a monk renowned for his wisdom) whether the light is from our own minds or from God. John replies that no human knows the answer but that no mind is illuminated at the time of prayer without God's grace. Cf. *Antirrhetikos* 6.16, Syriac version, in Frankenberg, *Euagrius Ponticus*, 524–525. Stewart seeks (at least partially) to resolve the ambiguity: "Evagrius writes both about the mind in its original created nature, in which it is filled with the light of the knowledge of God, and in its present state for which radiance is no longer natural because that original access to knowledge has been lost." "Imageless Prayer," 193, n. 96.

[68] Cf. Evagrius, *Scholia on Psalms* 4:7, PG 12:1164A–1165C.

[69] Cf. Evagrius, *De malignis cogitationibus* 42, SC 438:296; *Capita cognoscitiva* (*Reflections*) 4; 27, ed. J. Muyldermans, "Evagriana," *Le Museon* 44 (1931); *Kephalaia Gnostika* 5.3, PO 28:176–177; "Supplementary Chapter" to *Kephalaia Gnostika* 4, ed. Frankenberg, *Euagrius Ponticus*, 427.

[70] Cf. Evagrius, *De malignis cogitationibus* 15, SC 438:204. Of course, Evagrius' Nicene theology requires that the light of Christ be identical to the light of the Trinity. Cassian further develops this theme of the light emanating from Christ.

[71] The reference is to Exodus 24:10: "under [God's] feet was something like a pavement of sapphire stone," an image that reappears in Ezekiel's throne-room visions in Ezekiel 1:26 and 10:1 – texts identified by Golitzin as being important to the anthropomorphites (see Chapter 1, p. 21) but clearly important to Evagrius as well.

[72] While the Hebrew reads simply, "they saw the God of Israel," Evagrius references the Septuagint text, in which Moses and the elders "saw the place where there stood the God of Israel (καὶ εἶδον τὸν τόπον, οὗ εἱστήκει ἐκεῖ ὁ θεὸς τοῦ Ισραηλ)." Alfred Rahlfs, ed., *Septuaginta*, 2 vols., 8th ed., (Stuttgart: Württembergische Bibelanstalt, 1965); here, LXX 1:127.

[73] The Septuagint reads, "His place is in peace, and his dwelling place is in Zion (καὶ ἐγενήθη ἐν εἰρήνῃ ὁ τόπος αὐτοῦ καὶ τὸ κατοικητήριον αὐτοῦ ἐν Σιων)" (LXX

every intellect and which guards our heart. For another heaven is imprinted on a pure heart, the vision of which is both light and spiritual "place" .... [74]

Evagrius thus internalizes and universalizes the 'place of God,' moving it from Mt. Sinai to the human mind. Most importantly, he is not claiming that the mind *sees* the 'place of God' (in pictorial images, as the anthropomorphites would have it); rather, the mind *becomes* the 'place of God,' flooded with the light of the Trinity.[75]

Like Evagrius, Cassian explicitly describes 'pure' prayer as an experiential vision of God. Although he does not employ the 'place of God' metaphor, light imagery permeates *Conferences* 9 and 10. He writes, "the soul must be held back from all precarious running about and straying, so that in this way it might gradually begin to be elevated to the contemplation of God and to spiritual vision."[76] Such vision is attained in

that fiery and, indeed, more properly speaking, inexpressible prayer which is known and experienced by very few. Transcending all human perception, it is not distinguished by a sound of the voice, a movement of the tongue or a pronunciation of words. The mind delineates it not with narrow human expressions, but only when illuminated by an infusion of heavenly light from it. But when the senses have been rounded up, the mind pours forth as from a most abundant fountain and speaks ineffably to God, producing in that briefest moment things far greater than the self-conscious mind would be able to easily communicate or penetrate.[77]

Like Evagrius, Cassian thus creates tension between anesthesia-language and sensation-language: the senses have been "rounded up" (*conglobatis*) and the mind has lost self-consciousness; yet it is the mind

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2:80). Cf. Evagrius, *Capita cognoscitiva* 25 in Muyldermans, "Evagriana"; *Scholia on Psalms* 75:2, PG 12:1536C for other references to this text.

[74] Evagrius, *Ep.* 39, Syriac version, in Frankenberg, *Euagrius Ponticus*, 593; ET: Golitzin, "The Demons Suggest an Illusion," 30. For other references to the 'place of God' or to 'sapphire-blue light,' cf. *De malignis cogitationibus* 39–40; *De oratione* 58 ("place of prayer": 57, 72, 102, 152); *Capita cognoscitiva* 2, 4, 20, 23, 25.

[75] Cf. Stewart, "Imageless Prayer," 197: "The place of God is to be found within the human person, more specifically within the human mind, but 'seeing' it requires that one transcends all ordinary mental operation."

[76] Cassian, *Conlatio* 9.3: "*ab omni discursu atque euagatione lubrica animus inhibendus, ut ita paulatim ad comtemplationem di ac spiritales intuitus incipiat sublimari*." CSEL 13:252.

[77] Cassian, *Conlatio* 9.25: "*illam igneam ac perpaucis cognitam uel expertam, immo ut proprius dixerim ineffabilem orationem ... quae omnem transcendens humanum sensum nullo non dicam sono uocis nec linguae motu nec ulla uerborum pronuntiatione distinguitur, sed quam mens infusione caelestis illius luminis inlustrata non humanis atque angustis designat eloquiis, sed conglobatis sensibus uelut de fonte quodam copiosissimo effundit ubertim atque ineffabiliter eructat ad deum, tanta promens in illo breuissimo temporis puncto, quanta nec eloqui facile nec percurrere mens in semet ipsam reuersa praeualeat*." CSEL 13:272–273.

that "delineates" (*designat*), "pours forth" (*effundit*) and "speaks" (*eructat*) this "fiery" (*igneam*)[78] and illuminating prayer. This same tension is evident in *Conference* 9.31, where Cassian quotes Antony as stating, "It is not perfect prayer in which a monk knows himself or the very fact that he is praying"; for just prior to that pronouncement, the saint declares: "Why are you hindering me, O sun, you who are rising now in order to distract me from the brightness of this true light?"[79] Again, the monk is unaware that he is praying, yet he is keenly aware of the vision of light that he is experiencing. The distinction applied by Stewart to Evagrius (discussed on p. 43) thus holds for Cassian as well: the mind engaged in "fiery" prayer has exchanged sensory perception for a purely intellectual and spiritual experience.

Perhaps even more than Evagrius, Cassian writes clearly regarding the source of light in prayer. In that crucial passage in *Conference* 10.6, contrasting the vision of the earthly Jesus with that of the glorified Christ, Cassian states:

> They alone see his divinity with purest eyes who, climbing from lowly and earthly toils and thoughts, depart with him to the lofty mountain of the desert, which ... reveals the glory of his face and the image of his brightness ... that brightness with which he appears to those who are able to ascend with him the aforementioned mountain of the virtues – that is, to Peter, James and John. For in the desert he appeared to Moses and spoke to Elijah.[80]

Here is an obvious reference to the Transfiguration scene recorded in the synoptic gospels.[81] Mark reports that Jesus' "clothes became dazzling white" (9:3); Luke adds, "the appearance of his face changed" (9:29); while Matthew is more specific, stating that "his face shone like the sun" (17:2).[82] All three gospels report the presence of Moses and Elijah, which clearly reminded Cassian of certain Old Testament theophanies. Given his depiction of 'pure' prayer as "fiery," it is interesting to note those instances in which fire figures into the stories of the two prophets: (the angel

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[78] Evagrius had used this same adjective in *De oratione* 111, PG 79:1192.

[79] Cassian, *Conlatio* 9.31: "*quid me inpedis, sol, qui ad hoc iam oreris, ut me ab huius ueri luminis abstrahas claritate*?" CSEL 13:277.

[80] Cassian, *Conlatio* 10.6: "*illi soli purissimis oculis diuinitatem ipsius speculantur, qui de humilibus ac terrenis operibus et cogitationibus ascendentes cum illo secedunt in excelso solitudinis monte, qui ... gloriam uultus eius et claritatis reuelat imaginem ... illa claritate qua illis apparuit, qui cum ipso possunt in praedicto uirtutum monte conscendere, id est Petro, Iacobo et Iohanni. Ita enim in solitudine et Moysi apparuit et Heliae locutus est*." CSEL 13:292.

[81] Cf. Mark 9:2–8; Matt 17:1–9; Luke 9:28–36.

[82] Matthew's text especially must have reminded Cassian of the contrast between the light of the sun, which hindered Antony at prayer, and the true radiance of the glorified Christ.

of) the Lord appears to Moses in the burning bush (Exodus 3:1–4); Elijah calls down the fire of the Lord in the presence of the prophets of Baal (1 Kings 18:38), as well as upon his enemies (2 Kings 1:9–12); and a chariot and horses of fire carry Elijah to heaven (2 Kings 2:11). It is aslo possible that Cassian has in mind Exodus 24:10, the passage that was so important to Evagrius.

Remarkably, Cassian agrees with the anthropomorphites in associating the Old Testament theophanies specifically with the Second Person. However, he is adamant that the one who is seen – by the prophet in the desert, by the disciple on the mountain, or by the monk at prayer – is not Christ incarnate or in any way embodied, but Christ in "the glory of his majesty" or in his "royalty" – that is to say, in his divinity. Stewart sums up Cassian's point of view: "the radiant Christ of the Transfiguration is not a floodlit human Jesus, still bound by form and time, but the divine transcendence of all limits; he is Christ contemplated according to the spiritual sense."[83]

3. Images of Christ in Prayer

From the foregoing discussion it is clear that Cassian would not have opposed the anthropomorphites merely for seeking the vision of Christ, because such a vision is precisely what he was seeking as well. Yet what of Florovsky's suggestion that Cassian opposed them for seeking mental images of Christ *incarnate*, that they were defenders of the reality of the Incarnation and the Evagrians deniers of it? The answer lies, once again, in *Conference* 10.6:

> To the degree that [the mind] withdraws from the contemplation of earthly and material things, its state of purity advances and causes Jesus to be seen by the soul's inner gaze, either as still humble and in the flesh, or as glorified and coming in the glory of his majesty.... But they alone see his divinity with purest eyes who, climbing from lowly and earthly toils and thoughts, depart with him to the lofty mountain of the desert .... For the rest, Jesus is still seen by those who dwell in cities and fortresses and villages – that is, by those who have been placed in an active manner of life and work – but not with that brightness with which he appears to those who are able to ascend with him the aforementioned mountain of the virtues ….[84]

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[83] Stewart, *Cassian the Monk*, 98. Cassian would, of course, rule out any vision of a pre-incarnate, divine body of Christ as well.

[84] Cassian, *Conlatio* 10.6: "*tantum scilicet a terrenarum ac materialium rerum contemplatione discedens, quantum eam status suae prouexerit puritatis feceritque Iesum uel humilem adhuc et carneum, uel glorificatum et in maiestatis suae gloria uenientem internis obtutibus animae peruideri.... sed illi soli purissimis oculis diuinitatem ipsius speculantur, qui de humilibus ac terrenis operibus et cogitationibus ascendentes cum illo secedunt in excelso solitudinis monte .... ceterum uidetur Iesus etiam ab his qui in ciuitatibus et castellis ac uiculis conmorantur, id est qui in actuali conuersatione sunt atque*

As usual, Cassian is here following Evagrius. In his *Letter on Faith*, Evagrius had also contrasted the contemplation of Christ incarnate with the contemplation of the Word: "Our Lord, according to the design of the Incarnation and corporeal instruction, is not the desired end .... But our Lord himself is the end, the ultimate blessedness, according to the design of the Word."[85]

There can be no doubt that Cassian regarded the vision of the earthly Jesus to be inferior – suitable only for a layperson or for a monk in the early stages of contemplation. However, nothing in his writings warrants the conclusion that he regarded seeking after such a vision as *heretical*; rather, it is a legitimate vision of Christ and a necessary step toward the vision of God. Nevertheless, Cassian does repeatedly characterize the anthropomorphites as heretics.[86] Why? It would seem that, as far as he is concerned, they were rejecting the possibility of going *beyond* the vision of Christ in human form, thereby denying the possibility of the ultimate goal – the vision of the glorified Christ, which is the vision of God.

4. Genesis 1:26–27 and the Image of God

Cassian makes clear (as does *The Life of Aphou* and, to a certain extent, Socrates) that Genesis 1:26–27 and the meaning of the *imago Dei* was central to the controversy. He would have his readers believe that he opposed the anthropomorphites' interpretation of the Genesis text because they took it as indicating that God (*Deus omnipotens* or *diuinitatis substantiam*) has a body. It is now clear that Cassian was attempting to obscure his opponents' Christological focus. Yet given that focus, it is not clear why all the sources should pinpoint Genesis 1:26–27 as the central text in the debate. What is the connection between that text and the formation of mental images of Christ in prayer? Elizabeth Clark provides one plausible solution: the anthropomorphite basis for the formation of such images was absolute confidence in the abiding reality of the image of God in humans, despite sin; Evagrians denied the image of God in humans and therefore portrayed the anthropomorphites as believing simplistically that God has a body.[87]

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operibus constituti, sed non in illa claritate qua illis apparuit, qui cum ipso possunt in praedicto uirtutum monte conscendere …." CSEL 13:291–292.

[85] Evagrius, *Epistula fidei*: "οὐκ ἔστι δὲ ὁ Κύριος ἡμῶν κατὰ τὴν τῆς ἐνανθρωπήσεως ἐπίνοιαν καὶ παχυτέραν διδασκαλίαν τὸ ἔσχατον ὀρεκτόν .... ἔστι δὲ καὶ ὁ Κύριος ἡμῶν καὶ αὐτὸς τὸ τέλος καὶ ἡ ἐσχάτη μακαριότης κατὰ τὴν τοῦ Λόγου ἐπίνοιαν." Preserved as Basil, *Ep.* 8, ed. and trans. Roy J. Deferrari, *Saint Basil: The Letters* (London: William Heinemann; New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1926), 68–71.

[86] Cf. Cassian, *Conlatio* 10.4–5, CSEL 13:289–291. Cassian accuses the anthropomorphites seven times of "error," once of "heresy," and once of "blasphemy."

[87] Clark, *Origenist Controversy*, 75.

Evagrius certainly denied the image of God in humans. He gives the clearest explication of his doctrine of the image in his *Letter to Melania*.[88] The "image" of Genesis 1:26–27 refers only to the rational beings (*noes*) originally created by God.[89] When these fell, they ceased to be in the "image of God" and acquired the "image of the animals" – that is to say, embodied existence.[90] Only one creature – the incarnate Son – retains the "image, for his divine nature remains one of 'naked *nous*.'" Only after "all the worlds" will God make humanity fit "the resemblance of the image of his Son."[91] Clark summarizes Evagrius' teaching:

> We had the "image" only when we existed as unembodied minds: with the precosmic fall, we lost it. The regaining of the "image" will occur not when we receive a transformed body in the "first resurrection," but only when we cast off bodies totally, when again we exist as "naked minds" ....[92]

According to Clark, Cassian agreed with Evagrius that the image of God is lost in fallen humanity; as evidence, she cites *Institutes* 12.5, which states that Adam lost the "glory" he had received as a gift from God. However, she acknowledges that Cassian elsewhere "tends to soften the teaching" so that the image of God is not completely lost, but only marred.[93] Cassian has surprisingly little to say regarding the image of God, but what he does say, coupled with his overall theological anthropology, indicates that he did *not* believe the image of God is lost in fallen humanity.

In the passage from the *Institutes*, cited by Clark, Cassian writes concerning Adam: "Believing that he could procure for himself the glory of God by his own free will and effort, he lost even that which was his by the grace of the Creator."[94] Cassian does not state just what it was that Adam lost, but Clark takes it to be the "glory," which she further takes to be

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[88] Evagrius, *Ep ad Melaniam*, partial Syriac version in Frankenberg, *Euagrius Ponticus*, 610–619; remainder in Gösta Vitestam, "Seconde partie du traité, qui passe sous le nom de La grande lettre d'Evagre le Pontique à Mélanie l'Ancienne publiée et traduite d'après le manuscrit du British Museum Add. 17192," *Scripta Minora Regiae Societatis humaniorum litterarum Lundensis 1963–1964*, no. 3 (Lund: C.W.K. Gleerup, 1964); ET: Martin Parmentier, "Evagrius of Pontus' Letter to Melania," *Bijdragen* 46 (1985): 2–38.

[89] Evagrius, *Ep. Ad Melaniam* 3–4, in Frankenberg, *Euagrius Ponticus*, 614–617; ET: Parmentier, "Evagrius of Pontus' Letter to Melania," 9–11.

[90] Evagrius, *Ep. Ad Melaniam* 9, in Vitestam, "Second partie"; ET: Parmentier, "Evagrius of Pontus' Letter to Melania," 16–17.

[91] Evagrius, *Ep. Ad Melaniam* 4–6, in Frankenberg, *Euagrius Ponticus*, 614–619; ET: Parmentier, "Evagrius of Pontus' Letter to Melania," 11–12.

[92] Clark, *Origenist Controversy*, 73–74.

[93] Clark cites *Conference* 5.6 and *On the Incarnation* 7.6. See my discussion on p. 50.

[94] Cassian, *De institutis* 12.5: "*dum enim gloriam deitatis arbitrii libertate et industria sua credidit se posse conquirere, etiam illam perdidit, quam adeptus fuerat gratia conditoris*." CSEL 17:209.

identical with the image of God. However, another interpretation of the text is possible. Cassian explains that Adam's fall took place "through him who had, of his own accord, been cast down" – a reference to Satan.[95] In the previous section, Cassian describes the circumstances that led to the fall of Satan:

> He, being clothed in divine brightness and shining in the midst of the other celestial powers out of the Creator's bounty, believed himself to have acquired the splendor of his wisdom and the beauty of his virtue, with which he was adorned by the grace of the Creator, not as the latter's munificent gift but by the power of his own nature.[96]

Cassian characterizes Satan's sin as "judging himself to be similar to God," and "trusting the power of his free will."[97]

Note the parallels between the account of Satan's fall and the account of Adam's fall: each believed himself to be equal to God, each relied on his own free will, and each lost that which had originally been given "by the grace of the Creator." In the case of Satan's fall, however, Cassian specifies what was given and, consequently, what was lost – "the splendor of his wisdom and the beauty of his virtue." It is reasonable to suppose that Cassian thought of Adam's loss in the same terms. Hence there are two possible interpretations of the passage – that Adam completely lost the image of God or that he lost only the degree of wisdom and virtue that he had previously possessed.

The latter interpretation is consistent with what Cassian has to say elsewhere on the subject. In *Conference* 5, he writes that after the Fall, "the image and likeness of God was violated (*uiolata*)."[98] *Uiolo* may be translated "profaned," "dishonored," or "injured," but not "lost." In *On the Incarnation* Cassian compares the image of God to a damaged statue in need of repair.[99] There is no notion in either of these passages that the image is completely lost. Thus, rather than interpreting Cassian as rejecting the

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[95] Cassian, *De institutis* 12.5: "*rursum per illum, qui fuerat a se deiectus*." CSEL 17:209.

[96] Cassian, *De institutis* 12.4: "*hic namque indutus diuina claritate et inter ceteras supernas uirtutes conditoris largitate praefulgens splendorem sapientiae et uirtutum pulchritudinem, qua ornabatur gratia creatoris, naturae suae potentia, non munificentiae illius beneficio se credidit obtinere*." CSEL 17:208.

[97] Cassian, *De institutis* 12.4: "*deo se similem iudicauit ... liberi scilicet arbitrii facultate confisus*." CSEL 17:208.

[98] Cassian, *Conlatio* 5.6: "*imagine dei ac similitudine uiolata*." CSEL 13:124.

[99] Cassian, *De incarnatione* 7.6, ed. Michael Petschenig, CSEL 17 (Vienna: F. Tempsky, 1888), 362.

abiding presence of the *imago Dei* in *Institute* 12 and then 'softening' that view elsewhere, I tend to see consistency throughout.

Further, Cassian's theological anthropology affirms both continuity and discontinuity between prelapsarian and postlapsarian human nature. In *Conference* 13, he argues that before the Fall Adam knew only the good, but after the Fall he knew both evil and good: "After his sin, Adam conceived a knowledge of evil that he had not had, but he did not lose the knowledge of good that he had received."[100] After citing biblical evidence in support of this position, he warns: "We must be careful lest we refer all the good works of the saints to the Lord in such a way that we ascribe nothing except what is evil and perverse to human nature."[101] This optimistic anthropological starting point provides the basis for Cassian's theology of grace, in which he argues that grace and free will cooperate in the redemptive process. It furthermore indicates that he did not believe that fallen humanity has lost the image of God.

Yet if Cassian was not opposing the anthropomorphites' interpretation of Genesis 1:26-27 because it affirmed the *imago Dei*, then why did he oppose it? And how does his opposition relate to the fact that the anthropomorphites were actually seeking images of the Son and not of the Father? The thesis put forward in this study answers these questions: the anthropomorphites were seeking the vision of the visible, pre-incarnate Word of God, on whose body the human body is modeled. In this they were bearers of an ancient Judeo-Christian tradition. In fact, Cassian's own Evagrian circle can also be placed within this tradition, only they were attempting to 'update' it – by interiorizing the vision, by relating it to the consubstantial Trinity (not specifically to the Word), and by disassociating it from any image or form. Hence, Cassian attempts to obscure the anthropomorphite point of view.

E. *The Life of Apa Aphou of Pemdje*

The Life of Apa Aphou of Pemdje – the text that prompted the critical reappraisal of the anthropomorphite controversy – is perhaps the most difficult primary text to assess. Theophilus, Jerome, and Cassian are relatively easy to place in their theological and historical contexts; moreover, their many

[100] Cassian, *Conlatio* 13.12: "*concepit ergo Adam post praeuaricationem quam non habuerat scientiam mali, boni uero quam acceperat scientiam non amisit*." CSEL 13:378.

[101] Cassian, *Conlatio* 13.12: "*unde cauendum nobis est, ne ita ad dominum omnia sanctorum merita referamus, ut nihil nisi id quod malum atque peruersum est humanae adscribamus naturae*." CSEL 13:379–380.

writings provide a backdrop against which to examine their anti-anthropomorphite views. *The Life of Aphou*, on the other hand, was written anonymously at an unknown date[102] and is difficult to contextualize. For these reasons, any conclusions drawn from it must be tentative. However, the text may reasonably be interpreted as an anthropomorphite work (along the lines presented in this study), its theology being consistent with that opposed by Theophilus, Jerome, and Cassian.

The relevant portion of the text focuses on a single statement in a sermon of Theophilus, in which he allegedly denies the image of God in humans. The sermon was read aloud on an Easter Sunday in the city of Pemdje/Oxyrhynchus (approximately 380 kilometers south of Alexandria), with a desert hermit by the name of Aphou being in attendance. Taking offense at this statement, Aphou makes the long journey to Alexandria to confront the archbishop. Before we examine the debate itself, an important question must be addressed: what is the relationship between *The Life of Aphou* and the anthropomorphism of Lower Egypt encountered in the writings of Theophilus, Jerome, Cassian, and the historians? Modern scholars are nearly unanimous in reading *The Life of Aphou* as an 'anthropomorphite' text, whether they regard its theology as genuine anthropomorphism (i.e., 'God has a body') or merely alleged. The lone exception (to my knowledge) is Dmitrij Bumazhnov,[103] who has recently argued that the text is not about anthropomorphism at all: first (with Florovsky, but against Drioton and Golitzin), he sees no valid reason to consider Aphou an anthropomorphite of any stripe (including belief in a divine body of the Word); second, he shows that Aphou's debate with Theophilus serves the author's larger goal of developing the biography of the simple monk who

[102] Recent scholarship has followed Florovsky, "Theophilus of Alexandria," 100–101, in dating *The Life of Aphou* to the latter half of the fifth century. He points out that it was written "at a time when memories of the saint were still fresh" (according to the text, Aphou was made bishop by Theophilus 3 years after the dispute, and his episcopate was of considerable duration), and yet "in a day when the turbulent events of the times of Theophilus had been forgotten in monastic circles." I would add that, given the text's depiction of Theophilus, it is difficult to imagine it being promulgated in his (or in Cyril's) lifetime. It mischaracterizes his actual views on the image of God (see discussion on pp. 30–32) and presents him as weak and ineffective in the face of Aphou; there is absolutely no evidence that he ever published (or *would* publish) a letter of retraction, declaring himself "without intelligence" (ⲁⲛⲟⲏⲧⲟⲥ) on the question of the image of God (as *The Life of Aphou*, in Drioton, "La Discussion," 114, claims he did).

[103] Dmitrij F. Bumazhnov, "Zur Interpretatin der *Vita des seligen Aphu von Pemdje*," *Origeniana Octava: Origen and the Alexandrian Tradition* (Leuven University Press, 2003), 987–993; *Der Mensch als Gottes Bild im christlichen Ägypten : Studien zu Gen 1,26 in zwei koptischen Quellen des 4.–5. Jahrhunderts* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), 192–218.

becomes an exemplary bishop of a large city.[104] Nevertheless, Bumazhnov acknowledges that the text may legitimately be consulted for interpretation of the "so-called" anthropomorphite controversy.[105]

In order to connect *The Life of Aphou* with the anthropomorphites of Lower Egypt, two propositions must be affirmed: (1) the sermon described in the text is the festal letter of 399 (otherwise we may have two communities responding to two different pronouncements and perhaps two different sets of issues); and (2) there is a known connection between Aphou and the monastic communities of Lower Egypt, more than 300 kilometers away from his hometown of Pemdje (otherwise we may have two communities responding to the same Letter, but for different reasons or from different points of view). Regarding the former, it is certainly noteworthy that both extant summaries of the festal letter (Gennadius' and Cassian's) are perfectly consistent with *The Life of Aphou's* characterization of the sermon as having to do with the image of God; in fact, the reading of the letter in *Conference* 10 and the sermon in *The Life of Aphou* both result in a debate about Genesis 1:26–27. Regarding the latter, another Coptic text – *The Life of Paul of Tamma* – describes Aphou as being made a monk by Apa Antony of Scetis.[106] It is therefore plausible that Aphou's community (including, of course, the author of *The Life of Aphou*) and the anthropomorphite communities of Lower Egypt were related, and therefore responded in like manner to Theophilus' festal letter of 399. Even if this connection is accepted, important questions remain to be answered: what does *The Life of Aphou* actually say about the *imago Dei*, and is it consistent with the picture of anthropomorphism presented in this study? For answers, we must turn to the debate between Aphou and Theophilus.

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[104] According to *The Life of Aphou*, Theophilus later made Aphou the bishop of Pemdje/Oxyrhychus, and there is no reason to doubt this claim. However, Aphou's appointment should not be taken as an endorsement of his theological outlook, for Theophilus also consecrated Synesius – a known Christian Neoplatonist – bishop of Ptolemais, as long as the latter would refrain from philosophizing in public (Cf. Theophilus, *Ep*. 105, PG 66:1484C–1488B; for discussion, cf. Russell, *Theophilus of Alexandria*, 27). It seems that Theophilus was quite pragmatic when it came to ecclesiastical appointments – just one more reason for his opponents to label him as theologically unprincipled.

[105] Bumazhnov, *Mensch als Gottes Bild*, 213–214.

[106] *The Life of Paul of Tamma*, ed. Emile Amélineau, "Vie de Paul de Tamoueh," *Monuments pour servir à l'histoire de l'Egypte chrétienne aux IVe et Ve siècles: Mémoires publiés par les members dea la Mission archéologique francaise au Caire* (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1888): 759–760. Florovsky, "Theophilus of Alexandria," 103, sees every reason to identify the Aphou of *The Life of Paul* with Aphou of Pemdje. Both *Lives* describe their Aphou as practicing ζενιτεία – dwelling among wild animals in the desert; furthermore, Paul and Aphou are linked by geography, for Tamma was not far from Pemdje.

The text presents Aphou as defending the image of God in humans against Theophilus' denial of it. Theophilus begins the debate, questioning how an Ethiopian or one who is leprous, lame, or blind can be thought to bear the image of God.[107] Aphou replies by citing the authority of Genesis 1:26–27. Theophilus concedes that humanity was originally created in God's image, but insists that after the Fall the image is lost. Aphou responds by citing the words spoken to Noah in Genesis 9:6, a text that is – as he points out – post-lapsarian: "Whoever sheds the blood of a human, by a human shall that person's blood be shed; for in his own image God made humankind." Theophilus then returns to his previous line of questioning, this time emphasizing divine splendor: how can "a person who is subject to illness and fatigue bear the image of God, who is impassible and simple ... how can one think of such a person in connection with that true, unapproachable light?"[108] This is a clear reference to 1 Timothy 6:16, "It is he alone who has immortality and dwells in unapproachable light, whom no one has ever seen or can see." Thus Theophilus' denial of the *imago Dei* is grounded in the concern that the doctrine will result in belief in a visible, corporeal God.

Aphou responds by drawing an analogy with the Eucharist: if the bread and wine, which do not much resemble Christ's body and blood, are nevertheless regarded as Christ's body and blood, then humans, who do not much resemble God, should nevertheless be regarded as bearing God's image. Theophilus, however, rejects the analogy, pointing out that the bread and wine are believed to be Christ's body and blood only *after* the words of consecration, and there is nothing analogous to this in the case of humans as the image of God. Aphou returns once again to the authority of Scripture, arguing that the same Christ who said "I am the living bread that came down from heaven" (John 6:51) is the one who said (in Genesis) that humans bear the image of God.

Bumazhnov explains the reference to John 6:51 by pointing out that, earlier in the debate, Aphou criticized the Jews for rejecting Christ's real presence in the elements. Here, in the quotation of John 6:51, Aphou is thus presupposing the full context of the verse, including John 6:41: "Then the Jews began to complain about him because he said, 'I am the bread that came down from heaven.'" According to Bumazhnov, Theophilus' major

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[107] *The Life of Aphou*: "ⲡⲉϫⲉ ⲡⲁⲣⲭⲓⲉⲡⲓⲥⲕⲟⲡⲟⲥ ϫⲉ ⲛ̄ⲁⲱ ⲛ̄ϩⲉ ⲉⲕⲛⲁⲱϫⲟⲟⲥ ⲉⲧⲃⲉ ⲟⲩⲉⲥⲱⲱ ϫⲉ ⲑⲓⲕⲱⲛ ⲧⲉ ⲙ̄ⲡⲛⲟⲩⲧⲉ ⲏ̄ ⲟⲩⲁ ⲉϥⲥⲟⲃϩ ⲏ̄ ⲟⲩⲥⲁⲗⲉ ⲏ̄ ⲟⲩⲃ̄ⲗⲗⲉ." Drioton, "La Discussion," 97–98.

[108] *The Life of Aphou*: ⲡⲉϫⲉ ⲡⲁⲣⲭⲓⲉⲡⲓⲥⲕⲟⲡⲟⲥ ϫⲉ †ⲣ̄ϩⲟⲧⲉ ⲉϫⲟⲟⲥ ⲉⲩⲣⲱⲙⲉ ⲛ̄ ⲣⲉϥⲱⲱⲛⲉ ⲛ̄ⲣⲉϥⲱ̄ϩⲓⲥⲉ ϫⲉ ⲉϥⲫⲟⲣⲉⲓ̈ ⲛ̄ⲑⲓⲕⲱⲛ ⲙ̄ⲡⲛⲟⲩⲧⲉ ⲛ̄ⲁⲡⲁⲑⲏⲥ ⲛ̄ⲉⲩⲧⲏⲗⲉⲥ ... ⲛ̄ⲁⲱ ⲛ̄ϩⲉ ⲕⲛⲁⲙⲉⲉⲩⲉ ⲉⲣⲟϥ ⲙ̄ⲛ̄ ⲡⲟⲩⲟⲉⲓⲛ ⲙ̄ⲙⲉⲉⲧⲉ ⲙⲉⲣⲉ ⲗⲗⲁⲩ ϫⲟⲟⲃⲉϥ." Drioton, "La Discussion," 98.

difficulty in denying the *imago Dei* is unbelief in the Word of God, and it is this unbelief (such as that of the Jews) that Aphou has in mind with his reference to John 6.[109]

Of course, the monk has not yet answered the bishop's objection – that there is a great *difference* between Christ's presence in the Eucharist and God's image in humans. However, Theophilus' objection does demonstrate his willingness to believe in the substantial identity of two things that are externally different (the Eucharistic bread and Christ's body). Now Aphou must demonstrate the possibility of an image-relation between two things that are externally different but also different in nature (humans and God). To do so, he turns to what Bumazhnov refers to as the *Kaiserbildargument* – the analogy of the emperor and his image.[110] Because this is the crucial passage in this portion of *The Life of Aphou*, I cite it in full:

(1) As for the glory of the greatness of God, which it is impossible for anyone to see because of its incomprehensible light, and as for the weakness and imperfection of humans, according to the defects of the nature that we possess, we think that it is like a king who orders the making of an image. (2) Everyone confesses that it is the image of the king. (3) At the same time, however, everyone knows that it is only a piece of painted wood. (4) For its nose is not like the king's, nor are its ears like those on the king's head, nor does it speak like him. (5) But no one takes notice of any of these defects, because one fears for oneself in light of the statement of the king, who said, "This is my image." (6) But rather, if anyone dares to deny that it is the image of the king, he is executed, because he has scorned it. (7) Moreover, the authorities meet around it and admire the painted wood out of fear of the king. (8) If it is thus with a spiritless and motionless image, which cannot notice anything, how much more must one recognize humans as the image of God, in whom is the Spirit of God, who act, and who are honored above all the animals on the earth?[111]

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[109] Bumazhnov, *Mensch als Gottes Bild*, 212. In Chapter 4, pp.116–117 I examine an alternative (although not mutually exclusive) interpretation of Aphou's reference to John 6:51, provided by Golitzin.

[110] Bumazhnov, "Zur Interpretation," 989.

[111] *The Life of Aphou*: "(1) ⲉⲧⲃⲉ ⲡⲉⲟⲟⲩ ⲇⲉ ⲙ̄ⲡⲙⲉⲅⲉⲑⲟⲥ ⲛ̄ⲛⲟⲩⲧⲉ ⲡⲁⲓ ⲉ[ⲧⲉ ⲙⲛ̄] ⲱⲃⲟⲙ ⲉⲧⲣⲉⲗⲁⲁⲩ ⲛ[ⲁⲩ ⲉ]ⲣⲟϥ ⲉⲧ[ⲃⲉ] ⲡⲉϥⲟⲩ[ⲟⲉⲓⲛ] ⲛ̄ⲁⲧ[ⲧⲁ2ⲟϥ] ⲁⲩⲱ ⲉⲧⲃⲉ ⲧⲙⲛⲧⲃⲱⲃ ⲙⲛ̄ ⲧⲙⲛⲧⲉⲩⲧⲉⲗⲥ ⲙ̄ⲡⲣⲱⲙⲉ ⲕⲁⲧⲁ ⲛ̄ⲃⲱⲭ̄ⲃ ⲛ̄ⲧⲉϕⲩⲥⲓⲥ ⲉⲧⲛⲥⲟⲟⲩⲛ ⲙ̄[ⲙⲟ]ⲟⲩ. ⲉⲛⲙⲉⲉⲩⲉ ⲛ̄ⲧⲉⲓ2ⲉ ⲭ̄ⲉ ⲛ̄ⲑⲉ ⲛ̄ⲟⲩⲣⲣⲟ ⲉ ϥⲛⲁⲕⲉⲗⲉⲩⲉ ⲛ̄ⲥⲉⲍⲱⲅⲣⲁϕⲓ ⲛ̄ⲟⲩ2ⲓⲕⲱⲛ. (2) ⲁⲩⲱ ⲟⲛ ⲱⲁⲣⲉ ⲟⲩⲟⲛ ⲛⲓⲙ 2ⲟⲙⲟⲗⲟⲅⲉⲓ ⲙ̄ⲙⲟⲥ ⲭⲉ ⲑⲓⲕⲱⲛ ⲙ̄ⲡⲣ̄ⲣⲟ ⲧⲉ. (3) 2ⲁⲙⲁ ⲇⲉ ⲟⲛ ⲥⲉⲥⲟⲟⲩⲛ ⲧⲏⲣⲟⲩ ⲭⲉ ⲟⲩⲱⲉ ⲧⲉ ⲙⲛ 2ⲉⲛⲡⲁ2ⲣⲉ. (4) ⲟⲩⲇⲉ ⲅⲁⲣ ⲛⲱⲁⲁⲛⲧⲥ ⲭⲟⲥⲉ ⲁⲛ ⲛ̄ⲑⲉ ⲙⲡⲁⲡⲣⲱⲙⲉ ⲟⲩⲇⲉ ⲛⲉⲥⲙⲁⲁⲭⲉ ⲛ̄ⲑⲉ ⲛⲛⲁⲡ2ⲟ ⲙⲡⲣⲣⲟ ⲟⲩⲇⲉ ⲟⲛ ⲛⲉⲥⲱⲁⲭⲉ ⲁⲛ ⲛⲧⲉϥ2ⲉ. (5) ⲁⲩⲱ ⲛⲉⲓⲃⲱⲃ ⲧⲏⲣⲟⲩ ⲉⲧⲙⲙⲟⲥ ⲙⲉⲣⲉ ⲗⲁⲁⲩ ⲣ ⲡⲉⲩⲙⲉⲉⲩⲉ ⲉⲩⲣ2ⲟⲧⲉ 2ⲏⲧⲥ ⲛ̄ⲧⲁⲡⲟϕⲁⲥⲓⲥ ⲙ̄ⲡⲣ̄ⲣⲟ ⲭ̄ⲉ ⲁϥⲭⲟⲟⲥ ⲭ̄ⲉ ⲧⲁⲓ ⲧⲉ ⲧⲁ2ⲓⲕⲱⲛ. (6) ⲙⲁⲗⲗⲟⲛ ⲇⲉ ⲉⲣⲱⲁⲛⲟⲩⲁ ⲧⲟⲗⲙⲁ ⲉⲁⲣⲛⲁ ⲙ̄ⲙⲟⲥ ⲭⲉ ⲛ̄ⲑⲓⲕⲱⲛ ⲁⲛ ⲧⲉ ⲙ̄ⲡⲣ̄ⲣⲟ ⲱⲁⲩⲙⲟⲟⲩⲧϥ ⲭ̄ⲉ ⲁϥⲭⲓⲟⲩⲁ ⲉⲣⲟϥ. (7) ⲙⲁⲗⲓⲥⲧⲁ ⲭ̄ⲉ ⲱⲁⲣⲉⲛⲉⲍⲟⲩⲥⲓⲁ ⲥⲱⲟⲩ2 ⲉⲣⲟⲥ ⲉⲩ†ⲉⲟⲟⲩ ⲛ̄2ⲉⲛⲡⲁⲥⲉ ⲛ̄ⲱⲉ ⲙⲛ 2ⲉⲛⲡⲁ2ⲣⲉ ⲉⲧⲃⲉ ⲑⲟⲧⲉ ⲙ̄ⲡⲣ̄ⲣⲟ. (8) ⲉⲱⲭⲉ ⲱⲁⲣⲉ ⲛⲁⲓ ⲥⲉ ⲱⲱⲡⲉ ⲛ̄ⲟⲩ2ⲓⲕⲱⲛ ⲉⲙⲛ ⲙ̄ⲛ̄ⲭ̄ ⲙ̄ⲙⲟⲥ ⲟⲩⲇⲉ ⲙⲉⲥⲕⲓⲙ ⲉⲥⲟ ⲛ̄ⲁ…ⲑⲉⲧⲟⲥ ⲡⲓⲕ[ⲓⲙ] ⲙⲁⲗⲗⲟⲛ ⲡⲣⲱⲙⲉ ⲉⲣⲉ ⲡⲉ ⲙ̄ⲛ̄ⲭ̄ ⲙ̄ⲡⲛⲟⲩⲧⲉ ⲛ̄2ⲏⲧϥ ⲉϥⲉⲛⲉⲣⲅⲉⲓ ⲁⲩⲱ ⲉϥⲧⲁⲓⲏⲩ ⲡⲁⲣⲁ ⲛ̄ⲍⲱⲟⲛ ⲧⲏⲣⲟⲩ ⲉⲧ2ⲓⲭⲙ̄ ⲡⲕⲁ2." Drioton, "La Discussion," 99–100; 113. Verse numbers from Bumazhnov, "Zur Interpretation," 992.

There are (at least) two ways to interpret this passage. On the one hand, Aphou may be rejecting any sort of corporeal likeness between humans and God, locating the *imago Dei* in non-corporeal human characteristics. Bumazhnov understands the text in this manner.[112] He makes much of the fact that Aphou places great stress on the *unlikeness* between God and humans. In the first sentence of his argument Aphou contrasts the glory of God's greatness with the weakness and imperfection of human nature. This stress on unlikeness holds as well for the emperor and his image, where Aphou emphasizes their material difference. On Bumazhnov's reading, Aphou goes so far as to *deny* the likeness between the emperor and his image; the image-relation between them is therefore grounded not in their physical likeness, but *only* in the authority of the emperor, who has said, "This is my image." The same holds true for God and humans: their image-relation is grounded only in the authority of Scripture, where God has declared that humans bear his image. Bumazhnov does not, however, overlook the fact that Aphou uses the unlikeness between the king and his image as a backdrop against which to stress the likeness between God and humans. Bumazhnov points to three elements of likeness identified by Aphou, all of which are non-corporeal: the possession of God's spirit, the function of acting, and the honor of humans compared with animals.

On the other hand, Aphou may be arguing that, in spite of its weakness and imperfection, the human body is nevertheless the locus of the image of God. Drioton and Golitzin understand the *Kaiserbildargument* in this manner. Drioton refers to it as "a veritable synthesis ... the last word on anthropomorphite doctrine," and from it he concludes that Aphou believed "God has a body ... endowed with incomprehensible light."[113] Golitzin agrees, stating (even more boldly) that Aphou "clearly believed in a divine body."[114] Such a belief is certainly not explicit, for Aphou makes no mention of a divine body or of God being clothed. Even so, I would argue that these scholars (particularly Golitzin) have read the text correctly.

Bumazhnov is right to identify the *Kaiserbildargument* as Aphou's final answer to Theophilus. Yet on his reading, it is difficult to see why Aphou would make this particular analogy to counter Theophilus' argument. In the text, Theophilus is denying the *imago Dei* specifically on account of humanity's bodily weakness. Every one of his objections has to do with

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[112] For Bumazhnov's treatment of Aphou's argument, cf. "Zur Interpretation," 990–991 and *Mensch als Gottes Bild*, 199–210.

[113] Drioton: "une veritable synthèse … le dernier mot de leur dotrine.... Dieu a un corps ... doué de la lumière incomprehensible." "La Discussion," 126–127.

[114] Golitzin, "The Demons Suggest an Illusion," 25. The difference between Golitzin and Drition is that, while Drioton associates the "divine body" with the Father, Golitzin associates it with the Son.

physical infirmities or imperfections: leprosy, disabilities, illness, and fatigue. He seems unaware that none of these weaknesses preclude likeness to God in a host of non-corporeal characteristics: stewardship over creation, the ability to reason or to do the good, the power to act or to exercise free will, etc.[115] If Aphou were simply arguing that the image is non-corporeal, it would be easy for him to point out this fact, yet he does not. Instead, he brings in the *Kaiserbildargument*, which would only seem to confirm Theophilus' assumption that the image must have something to do with the body.

It is true that Aphou dwells on the many ways in which the emperor's image differs from its exemplar. In fact (as noted on p. 56), Bumazhnov argues that for Aphou, the image differs so greatly that it is recognized *only* because the emperor has commanded his subjects to recognize it. Yet I would counter that, in reality, this is not the case. The image is also recognized because, in its physical features, it actually resembles the emperor. The nose or the ears may be wrong, but ultimately it looks like the emperor; those (few) subjects who have actually seen the emperor would not mistake his image for that of someone else. This is the reason why Athanasius could use this same analogy to argue for the consubstantiality of Father and Son. In *Contra Arianos* 3.5, he writes:

> In the Son is contemplated the divinity of the Father. One can perceive this at once from the example of the emperor's image. For in the image is the shape and form of the emperor, and in the emperor is the shape that is in the image. For the likeness of the emperor in the image is exact; so that one who looks at the image sees in it the emperor, and again one who sees the emperor recognizes that it is he who is in the image.[116]

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[115] Again, *The Life of Aphou* mischaracterizes (or is simply unaware of) Theophilus' actual position; as discussed on pp. 30–32, he taught that the image of God – defined as immortality and incorruptibility – was restored by Christ and applies to both soul and body for the person who participates in the sacraments. It seems that the Theophilus of *The Life of Aphou* is 'standing in' for the Evagrian opponents of Aphou's community (for, as shown on p. 49, Evagrius did deny the *imago Dei*, and it is reasonable to suppose that some of his followers did as well). Perhaps, just as Evagrians tended to portray their opponents as anthropomorphites, this community tended to portray their opponents as Evagrians.

[116] Athanasius, *Contra Arianos* 3.5: "ἐν γὰρ τῷ Υἱῷ ἡ τοῦ Πατρὸς θεότης θεωρεῖται. Τοῦτο δὲ καὶ ἀπὸ τοῦ παραδείγματος τῆς εἰκόνος τοῦ βασιλέως προσεχέστερόν τις κατανοεῖν δυνήσεται. Ἐν γὰρ τῇ εἰκόνι τὸ εἶδος καὶ ἡ μορφὴ τοῦ βασιλέως ἐστὶ, καὶ ἐν τῷ βασιλεῖ δὲ τὸ ἐν τῇ εἰκόνι εἶδός ἐστιν. Ἀπαράλλακτος γάρ ἐστιν ἡ ἐν τῇ εἰκόνι τοῦ βασιλέως ὁμοιότης· ὥστε τὸν ἑνορῶντα τῇ εἰκόνι ὁρᾷν ἐν αὐτῇ τὸν βασιλέα, καὶ τὸν πάλιν ὁρῶντα τὸν βασιλέα ἐπιγινώσκειν, ὅτι οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ ἐν τῇ εἰκόνι." PG 26:332A. Cf. Basil of Caesarea, *Hom.*24.4, PG 31:608A–B; Severianus of Gabala, *In crucem*, PG 94:1409A.

Just as the image looks like the emperor (in a strictly physical manner), so the Son 'looks like' the Father (of course, in a strictly non-physical manner).

According to Bumazhnov, Athanasius is the source for Aphou's use of the *Kaiserbildargument*. He seems not to notice, however, that the two Fathers put the analogy to different use. Athanasius focuses on the *shape* of the image and how closely it resembles the emperor, while Aphou focuses on the *material* of the image (painted wood) and how poorly it resembles the emperor. The reason for the difference is that Athanasius wants to demonstrate the equality of Father and Son, while Aphou wants to demonstrate the unlikeness between God and humans in those bodily imperfections that Theophilus finds so objectionable. So where *does* Aphou locate the *imago Dei*? On Bumazhnov's reading, he locates it only in certain non-corporeal human characteristics (possession of the Spirit, activity, and dominion over the animals). Yet if that were the case, then why bring up the emperor's image, which does after all resemble the emperor *physically*? Aphou's use of the analogy makes far more sense if we understand him to be arguing something like this: just as one must overlook a statue's many imperfections in order to recognize it as bearing the emperor's image, so must one overlook the many imperfections in the human body in order to recognize it as bearing the image of God.

If this analysis is correct, then Athanasius is not the most likely source for Aphou's use of the *Kaiserbildargument*. It seems, rather, that Aphou's use of the analogy belongs to that same tradition represented by R. Hillel the Elder (referenced in Chapter 1, p. 21). When asked why he regards bathing as a religious duty, Hillel refers to the *imago Dei*:

> If the statues of kings are scoured and washed by the man appointed to look after them ... [and who, as a result] is exalted in the company of the great – how much more shall I, who have been created in the image and likeness; as it is written, "For in the image of God made he man."[117]

For Hillel, a statue is regarded as priceless because it bears the image of the king; how much more is this true of the human body, which bears the image of God. I would suggest that Aphou is making the same argument. On this reading, *The Life of Aphou* belongs to the same tradition as those anthropomorphite monks of Lower Egypt encountered in the writings of Theophilus, Jerome, Cassian, and the historians.

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[117] *Leviticus Rabbah* 34.3, tr. J. Israelstam and J. S. Slotki, in *Midrash Rabbah*, ed. H. Freedman and Maurice Simon (London: Soncino Press, 1939), IV:428.

F. Conclusion

It is difficult to draw firm conclusions in the face of such conflicting sources. However, the preponderance of the evidence supports the thesis that the anthropomorphites were seeking mental images of Christ in prayer, and not merely of Christ *incarnate*; rather, they were seeking the vision of the eternal, divine body of the Word. In Chapter 3 I show that this thesis is confirmed by witnesses to later anthropomorphism – Cyril of Alexandria and Augustine of Hippo – both of whom ascribe this very notion to opponents who are otherwise being accused (whether explicitly or implicitly) of anthropomorphism.

Chapter 3

Witnesses to Later Anthropomorphism

A. Introduction

In Chapter 2 I examine witnesses to the anthropomorphite controversy of 399. A careful analysis of that literature reveals that the anthropomorphites were seeking – as the goal of the monastic life – mental images of Christ in prayer. However, an important question is raised: what does it mean to seek mental images of Christ? Much of the secondary literature assumes that the anthropomorphites were merely affirming the embodiment and visibility of Christ *incarnate*, and therefore the legitimacy of seeking the vision of Christ in prayer – a position developed in opposition to Evagrius and his followers. However, this assumption fails to explain certain features of the primary literature: (1) Cassian's entire theological project had as its goal the vision of the glorified Christ, and he even made room (at the early stages of contemplation) for the vision of the earthly Jesus; and (2) the anthropomorphites were opposed by Evagrians and non-Evagrians alike.

These features of the literature are explained by the thesis put forward in this study: the anthropomorphites were not merely seeking the vision of Christ incarnate, but the vision of the eternal, divine body of the Word. In this chapter I seek to confirm this thesis by examining two witnesses to later (fifth-century) anthropomorphism: Cyril of Alexandria and Augustine of Hippo. Cyril and Augustine are important, for in their writings the theology of anthropomorphism begins to come into focus: the Son, from all eternity (and not merely in the Incarnation), is intrinsically visible (in contrast to the Father, who is invisible). In texts aimed at opponents who are otherwise being accused of anthropomorphism, Cyril devotes a great deal of space to refuting such a notion; Augustine also combats it in his polemics against certain Latin Homoians, whom he elsewhere links with anthropomorphites.

Michel Barnes has shown that this distinction between an invisible Father and a visible Son was not only Homoian; it was a long-standing Western doctrine – "the bedrock of Latin Trinitarian theology" – aimed at combating modalism (and for this reason it posed a significant problem for

Nicene theologians such as Hilary and Augustine).[1] In Part 2 (Chapters 4 and 5) of this study I argue that the distinction was a long-standing tradition in Egypt as well and that the anthropomorphites were merely inheritors of that tradition. Yet in the eyes of those loyal to Nicene Christology (Origenists and non-Origenists alike), this distinction could only be regarded as heretical. Such is certainly the attitude of Augustine and Cyril.

B. Cyril of Alexandria

In 1983 Lionel Wickham published *Cyril of Alexandria: Select Letters*, presenting a number of Cyril's works in critical edition along with English translations.[2] Three of these works – *Answers to Tiberius and His Companions*, *Doctrinal Questions and Answers*, and *Letter to Calosirius* – deal (at least on the surface) with the problem of anthropomorphism. In fact, up until 1872 they were known as a single treatise by Cyril entitled *Against the Anthropomorphites*, which combined the three works in a jumbled order (this is the way they appear in PG 46:1128–1149). In his introduction, Wickham points out that the issues involved in these texts did not exactly "agitate the Empire"; he goes on to describe these controversies as "storms in tea-cups."[3] Perhaps it is for this reason that few scholars have produced studies of them. Apart from Wickham's introduction, I know of only three authors who have dealt with these works: Alexander Golitzin,[4] John McGuckin,[5] and E. P. Meijering.[6] While McGuckin only deals with *Letter to Calosirius*, Meijering is not directly concerned with Cyril's rejection of anthropomorphism; rather, he uses Cyril's arguments "to refute some modern misrepresentations of Platonism and Platonizing Christianity."[7]

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[1] Michel Barnes, "The Visible Christ and the Invisible Trinity: Mt. 5.8 in Augustine's Trinitarian Theology of 400," *Modern Theology* 19:3 (July 2003), 329–355, here 341.

[2] Lionel Wickham, ed. and trans., *Cyril of Alexandria: Select Letters* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983).

[3] Wickham, *Select Letters*, xxviii.

[4] Golitzin, "The Form of God," online at http://www.marquette.edu/maqom/morphe.html (on 16 June 2011).

[5] John A. McGuckin, "Cyril of Alexandria: Bishop and Pastor," in *The Theology of St. Cyril of Alexandria: A Critical Appreciation*, ed. by Thomas G. Weinandy and Daniel A. Keating (London and New York: T & T Clark, 2003), 211–222.

[6] E. P. Meijering, "Some Reflections on Cyril of Alexandria's Rejection of Anthropomorphism," *Nederlands theologisch tijdschrift* (1974): 297–301.

[7] Meijering's thesis is that Cyril's rejection of anthropomorphism is based on the insistence that God everywhere and always stands in relationship with human beings—in opposition to the view that classical (Platonizing) Christian theology tended to objectify God.

Wickham and Golitzin, on the other hand, are interested in the question of anthropomorphism, but they approach Cyril's texts differently. Wickham insists that there is "no obvious, direct connection" between them and the anthropomorphite controversy of 399. He bases that insistence on the fact that the anthropomorphites of 399 were arguing for the legitimacy of visualizing Christ in prayer, while Cyril's anthropomorphites seem not to have prayer in view at all; rather, they "are convinced that God has something corresponding with a human form because it says so in the Bible."[8]

Golitzin draws a direct connection between Cyril's anthropomorphites and those of 399 CE. He cites Cyril's texts in support of his contention that the anthropomorphites conceived of the Son as the eternal, visible manifestation of the Father, in whose image human beings were created. Yet Golitzin merely assumes the connection, providing little evidence for it; furthermore, he does not take up Wickham's arguments at all. In this chapter I present evidence for a direct connection between the anthropomorphites of 399 and those encountered by Cyril. I further demonstrate that Cyril's texts confirm the thesis that the anthropomorphite controversy was actually a Christological controversy in which those being accused of anthropomorphism were actually seeking mental images of the divine body of Christ in prayer.

1. Answers to Tiberius and His Companions

Some time after his victory over Nestorius in 431, Cyril received a visit from a certain Tiberius, deacon in a Palestinian monastery.[9] Tiberius had approached Cyril seeking guidance on some doctrinal issues that were troubling the members of his community, and Cyril responded with fifteen *Answers*. Throughout this correspondence, Cyril addresses what he at first presents as a straightforward case of anthropomorphism – his opponents are asserting that God is human in form. However, when he lays out his arguments against them it becomes clear that the controversy was actually Christological, with his opponents taking the view that the pre-incarnate Word, as distinct from the Father, is somehow embodied.

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[8] Wickham, *Select Letters*, xxxi.

[9] Wickham, *Select Letters*, xxviii, dates the text between 431 and 434. There is no indication as to where in Palestine Tiberius' monastery was situated. On Cyril's connections with Palestinian monasteries, cf. F. M. Abel, "Cyrille d'Alexandrie dans ses rapports avec la Palestine," *Kyrilliana Specilegia edita Sancti Cyrilli Alexandrini XV recurrente saeculo (444–1944)* (Cairo: 1947), 203–230.

In an introductory address and letter of explanation,[10] Tiberius describes the situation as he sees it: "evil-minded people ... from somewhere or other" have come to the area of the monastery teaching "new and perverse heresies."[11] These heresies had "formerly been suppressed," but are now threatening to destroy the community; the intruders are deceiving "the simple, ... those with very child-like ideas."[12] Tiberius thus distinguishes between three groups of individuals in the monastery: the intruders who are spreading heresy, the simple who are being deceived, and he and his companions who are "planning a rebuttal" and are therefore in need of Cyril's assistance.[13]

Tiberius does not say where the intruders came from, but it seems probable that they came from Egypt. First, anthropomorphism (which, in some form or other, is clearly at issue in all of these texts) had certainly "formerly been suppressed" there, and the potential embarrassment of the intruders coming from Cyril's backyard might explain Tiberius' silence as to their place of origin. Furthermore, the quasi-anthropomorphite opponents addressed in *Doctrinal Questions and Answers* (a correspondence carried on some time later, probably with the same Tiberius) are explicitly identified as coming from Egypt.[14] Finally, *Letter to Calosirius* is addressed specifically to an Egyptian monastery (located on Mount Calamon, a hill to the southwest of present-day Fayyum), and there Cyril is dealing with what he regards as a straightforward case of anthropomorphism. Even if Calosirius' opponents cannot be connected with those of Tiberius, the letter demonstrates that Cyril regarded anthropomorphism as a problem in Egypt at the time that he wrote it.

Tiberius also does not offer any clue regarding the content of the intruders' teaching, either in the introductory address or in the letter of explanation. His understanding of their teaching may have been revealed in the list of questions that possibly followed the letter in its original form. Unfortunately, such a list has not been preserved in the manuscript tradition; the questions now appear only in summarized form in the headings to Cyril's *Answers*. As such, it is difficult to determine which

[10] These, along with Cyril's first *Answer*, are extant only in Syriac. I rely on Wickham's ET of this portion of the text. The remainder of the document is preserved in Greek, and the ETs are mine.

[11] Tiberius, *Answers to Tiberius and His Companions* in Wickham, *Select Letters*, 133–134.

[12] Tiberius, *Answers to Tiberius and His Companions* in Wickham, *Select Letters*, 134–135.

[13] Tiberius, *Answers to Tiberius and His Companions* in Wickham, *Select Letters*, 134.

[14] I discuss the *Doctrinal Questions and Answers* on pp. 91–96. These opponents were not really anthropomorphites, but they were being labeled as such.

questions were being raised by the intruders, which (if any) were being raised by the "simple," and which (if any) were being raised by Tiberius and his companions.[15] In any case, four (perhaps five) of the fifteen *Answers* touch on the issue of anthropomorphism.

The first *Answer* is a response "to those who assert that deity is human in form." Although Cyril does not use the word 'anthropomorphite' to describe his opponents, he certainly describes them as such: "they somehow suppose and think the all-transcending divine nature to be human in appearance or form." He goes on to offer seven arguments against those who hold such a view. First he accuses them of idolatry, citing the words of Romans 1.22: "they have become fools and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into the form of corruptible man."[16]

His second argument is based on the self-emptying of Christ described in Philippians 2:5–11. Cyril notes that the Son, in becoming human, is said to have assumed the form of a servant – that is, a human form. However, he argues, if God's form were human, the Son (already in the form of God) would already have possessed human form and would *not* have assumed it in the Incarnation. Therefore, Cyril concludes, "God's form must be separate from ours."[17]

Third, he cites the words of Galatians 4:19: "My children with whom I am again in travail until Christ be formed in you."[18] He points out that Paul's readers were already human in form, so Christ's form must be created in us in a different way, "perceptible to the mind and spiritually."[19] Such is in keeping with the divine nature, which "does not consist of parts and limbs as we do but as incorporeal without quantitative and limiting shape."[20]

His fourth argument is based on the words of Christ recorded in John 5:37, that his opponents have never heard the Father's voice or seen his shape. Cyril asks how, if God is human in appearance, they could have

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[15] In *Answer* 6, Cyril refutes two distinct groups: "those who say that Christ was not taken up along with the flesh united to him (τοὺς λέγοντας ὅτι οὐκ ἀνελήφθη μετὰ τῆς ἑνωθείσης αὐτῷ σαρκός)", and "those who say that the assumed body was united with the holy Trinity (τοὺς λέγοντας ὅτι τὸ ἀναληφθὲν σῶμα τῇ ἁγίᾳ τριάδι συγκέκραται)." *Answers to Tiberius and His Companions* 6 in Wickham, *Select Letters*, 157. If a single *Answer* could thus address two seemingly opposed groups, then it is certainly possible that different *Answers* were composed in response to different groups within Tiberius' community.

[16] Cyril, *Answers to Tiberius and His Companions* 1 in Wickham, *Select Letters*, 137.

[17] Cyril, *Answers to Tiberius and His Companions* 1 in Wickham, *Select Letters*, 137.

[18] Cyril, *Answers to Tiberius and His Companions* 1 in Wickham, *Select Letters*, 138.

[19] According to Wickham, *Select Letters*, 138 n. 13, the underlying Greek is νοητῶς καὶ πνευματικῶς.

[20] Cyril, *Answers to Tiberius and His Companions* 1 in Wickham, *Select Letters*, 138.

failed to see the Father when they looked at each other. He further asks how the Son can be regarded as the *unique* image of the Father if the Father has a human form.

Fifth, he cites Paul's address to the Athenians in Acts 17:22–34, which states that the "Godhead" is not like "gold or silver or engraving made by human artifice or imagination" (v. 29).[21] Cyril points out that craftsmen often stamp a human appearance on their idols; if the "Godhead" is not like them, then it cannot be human in appearance.

The sixth argument is based on Romans 8.29: "For those whom he knew he predestined to share his Son's form and these he called ...." If God's Son is human in form, Cyril asks, then why is not everybody said to share his form rather than just the elect? He answers, "deity is without appearance and does not exist in shape, configuration or image inasmuch as he is incorporeal whereas we are quantitative both in appearance and configuration."[22] Therefore, sharing the Son's form should be understood as a spiritual (rather than a physical) condition.

Finally Cyril responds to those who would ask why Scripture mentions God as having bodily parts (i.e., a face, hands, feet, ears, eyes, and a mouth). His answer is that the Bible "employs human expressions and speaks to us in terms we can comprehend."[23] He cautions against reading such descriptions as indicating that God has a human form, pointing out that Scripture also describes God with seven eyes (Zech. 4:10) and with wings (Deut. 32:11). If humans do not possess seven eyes or wings, Cyril argues, then neither does God possess a human form.

Cyril concludes his first *Answer* with the following statement:

> God being incorporeal has no bodily form or appearance at all but is beyond all thought and language. He is, indeed, viewed intellectually by the reality of the heart as one possessing supra-mundane glory and he transcends all visible and invisible reality, for as creator of all he is in nature apart from all.[24]

That being the case, then what is meant by humanity being created in God's image? Cyril defines the *imago Dei* as the capacity for righteousness, holiness, goodness, wisdom, and dominion over the earth. The image of God in humans can have nothing to do with likeness to God in appearance or form.

The second *Answer* is against those who, according to Cyril, are teaching something to the following effect:

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[21] Cyril, *Answers to Tiberius and His Companions* 1 in Wickham, *Select Letters*, 138.
[22] Cyril, *Answers to Tiberius and His Companions* 1 in Wickham, *Select Letters*, 138.
[23] Cyril, *Answers to Tiberius and His Companions* 1 in Wickham, *Select Letters*, 138.
[24] Cyril, *Answers to Tiberius and His Companions* 1 in Wickham, *Select Letters*, 139.

According to the rank of deity and substance, the only-begotten Son of God was with God the Father while he was on earth and lived among men, by virtue of his being consubstantial with him; but he was no longer with him according to the category of hypostasis. Because, they say, his entire filial hypostasis was emptied out of heaven and the paternal bosom itself. For hypostases cannot be joined together, nor can they exist in one substance.[25]

The final phrase is difficult to translate; it can also be rendered "nor can things that exist in one substance (be joined together)." The question is whether Cyril's opponents were denying that hypostases can exist in one substance, or that hypostases existing in one substance can be joined together. The former makes no sense in light of the fact that they apparently affirmed the *homoousion*, but it is difficult to determine what they might have meant by the latter. In either case, Wickham believes the implications are clear:

The individual beings of the Trinity, though of the same physical stuff, cannot be united physically, and, if one of them descends to earth, heaven loses the individual, but the common stuff, the form of God of which the Son divested himself, remains behind.[26]

That is to say, although the incarnate Word remained with the Father in terms of the *rank* of divinity, his hypostasis was in actuality separated from the Father's divinity.

In response, Cyril charges his opponents with "making God's substance into a quantity ... measurable and limited, no longer infinite and immeasurable, but spatially finite and comprehensible."[27] He offers three arguments against them. First, he cites John 4:24 ("God is Spirit") and quips that even "pagan philosophers take a more religious view" than his opponents in their insistence on divine incorporeality.[28]

Second, he argues from the principle of divine omnipresence that the Son can be present at once both in heaven and on earth. He reasons that if

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[25] Cyril, *Answers to Tiberius and His Companions* 2: "ὁ μονογενὴς τοῦ θεοῦ υἱὸς κατὰ μὲν τὴν τῆς θεότητος καὶ οὐσίας ἀξίαν συνῆν τῷ θεῷ καὶ πατρί, ἥνίκα ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς ἐχρημάτιζε καὶ τοῖς ἀνθρώποις συνανεστρέφετο, ὡς ὁμοούσιος ὢν αὐτῷ· κατὰ δὲ τὸν τῆς ὑποστάσεως λόγον οὐκ ἔτι. κεκένωτο γὰρ πᾶσα, ὡς αὐτοί φασιν, ἡ υἱοτικὴ ὑποστασις ἔκ τε τῶν οὐρανῶνκαὶ αὐτῶν τῶν πατρικῶν κόλπων. οὐ γὰρ συναπτέον ὑπόστασιν ὑποστάσει, οὔτε τὰς ἐν μιᾷ οὐσίᾳ ὑπαρχούσας." Wickham, *Select Letters*, 140.

[26] Wickham, *Select Letters*, 141, n. 21.

[27] Cyril, *Answers to Tiberius and His Companions* 2: "πεπόσωται παρ' αὐτοῖς ἡ οὐσία τοῦ θεοῦ, καὶ καταληπτὴν ... καὶ πεπερατωμένην, καὶ οὐκ ἔτι μὲν ἀπεριόριστον οὐδέ ἀκατάληπτον, ἄλλ' ἤδε καὶ τόποις χωρητὴν καὶ διαστήμασι περιληπτήν." Wickham, *Select Letters*, 140.

[28] Cyril, *Answers to Tiberius and His Companions* 2: "εὐσεβέστερον γὰρ οἱ παρ' Ἕλλησι σοφοὶ δοξάζουσι." Wickham, *Select Letters*, 140. ET: Wickham, *Select Letters*, 141.

heaven was void of the Son's presence by virtue of the Incarnation, then the earth must be void of the Father's presence by virtue of the fact that the Father did *not* become incarnate. Furthermore, the sending of the Paraclete to earth would have emptied heaven of the Spirit's presence, and if Christ is now fulfilling the words of Matthew 28:20 ("Behold I am with you always, even to the end of the world"), then he must once again have emptied heaven of his "filial hypostasis" (υἱοτικῆς ὑποστάσεως) in order to dwell on earth.[29]

Third, he argues from the principle of consubstantiality that the Father cannot exist without the Son and the Son cannot exist without the Father. He states, "wherever the Father is considered to be (and he is everywhere), there is the Son, and likewise wherever the Son is, there is the Father.[30]

Cyril concludes the second *Answer* by speculating about the root cause of his opponent's error – "perhaps they are somehow misusing our human characteristics to prove their own nonsense."[31] That is to say, he thinks they are illegitimately trying to apply the principles of created nature to the divine nature, which, of course, he believes one ought not to do.

The third *Answer* is addressed to those who "are led by much stupidity to say that the only-begotten Word of God, when becoming a man and living on earth in the flesh, left heaven empty of his deity."[32] Cyril responds much as he did in the second *Answer*: "This is no different than saying that the Word is quantitatively measurable, has a limited nature and takes up space like bodies or other created things."[33] He once again argues that the Godhead is incorporeal and omnipresent, this time citing Psalm 139:7.[34] He further argues, as he did in the second *Answer*, that the Word

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[29] Cyril, *Answers to Tiberius and His Companions* 2 in Wickham, *Select Letters*, 142–143.

[30] Cyril, *Answers to Tiberius and His Companions* 2: "ἀλλ' ἔνθαπερ ὁ πατὴρ εἶναι νοοῖτο (ἔστι δὲ πανταχοῦ) ἐκεῖ που πάντως καὶ ὁ υἱος, και ἔνθαπερ ἂν ὁ υἱός, ἐκεῖ καὶ ὁ πατήρ." Wickham, *Select Letters*, 144.

[31] Cyril, *Answers to Tiberius and His Companions* 2: "τάχα που τὰ καθ' ἡμᾶς παρακομί–ζουσιν εἰς ἀπόδειξιν τῶν αὐτοῖς πεφλυαρημένων." Wickham, *Select Letters*, 144.

[32] Cyril, *Answers to Tiberius and His Companions* 3: "ἐκ πολλῆς ἄγαν ἀσυνεσίας διακεῖσθαι καὶ λέγειν, ὅτι γενόμενος ἄνθρωπος ὁ μενογενὴς τοῦ θεοῦ λόγος, καὶ μετὰ σαρκὸς συναναστραφεὶς τοῖς ἐπὶ γῆς, κενοὺς ἀφῆκε τῆς ἑαυτου θεότητος τοὺς οὐρανούς." Wickham, *Select Letters*, 146.

[33] Cyril, *Answers to Tiberius and His Companions* 3: "τοῦτο δέ ἐστιν ἕτερον οὐδὲν ἢ ἐκεῖνο φάναι, ὅτι ποσότητι μετρητός ἐστι, καὶ περιληπτὴν ἔχει τὴν φύσιν, καὶ ἐν τόπῳ μένει καθὰ καὶ τὰ σώματα, ἤγουν τὰ ἕτερα τῶν κτισμάτων." Wickham, *Select Letters*, 146.

[34] The text reads: "Where can I go from your spirit? Or where can I flee from your presence? If I ascend to heaven, you are there; if I make my bed in Sheol, you are there.

is always with the Father, comparing the Father to the sun and the Word to the sun's radiance.

However, there is one new wrinkle in this third *Answer* – Cyril accuses his opponents of Arianism. Of course, they are clearly *not* Arians; after all, according to the second *Answer*, they at least attempt to uphold the *homoousion*. It is certainly plausible that Cyril makes this accusation out of a desire to (mis)label his opponents.[35] However, I would argue that, if Cyril has understood them correctly, he has reason to make a connection between their views and Arianism. He reasons, "if the Father fills all things but the Son cannot do this in accordance with his own nature" – as he understands his opponents to be teaching – "then the Son must be of a different nature than the Father."[36] By affirming such a doctrine, "they are reducing the creator to the (level of) creatures, putting the author and Lord of all in the class of created things."[37] Cyril thus considers his opponents' teaching to be a betrayal of the *homoousion* and, as such, he regards them as being guilty of the same error as Arius.

Furthermore, Cyril almost certainly would have been familiar with Athanasius' *Orationes adversus Arianos*, in which Athanasius defends the invisibility of both Father and Son, apparently against those ('Arians') who would posit the visibility of the Son in contrast to the invisibility of the Father.[38] If Cyril regarded such to be an Arian doctrine, it is understandable (and even to be expected) that he would accuse his present opponents of Arianism.

Wickham is correct to note that this third *Answer* looks like an alternative version of the second; the issues are similar and Cyril's arguments overlap. Yet they are not identical. The second question has to do with whether the incarnate Word left his divinity in heaven; the third question has to do with whether he took it with him. Wickham speculates that the original question may have been obscure, prompting Cyril to give alternative answers.[39]

If I take the wings of the morning and settle at the farthest limits of the sea, even there your hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold me fast."

[35] According to Meijering, Cyril is here making the (false) "assumption (not uncommon amongst orthodox Christians) that the positions held by the heretics almost tend to be an amalgamation of all possible heresies." *Some Reflections*, 297.

[36] Cyril, *Answers to Tiberius and His Companions* 3: "εἰ τὰ πάντα πληροῦντος τοῦ πατρὸς οὐκ ἔχει τοῦτο κατὰ φύσιν ἰδίαν ὁ υἱος … ἑτεροφυὴς ἄρα παρ' αὐτόν ἐστιν." Wickham, *Select Letters*, 148.

[37] Cyril, *Answers to Tiberius and His Companions* 3: "καταφέρουσιν ἐν κτίσμασι τὸν ποιητήν, καὶ τῇ τῶν γεγονότων μοίρᾳ τάττουσι τὸν τῶν ὅλων γενεσιουργὸν καὶ κύριον." Wickham, *Select Letters*, 148.

[38] Athanasius, *Orationes adversus Arianos* 4.36, PG 26.525.

[39] Wickham, *Select Letters*, 147, n. 23.

It certainly seems as if Cyril is trying to 'feel out' his opponents' views. He begins both *Answers* with the phrase "I am given to understand." Also, at the end of the second *Answer*, he accuses his opponents of "speaking from their own hearts and not from the mouth of God" (from Jeremiah 23:16),[40] and he begins the third *Answer* with the exact same accusation and biblical quotation. It is therefore likely that these two *Answers* are not directed at two different groups of individuals, but at the same group whose teachings were somewhat unclear to Cyril.

The tenth *Answer* is a response to the question of how humanity is in the image of God. Here Cyril accuses his opponents of "declaring that the likeness to God consists in the image and visible shape of the body, and in nothing else."[41] He never uses the terms "anthropomorphite" or "anthropomorphism," but that certainly seems to be his target. He once again cites John 4:24, "God is Spirit," and argues that, since shapes belong to bodies and God is a spirit, then God must be without shape. He concludes by repeating his previous assertion that the image of God in humanity consists in virtue, holiness, and dominion over the earth.[42]

The fifteenth *Answer* may have some connection with the anthropomorphism of Cyril's opponents – at least as far as Cyril is concerned. He here argues against interpreting Gen 6:1–2 to mean that demons (i.e., fallen angels) had intercourse with women.[43] It must be noted that, until the early fifth century CE, this was the dominant Christian interpretation of the Genesis text (influenced largely by that portion of *1 Enoch* known as *The Book of the Watchers*).[44] Cyril, however, interprets "Sons of God" to be

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[40] Cyril, *Answers to Tiberius and His Companions* 3: "τὰ ἀπὸ καρδίας αὐτῶν λαλοῦντες, καὶ οὐκ ἀπὸ στόματος κυρίου." Wickham, *Select Letters*, 146.

[41] Cyril, *Answers to Tiberius and His Companions* 10: "τὴν τοῦ σώματος εἰκόνα, καὶ τὸ ὁρώμενον εἶδος αὐτό φασιν καὶ οὐχ ἕτερον εἶναι τὴν πρὸς θεὸν ὁμοίωσιν." Wickham, *Select Letters*, 164.

[42] Cyril, *Answers to Tiberius and His Companions* 10 in Wickham, *Select Letters*, 164–167.

[43] The text reads: "When people began to multiply on the face of the ground, and daughters were born to them, the sons of God saw that they were fair; and they took wives for themselves of all that they chose."

[44] The dominance of this interpretation is documented by James C. VanderKam, "1 Enoch, Enochic Motifs, and Enoch in Early Christian Literature," in *The Jewish Apocalyptic Heritage in Early Christianity*, ed. by James C. VanderKam and William Adler (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996), 60–88 and by Lionel Wickham, "The Sons of God and the Daughters of Men: Genesis VI 2 in Early Christian Exegesis," *Oudtestamentische Studien* 19 (1974), 143–144. On the (limited) popularity of *1 Enoch*, see William Adler, "Introduction," in *The Jewish Apocalyptic Heritage*, 23–25. Annette Yoshiko Reed argues that the fate of *1 Enoch* and that of the angelic interpretation of the Genesis text were inextricably linked: "In Second Temple Judaism and proto-orthodox Christianity, the angelic interpretation of Gen 6:1–4 and the use of the *Book of the*

the righteous descendants of Enosh (the son of Seth, according to Gen 4:26) and "daughters of men" to be the wicked descendants of Cain.[45] He concludes, "It is foolish to suppose incorporeal demons to be able to do what bodies do and to act contrary to their own nature."[46]

It is difficult to determine the relationship between *Answer* 15 and those that precede it.[47] There is certainly a parallelism between *Answer* 1, which argues that God is incorporeal, and *Answer* 15, which argues that angels are incorporeal. However, the text does not indicate whether these *Answers* are addressed to the same group of opponents. It may be that the anthropomorphite opponents of the earlier *Answers* were distinct from those who were "wrongly" interpreting Genesis 6. However, Golitzin argues that *Answer* 15 does actually reveal something about the theology of Cyril's anthropomorphite opponents (as well as the anthropomorphites of 399) – that, in addition to seeking mental images of the pre-incarnate Son, they were also interested in visions of angels.[48] Unfortunately, although Cyril seems to be implying a connection between the anthropomorphism addressed in the previous *Answers* and the error addressed here, it is impossible to determine whether such a connection actually existed.

In assessing the *Answers to Tiberius and His Companions*, I argue (against Wickham) that a connection *can* be established between these anthropomorphites and those of 399 – provided that the latter are properly understood. As shown in Chapter 1, the scholarly consensus regarding the earlier controversy is that the anthropomorphites were not really anthropomorphites at all; rather, they were proponents of the formation of mental images of Jesus in prayer, against the 'pure' prayer of the Evag-

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Watchers seem to have been mutually validating," while "the progressive marginalization of the Enochic literature in Western Christendom occurred concurrently with a shift in the consensus among learned Jews and Christians about the identity of the 'sons of God' in Gen 6:1–4." *Fallen Angels and the History of Judaism and Christianity* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 205–206.

[45] Cyril, *Answers to Tiberius and His Companions* 15 in Wickham, *Select Letters*, 176–177.

[46] Cyril, *Answers to Tiberius and His Companions* 15: "ἀσύνετον δὲ τὸ οἴεσθαι τοὺς ἀσωμάτους δαίμονας ἐνεργεῖν δύνασθαι τὰ σωμάτων, καὶ τὸ παρὰ φύσιν ἰδίαν ἐπιτελεῖν." Wickham, *Select Letters*, 178.

[47] Wickham, "Sons of God," 145–146, places *Answer* 15 in the historical-theological context of the fourth-century debates about Christ's divinity. He argues that these debates gave impetus to the exploration of Old Testament passages that speak of God as "Father" and humans as his "sons." Given that the sonship of Christians is derived from the sonship of Christ, references to human sons of God in the Old Testament could be used to prove the reality of Christ's sonship prior to the Incarnation. Wickham does not, however, address the question of *Answer* 15's place within its *literary* context.

[48] Golitzin, "The Form of God," online at http://www.marquette.edu/maq-om/morphe.html (on 16 June 2012).

rians. Thus the controversy was Christological. Of course, where I part ways with this consensus is that, while previous scholarship assumed the subject of the anthropomorphites' vision to be the incarnate Christ, I understand it to be the pre-incarnate Word. Cyril's description of his opponents lines up well with my understanding of anthropomorphism. First of all, he refrains from ever using the term 'anthropomorphite.' This omission is strange considering the fact that the first and tenth *Answers*, at least on the surface, seem to deal with a straightforward case of anthropomorphism. Perhaps Cyril knew that straightforward anthropomorphism was *not* really the issue, and writing many years after the heat of the initial controversy had subsided, he feels no need to use the pejorative term 'anthropomorphite' as a polemical device.

Rather, he consistently presents the controversy as a *Christological* controversy – even in the first *Answer to Tiberius,* where he describes his opponents as those who believe "the all-transcending divine nature to be human in appearance or form."[49] Of his seven arguments against the intruders, three establish the incorporeality of the Godhead generically considered, three others establish that of the Word, and only one establishes that of the Father – suggesting that Cyril's opponents have the Son, rather than the Father, in view.

The Christological dimension of the controversy is further clarified by *Answers to Tiberius* 2 and 3. There, Cyril makes it clear that whatever his opponents believed, it involved the embodiment of the pre-incarnate Word – viewing him as measurable, limited, and occupying space. Thus in his incarnate state he must be viewed as separated from the Father. Cyril, of course, will have nothing of it, insisting that "Christ is near to all, filling all things together with the Father, being begotten of him by nature."[50]

Finally, although Wickham is correct that Cyril never places his controversy in the context of prayer, Cyril does imply that the vision of God was at issue. Toward the end of the first *Answer* he is compelled to explain how it is that God can be seen: "He is ... viewed intellectually by the reality of the heart as one possessing supra-mundane glory and he transcends all visible and invisible reality."[51] There can be no doubt that Cyril here (and throughout the *Answers to Tiberius and His Companions*) rejects the formation of visible or somatic images of *any* of the divine persons, including the pre-incarnate Word.

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[49] Cyril, *Answers to Tiberius and His Companions* 1 in Wickham, *Select Letters*, 137.

[50] Cyril, *Answers to Tiberius and His Companions* 2: "πάντα γὰρ ἐγγὺς ἔχει, τὰ πάντα πληρῶν ὁμοῦ τῷ πατρὶ ὁ ἐξ αὐτοῦ κατὰ φύσιν γεγεννημένος Χριστός." Wickham, *Select Letters*, 142.

[51] Cyril, *Answers to Tiberius and His Companions* 1 in Wickham, *Select Letters*, 139.

2. Doctrinal Questions and Answers

Some time later, Tiberius[52] approached Cyril with a similar set of theological issues, and their correspondence is preserved in eleven *Doctrinal Questions and Answers*. Here, once again, Cyril takes on opponents who – on the surface – seem to be ascribing a body (or something like it) to God. Yet, once again, his reply makes it clear that they are not applying this notion to the Father or to the divine nature generically considered, but specifically to the Son.

In this petition to Cyril, Tiberius reports that "the people of Abilene[53] are wickedly opposing one another regarding certain doctrinal inquiries"; additionally, "certain Egyptians, not taught to think rightly about God, suffer from the same madness as these."[54] Both parties brought their questions to Tiberius and the saints in Palestine, but (Tiberius humbly claims) their theological powers were unequal to the task of resolving such difficult issues. Fortunately, according to Tiberius, all parties involved were eager to present the questions to Cyril.[55]

In this case, the *Questions* are preserved, apparently in Tiberius' own words. Nevertheless, it would be difficult (if not impossible) to determine which *Questions* belonged to Abilene and which to the Egyptians; but as Wickham points out, it is probably unnecessary to do so.[56] Tiberius clearly intends for Cyril to understand that the same points were at issue for both groups, claiming as he does that both were afflicted with the "same madness" (τὴν αὐτὴν μανίαν). *Questions* 1 and 4 are of particular interest for the present study.

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[52] Actually, the Greek text does not identify Tiberius (or anyone else, for that matter) as the author of the *Questions*. It is reasonable, however, to suppose that Tiberius is the author: the issues under consideration are similar to those addressed in the *Answers to Tiberius*, the text identifies the author as residing in Palestine, it mentions a previous volume received from Cyril—presumably the *Answers to Tiberius*, and the title of the Armenian translation identifies "Tiberius the priest" as the author (ET: Wickham, *Select Letters*, 180, n. 1; Wickham, *Select Letters*, xlvii, locates the Armenian version in three manuscripts: Bodleian Arm.e.20, Bodleian Arm.e.36, and San Lazzaro 308).

[53] Wickham, *Select Letters*, 181, identifies the location as the present-day Suq-Wadi-Barada in Syria, 14 miles NW of Damascus.

[54] Tiberius, *Doctrinal Questions and Answers*: "οἱ τῆς Ἀβηλινῆς χώρας κακῶς πρὸς ἀλλήλους διατεινόμενοι δογματικῶν ἕνεκά τινων ζητημάτων … τῶν Αἰγυπτίων τινὲς οὐκ ὀρθῶς φρονεῖν περὶ θεοῦ δεδιδαγμένοι, τὴν αὐτὴν ἐκείνοις νοσοῦντες μανίαν." Wickham, *Select Letters*, 180.

[55] It is difficult to take this claim at face value. If the Egyptians had intended for Cyril to hear their case, they might have approached him directly. In fact, their awareness of Cyril's opposition to any form of anthropomorphism probably explains why they went to Palestine in the first place.

[56] Wickham, *Select Letters*, xxix.

The first *Question* is how Scripture should be understood when it attributes hands, feet, eyes, ears, and wings to God.[57] The questioners acknowledge that these should not be understood "anthropomorphically, with the limbs being taken as (belonging) to a body."[58] Rather, they propose the following interpretation: "just as he is substance, so also the entities spoken of in terms of substance – the divine limbs – themselves exist according to substance."[59] The questioners clearly wish to distance themselves from 'crude' anthropomorphism (of which they are probably being accused), opting as they do for an immaterial (but nevertheless realistic) interpretation of the biblical texts. It is difficult to say what they have in mind by such 'substantial entities,' but Cyril (again) will have nothing of it.[60]

He begins his response with a clear affirmation of divine incorporeality. He cites 1 Timothy 6:16 to the effect that God dwells in "light unapproachable" (φῶς ἀπρόσιτον) and reasons that if the light surrounding deity is unapproachable, then deity itself must be "completely incorporeal" (ἀσώματον παντελῶς). Therefore, God is not to be thought of as consisting of parts or limbs, "even if someone chooses to think of such things not in terms of tangible and gross bodies, but in terms of a fine and immaterial (body), in accordance with God's nature."[61] Cyril thus understands his opponents' reference to "divine limbs" to indicate *immaterial* realities (whatever those realities might be); he knows they are not 'real' anthropomorphites. Nevertheless, they do affirm that God has parts or limbs, and Cyril takes issue with any such affirmation. If Scripture mentions the eyes, ears, hands, feet, or eyes of God, these must be understood as describing God's activities in the world – not God as he is in himself.[62]

The next three *Questions* deal with the proper interpretation of Genesis 1–2: *Question* 2 concerns what is meant by the divine in-breathing of

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[57] See Deuteronomy 32:11; Psalm 18:8ff.

[58] Tiberius, *Doctrinal Questions and Answers* 1: "οὐκ ἀνθρωποειδῶς ὡς ἐπὶ σώματος τῶν μελῶν λαμβανομένων." Wickham, *Select Letters*, 184.

[59] Tiberius, *Doctrinal Questions and Answers* 1: "καθώς ἐστιν οὐσία, οὕτω καὶ τὰ λεχθέντα τῆς οὐσίας ὄντα, μέλη θεῖα καὶ αὐτὰ κατὰ τὴν οὐσίαν ὑπάρχει." Wickham, *Select Letters*, 184.

[60] Wickham, *Select Letters*, 185, notes that Irenaeus, *Adv. haeres.* 5.1.3, understood God's hands to be the Word and the Spirit and speculates that such may be the thought of Cyril's opponents. However, nothing in Cyril's response seems to be directed against such an interpretation.

[61] Cyril, *Doctrinal Questions and Answers* 1: "κἂν εἰ μή τισ ἕλοιτο τυχὸν ὡς ἐν ἁπτοῖς καὶ παχέσι σώμασι τὰ τοιάδε νοεῖν, ἀλλ' ὡς ἐν ἰσχνῷ καὶ ἀὐλῳ, καὶ κατά γε τὴν τοῦ θεοῦ φύσιν." Wickham, *Select Letters*, 186.

[62] Cyril, *Doctrinal Questions and Answers* 1 in Wickham, *Select Letters*, 186–187.

Genesis 2:7; *Question* 3 is whether the terms "image" and "likeness" in Genesis 1:26–27 should be understood synonymously; *Question* 4 (having potential implications for any discussion of anthropomorphism) is whether humanity is God's image or an image of an image (i.e., the Son). On this last issue, Cyril's opponents clearly took the latter position, arguing from the fact that the Genesis text does *not* read "God made man his own image" but "*according to* his image" (κατ᾽ εἰκόνα).[63] Ironically, as Meijering points out, this interpretation of Genesis seems to be motivated by a commitment to the doctrine of God's absolute transcendence – a position that certainly cannot be called 'anthropomorphic.'[64]

Cyril's response to his opponents' views is grounded in the Nicene doctrine of consubstantiality – since the Father and Son are substantially identical, then to be made in the Son's image *is* to be made in God's image. He writes:

> The divine and consubstantial Trinity is beyond all form and appearance, but one ought to believe that the Father is in the Son and the Son is in the Father, and that anyone who has seen the Son has seen the Father.... Where there is complete identity of substance there can by no means be any distinction.... Therefore if humanity was made in the Son's image, then we are in God's image.[65]

He thus concludes that it is "useless" (περιττὸν) – and probably theologically dangerous – to "split hairs" (ἰσχνοεπεῖν) by saying that humans are images of the Son, who is God's image, but *not* images of God.[66]

There are good reasons to connect Cyril's opponents here with the anthropomorphites of 399. Obviously, they are from Egypt – a necessary (although not sufficient) condition for making such a connection. More importantly, there are several points of contact between this debate and the controversy of 399 as it is currently understood. First, Cyril's opponents are not 'true' anthropomorphites (i.e., they do not ascribe a body to the Father or to the divine nature itself), but they are being accused as such (hence they feel the need to distinguish between their interpretation of Scripture and an "anthropomorphic" one). Second, at issue is the proper interpretation of Genesis 1 – does humanity's creation in the image of God say anything about God as he is in himself? Third, the debate clearly has to

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[63] Cyril, *Doctrinal Questions and Answers* 4 in Wickham, *Select Letters*, 196.

[64] Meijering, *Some Reflections*, 297.

[65] Cyril, *Doctrinal Questions and Answers* 4: "Εἰδοὺς μὲν ἐπέκεινα παντὸς καὶ φαντασίας σωματικῆς ἡ θεία τέ ἐστι καὶ ὁμοούσιος τριάς πιστεύειν δὲ χρὴ ὅτι ὁ πατὴρ ἐν τῷ υἱῷ ἐστι καὶ ὁ υἱὸς ἐν τῷ πατρί, καὶ ὁ τὸν υἱὸν ἑωρακὼς ἑώρακε τὸν πατέρα.... ἔνθα δὲ ὅλως οὐσίας ταυτότης, ἐκεῖ που πάντως εἴη ἂν τὸ παρ– αλλάττον οὐδέν.... οὐκοῦν κἂν εἰ γέγονε κατ᾽ εἰκόνα τοῦ υἱοῦ ὁ ἄνθρωπος, καὶ οὕτως ἐστὶ κατ᾽ εἰκόνα θεοῦ." Wickham, *Select Letters*, 196.

[66] Cyril, *Doctrinal Questions and Answers* 4 in Wickham, *Select Letters*, 198–199.

do with Christology – it is the image of the eternal Son that is under discussion.

If this connection is accepted, then Cyril's reply offers clues regarding the content of anthropomorphite theology and why it was opposed. He begins *Answer* 4 with a brief reminder of divine incorporeality (as discussed on p. 73), probably to prevent his readers from drawing anthropomorphic implications from his allusion to John 14:6 ("one who has seen the Son has seen the Father"). However, there is nothing in his opponents' interpretation of Genesis 1:26–27 – humanity is the image of an image – that would necessarily lead them to do so; after all, the Genesis text had been read in this way by numerous other exegetes (most notably Philo,[67] Clement,[68] and Origen[69]) who were decidedly *not* anthropomorphites!

Thus there must have been some connection in Cyril's mind between this fourth *Question* and the first: they are ascribing something more than spiritual significance to the *imago Dei* (perhaps something having to do with 'parts' or 'limbs'); at the same time they are applying this understanding of the *imago Dei* to the Son (but not to the Father), resulting in what Cyril cannot help but regard as a subordinationist Christology. He does not explicitly level the charge of 'Arianism' here (as he does in *Answers to Tiberius and His Companions*), but it is clearly not far from his mind.

3. Letter to Calosirius

By far the shortest of the three texts, *Letter to Calosirius* should probably be regarded as unrelated to the other two. It is addressed not to Palestine, but to an Egyptian bishop named Calosirius (bishop of Arsenoite, or present-day Fayyum). Calosirius did not request the letter, as Tiberius had done. Rather, Cyril writes to inform him that "some men" had recently arrived in Alexandria from the monastery of Mount Calamon (a great distance south-west of Fayyum on the Red Sea, but still considered to be under Calosirius' jurisdiction); when questioned by Cyril, they reported that some of the monks there were guilty of "extreme impiety."[70]

The blasphemy of which they stand accused is quite removed from the Christological speculations troubling Tiberius' community. The monks of

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[67] Cf. Philo, *Op.* 25, 69–71; *Leg.* 3.95–96; *Her.* 230–231; *Spec.* 1.80–81, 3.83, 3.207; QG 2.62. See Chapter 4 for the (potential) Christological implications of Philo's Logos doctrine.

[68] Cf. Clement of Alexandria, *Protrepticus* 10; *Stromata* 5:14.

[69] Cf. Origen, *De oratione* 22.4.

[70] Cyril, *Letter to Calosirius*: "τῆς ἐσχάτης δυσσεβείας." Wickham, *Select Letters*, 214. Wickham, *Select Letters*, xxx, speculates that these men were Cyril's spies in the monastery, which may well be true.

Mount Calamon appear to be straightforward anthropomorphites, maintaining that "the Godhead (τὸ θεῖον) is human in shape or form."[71] Cyril does not say what he understands the monks to mean by τὸ θεῖον (whether the Father, the divine nature, etc.), but he certainly gives no indication that they are applying their ideas specifically to the Son. I thus concur with the judgment of Wickham, that "there is nothing to link the anthropomorphites at Calamon with the intruders in Palestine or the contentious Egyptians" of the previous two texts.[72] The only way to make such a link would be to argue that Cyril (or his informant) had badly misunderstood or misconstrued the monks' theology (i.e., they were not simple anthropomorphites as reported).

Interestingly, that is precisely what John McGuckin claims Cyril has done. He writes that Cyril is merely

> continuing the tradition of the clash between Origenists and Anthropomorphites of the latter fourth century when the Origenist camp more or less invented that term as a catch-all ridiculing what Florovsky more carefully presents as a school resistant to Evagrian ideas that the historical gospel of the incarnate Christ would be transcended in the ascent to imageless prayer.[73]

However, Cyril never actually *uses* the term 'anthropomorphite' in *Letter to Calosirius* – or, for that matter, in *Answers to Tiberius* or in *Doctrinal Questions and Answers*. In fact, in the latter two texts he does not even attempt to *portray* his opponents as simple anthropomorphites. On McGuckin's analysis, it is difficult (if not impossible) to explain why Cyril would portray them as such in *Letter to Calosirius* while refraining from doing so in the other texts. Furthermore, while McGuckin acknowledges that "there were, doubtless, ignorant anthropomorphites in the desert,"[74] he never specifies what, in his view, the offending monks were actually teaching.

It seems reasonable to conclude that, at least as far as Cyril was concerned, the monks described in *Letter to Calosirius* were straightforward anthropomorphites, teaching that God had something like a human body. The letter is therefore of limited value for understanding the anthropomorphite controversy of 399 (which, I am arguing, was *not* a case

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[71] Cyril, *Letter to Calosirius*: "ἀνθρωποειδὲς ἤγουν ἀνθροπόμορφόν ἐστι τὸ θεῖον." Wickham, *Select Letters*, 214. Predictably, this notion is tied to the monks' interpretation of Genesis 1:26–27, and Cyril, *Letter to Calosirius*, responds with his own interpretation of the text: the image of God refers not to "the configuration of the body (τὸ τοῦ σώματος σχῆμα)," but to the fact that the human being is a "rational animal, a lover of virtue and ruler over the creatures of the earth (ζῷον λογικὸν καὶ καθὸ φιλάρετον καὶ ἀρχικὸν τῶν ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς)." Wickham, *Select Letters*, 216.

[72] Wickham, *Select Letters*, xxx.

[73] McGuckin, "Cyril of Alexandria: Bishop and Pastor," 214.

[74] McGuckin, "Cyril of Alexandria: Bishop and Pastor," 214.

of straightforward anthropomorphism); it merely reveals that anthropomorphism, in some form or other, was still perceived to be a problem in Egypt during Cyril's tenure as Bishop of Alexandria.

C. Augustine of Hippo

Much like Cyril of Alexandria, Augustine addresses the problem of anthropomorphism in a number of works. He likewise refutes the idea – held by some of Cyril's opponents (and, as I am arguing, by the Egyptian anthropomorphites of 399) – that although the Father is invisible, the Son is intrinsically and eternally visible. Cyril explicitly associates this view with anthropomorphites (i.e., with those being accused of anthropomorphism as I understand it), and for this reason he accuses them of Arianism. Augustine, on the other hand, associates this idea with Arianism (i.e., Homoianism) but never with anthropomorphism. When he describes the views of 'anthropomorphites,' he clearly has in mind those who simplistically believe that God (generically considered) has a body. However, in at least one text (*De haeresibus*), he indicates that there is a connection (at least in his thinking) between 'Arians' and 'anthropomorphites.' Exactly what that connection is he does not say, but it is at least plausible that they are linked (again, in Augustine's thinking) by this doctrine of the Son's visibility. Five texts are of particular interest: *Contra epistulam fundamenti Manichaeorum, De Trinitate* (particularly Books 2 and 3), Letter 147, Letter 148, and *De haeresibus*. I examine these texts chronologically, tracing the development in Augustine's thought as it relates to anthropomorphism.

1. Contra epistulam fundamenti Manichaeorum

Augustine wrote *Contra epistulam fundamenti Manichaeorum* (*Against the "Foundation Letter" of the Manichees*) around 396 – 3 years before the anthropomorphite controversy erupted in Egypt. In chapter 23 of the work he makes mention of Christians who hold decidedly anthropomorphic views. It is clear, however, that he does not have any particular group or groups in mind but is thinking generally of more literal-minded believers. He never uses the term 'anthropomorphite' in this text; rather, he describes "the carnal and childish among us who, when they hear certain members of the body used in allegory (like when God's eyes or ears are mentioned), are accustomed, in the liberty of fantasy, to picture God for themselves in the

form of the human body."[75] Such people are inferior to "spiritual" Christians, who understand that "the divine substance and nature does not spread out in material space, nor is it shaped by linear measurements."[76] Yet their ideas of God are more respectable than those of the Manichaeans, who think of God as having "infinite material extension, yet not in all directions" – being "unbounded above in his own nature, but encroached on below by a hostile nature."[77]

Augustine places the "carnal and childish" believers in a better position than the Manichaeans for two reasons. First, they conceive of God as having a human form, which is "the most excellent of its kind."[78] Second, if they are willing to submit to the teaching of the church, these believers can be brought to a more "spiritual" understanding of Scripture – namely, "that the divine powers are suitably expressed by the name, sometimes of ears, sometimes of eyes, sometimes of hands or feet ... and all the other innumerable things."[79] In this text of 396, Augustine demonstrates no knowledge of an 'anthropomorphite' sect – only of literal-minded believers who could aptly be labeled 'anthropomorphites,' even though Augustine refrains from doing so.

2. De Trinitate

Augustine worked on *De Trinitate* throughout the early 400s, completing it sometime between 416 and 421. In Book 2, Chapters 8 and 9, he addresses a doctrine that appears to be similar to the one held by some of Cyril's opponents – namely, that the Father is invisible while the Son is visible. Specifically, Augustine charges his opponents with affirming "the Son to be visible, not by having taken flesh of the Virgin, but also previously in himself."[80] They cite as evidence the Old Testament theophanies, claiming that

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[75] Augustine, *C. ep. Man.* 23: "*carnales et paruulos nostros, qui solent aiditis in allegoria membris quibusdam corporis nostri—uelut cum dicuntur oculi dei et aures dei, solent deum sibi libertate phantasmatis corporis humani specie figurare*." CSEL 25:219–220.

[76] Augustine, *C. ep. Man.* 23: "*substantium naturamque diuinam nullis locorum spatiis tendi, nullis liniamentorum dimensionibus figurari*." CSEL 25:219

[77] Augustine, *C. ep. Man.* 23: "*infinita mole diffusum, non tamen undique ... apertum superius natura propria, intratum inferius aliena*." CSEL 25:220.

[78] Augustine, *C. ep. Man.* 23: "*summa dignitate in suo genere*." CSEL 25:220.

[79] Augustine, *C. ep. Man.* 23: "*diuinas potentias congruenter alibi aurium, alibi oculorum, alibi manuum uel pedum ... ceterarumque talium innumerabilium rerum nomine enuntiari*." CSEL 25:220.

[80] Augustine, *Trin.* 2.9.15: "*visibilem Filium, non per carnem de Virgine assumptam, sed etiam antea per se ipsum*." OSA 15:218.

it was the Son who appeared to the fathers when "he had not yet taken flesh, his substance being visible to mortal eyes."[81]

Not only is the Son visible in their thinking – he is also mortal, for he appeared in many forms and is therefore changeable (Augustine and his opponents both equating changeableness with mortality). Augustine adds that the Scriptural passages under consideration were 1 Timothy 1:17 ("To the King of the ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever") and 6:16 ("It is he alone who has immortality and dwells in unapproachable light, whom no one has ever seen or can see"), with his opponents interpreting these texts as applying to the Father only.[82]

Augustine concludes the discussion by declaring that his opponents are very far from knowing that the substance "of the one and only God, that is, the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, remains not only invisible, but also unchangeable, and by this it consists in true and real immortality."[83] In fact, it is to be denied that God (Father, Son, or Spirit) *ever* appeared to human eyes, "unless through the corporeal creature made subject to God's own power."[84]

Michel Barnes demonstrates convincingly that Augustine's opponents in *De Trinitate* 1–4 are Latin Homoians.[85] He cites a text fragment written by the Homoian bishop Palladius of Ratiaria[86] that questions "whether the

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[81] Augustine, *Trin.* 2.9.15: "*nondum carne assumpta, substantia ejus conspicua mortalibus oculis fuit*." OSA 15:220.

[82] Augustine, *Trin.* 2.9.15, OSA 15:218–220.

[83] Augustine, *Trin.* 2.9.16: "*unius et solius Dei, id est, Patris et Filii et Spiritus sancti, non solum invisibilem, verum et incommutabilem permanere ..., ac per hoc in vera et sincera immortalitate consistere*." OSA 15:222.

[84] Augustine, *Trin.* 2.9.16: "*nisi per subjectam suae potestati corpoream creaturam*." OSA 15:222.

[85] Barnes, "The Visible Christ," 336–342. Homoians affirmed the Son to be 'like' (ὅμοιος) the Father, but rejected any definition involving 'ousios' language, which they considered unbiblical and divisive (they are thus to be distinguished from both Homoiousians and Anomoians). As noted by Peter Heather and John Matthews, the western Homoians (most notably the Gothic bishop Ulfila, Auxentius of Durostorum, and Palladius of Ratiaria) emphatically subordinated the Son to the Father, regarding Christ "as an 'only-begotten' (*unigenitus*) God of second order, as 'Lord' (*dominus*) created by the 'unbegotten' (*ingenitus*) Supreme God, or Father." *The Goths in the Fourth Century* (Liverpool University Press, 1991), 138. In this, they see the influence of Middle Platonism, with its notion of "a creating God or 'demiurge' operating below the Supreme First Principle (*altissimus auctor*)." *The Goths*, 139. This is interesting, for in Part 2 (Chapters 4 and 5) of this study, I examine the influence of Middle Platonic Jewish thinking (like that of Philo) on the Christology of the anthropomorphites.

[86] Palladius, longtime enemy of Ambrose of Milan, was condemned and deposed (along with two others) at the Council of Aquileia (381) for his refusal to acknowledge the Son as *deum verum*. For the acts of the council, see *Gesta Episcoporum Aquileiae adversum Haereticos Arrianos*, ed. M. Zelzer, CSEL 82.3:326–368; for an interpretation

Son is the invisible God" (*si Filius inuisibilis Deus*).[87] Palladius cites a number of Scriptural passages affirming that the Father cannot be seen (1 Tim 6:16; Exod 33:20; John 1:18) and then turns to passages that seem to teach that the Son can be seen (Gen 18:1; John 1:14, 9:36–37). Barnes highlights several features of this Homoian text: (1) the true God is invisible; (2) the Son is visible; (3) the Old Testament theophanies are understood to be appearances of the Son; (4) the Son's visibility is found equally in the Old and New Testaments; and (5) Palladius expresses this theology as exegesis, 1 Timothy 6:16 being "the key text by which all the other appearance texts are understood."[88] Every one of these features is present in the view that Augustine is opposing in *De Trinitate* 2.8–9.

3. Letters 147 and 148

Barnes' conclusion is confirmed by Augustine's letters 147 and 148, both dated to 413 or 414, and both dealing with the vision of God. In these letters, Augustine seeks to resolve the dilemma of how Scripture can say that God will be seen (cf. Matt 5:8), while at the same time teaching that no one has ever seen or can see God (cf. John 1:18). He realizes that some sort of distinction must be made but rejects as heretical the distinction encountered in *De Trinitate* 2.8–9 – that the Father's nature is invisible (hence God cannot be seen), while the Son's is visible (hence God can be seen). Here (unlike in *De Trinitate*) he actually names the proponents of this view – the "Arians."[89] Interestingly, when Cyril encountered this doctrine, he also accused his opponents of 'Arianism.' However, while Cyril was addressing Egyptian and Palestinian monks (who in all probability were not Arians of any stripe), Augustine is clearly addressing Latin Homoians the likes of Palladius.

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of the proceedings, see Daniel H. Williams, *Ambrose of Milan and the End of the Nicene-Arian Conflicts* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 169–184. Apparently, Palladius had no difficulty in saying Christ was *verum filium dei* (following Rom 9:5), but he rejected his opponents' language of *deum verum* as unscriptural, for in John 17:3 Christ describes the Father as *solum verum deum* (*Gesta* 17, CSEL 82.3:336).

[87] Palladius, *Fragment* 106 in Roger Gryson, *Scolies Ariennes sur le Concile d'Aquilee* (Paris: Les Editions du Cerf, 1980), SC 267:290–291. The fragment appears as one of many (pro-Homoian) notes in the margins of the fifth-century uncial text Parisinus Latinus 8907, which contains the *gesta* of Aquileia, some writings of Hilary of Poitier, and Ambrose's *De fide* 1–2. Gryson, 80–81, argues that fragment 106 (along with all the others that appear in the margins of *De fide*) belongs to a refutation of *De fide*, written by Palladius, in defense of himself and the others who were condemned at Aquileia.

[88] Barnes, "The Visible Christ," 336–337.

[89] Augustine, *Ep.* 147.19, CSEL 44:292; *Ep.* 148.10, CSEL 44:340. Of course, it would be more accurate to call them "Homoians."

Augustine resolves the dilemma by making two parallel distinctions: between form (*species*) and substance (*substantia*), and between bodily eyes and the eyes of the purified heart/mind. The eyes of the body can see God only in the *form* in which God chooses to appear, while the eyes of a purified heart can see God in his *substance*. He writes that, whenever God has appeared to bodily eyes (e.g., in the Old Testament theophanies), he appeared "in the form his will chose, while his nature remained hidden."[90] However, "the desire of the truly pious" is to see more, "to gaze upon that substance by which [God] is what he is."[91] According to Augustine, such a vision *can* be received – not by the eyes of the body, but only by the eyes of a purified mind or heart. Although a few saints receive it in this life (e.g., Moses and Paul), as a rule it is reserved for the life to come.

An important feature of Letter 148 is the mention, for the first time in Augustine's corpus, of "anthropomorphites." The letter is addressed to Fortunian, bishop of Sicca, asking him to apologize on Augustine's behalf to an anonymous "brother" (presumably a fellow bishop). This brother was offended by Augustine's harsh language in a previous letter, which argued that God cannot be seen by the eyes of the body. Augustine claims that he wrote the previous letter as a warning against thinking that God is bodily and visible (as anthropomorphites do) and that his zeal in refuting such a doctrine is what caused him to be "excessive and thoughtless in attacking."[92]

Two difficulties surround Letter 148: what was the offending letter, and why was the anonymous bishop offended? Although Letter 147 was addressed to a private individual – a Catholic laywoman named Paulina – it was in all probability the offending letter. The subject matter is identical, and Augustine notes in *Retractationes* that he had discovered Letter 148 (at that time unlisted among his works as a book or as a letter) in a manuscript along with Letter 147, further linking the two.[93]

Why was the anonymous bishop offended? Was it because he himself believed God to be bodily and visible? If that were the case, it would be difficult to make sense of Augustine's apology.[94] Rather, Augustine gives

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[90] Augustine, *Ep.* 147.19: "*ea specie, quam uoluntas elegerit, etiam latente natura*." CSEL 44:292.

[91] Augustine, *Ep.* 147.20: "*desiderium autem ueraciter piorum ... contuendam ... in eam substantiam, qua ipse est, quod est*." CSEL 44:293.

[92] Augustine, *Ep.* 148.4: "*in corripiendo nimius atque inprouidus*." CSEL 44:334.

[93] Augustine, *retr.* 2.41 in *Les Révisions*, ed. Gustave Bardy (Paris: Desclée, De Brouwer et Cie, 1950), OSA 12:522.

[94] Golitzin, "The Form of God," online at http://www.marquette.edu/maqom/morphe.html (on 16 June 2011), raises the possibility that the bishop was an "anthropomorphite"—in the sense that he and I define the term—referring to those who believe that the

the impression that he and the bishop held opposing views on the nature of the resurrected body. It would seem that the bishop believed in a body so greatly changed that its eyes will be able to see God's "incorporeal substance" (*substantiam incorporalem*), and Augustine plainly believed that this was wrong. However, he writes that he has not yet come to any firm conclusions about the nature of the resurrected body and that, as long as one's ideas do not spill over into the erroneous belief in a "bodily God" (*deo corporali*), he is willing to keep an open mind on the subject. He states more than once that if the offended bishop (or anyone else, for that matter) has achieved some certainty on this difficult question, he is willing to learn from him.[95]

Augustine makes it a part of his strategy in this letter to dwell on the issue of anthropomorphism, probably in an attempt to convince his readers (especially the offended bishop) that anthropomorphites were the *real* target of his attack in the previous letter (and not the bishop's views regarding the resurrected body). He is clearly thinking here of a particular sect – "those who are called anthropomorphites."[96] He states that he could quote many authors who have refuted them (it would be interesting to know who they are), but he chooses to cite only Jerome's homily on Psalm 93(94).[97] The text describes 'anthropomorphites' as those "who say God has body parts just as we do"[98] and who understand certain passages of Scripture (i.e., Gen 3.8) "simplistically and refer human weaknesses to the magnificence of God."[99] Throughout the course of this discussion, Augustine never once accuses the anthropomorphites of teaching that the Son *in particular* is eternally and intrinsically visible – he reserves that accusation for the 'Arians.' Rather, Augustine understands the anthropomorphites to believe that God, generically considered, has a body.

Augustine's understanding of anthropomorphism changed between the writing of *Contra epistulam fundamenti Manichaeorum* in 396 and the writing of these two letters in 413/14. In 396 he knew of literal-minded

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Son is bodily and visible. However, Augustine's apology makes equally little sense on this hypothesis.

[95] Cf. Augustine, *Ep.* 148.2 (CSEL 44:333); 4 (CSEL 44:34–335); and 18 (CSEL 44:347).

[96] Augustine, *Ep.* 148.13: "*qui ... anthropomorphi nominantur*." CSEL 44:343.

[97] The text he cites—word for word—is Jerome's *Tractatus in Psalmos* 93, CCSL 78:144–145, discussed in Chapter 2, p. 37. Teske, WSA II/2, mistakenly attributes the citation to pseudo-Jerome, *Brevarium in Psalmos* (*Short Commentary on the Psalms*), PL 26:1108.

[98] Augustine, *Ep.* 148.14: "*qui dicunt deum habere membra, quae etiam nos habemus* (literally, "who say God has members, which we also have")." CSEL 44:344.

[99] Augustine, *Ep.* 148.14: "*simpliciter ... et humanas inbecillitates ad dei magnificentiam referunt*." CSEL 44:344.

Christians who took the doctrine of the *imago dei* to indicate that God had a human body. Yet he did not think of such believers as an organized group, and he had no name for them. By the writing of Letter 148, he knew of a distinct sect called 'anthropomorphites' who had been opposed by numerous 'orthodox' writers. Of course, this difference can be explained by the eruption of the anthropomorphite controversy in 399 and the subsequent condemnation of anthropomorphism by numerous authors Augustine would have read. Relying solely upon them, Augustine merely repeats their characterization of anthropomorphite theology, having no way of knowing whether it had been misconstrued or misunderstood.

Furthermore, although he does not equate anthropomorphites with 'Arians' (i.e., Homoians), he clearly associates them with one another – both offered (in Augustine's view) erroneous solutions to the problem of the vision of God. While Homoians solved the problem of God's invisibility/visibility with the dichotomy of invisible Father/visible Son, the anthropomorphites (according to Augustine's sources) denied divine invisibility altogether, picturing God in human form. This association between anthropomorphites and 'Arians' becomes even clearer in Augustine's anti-heretical work, *De haeresibus*.

4. De haeresibus *50*

Augustine wrote *De haeresibus* in 428 or 429, after completing two books of *Retractationes* and while he was writing *Contra Julianum*.[100] In the text, he remains convinced that 'anthropomorphites' teach divine corporeality (with no specific reference to the eternal Word). At the same time, he associates them very closely with 'Arians,' perhaps based on a growing (if not entirely understood) awareness of the affinity between the two 'heresies.' He does not equate them with one another (as Cyril does), but he may be moving in that direction.

De haeresibus contains only the descriptions of various heresies and not their refutations. Augustine writes, in the "Preface," that he intended a second volume that was to serve as a guidebook for avoiding any and every heresy that had already arisen or that would come along in the future,[101] but this second volume was never written. *De haeresibus* lists 88 heresies, beginning with the Simonians (followers of the biblical Simon Magus) and concluding with the Pelagians. In Chapters 1–57 Augustine follows what he considered to be the work of Epiphanius, in Chapters 58–80 he follows

[100] Latin and ET: *The De haeresibus of Saint Augustine: A Translation with an Introduction and Commentary*, ed. Liguori G. Muller (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1956). For the date of *De haeresibus* see Muller, "Introduction," 6.

[101] Augustine, *haer.* "Preface," p. 59.

the *De haeresibus liber* of Filastrius,[102] and in Chapters 81–88 he makes use of various other sources.

Augustine's description of anthropomorphites comes in Chapter 50, in the section of the work where he believes he is following Epiphanius. He begins by noting that Epiphanius calls them "Audians" (*Vadianos*), while others call them "Anthropomorphites" (*Anthropomorphitas*) "because in their material-mindedness they fashion God for themselves in the likeness of corruptible humanity."[103] He further notes that Epiphanius attributes this error to their ignorance (*rusticitati*), intending them to be regarded as schismatics and not as heretics. He cites Epiphanius as stating that this sect "separated themselves from communion with us because they find fault with wealthy bishops and celebrate the Pasch along with the Jews."[104] However, he notes that others claim the Audians/Anthropomorphites "to be in communion with the Catholic Church in Egypt."[105]

Since Augustine claims to be following Epiphanius, and clearly believes he is doing so, it is necessary to clarify precisely what he is using for his source. Among Epiphanius' works is a massive anti-heretical treatise, the *Panarion* (meaning "Medicine Chest").[106] The *Panarion* offers descriptions and lengthy refutations of eighty[107] heresies and schisms, the Audians among them. However, it is not possible that Augustine used the *Panarion* as a source for *De haeresibus*, because in the Preface he characterizes his source as extremely short and lacking refutations.[108] The *Panarion* simply cannot be characterized in this way.

According to Frank Williams, it is debatable whether Augustine even knew of the *Panarion*.[109] He certainly knew nothing of its description of the Audians.[110] In *Panarion* 70, Epiphanius praises Audius (their founder) for his purity, Godly zeal, and faith. He declares the Audians to be "entirely orthodox" (ὀρθότατα), yet contentious about a few small points:

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[102] Filastrius, *De haeresibus liber*, ed. F. Marx (Vienna: 1885): CSEL 38.

[103] Augustine, *haer*. 50: '*quoniam Deum sibi fingunt cogitatione carnali in similitudinem hominis corruptibilis*." *De haeresibus*, 98.

[104] Augustine, *haer*. 50: "*separasse se ... a communione nostra culpando episcopos divites et pascha cum Iudaeis celebrando*." *De haeresibus*, 98.

[105] Augustine, *haer*. 50: "*in Aegypto ecclesiae Catholicae communicare*." *De haeresibus*, 98.

[106] Critical ed: *Epiphanius*, vols. 1–4, ed. Karl Holl and Jürgen Dummer (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs; Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1915–2006).

[107] Epiphanius draws his inspiration from the eighty concubines mentioned in Song of Songs 6:8, which he interprets as corresponding to heresies, while the one dove of 6:9 corresponds to the church (*Panarion* 35 in *Epiphanius* 2:43).

[108] Augustine, *haer*. "Preface," p. 59.

[109] Frank Williams, introduction to *The Panarion of Epiphanius of Salamis* (Leiden: Brill, 1987), xvii.

[110] Cf. Epiphanius, *Panarion* 70 in *Epiphanius* 3:232–249.

they hold that the image of God refers to the human body (perhaps implying that God is corporeal); they celebrate the Passover at the same time as the Jews (rather than with the rest of the church); and (worst of all) they are schismatic, refusing even to pray with someone just because he or she has membership in the Catholic Church. Furthermore, Epiphanius places the sect – at its height – in the regions of Syria and Scythia (which he calls Gothia). Yet by the time of writing (the *Panarion* was completed in 377 or 378[111]), he reports that the Audians were in decline and that they had retreated to monasteries in the Taurus Mountains (Cappadocia), Palestine, and Arabia. He surmises that some may still reside in villages outside of Chalcis (near Antioch) and Damascus, but greatly reduced in number.

Augustine's description of the Audians differs from *Panarion* 70 on several key points. In *Panarion* 70, the Audians are presented as schismatics who refuse to commune with Catholic Christians, there is no mention of them thriving in Egypt, and they are already on their way toward extinction. Augustine's Audians still exist, in Egypt, and (possibly) in communion with the Catholic Church there. He is most certainly thinking of the monks who were involved in the anthropomorphite controversy of 399. They were consistently (albeit unfairly) referred to as 'anthropomorphites' (Augustine's alternate name for the Audians), they were most certainly in communion with the Catholic Church (although that communion was often strained), and if my analysis of Cyril's letters is correct, they were still around at least into the 430s. It would seem, then, that Augustine has conflated his source's description of the Audians with information he has gathered about the Egyptian anthropomorphites – a mistake he likely would not have made had he been familiar with the *Panarion*.

Rather, Augustine's source is a series of texts attributed to Epiphanius called the *Anacephalaeoses*, or *Recapitulations* (of the *Panarion*). In the manuscript tradition of the *Panarion*, seven *Anacephalaeoses* are interspersed throughout the text, heading each section and offering brief summaries of the heresies to be discussed in it. The consensus today is that these are not authentic; they differ in vocabulary from the *Panarion* and often contradict it in content (i.e., the order of heresies in *Anacephalaeosis* 1 differs from that of the *Panarion*).[112] It would seem that the *Anacephalaeoses* circulated independently of the *Panarion* and were meant to be read as a whole. Augustine, although ignorant of the *Panarion*, had access to the *Anacephalaeoses* and employed them as a source for *De haeresibus*.

[111] According to Williams, "Introduction," p. xiii.
[112] See Williams, "Introduction," p. xvii.

This is evidenced by the fact that numerous chapters of *De haeresibus* are nothing more than literal translations of the (Greek) *Anacephalaeoses.*[113]

Augustine's conflation of the Audians with the Egyptian anthropomorphites is easy to understand if we consider that he had recourse only to the *Anacephalaeoses* and not to the *Panarion*. The description of the Audians is far briefer in the former than in the latter (a mere 8 lines of text compared to 509).[114] The author notes that they are orderly in their behavior, that they hold to the Catholic faith, and that most of them live in monasteries. He also claims that "they make excessive use of many apocryphal works"[115] – a claim not made by Epiphanius in *Panarion* 70. Finally, the author summarizes the charges found in *Panarion* 70: the Audians do not pray with Catholic Christians because they find fault with their bishops; they celebrate Passover on the Jewish date; and "they have an unlearned and contentious belief, interpreting the words 'according to the image' most literally."[116]

Apart from the reference to the Audians' alternative Paschal celebration, there is nothing here that would distinguish them from the Egyptian anthropomorphites. The anthropomorphites (like the Audians of the *Anacephalaeosis*) were monks Catholic in faith but finding fault with Catholic bishops (most notably Theophilus of Alexandria) and accused of holding anthropomorphite beliefs. Further, there is good reason to believe that they also made use of apocryphal literature.[117] Finally, the *Anacephalaeosis* mentions neither the Audians' geographic location nor their rapid decline in Epiphanius' own time. If this was all the information Augustine had regarding the Audians, one can understand why he confused them with the Egyptian anthropomorphites.

What is most significant for this study are the ways in which Augustine has altered his source, both in content and in form. In terms of content – besides identifying the Audians with the Egyptian anthropomorphites – Augustine has made one major change to the text of *Anacephalaeosis* 70.

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[113] Muller, "Introduction" in *De haer*., p. 23.

[114] Cf. *Anacephalaeosis* 6.70 in *Epiphanius* 3:230.

[115] *Anac.* 6.70: "κέχρηνται δὲ καὶ ἀποκρύφοις πολλοῖς κατακόρως." *Epiphanius* 3:230. Χράω is often used in the sense of relying upon or submitting oneself to an oracle or scriptures (Christian or otherwise).

[116] *Anac.* 6.70: " ἔχουσι δὲ καὶ ἰδιωτικόν τι καὶ φιλόνεικον ξηρότατα τὸ κατ' εἰκόνα ἑρμηνεύοντες." *Epiphanius* 3:230. The author is clearly referencing Genesis 1:27. Ξηρός literally means 'dry' or 'bare,' as in 'according to the letter.' It is used here in the superlative.

[117] Cf. Golitzin, "The Form of God," online at http://www.marquette.edu/maqom/morphe.html (on 16 June 2011). In Chapter 4 of this study, I explore the link between anthropomorphite theology and the Nag Hammadi corpus—literature that was and continues to be characterized as 'apocryphal.'

Although the latter characterizes the doctrinal error in the most general of terms (they take the image of God "most literally"), Augustine states it much more specifically – "they fashion God for themselves in the likeness of corruptible humanity."[118]

Now, taking the image of God "most literally" could conceivably mean a number of different things, but Augustine is certain that it consists in the theological error of ascribing to God a human body. Although this specific characterization might simply have been inferred from the text of the *Anacephalaeosis*, it is probable that Augustine is drawing on prior (mis)information he has received about Egyptian anthropomorphite theology. In the quotation from 'Jerome' in Letter 148, the anthropomorphites' literal interpretation of Scripture led to the view that God has a human body. It is easy enough to see why Augustine might assume that the Audians' taking "the doctrine of our creation in God's image with extreme literalness" would lead to the same error and why he would come to identify the two sects with one another (especially lacking the additional information about the Audians provided by the *Panarion*).

In terms of form, Augustine manipulated the order of the heresies as he found them in the *Anacephalaeoses*, with the result that the Audians/ Anthropomorphites fall in between Arians and semi-Arians. A comparison chart reveals the differences (Table 1).

Table 1: Anacephalaeoses *compared with* De haeresibus

Anacephalaeoses	De haeresibus
(65) Paulianists	(44) Paulianists
	(45) Photinians
(66) Manichaeans	(46) Manichaeans
(67) Hieracites	(47) Hieracites
(68) Melitians	(48) Melitians
(69) Arians	(49) Arians
(70) Audians	(50) Audians or Anthropomorphites
(71) Photinians	
(72) Marcellians	
(73) Semi-Arians	(51) Semi-Arians

Augustine makes two changes in the order of heresies: he moves the description of the Photinians so that it follows that of the Paulianists, and he omits completely the description of the Marcellians.[119] Augustine states

[118] Augustine, *haer*. 50: "*quoniam Deum sibi fingunt ... in similitudinem hominis corruptibilis*." *De haeresibus*, 98.

[119] There are other differences between the *Anacephalaeoses* and *De haeresibus* in terms of the order of the heresies, but the only differences that are significant for this study are those that take place between Chapters 44 and 51.

plainly his reason for this first change – the Photinians share the same error as the Paulianists (followers of Paul of Samosata), and therefore the two groups should be placed in succession. In fact, according to Augustine, Photinus so strengthened Paul's error that Paulianists are now called Photinians.[120] Nevertheless, Augustine follows both Epiphanius and Filastrius in keeping these heresies under separate headings while adopting Filastrius' order in preference to that of Epiphanius.

The omission of the Marcellians is more difficult to account for. Aside from Epiphanius' first twenty heresies (all of which Augustine omits because they are pre-Christian), the Marcellians are one of only three heresies contained in the *Anacephalaeoses* that Augustine omits from *De haeresibus*, along with the Lucianists (*Anac*. 43) and the Collyridians (*Anac*. 79). He nowhere mentions these omissions and therefore offers no reason for them, yet one may speculate as to his motives.

Anacephalaeosis 43 offers a brief description of the Lucianists, stating only that "a certain ancient Lucian ... taught doctrines in all respects like Marcion's, but taught others different from Marcion's."[121] Perhaps Augustine, knowing nothing of the Lucianists himself (and not having access to the *Panarion*), found this statement too terse, too enigmatic, or both, to be of any use, and so decided to omit this sect altogether.

About the Collyridians, *Anacephalaeosis* 79 likewise has little to say – only that "they offer a small loaf [of bread] in the name of ... Mary on a certain set day of the year" and that this is why they are called Collyridians.[122] *Panarion* 79 makes it clear that the actual accusation here involved the worship of Mary and the usurpation of the priesthood by women (an abomination in the eyes of Epiphanius).[123] Yet supposing that Augustine was ignorant of the *Panarion* and knew nothing of the Collyridians himself, it would be difficult to imagine why he would even regard them as heretical based on their description in the *Anacephalaeosis*; thus he also omits this sect from *De haeresibus*.

The Marcellians are described at some length in *Anacephalaeosis* 72, but in such a way as to call into question whether they should be regarded as heretics. It states that they derive from Marcellus of Ancyra and that it was only *rumored* that his views approximated to those of Sabellius. However, "perhaps he has presently repented and corrected himself ... for some orthodox writers have more or less defended him and his disci-

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[120] Augustine, *haer*. 44, p. 84.

[121] *Anac*. 3.43: "Λουκιανός τις ἀρχαῖος ... πάντα κατὰ Μαρκίωνα ἐδογμάτισεν, ἕτερα δὲ παρὰ τὸν Μαρκίωνα ... δογματίζει." *Epiphanius* 2:3.

[122] *Anac*. 7.79: "οἵ εἰς ὄνομα ... Μαρίας ἐν ἡμέρᾳ τινὶ τοῦ ἔτους ἀποτεταγμένῃ κολλυρίδα τινὰ προσφέροντες." *Epiphanius* 3:415.

[123] Epiphanius, *Panarion* 79 in *Epiphanius* 3:475–484.

ples."[124] Perhaps Augustine found this too thin a basis for the accusation of heresy and so omitted the Marcellians from his list.

The result of these changes is that Audians/Anthropomorphites fall in between Arians and semi-Arians. Interestingly, this is the only text (to my knowledge) in which Augustine distinguishes between Arians and semi-Arians. He seems to be aware of this fact himself, for he makes it clear that he is only following Epiphanius: "Epiphanius calls 'semi-Arians' those who say that the Son is of like essence [to the Father], as if they are not full Arians; as though the Arians intend 'not like [essence],' since this is what the Eunomians are known to say."[125] It is obvious from both *Panarion* 73 and *Anacephalaeosis* 73 that Epiphanius is distinguishing between Homoiousians and 'full' Arians, but Augustine clearly does not accept the distinction. He seems to acknowledge only two alternatives to *homoousion*: "like essence" and "not like essence." Any heretic who does not say "not like essence" with the Eunomians must say "like essence" (or something akin to it), and Augustine prefers to label all such opponents simply as 'Arians' (as in *De Trinitate*).

Given this, one might expect him to make one of two moves: either omit semi-Arians from *De haeresibus* (as he has done with Lucianists, Marcellians, and Collyridians), or (given the close relationship – even identity – that he perceives between Arians and so-called semi-Arians) place semi-Arians directly after Arians (as he had done with Paulianists and Photinians). Surprisingly, he refrains from doing either, with the result that Audians/Anthropomorphites are listed between these two closely related groups.

De haeresibus is not the only text in which Augustine associates anthropomorphites with a group that might be called 'semi-Arian' – in Letter 148 he separately attacks Homoians for maintaining the visibility of the Son and anthropomorphites for maintaining the corporeality of God. Both 'errors' appear in the letter because each, in its own turn, offers what Augustine considers to be an unacceptable solution to the problem of the vision of God. In *De haeresibus*, Augustine has manipulated the order of heresies as he found them in the *Anacephalaeoses* with the result that an-

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[124] *Anac.* 6.72: " ἴσως δὲ μεταγνοὺς τάχα ἑαυτὸν διωρθώσατο ... ὕπὲρ αὐτοῦ γὰρ καὶ ὕπὲρ τῶν αὐτοῦ μαθητῶν ὀρθόδοξοί τινες μέσως ὕπεραπελογοῦντο." *Epiphanius* 3:230.

[125] Augustine, *haer.* 51: "*Semiarianos Epiphanius dicit qui similes essentiae dicunt filium, tamquam non plenis Arianos; quasi Ariani nec similem velint, cum hoc Eunomiani dicere celebrentur.*" *De haeresibus*, 98. Muller takes *nec* as modifying *velint* ("as if the Arians themselves do not intend like essence"), but this seems wrong for two reasons. First, the word order favors taking *nec* with *similem*; second, Muller's translations introduces an unlikely confusion into Augustine's thinking—it has him accusing the Eunomians of saying "like essence," which he must have known they emphatically did *not* say.

thropomorphites are associated even more closely with 'Arians' and 'semi-Arians.' It seems plausible that, by the late 420s, Augustine was aware of a closer affinity between these groups than when he wrote Letter 148, even if he remained unaware of the true (Christological) nature of anthropomorphism.

The problem of the vision of God was one that seemed to trouble Augustine throughout his career: Can God be seen in this life? If not, then how is one to explain the Scriptural theophanies? Will God be seen in the next life? If so, how? Augustine even admits uncertainty in Letter 148. Yet although he was not willing to state dogmatically what one *ought* to believe about the vision of God, he was sure of what one ought *not* to believe – anything that would compromise the doctrine of divine incorporeality or distinguish too sharply between persons of the Trinity.

D. Conclusion

When Cyril and Augustine are taken into account alongside the witnesses to the original controversy of 399, a clear picture of anthropomorphite theology emerges. The anthropomorphites were indeed seeking the vision of Christ in prayer, but not merely of Christ *incarnate*. They were seeking the vision of the eternal, divine body of the Word. This explains not only why they were opposed by Origenists, but why they were opposed by non-Origenists as well: in light of (the newly victorious) Nicene orthodoxy, any Christology that distinguished the Son's nature from that of the Father was certain to draw fire from numerous quarters.

In Chapter 4 I seek to place anthropomorphite Christology in its broader Egyptian context by examining parallel ideas in certain texts of the Nag Hammadi codices. Even if a direct connection cannot be proven to exist between this literature and the anthropomorphites (although I will argue that such a connection is possible), these parallels will demonstrate that the anthropomorphite conception of Christ as the eternally visible, embodied image of God was somewhat widespread in fourth-century Egypt.

Chapter 4

Nag Hammadi

A. Introduction

In Part 1 (Chapters 2 and 3) of this study, I argue that the anthropomorphite controversy was actually a Christological controversy, with the anthropomorphites taking the view that Christ – in his divinity – is the embodied, visible image of the Father. In Part 2 (Chapters 4 and 5), I show that they were not alone. Such a Christology is also present in a number of Nag Hammadi texts, and it is predated by Jewish-mystical traditions concerning God's Logos or Memra. I argue that the anthropomorphites and the communities that produced these Nag Hammadi texts were informed by such traditions, which possibly filtered down to the anthropomorphites (in part) through their reading of these texts.

In this chapter, I examine six Nag Hammadi texts: *The Gospel of Thomas*, *Eugnostos the Blessed*, *The Sophia of Jesus Christ*, *On the Origin of the World*, *The Apocryphon of John*, and *The Teachings of Silvanus*. Through them runs a common thread – the notion that a divine Anthropos appeared in the primordial light of Genesis 1:3–4, functioning at once as the image of God, the archetype of humanity, and the one through whom God's glory is seen. Before discussing the details of this concept, I present the external evidence that these Nag Hammadi texts may have had a direct influence on the anthropomorphites.

B. Nag Hammadi and the Anthropomorphites

A direct link between the Nag Hammadi texts and the anthropomorphites cannot be proven; furthermore, any link between the anthropomorphites (at least the ones of which we are aware) and the actual Nag Hammadi codices is highly unlikely, given the great geographical distance between them. Nevertheless, the anthropomorphites (as I have interpreted them) and the authors of certain Nag Hammadi texts shared a common Christology. It may simply be the case that various communities inherited this Christology from the same Jewish (and Jewish-Christian) sources; however, a case can be made that anthropomorphites actually did read these texts.

First, there is a strong possibility that the Nag Hammadi codices were produced and used by Pachomian monks. It is well known that the codices were discovered just a few kilometers from the sites of the earliest Pachomian foundations (Tabennesi, Pbow and Sheneset, very near Diospolis Parva/Chenoboskion). Of course, this proximity in itself proves nothing. Besides Pachomian monks, many people lived in the area who might have taken an interest in these texts: communities similar to that of Palamon (Pachomius' master), followers of other disciples of Palamon, Hieracites,[1] Melitians,[2] civilian and military administrators in Diospolis Parva,[3] etc.

However, there is an additional matter – the leather covers of eight of the codices were strengthened with scraps of used papyrus (cartonnage), and these provide a great deal of information about the production of the codices.[4] First, they bear dates between 333 and 348 CE, placing the production of the codices firmly in the middle third of the fourth century.[5] Second, the fragments from Codex VII give some indication of a monastic

[1] These were followers of Hieracas, a contemporary of Pachomius who lived outside Leontopolis. He made encratism central to Christianity, insisting that the ascetic lifestyle is essential for salvation and that married persons cannot enter the kingdom of heaven. Cf. Epiphanius, *Panarion* 67 in *Epiphanius* 3:132–140. Frederik Wisse, "Gnosticism and Early Monasticism in Egypt," in *Gnosis: Festschrift für Hans Jonas*, ed. B. Aland (Göttingen 1978), 438–440, argues for a connection between the Nag Hammadi codices, Hieracites, *and* the Pachomians (suggesting that, in the first half of the fourth century, sects such as the Hieracites were being assimilated into the monasteries). He further argues that the *Testimony of Truth* (Codex IX) was likely written by Hieracas or one of his followers (whether before or after their assimilation into the Pachomian monasteries, he does not say).

[2] These were followers of Bishop Melitius of Lycopolis and comprised one of a number of sects that protested the ease with which the church readmitted the 'lapsed' into communion. Cf. Epiphanius, *Panarion* 68 in *Epiphanius* 3:140–152.

[3] D. W. Young, "The Milieu of Nag Hammadi: Some Historical Considerations," *Vigiliae christianae* 24 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1970): 130, discusses a text in which Shenute encounters the son of a *stratēlatēs* (general) who publicly expresses the opinion that "this body will not rise" (Shenute, *Opera* 3, CSCO 42:33). Such a sentiment is expressed in numerous Nag Hammadi texts, including *The Treatise on the Resurrection*, *The Exegesis on the Soul*, and *The Gospel of Philip*. This encounter demonstrates that, at the very least, a civilian or military official might have taken an interest in texts such as those discovered at Nag Hammadi.

[4] Photographs of the fragments are contained in *The Facsimile Edition of the Nag Hammadi Codices*, vol. 11: *Cartonnage* (Leiden: Brill, 1972–1979); ET in J. W. B. Barns, G. M. Browne, and J. C. Shelton, eds., *Nag Hammadi Codices: Greek and Coptic Papyri from the Cartonnage of the Covers* (Leiden: Brill, 1981).

[5] These dates are given by Armand Veilleux, "Monasticism and Gnosis in Egypt" in *The Roots of Egyptian Christianity*, ed. Birger A. Pearson and James E. Goehring (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986), 278.

– perhaps even a Pachomian – origin.[6] Among them are portions of the text of Genesis, an exhortation to virtue that was probably part of a homily or letter, and two letters written by or to monks. The first fragment (no. 72) was written by a woman to two monks named Sansnos and Psatos, asking for the cost per wagonload of chaff for her asses. The second (no. C8) is a Coptic fragment of a letter written by a certain Paphnoute to a certain Pachomius, addressing him as "my prophet and my father."[7] Paphnoute was, incidentally, the name of Abba Theodore's brother, who served as the great steward of the Pachomian *Koinonia* and resided at Pbow.[8]

This latter fragment would appear to be the 'smoking gun' connecting at least one Nag Hammadi codex to a Pachomian monastery. Armand Veilleux, however, urges caution. He points out that Paphnoute and Pachomius were among the most common of Coptic names, *The Life of Pachomius* mentioning two men by the name of Pachomius and at least two by the name of Paphnoute. Furthermore, Pachomius is never addressed by the title 'prophet' in all of Pachomian literature (although the title would later be applied to Shenute). Finally, since Pachomius and Paphnoute lived in the same monastery at Pbow, and since Pachomius' absences were brief, Veilleux questions whether the two men would have communicated by letters.[9]

The cartonnage of the other codices (I, IV, V, VI, VIII, IX, and XI) consists mainly of taxation lists, imperial ordinances, contracts, and accounts for items such as wine, wheat, and barley (sometimes in very large amounts). This diversity led J. C. Shelton to declare, "it is hard to think of a satisfactory single source for such a variety of documents except a town rubbish heap."[10] Of course, there is no reason why monks could not have gathered some of the material for making their books from the town rubbish heap (as Shelton himself admits). Furthermore, as James Goehring points out:

> One should not automatically extend the division between the spiritual and secular world in Pachomian monasticism into the economic realm as well. While the movement divided

[6] John Barns, "Greek and Coptic Papyri from the Covers of the Nag Hammadi Codices" in *Essays on the Nag Hammadi Texts*, ed. M. Krause (Leiden: Brill, 1975), 9–18, was the first to argue that the codices were produced by Pachomians.

[7] For more details about the contents of the fragments, cf. Veilleux, "Monasticism and Gnosis in Egypt," 278–283.

[8] Cf. *BoLife* 119 and *GkLife*[1] 114 in *Pachomian Koinonia*, tr. Armand Veilleux, *Cistercian Studies Series* 45–47 (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1980–1982), 1:174, 378.

[9] Veilleux, "Monasticism and Gnosis in Egypt," 281–282.

[10] Shelton, "Introduction," in *Nag Hammadi Codices*, 11.

itself from the world by a wall, it must be remembered that it built its monasteries in the greenbelt of the Nile.[11]

For instance, the monks practiced various crafts (such as weaving and building), retained boats and barges for travel up and down the Nile, conducted business, and farmed.[12] Furthermore, if the monasteries were as large as sources indicate, stocking them would have required a large quantity of supplies (and therefore a large amount of paperwork!).

Of course, even if it could be shown that the codices were produced in a Pachomian monastery, there would remain the question of their use. Torgny Säve-Söderbergh suggests that they were indeed produced by Pachomian monks but to be used as a heresiological library. Such a library would have been created for the purpose of refutation and discarded after it had lost its usefulness.[13] Numerous arguments have been marshaled against Säve-Söderbergh's suggestion. First, the codices were carefully buried rather than destroyed. Second, they do not comprise a library of any kind; differences in cover art and scribal hands, along with the fact that several treatises are duplicated, lead Frederik Wisse to conclude, "we are clearly not dealing with the standardized products of a monastic scriptorium and bindery but with uncoordinated individual efforts."[14] Third, the earliest Pachomian sources do not indicate an interest in heresy hunting so great as to call for the production of such a heresiological library.[15] Fourth, the content of the codices belies a heresiological use: some of the texts are pagan (like the portion of Plato's *Republic* recorded in Codex VI) and therefore would not interest a Christian heresiologist, while there are no writings from the main 'heretics' of fourth-century Egypt (the Arians,

[11] James E. Goehring, "New Frontiers in Pachomian Studies" in *The Roots of Egyptian Christianity*, ed. Birger A. Pearson and James E. Goehring (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986), 278.

[12] Cf. Palladius, *Historia Lausiaca*, 32.9–10 in *The Lausiac History of Palladius*, ed. Dom Cuthbert Butler (Cambridge: University Press, 1898), 94–95; *Regulations of Horsiesios* 55–62 in Veilleux, *Pachomian Koinonia*, 2:217–219.

[13] Torgny Säve-Söderbergh, "Holy Scriptures or Apologetic Documentations? The 'Sitz im Leben' of the Nag Hammadi Library" in *Les Textes de Nag Hammadi*, ed. Jacques-E. Ménard **(**Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1975), 3–14.

[14] Wisse, "Gnosticism and Early Monasticism in Egypt," 435.

[15] Veilleux, "Monasticism and Gnosis in Egypt," 286–288, argues that the few passages indicating such an interest are late additions and probably the work of non-Pachomian scribes. Goehring, "New Frontiers in Pachomian Studies," 246–247, argues that the movement under Pachomius simply did not understand authority in terms of 'orthodoxy' and 'heresy.' He concludes, "as difficult as it may be for us to fathom in this modern age of reason, it was not impossible for one to support Athanasius and read the Nag Hammadi texts." It was only later – under Abba Theodore – that the movement began to take an interest in 'orthodoxy' (and therefore in 'heresy'), as it sought to align itself with the Alexandrian Patriarchate.

Manichaeans, Origenists, and Meletians). Fifth, in the words of James Robinson, "the care and religious devotion reflected in the manufacture of the [codices] hardly suggests that the books were produced out of antagonism or even disinterest in their contents, but rather reflect the veneration accorded to holy texts."[16] He points out that some of the leather covers are tooled with crosses (codices II, IV, and VIII); the acrostic ιχθυς occurs in two scribal colophons (in codices III and VII); numerous colophons indicate that the scribe found what he was copying to be godly; and the scribes took care to correct errors in spelling and grammar. These characteristics conform to what is found in other monastic manuscripts, indicating that "the codices were meant to be edifying reading material."[17]

One final bit of evidence points to the possibility that the Nag Hammadi codices were read, with approval, in Pachomian monasteries. In his Festal Letter of 367, Athanasius warns against "apocryphal writings," which are the "invention of heretics, writing them to favour their own views, bestowing upon them their approbation, and assigning to them a date, and producing them as ancient writings, that thereby they might find occasion to lead astray the simple."[18] *The Bohairic Life of Pachomius* tells of the reception of the letter in the Pachomian monasteries. After reading it aloud, Abba Theodore admonishes the brothers:

> But let us be vigilant and take care not to read the books composed by these defiled heretics, atheists, and truly irreverent people, so that we ourselves may not become disobedient to the Lord .... And we must not lead others astray so that they read them and learn to be disobedient to the commands of the Holy Scriptures, which are founded on the orthodox faith our holy father taught us.[19]

After this admonition, he orders the letter to be translated into Coptic, and he personally "placed it in the monastery as a law for them."[20] Although he does not explicitly order the destruction or removal of such books, it is reasonable to suppose that (if they were indeed read in the monasteries) some sort of purge would have taken place. It has further been supposed that such a purge provided the impetus for the burial of the Nag Hammadi codices. However, it is only assumed that the codices were buried for the purpose of *hiding* them. According to Martin Krause, it was not uncom-

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[16] James M. Robinson, "Introduction" in *The Nag Hammadi Library in English* 3rd completely rev. ed., ed. James M. Robinson (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1990), 17.

[17] Wisse, "Gnosticism and Early Monasticism in Egypt," 435.

[18] Athanasius, *Letter 39* in *The Festal Epistles of S. Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria*, ed. H. G. Williams, tr. (from Syriac) Henry Burgess, *A Library of Fathers of the Holy Catholic Church*, v. 38 (Oxford: J. H. Parker, 1854), 139.

[19] *BoLife* 189 in Veilleux, *Pachomian Koinonia* 1:231.

[20] *BoLife* 189 in Veilleux, *Pachomian Koinonia* 1:232.

mon in late antiquity for books to be buried with their owners, and indeed, the codices were discovered near Pachomian monasteries.[21]

Although the evidence is inconclusive, it points toward the Pachomian production and use of the Nag Hammadi codices. Even so, what would these texts have to do with the anthropomorphites? The nearest anthropomorphite community to the burial site was that of Apa Aphou in Pemdje/Oxyrhynchus, 370 kilometers to the north; and Cassian and Socrates place the anthropomorphites in Scetis, Nitria, and (perhaps) Kellia, more than 600 kilometers away. Yet John Dechow has demonstrated the (perhaps surprisingly) close relationship between Nitria and the Pachomian monasteries, writing that a "common spirit" prevailed "among Pachomian monks, Athanasius, the Nitrian Origenist ascetics, and others."[22] He marshals a great amount of evidence. First, *The Life of Pachomius* praises Amoun, the founder of the Nitrian community, for his virtuous life.[23] Also, a certain Ammon recounts that, after spending 3 years (352–355) at Pbow as an initiate under Abba Theodore, he was sent to Nitria to be closer to his Alexandrian family; in sending him, Theodore declares of Nitria, "especially in that place are holy men, well-pleasing to God."[24] Finally, Palladius writes of numerous contacts between Nitrian monks and the Pachomian monasteries: Arsisius, one of the monastic patriarchs at Nitria, knew Pachomius[25]; a Nitrian named Cronius travelled extensively in the Thebaid[26]; Macarius the Alexandrian of Kellia stayed for some time at Tabennesi, where he impressed Pachomius with his asceticism[27]; and Palladius himself spent 4 years (sometime between 390 and 400) in the Thebaid,[28] where he became friends with Aphthonius of Pbow[29] and visited one of the nine original Pachomian monasteries.[30] I assume that this free exchange of people would be accompanied by an equally free exchange of texts; at the very least, members of one community must have been familiar with texts being read by members of the other communities. Thus if the texts contained in the Nag Hammadi codices were read by Pachomian

[21] Martin Krause, "Die Texte von Nag Hammadi," in *Gnosis: Festschrift für Hans Jonas*, ed. B. Aland (Göttingen l978), 243.

[22] John F. Dechow, *Dogma and Mysticism in Early Christianity: Epiphanius of Cyprus and the Legacy of Origen*, Patristic Monograph Series 13 (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1988), 184.

[23] *BoLife* 2 and *GkLife*[1] 2 in Veilleux, *Pachomian Koinonia* 1:24, 298.

[24] The letter comprises a portion of *GkLife*[1]. Cf. Veilleux, *Pachomian Koinonia* 2:100.

[25] Palladius, *Historia Lausiaca* 7.6 in Butler, *Lausiac History*, 26.

[26] Palladius, *Historia Lausiaca* 21.15 in Butler, *Lausiac History*, 68.

[27] Palladius, *Historia Lausiaca* 18.12–16 in Butler, *Lausiac History*, 52–53.

[28] Palladius, *Historia Lausiaca* 58.1 in Butler, *Lausiac History*, 151.

[29] Palladius, *Historia Lausiaca* 32.8 in Butler, *Lausiac History*, 93–94.

[30] Palladius, *Historia Lausiaca* 32.9 in Butler, *Lausiac History*, 94.

monks, then it is possible that some of the anthropomorphites of Nitria, Kellia, and Scetis had the opportunity to read them as well.

Another bit of evidence provides a possible link between Apa Aphou's community and two of these Nag Hammadi texts – Greek fragments of *The Gospel of Thomas*[31] and *The Sophia of Jesus Christ*[32] were discovered around the turn of the last century at Pemdje/Oxyrhynchus. Moreover, the fragments of *Gos. Thom.* come from three different manuscripts: POxy 1 from a papyrus codex, POxy 654 from the reverse side of a list of land parcels, and POxy 655 from a papyrus roll. This fact "demonstrates that these fragments are derived from literary works, not just from some person's jottings" and furthermore "gives evidence of rather frequent copying of this gospel in the third century" in Pemdje.[33] Of course, it is not possible to prove that any of these manuscripts belonged to Aphou or his community. However, it seems likely that the monks would have been aware of these two works and possible that they had the opportunity to read them.

Finally, there is the warning of Abba Sopatros, recorded in the *Apophthegmata patrum*:

> Do not let a woman come into your cell and do not read apocryphal literature. Do not speculate about the image. This is not heresy, but there is much ignorance and love of dispute on both sides. It is impossible for any creature to comprehend this matter.[34]

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[31] Three fragments were discovered by the British scholars Grenfell and Hunt, the first in 1897 and the other two in 1904. POxy 1 (corresponding to Coptic *Gos. Thom.* 26–33 and 77b) was written around 200 CE; POxy 654 (corresponding to the prologue and sayings 1–7) and POxy 655 (corresponding to sayings 24 and 36–39) were written before 300 CE. Cf. B. P. Grenfell and A. S. Hunt, *ΛΟΓΙΑ ΙΗΣΟΥ: Sayings of Our Lord* (London: Frowde, 1897); *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri: Part IV* (London: Egypt Exploration Fund, 1904).

[32] One fragment was found, labeled POxy 1081. Cf. A. S. Hunt, ed., *The Oxyrhynhcus Papyri: Part VIII* (London: Egypt Exploration Fund, 1911).

[33] Francis T. Fallon and Ron Cameron, "The Gospel of Thomas: a Forschungsbericht and Analysis" in *Principat* 25.6: *Religion*, ed. W. Haase (Berlin; New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1988), 4201.

[34] *Apophthegmata patrum* (Alphabetical), Sopatros: "Μὴ εἰσέλθῃ γυνὴ εἰς τὸ κελλίον σου, καὶ μὴ ἀναγνώσῃς ἀπόκρυφα· καὶ μὴ ἐκζητήσῃς περὶ τῆς εἰκόνος· τοῦτο γὰρ οὐκ ἔστιν αἵρεσις, ἀλλ᾽ ἰδιωτεία καὶ φιλονεικία ἀμφοτέρων τῶν μερῶν· ἀδυνατον γὰρ καταληφθῆναι τὸ πρᾶγμα τοῦτο ὑπὸ πάσης τῆς κτίσεως." PG 65:413A. It is interesting that Sopatros refrains from declaring such speculation to be heretical. It is possible that the saying reflects an early period of the anthropomorphite controversy, well before 399 when things heated up. However, it is more likely that the saying has been redacted to fit the general tone of the *Apophthegmata patrum*, which (being a product of Nitria and Scetis) "is conspicuously silent about Origenism, anti-Origenism, or even the fact that there was a controversy at all." S. Rubenson, "Origen in the Egyptian Monastic Tradition of the Fourth Century" in *Origeniana Septima*, ed. W. A. Bienert and U. Kühneweg (Leuven: Peeters, 1999), 331.

Sopatros thus associates 'speculation' about the *imago Dei* with 'apocryphal' literature. Again, there is no way to prove that he is thinking of the anthropomorphite controversy or of the Nag Hammadi texts. However, the controversy certainly qualified as 'speculation' about the image of God, and there is some indication that the Nag Hammadi texts qualified, at least in the minds of some monks, as 'apocryphal' literature. For instance, a treatise of Shenute condemns "apocryphal books" in no uncertain terms[35] and then goes on to condemn specific doctrines that are normally associated with the Nag Hammadi texts: the creation of a plurality of worlds, the preexistence of souls (and their 'fall' into bodies), and denial of the resurrection. Indeed, Tito Orlandi concludes that the connections between this treatise and the Nag Hammadi texts are "certain, though not direct."[36] Admittedly, all of this evidence is circumstantial; nevertheless, it is corroborated by what one finds within the pages of certain Nag Hammadi texts – a Christology with close affinities to that of the anthropomorphites (as I have outlined it).

C. Christ the Primordial Anthropos

Six Nag Hammadi texts, to varying degrees, bear witness to an ancient Jewish tradition according to which a primordial Anthropos appeared in the light of the first day of creation. These texts are by no means monolithic in their expression of this tradition. Some merely allude to it, while others employ it as a major feature within a highly developed myth of origins. In some of these texts, the Anthropos figure functions as the image or likeness of God; in others, he is the model after which humankind is created; in still others, he is identified with Christ. After I examine these texts, I return briefly to *The Life of Apa Aphou of Pemdje*; it is my contention that the Nag Hammadi texts will help to elucidate *The Life of Aphou*, particularly in its reference to Christ as the "unapproachable light."

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[35] Shenute writes, "Hear, that you may know that those who write the apocryphal books are blind, and blind are those who receive them and believe in them." ET: Tito Orlandi, "A Catechesis Against Apocryphal Texts by Shenute and the Gnostic Texts of Nag Hammadi," *Harvard Theological Review* 75:1 (1982): 88.

[36] Orlandi, "Catechesis," 86. Furthermore, Shenute explicitly links these 'apocryphal' texts and their doctrines with 'Origenists' (among others). In my view this strengthens the possible link between Nag Hammadi texts and the anthropomorphite controversy, for if (as I argue) anthropomorphites and Evagrians shared a common 'vision' tradition, they probably also used common texts (i.e., if Evagrians were reading Nag Hammadi texts, then it is plausible that the anthropomorphites were as well).

1. The Gospel of Thomas

The Gospel of Thomas,[37] according to April DeConick,[38] should be understood in the context of three traditions: encratism,[39] Hermeticism, and Jewish mysticism. The latter two are especially pertinent to this study. DeConick defines Jewish mysticism as "an esoteric tendency within Second Temple Judaism which was characterized by speculation about ascent into heaven and gaining a transforming vision of the *kavod*" – in other words, the exact same context in which Golitzin places the anthropomorphites (see Chapter 1, pp. 21–23). The remainder of this study focuses on a closely related Jewish-mystical tradition – exegesis of Genesis 1:3–4 in which a divine Anthropos appears in the primordial light, functioning at once as the image of God, the archetype of humanity, and the one through whom God's glory is seen.[40] The rest of this chapter is devoted to examining the influence of this tradition on *Gos. Thom.* and other Nag Hammadi texts. In Chapter 5, I trace its lines back to the writings of Philo and other Jewish authors.

As DeConick points out, the influence of Jewish mysticism extended beyond the confines of Judaism and Christianity, and into the thought-world of Hermeticism – an ancient Graeco-Egyptian religious movement that promoted belief in the divinity of humanity.[41] This influence is most clearly seen in the Hermetic creation account, *Poimandres*.[42] In the text, Poimandres, "the mind of sovereignty (ὁ τῆς αὐθεντίας νοῦς)," appears to the narrator, Hermes Trismegistus, in a vision of light.[43] He declares, "I am that light which you long after, mind, your god, who existed before the watery nature that appeared out of darkness," adding, "the lightgiving

[37] The text of *Gos. Thom.* is preserved in Nag Hammadi Codex (hereafter NHC) II 32.10–51.28; ET: Thomas O. Lambdin, *NHLE*, 126–138.

[38] April DeConick, *Seek to See Him: Ascent and Vision Mysticism in the Gospel of Thomas* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1996).

[39] DeConick, *Seek to See Him*, 3–5, defines encratism first as a lifestyle characterized by celibacy, dietary restrictions (prohibiting even meat and wine), and voluntary poverty, and second as the insistence upon such a lifestyle for salvation. Such an insistence is indeed present in Thomas: according to saying 49, only the "solitary" (ⲙⲟⲛⲁⲭⲟⲥ) will "find the kingdom" (*NHLE*, 132), while in saying 75, only the ⲙⲟⲛⲁⲭⲟⲥ can enter the "bridal chamber" (*NHLE*, 134).

[40] Although this tradition does not feature prominently in DeConick's study, she is certainly aware of it and its influence on *Gos. Thom.* (see my discussion on pp. 104–105).

[41] Cf. Garth Fowden, *The Egyptian Hermes: A Historical Approach to the Pagan Mind* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

[42] Critical ed.: *Corpus Hermeticum, Tome I, Traités I–XII*, 2nd ed., ed. A. D. Nock (Paris: Société d'Édition Les belles lettres, 1960).

[43] *Poimandres* 2–4 in *Corpus Hermeticum* 1:7.

word who comes from mind is the son of god." [44] This description, with its reference to light, water, and darkness, recalls the early verses of Genesis as well as Philo, who (as demonstrated in Chapter 5), also associates the Logos with light and refers to it as God's son. *Poimandres* goes on to recount the creation of humankind:

> Mind, the father of all, who is life and light, gave birth to a man like himself whom he loved as his own child. He was most beautiful, having the image of his father; and god, being in love with his own form, bestowed on him all his craftworks.[45]

The man then looked into the cosmos, his reflection appearing in the water and his shadow on the earth; "when he saw his form taking shape in the water, he loved it and wished to inhabit it ... and he inhabited the irrational form."[46] It is for this reason, the text continues, that "humankind is twofold, mortal in respect of the body, but immortal in respect of the essential humanity."[47] This idea of a primordial Anthropos who functions as the image of God and the archetype of humanity, and who is further identified with the light of Genesis 1:3–4, is precisely what one finds in *Gos. Thom.* (particularly saying 77) and numerous other Nag Hammadi texts.

Scholars have long recognized that *Gos. Thom.* should be interpreted in the context of Jewish exegesis of Genesis. Hans-Martin Schenke, in 1962, argued for such a reading of saying 84, which reads:

> Jesus said, "When you see your likeness, you rejoice. But when you see your images which came into being before you, and which neither die nor become manifest, how much you will have to bear!"[48]

According to Schenke, the "images" are those that came into being before the creation of the world, in the primordial light/divine Anthropos of Genesis 1:3–4.[49]

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[44] *Poimandres* 6: "Τὸ φῶς ἐκεῖνο, ἔφη, ἐγὼ Νοῦς ὁ σὸς θεός, ὁ πρὸ φύσεως ὑγρᾶς τῆς ἐκ σκότους φανείσης· ὁ δὲ ἐκ Νοὸς φωτεινὸς Λόγος υἱὸς θεοῦ." *Corpus Hermeticum* 1:8.

[45] *Poimandres* 12: "ὁ δὲ πάντων πατὴρ ὁ Νοῦς, ὢν ζωὴ καὶ φῶς, ἀπεκύησεν Ἄνθρωπον αὑτῷ ἴσον, οὗ ἠράσθη ὡς ἰδίου τόκου· περικαλλὴς γάρ, τὴν τοῦ πατρὸς εἰκόνα ἔχων· ὄντως γὰρ καὶ ὁ θεὸς ἠράσθη τῆς ἰδίας μορφῆς, παρέδωκε τὰ ἑαυτοῦ πάντα δημιουργήματα." *Corpus Hermeticum* 1:10.

[46] *Poimandres* 14: "ὁ δὲ ἰδὼν τὴν ὁμοίαν αὐτῷ μορφὴν ἐν αὐτῇ οὖσαν ἐν τῷ ὕδατι, ἐφίλησε καὶ ἠβουλήθη αὐτοῦ οἰκεῖν ... καὶ ᾤκησε τὴν ἄλογον μορφήν." *Corpus Hermeticum* 1:11.

[47] *Poimandres* 15: "διπλοῦς ἐστιν ὁ ἄνθρωπος, θνητὸς μὲν διὰ τὸ σῶμα, ἀθάνατος δὲ διὰ τὸν οὐσιώδη ἄνθρωπον." *Corpus Hermeticum* 1:11. Cf. Philo, *Opif.* 135: "τὸν ἄνθρωπον θνητῆς καὶ ἀθανάτου φύσεως εἶναι μεθόριον ... θνητὸν μὲν κατὰ τὸ σῶμα, κατὰ δὲ τὴν διάνοιαν ἀθάνατον." LCL 1:106.

[48] *Gos. Thom.* 84, *NHLE*, 135.

Stevan Davies, in "The Christology and Protology of the *Gospel of Thomas*," characterizes the gospel's message as a call to apprehend the world protologically:

> Jesus, as Thomas portrays him, insists that the world ought to be considered to be in the condition of Genesis 1:1–2:4 and, accordingly, that people should restore themselves to the condition of the image of God. They will then live in this world with the rest and immortality proper to the seventh day of creation. Jesus is to be understood accordingly; one who seeks Jesus will find him when the hidden primordial state of the world is found.[50]

According to Davies, numerous sayings in *Gos. Thom.* indicate that the world can be conceived in two mutually exclusive ways: from the perspective of the primordial light and the beginning (Gen 1:1–2:4), or from the ordinary perspective (Gen 2:5ff).[51] He points, first of all, to saying 18:

> The disciples said to Jesus, "Tell us how our end will be." Jesus said, "Have you discovered, then, the beginning, that you look for the end? For where the beginning is, there will the end be. Blessed is he who will take his place in the beginning; he will know the end and will not experience death."[52]

Davies is not alone in interpreting this text protologically. Richard Valantasis writes, "the goal of human endeavor involves a return to the beginning. The beginning, however, exists perpetually: it ... must be understood as a primordial place of origin that continues throughout time."[53] According to DeConick, "the End is understood to be a return to paradise which can be achieved by the disciples when they 'stand' in Eden," which she understands to be "the mystical renewal of creation and the original Adam through encratic practice and personal transformation."[54]

Davies next points to *Gos. Thom.* 4, which he takes as a call for the disciple to live as if in the seventh day of creation:

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[49] Hans-Martin Schenke, *Der Gott "Mensch" in der Gnosis: Ein religionsgeschichtlicher Beitrag zur Diskussion über die paulinische Anschauung von der Kirche als Leib Christi* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1962), 134.

[50] Davies, "The Christology and Protology of the *Gospel of Thomas*," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 111.4 (1992): 664.

[51] Davies, "Christology," 669 and 673.

[52] *Gos. Thom.* 18, *NHLE*, 128.

[53] Richard Valantasis, *The Gospel of Thomas* (London; New York: Routledge, 1997), 86.

[54] April DeConick, *The Original Gospel of Thomas in Translation: with a Commentary and New English Translation of the Complete Gospel* (London; New York: T & T Clark, 2006), 102.

Jesus said, "The man old in days will not hesitate to ask a small child seven days old about the place of life, and he will live. For many who are first will become last, and they will become one and the same."[55]

Again, DeConick agrees, writing: "the believer has become the perfect 'child' by returning to the prelapsarian condition of the human being on the seventh day of creation (Genesis 2:2–3)."[56] Noting the continuation of the childhood theme, she connects saying 4 with saying 22:

Jesus saw infants being suckled. He said to his disciples, "These infants being suckled are like those who enter the kingdom." They said to him, "Shall we then, as children, enter the kingdom?" Jesus said to them, "When you make the two one, and when you make the inside like the outside and the outside like the inside, and the above like the below, and when you make the male and the female one and the same, so that the male not be male nor the female female; and when you fashion eyes in the place of an eye, and a hand in place of a hand, and a foot in place of a foot, and a likeness in place of a likeness; then will you enter the kingdom."[57]

DeConick writes, "The person is admonished to become a 'little one,' which is understood to be the androgynous primal Adam .... This transformation involves restoring one's self to its original Image."[58] Davies adds, "any interpretation of Thomas 22c which is very far from this primitive and Adamic idea of the restoration of the image of God does considerable violence to the simplicity of the text."[59] *Gos. Thom.* therefore identifies as the key to salvation the awareness that "the light through which God created the world persists in the world and within people."[60] Hence, Jesus is calling his disciples to change their perspective on reality.

Davies interprets saying 77 in light of the preceding analysis. In the saying, Jesus declares:

It is I who am the light which is above them all. It is I who am the all. From me did the all come forth, and unto me did the all extend. Split a piece of wood, and I am there. Lift up the stone, and you will find me there.[61]

As Davies points out, this is perhaps the most 'Christological' statement in a text that otherwise discourages its readers from pondering Jesus' nature. For instance, when the disciples ask to see the place where Jesus is, he directs them to seek the light within themselves (saying 24); when people ask him who he is, he directs them "to recognize the nature of the present

[55] *Gos. Thom.* 4, *NHLE*, 126.
[56] DeConick, *Original Gospel of Thomas*, 56.
[57] *Gos. Thom.* 22, *NHLE*, 129.
[58] DeConick, *Original Gospel of Thomas*, 116.
[59] Stevan Davies, *The Gospel of Thomas and Christian Wisdom* (New York: Seabury Press, 1983), 128.
[60] Davies, "Christology," 673.
[61] *Gos. Thom.* 77, *NHLE*, 135.

time (saying 91)."[62] Hence, Davies cautiously interprets the claim of saying 77, that Jesus is the light from which all things come: "Perhaps he is uniquely so ... but more likely he is the firstfruits of those that follow," those who "actualize the light, comprehend the kingdom, restore God's image, know themselves to be sons of the living father, and dwell in the beginning."[63]

Although consistent with the rest of *Gos. Thom.*, this interpretation fails to do justice to the obvious exclusivity of the claim being made in saying 77: Christ is the light through which all things were created, he pervades the entire cosmos, and all things subsist in him. By contrast, Thomasine Christians may come *from* the light and may *contain* the light within themselves, but they are never *equated* with the light. This is made clear in saying 50, where Jesus provides answers to questions the disciples are likely to encounter: "If they[64] say to you, 'Where did you come from?', say to them, 'We came from the light ....' If they say to you, 'Is it you?', say, 'We are its children, and we are the elect of the living father.'"[65] If the author of *Gos. Thom.* had intended to equate the Thomasine Christian with the light, saying 50 would have provided the perfect opportunity to do so.

Saying 77 thus makes striking Christological claims in a text that otherwise refrains from doing so. The uniqueness of this saying may best be explained by the fact that *Gos. Thom.* is here drawing on a tradition that *did* ascribe a unique, creative role to Christ – just as Jewish tradition had ascribed such a role to God's Logos (see Chapter 5). Davies recognizes this connection between *Gos. Thom.* and Logos doctrine:

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[62] Davies, "Christology," 674.

[63] Davies, "Christology," 678–679. This interpretation makes sense of the fact that, while saying 37 refers to Jesus as "the son of the living one" (*NHLE*, 130), saying 3 declares all who comprehend the kingdom and know themselves to be "sons of the living father" (*NHLE*, 126).

[64] Davies, "Christology," 670, identifies the interlocutors of saying 50 as Christians who would appeal to the tradition of the (other) disciples. As he points out, questioning disciples appear in sayings 51–53, and saying 3 indicates that Thomas is engaged in dispute with "those who lead you." DeConick argues that the questioners are "angels whose purpose it is to guard the divine realm and to keep impure or unworthy aspirants from entering the sacred zone of heaven. Thus, at the entrance to each sphere ... angelic guards are stationed whose duty it is to thwart the ascent of the mystic by testing the aspirant" (*Seek to See Him*, 64). For parallels, she points to the Hermetic *Mithras Liturgy*, Jewish apocalyptic texts (*The History of the Rechabites*, *3 Enoch*, *The Ascension of Isaiah*, and *Hekhalot Rabbati*), and Christian literature (*The Gospel of Mary* and *The Apocalypse of Paul*). Either explanation seems plausible; in either case, the point being made here stands: *Gos. Thom.* equates Christ with the light but never equates human beings with the light.

[65] *Gos. Thom.* 50, *NHLE*, 132.

To claim as *Thomas* does that the world was created through the light of the beginning, from which nothing is severed and through which the human mind can comprehend its true nature as God's image, is to speak in a manner similar to Philo, to whom the close relationship of that light and the *logos* was self-evident.[66]

What Davies does not acknowledge is that, according to saying 77, the close relationship – in fact, the identity – of that light and *Jesus* is equally self-evident. Thomas here assigns exclusively to Jesus the role that Philo assigns exclusively to the Logos.

Elaine Pagels, in "Exegesis of Genesis 1 in the Gospels of Thomas and John," acknowledges this relationship between Jesus and the light. She writes,

Thomas takes Gen 1:3 to mean that when the primordial light appeared on the 'first day,' prior to the world's creation, there appeared in that light the form of a primordial *anthropos* – whom log. 77 implicitly identifies with Jesus – through whom all things are to come into being.[67]

She proceeds to argue that *Gos. Thom.*' anthropomorphizing of primordial light is consistent with Jewish tradition,[68] while it "diverges from such tradition ... by depicting 'the living Jesus' speaking with that divine voice."[69] Pagels thus recognizes within *Gos. Thom.* a unique role for Christ (and for Christology), which Davies rejects.

Nevertheless, Pagels agrees with Davies' basic assessment of *Gos. Thom*. She concurs that the gospel "directs those who seek access to God toward the divine image given in creation" and that Jesus rebukes those who seek such access elsewhere – especially "those who seek it by trying to follow Jesus himself."[70] Furthermore she notes that *Gos. Thom.* betrays little interest in the earthly life and death of Jesus; even less does it place any salvific significance in those events. Rather, the "good news" of Thomas is that the divine Anthropos – whom Pagels regards as being identified with the "living Jesus" – dwells as light in all people.[71]

For her part, DeConick also agrees with Davies' overall characterization of Thomas, stating that "the believer is responsible for his own salvation." However, this salvation is achieved not by a move backward, but rather upward – "by seeking to see God." When the vision of God is achieved, "the believer is translated from the fate of death to life. He has left this

[66] Davies, "Christology," 680.

[67] Pagels, "Exegesis of Genesis 1 in the Gospels of Thomas and John," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 118.3 (1999): 479.

[68] She points explicitly to *Eugnostos*, *Orig. World*, and *Ap. John*.

[69] Pagels, "Exegesis," 486.

[70] Pagels, Exegesis," 487 (referencing saying 24).

[71] Pagels, "Exegesis," 492.

world and entered God's kingdom."[72] DeConick's interpretation of saying 77 has more in common with Pagels than with Davies. She understands it to teach that "Jesus, as the *Phōs*, the Light-Man" is the creator of the world.[73] She links this teaching to Jewish exegesis of Genesis 1:3–4 that equated 'light' with 'man' – an interpretation no doubt informed by the fact that in Greek, the word for 'light' (ϕῶς) and one of the words for 'man' (ϕώς) were homonyms.[74] Thus *Gos. Thom.* explicitly identifies Christ with the primordial Anthropos of Genesis 1:3–4 and assigns to him a unique, creative role.

2. Eugnostos the Blessed

Eugnostos the Blessed is a non-Christian (and perhaps pre-Christian) work that begins as a letter written by an otherwise unknown Eugnostos to his disciples but quickly takes on the characteristics of a divine revelation.[75] It opens with a lengthy statement concerning divine transcendence, emphasizing that God has no human form and no likeness to any created thing; rather, "He Who Is" is "ineffable," "incomprehensible," "unknowable," "immeasurable," and "untraceable."[76] Of course, such negative theology presents (as always) a serious difficulty – the author is writing *about* God; the unknowable God has in some way become known.

To resolve this difficulty, *Eugnostos* develops a doctrine of the divine Pleroma, emanations through which God acts on the universe and is manifested to human beings. The author writes that God "is not rightly called 'Father' but 'Forefather.' For the Father is the beginning (*or* principle) of what is visible." In other words, the empirical cosmos ("what is visible") is not created directly by God, but by a second divine being. That being is God's reflection, named "Self-Father" or "Self-Begetter," who is "of equal age" with God but "not equal to him in power."[77] Self-Father generates a third divine being:

> The First who appeared before the universe in infinity is Self-grown, Self-constructed Father, and is full of shining, ineffable light. In the beginning, he decided to have his

[72] DeConick, *Seek to See Him*, 39.
[73] DeConick, *Seek to See Him*, 21.
[74] Cf. Gilles Quispel, "Ezekiel 1:26 in Jewish Mysticism and Gnosis," *Vigiliae christianae* 34 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1980), 6.
[75] The text of *Eugnostos* is preserved in two codices (III 70.1–90.13 and V 1.1–17.18); ET (in parallel with *Soph. Jes. Chr.*): Douglas M. Parrott, *The Nag Hammadi Library in English*, 222–243.
[76] *Eugnostos*, NHC III 71.14–72.22; *NHLE*, 224–225.
[77] *Eugnostos*, NHC III 74.20–75.12; *NHLE*, 227.

likeness become a great power. Immediately, the principle (*or* beginning) of that Light appeared as Immortal Androgynous Man.[78]

Of course, the words "In the beginning ... that Light appeared" recall the text of Genesis 1:1–3; it has been noted that this passage also recalls Ezekiel 1:26 (LXX), in which Ezekiel sees God's Glory (*kavod*) in "the likeness as the appearance of a man (ὁμοίωμα ὡς εἶδος ἀνθρώπου)."[79] Chapter 1 of this study shows that Jewish-mystical tradition had long connected Ezekiel's theophany with the *imago Dei* of Genesis 1:26–27; *Eugnostos* here connects it with the first verses of Genesis, anthropomorphizing the light of the first day of creation and identifying it as "the hypostasized manifestation of God."[80]

The text proceeds to develop the male and female aspects of the androgynous Anthropos: his male name is "Begetter-*Nous*,"[81] while his female name is "All-wise Begettress Sophia."[82] The text then states, "from Immortal Man was first revealed the name of the Divinity and the Lordship and Kingship and those which came after them."[83] According to Roelof Van Den Broek, this "peculiar expression 'the name of the Divinity and the Lordship and the Kingship' should be interpreted as 'the divine power that is expressed by the name God and that expressed by the name Lord and King.'"[84]

There are numerous affinities between *Eugnostos* and Philo of Alexandria. First, Philo also develops a thoroughly negative theology and resolves the epistemological problem by speaking of a divine intermediary figure – the Logos. Second, just as *Eugnostos* equates the Anthropos with Sophia, Philo (usually) equates the Logos with Sophia.[85] Finally, from the Logos (just as from *Eugnostos*' Anthropos) originate the divine powers of 'God'

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[78] *Eugnostos*, NHC III 76.14–24; *NHLE*, 228. Despite the author's previous qualification, he persists here (as elsewhere in the text) in referring to God as "Father" rather than "Forefather."

[79] LXX 2:772. Cf. Quispel, "Ezekiel 1:26," 6–7; Roelof Van Den Broek, "Jewish and Platonic Speculations in Early Alexandrian Theology: Eugnostos, Philo, Valentinus, and Origen" in *The Roots of Egyptian Christianity*, ed. Birger A. Pearson and James E. Goehring (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986), 193–195.

[80] Van Den Broek, "Jewish and Platonic Speculations," 192.

[81] The text of NHC III is lacunar at this point. This reading is from NHC V 6.6–7.

[82] *Eugnostos*, NHC III 77.3–4; *NHLE*, 228.

[83] *Eugnostos*, NHC V 6.14–22; ET Van Den Broek, "Jewish and Platonic Speculations," 192. NHC III 77.9–13 is more terse: "Through Immortal Man appeared the first designation, namely, divinity and kingdom ...." (*NHLE*, 229).

[84] Van Den Broek, "Jewish and Platonic Speculations," 193.

[85] This fact is pointed out by John Dillon, *The Middle Platonists* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1977), 164, and David Winston, *Logos and Mystical Theology in Philo of Alexandria* (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 1985), 20. Cf. Philo, *Leg*. 1.65.

(Elohim/θεός) and 'Lord' (Yahweh/κύριος), along with other powers. Philo writes:

> In the first place (there is) He Who is elder than the one and the monad and the beginning. Then (comes) the Logos of the Existent One, the truly seminal substance of existing things. And from the divine Logos, as from a spring, there divide and break forth two powers. One is the creative (power), through which the Artificer placed and ordered all things; this is named "God." And (the other is) the royal (power), since through it the Creator rules over created things; this is called "Lord." And from these two powers have grown the others.[86]

Eugnostos thus parallels Philo in many respects, except Philo's Greek Logos is here replaced with the heavenly Anthropos of Ezekiel's theophany. Van Den Broek takes this fact as evidence that Philo "was not original, but simply Hellenizing" an older Jewish tradition.[87] Of course, this tradition also had a tremendous influence on the communities that produced these Nag Hammadi texts and – I would argue – on the anthropomorphites as well.

3. The Sophia of Jesus Christ

The Sophia of Jesus Christ is a Christian adaptation of *Eugnostos*, set as a dialogue between the risen Christ and his disciples.[88] It contains most of the text of *Eugnostos*, with numerous deletions and insertions. Three passages are especially significant for this study, for they develop an association between the primordial Anthropos and Christ. First, there is the description of the risen Christ. He appears "not in his previous form, but in the invisible spirit"; nevertheless, he has a "likeness" that "resembles a great angel of light."[89] Beyond this terse statement, the author refuses to further describe Christ's risen likeness, reasoning that "no mortal flesh could endure it, but only pure (and) perfect flesh, like that which he taught us about on the mountain called 'Of Olives' in Galilee."[90] This is a clear reference to the gospel Transfiguration scene, in which Christ's face shines like the sun and his clothes become dazzling white, and he orders the disciples not to tell anyone about what they have seen (Matt 17:1–9). It is difficult not to see some sort of connection between this description of the

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[86] Philo, *QE* 2.68, tr. (from Armenian) by Ralph Marcus, LCL Supplement 2:116.

[87] Van Den Broek, "Jewish and Platonic Speculations," 195.

[88] The text of *Soph. Jes. Chr.* is preserved in NHC III 90.14–119.18 (immediately after *Eugnostos*) and in the Coptic Codex of Berlin (abbreviated BG), ed. W. C. Till, *Die gnostischen Schriften des koptischen Papyrus Berolinensis 8502* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1955), 194–295; ET (in parallel with *Eugnostos*): Douglas M. Parrott, *The Nag Hammadi Library in English*, 222–243.

[89] *Soph. Jes. Chr.*, NHC III 91.10–13; *NHLE*, 222.

[90] *Soph. Jes. Chr.*, NHC III 91.14–20; *NHLE*, 222.

risen Christ and that of the primordial Anthropos, who later appears in the text as light.

Second, immediately after the passage from *Eugnostos* in which the primordial Anthropos first appears, *Soph. Jes. Chr.* states: "through that Immortal Man they might attain their salvation and awake from forgetfulness through the interpreter who was sent, who is with you until the end of the poverty of the robbers."[91] This "interpreter" no doubt is Christ, as he is the one who enlightens the world and brings salvation (throughout *Soph. Jes. Chr.*, he is referred to as "Savior" – often "perfect Savior"). Of course, this passage implies that Christ is not to be *equated* with Immortal Man, but rather is sent by or through him.

This interpretation is confirmed in a third passage. In both *Eugnostos* and *Soph. Jes. Chr.*, Immortal Man is not the only divine emanation; many others follow. First, Immortal Man and his consort (now called "Great Sophia") reveal a second Anthropos – "First-begotten Son of God," later identified as "Adam of the Light," whose female aspect is "First-begotten Sophia, Mother of the Universe."[92] This latter name is, of course, reminiscent of Eve, to whom Genesis 3:20 refers as "the mother of all living things."[93] But this pair should not be confused with the Adam and Eve of Paradise. Rather, they are "an aeonic pair in the Pleroma of God,"[94] who themselves reveal a third Anthropos: "Savior, Begetter of All Things," whose female aspect is "Pistis Sophia, All-Begettress."[95]

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[91] *Soph. Jes. Chr.*, NHC III 101.9–15; *NHLE*, 228. Catherine Barry, *La Sagesse de Jésus-Christ (BG, 3; NH III,4)* (Québec, Canada: Presses de l'Université Laval, 1993), 226–227, connects this phrase to *Gos. Thom.* 3: "When you come to know yourselves, then you will become known, and you will realize that it is you who are the sons of the living father. But if you will not know yourselves, you dwell in poverty and it is you who are that poverty" (*NHLE*, 126). If this connection is accepted, then "poverty" refers to the ignorance in which human beings are held captive, while "the robbers" are the archonic powers who hold them in such ignorance.

[92] *Eugnostos*, NHC V 8.27–9.9, NHC III 81.12; *Soph. Jes. Chr.*, NHC III 104.5–20, 105.12–13; *NHLE*, 231–232.

[93] Philo, in one passage at least, connects Sophia with Eve in this way. In *Ebr.* 30–31, he writes of God uniting with Sophia, "the mother and nurse of the whole universe (τῆς μητρὸς καὶ τιθήνης τῶν ὅλων)," who "bore her only and beloved son, perceptible to the senses, namely the cosmos (τὸν μόνον καὶ ἀγαπητὸν αἰσθητὸν υἱὸν ἀπεκύησε, τόνδε τὸν κόσμον)." LCL 3:334. This passage is unusual, for (as I discuss in Chapter 5) in Philo's 'system' the Logos is normally the instrument of creation, no mention being made of a mother.

[94] Van Den Broek, "Jewish and Platonic Speculations," 198.

[95] *Eugnostos*, NHC III 81.21–82.6; *Soph. Jes. Chr.*, NHC III 106.15–24; *NHLE*, 232–233. The text of *Eugnostos* preserved in NHC III later conflates the second and third Anthropoi (85.9–14), while NHC V 13.12–13 and *Soph. Jes. Chr.*, NHC III 108.1–11 maintain the threefold division. This contradiction supports the contention of Hans-Martin Schenke, "Nag Hammadi Studien III: Die Spitze des dem Apocryphon Johannis und der

Soph. Jes. Chr. follows *Eugnostos* closely in all of this, with one important addition – the second Anthropos, "First-begotten Son of God," is called "Christ."[96] This identification makes perfect sense, with the exception of the fact that it forces a distinction between Christ (the second Anthropos) and Savior (the third Anthropos). The author of *Soph. Jes. Chr.* must have felt this difficulty, for these identities are reversed in a later passage, in which the second Anthropos is called "Savior" and the third Anthropos is called "Adam, Eye of Light."[97] This contradiction may reveal development within the tradition – as Christian authors began adopting (and adapting) these texts, the Savior figure (now identified as Christ) moves up the hierarchy in the divine Pleroma. It is not difficult to imagine an even later stage of tradition equating that figure with the first Anthropos (the one nearest to God), which is precisely what one finds in *On the Origin of the World*.

4. On the Origin of the World (The Writing Without Title)

On the Origin of the World, although belonging to the same tradition as *Eugnostos* and *Soph. Jes. Chr.*, presents a largely subversive interpretation of Genesis 1–3.[98] According to its account, creation is not the work of the supreme deity, but rather that of a lesser god named Yaldabaoth.[99] He is the (apparently unintended) offspring of Pistis Sophia (an older deity), but he is ignorant of this fact. Thus, after creating heaven and earth and then generating a host of heavenly powers, he declares: "It is I who am God, and there is no other one that exists apart from me."[100] Pistis proceeds to inform him of an "immortal man of light who has been in existence before you."[101] Yaldabaoth demands to see this Immortal Man,

> And immediately, behold! Light came out of the eighth heaven above and passed through all of the heavens of the earth. When the prime parent [Yaldabaoth] saw that the light

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Sophia Jesu Christi zugrundeliegenden gnostischen Systems," *Zeitschrift für Religions- und Geistegeschichte* 14 (1962): 355, that the tradition originally knew of only one Anthropos but was amplified over time to include two and even three.

[96] *Soph. Jes. Chr.*, NHC III 104.20; *NHLE*, 231.

[97] *Soph. Jes. Chr.*, NHC III 108.1–11; *NHLE*, 236.

[98] The text of *Orig. World* is preserved in NHC II 97.24–127.17; ET: Hans-Gebhard Bethge, et. al., *NHLE*, 171–189.

[99] The text also provides the following interpretations: (1) the formation of Eve from Adam's rib is a lie told to Adam to hide from him the truth that it was Eve who gave life to him, (2) the prohibition against eating of the tree of knowledge is a trick to keep humankind in the darkness, and (3) the serpent is actually an "instructor" sent to set humankind free.

[100] *Orig. World*, NHC II 103.12–13; *NHLE*, 175.

[101] *Orig. World*, NHC II 103.19–20; *NHLE*, 175.

was beautiful as it radiated, he was amazed. And he was greatly ashamed. As that light appeared, a human likeness appeared within it, very wonderful.[102]

Consistent with *Eugnostos* and *Soph. Jes. Chr.*, the text goes on to identify the Immortal Man as "Adam of Light."[103]

Jealous of this being, Yaldabaoth plans a scheme against him that involves the creation of humankind, saying to the powers: "Come let us create a man out of earth, according to the image of our body and according to the likeness of this being ... so that when he sees his likeness he might become enamored of it."[104] Later in the text, three Adams are distinguished:

> Now the first Adam, (Adam) of Light, is spirit-endowed (pneumatikos), and appeared on the first day. The second Adam is soul-endowed (psychikos), and appeared on the sixth day .... The third Adam is a creature of the earth (choikos), that is, the man of the law, and he appeared on the eighth day.[105]

It is clear that the first Adam is the Immortal Man who appears in the light of Genesis 1:3–4, the second Adam is the human being created in Genesis 1:26–27, and the third Adam is the human being created in Genesis 2:7. It is also clear that the Immortal Man functions (at least in part) as the archetype for the human being created out of the earth.

Two questions emerge, both of which can be answered by placing this passage in the context of Philo's exegesis of the Genesis text. First, why does the author of *Orig. World* place the human archetype in the light of Genesis 1:3–4, rather than identifying the archetypal, first Adam with the human being of Genesis 1:26–27? The answer has to do with the fact that Philo (as I show in Chapter 5) insists that the ideal, archetypal creation takes place on the first day of creation but (strangely) never locates a human archetype in the text of Genesis 1:1–5. The author of *Orig. World* fills this gap by locating the archetypal, Immortal Man in the light of Genesis 1:3–4.

Second, what sort of distinction does the author of *Orig. World* intend between the soul-endowed creature of Genesis 1:26–27 and the earthly creature of Genesis 2:7? I show (again, in Chapter 5) that Philo makes a moral or ethical distinction between the human being of Genesis 1:26–27 and Genesis 2:7, with the latter representing the human being enslaved to the passions and the former representing the 'enlightened' human being

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[102] *Orig. World*, NHC II 108.2–9; *NHLE*, 177.
[103] *Orig. World*, NHC II 108.21; *NHLE*, 178.
[104] *Orig. World*, NHC II 112.33–113.2; *NHLE*, 180.
[105] *Orig. World*, NHC II 117.28–36; *NHLE*, 183.

who lives according to reason. It is reasonable to suppose that the author of *Orig. World* intends the same distinction.[106]

The reference to a 'spiritual' and an 'earthly' Adam probably also functions as an interpretation of 1 Corinthians 15:45–47,[107] in which Paul establishes that the "man from the earth" (Adam) must precede the "man from heaven" (Christ). Of course, the author of *Orig. World* reverses the order, placing the 'spiritual man' prior to the 'earthly man.'[108] If this connection is accepted, then the first, spirit-endowed Adam (the Immortal Man) is here implicitly equated with Christ.

The text goes on to describe how Yaldabaoth's scheme is frustrated and redemption is made possible for humankind through the work of Pistis Sophia. Christ plays no discernible role in this work,[109] with one notable exception toward the end of the text – the Logos "that is superior to all beings" is sent "that he might proclaim the unknown."[110] This characterization of the Logos as "superior to all beings" probably equates the Logos with Immortal Man – the only other being in the text that fits such a description. The Logos proceeds to speak the words of Mark 4:22 par., "There is nothing hidden that is not apparent, and what has not been recognized will be recognized."[111] The Logos (and by extension, the Immortal Man) is thus equated with the Jesus of the canonical gospels, albeit with a limited salvific role.

Given the text's subversive reading of Genesis, together with the limited role it assigns to Christ, it is difficult (if not impossible) to imagine the anthropomorphites reading *Orig. World* approvingly. However, the text constitutes an important witness to one stage of the Anthropos tradition, which places the primordial Anthropos within the light of the first day of creation, identifying him as the archetype after which human beings are created, and equating him with the Logos/Christ. I suggest that all of these elements were likewise present in anthropomorphite Christology.[112]

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[106] However, Philo consistently associates the human being of Genesis 1:26–27 with the spirit and *not* with the soul (as does the author of *Orig. World*).

[107] "Thus it is written, 'The first man, Adam, became a living being'; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit. But it is not the spiritual that is first, but the physical, and then the spiritual. The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven."

[108] Cf. Louis Painchaud, *L'écrit sans titre: Traité Sur L'origine Du Monde* (Québec: Presses de l'Université Laval, 1995.), 423–429.

[109] Hans-Gebhard Bethge, "Introduction" in *NHLE*, 171, argues that, as "Jesus Christ has no central function," *Orig. World* is "essentially non-Christian."

[110] *Orig. World*, NHC II 125.14–16; *NHLE*, 188.

[111] *Orig. World*, NHC II 125.17–19; *NHLE*, 188.

[112] Of course, the one element missing from *Orig. World* is the assignment of a significant salvific role to Christ.

5. The Apocryphon of John

The Apocryphon of John presents a complex version of the myth encountered in *Orig. World*, in which the Anthropos tradition plays a key role.[113] The text is set as a discourse between the apostle John and the risen Christ, who appears to John in a light that illuminates the "whole creation."[114] Throughout the discourse, in the words of Christ, the text develops an elaborate pre-cosmic and early cosmic history. It begins with a description of the "Monad," who exists as "God and Father of everything, [the invisible] One who is above [everything]" and who is the "pure light into which no [eye] can look."[115] The text goes on to describe the emergence of a Mother-figure out of the mind of the Father; she is called "Barbelo," "Mother-Father," "first man," and "holy Spirit."[116] Being androgynous, she is described sometimes as female and sometimes as male. The Father and Mother proceed to generate an only-begotten Son:

> And he [the Father] looked at Barbelo with the pure light which surrounds the invisible Spirit and (with) his spark, and she conceived from him. He begot a spark of light with a light resembling blessedness. But it does not equal his greatness. This was an only-begotten child of the Mother-Father which had come forth; it is the only offspring, the only-begotten one of the Father, the pure Light.[117]

The text repeatedly refers to the Son as "Autogenes" (self-generated) and "Christ."[118]

Upon seeing him, the Father "rejoiced over the light which came forth" from Barbelo, anointing him "with his goodness until it became perfect, not lacking in any goodness, because he had anointed it with the goodness of the invisible Spirit."[119] This passage, with its conjunction of primal triad

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[113] Three versions of *Ap. John* are preserved. NHC II.1 and IV.1 both represent the same Coptic translation of a long Greek version; NHC III.1 and BG 2 represent two independent Coptic translations of a short Greek version; ET: Frederik Wisse, *NHLE*, 105–123.

[114] *Ap. John*, NHC II 1.31; *NHLE*, 105.

[115] *Ap. John*, NHC II 2.26–31; *NHLE*, 106.

[116] *Ap. John*, NHC II 4.36–5.7; *NHLE*, 107.

[117] *Ap. John*, NHC II 6.10–18; *NHLE*, 108.

[118] *Ap. John*, NHC II 7.10–11, 20; 8.23; 9.1–2. The terms "only-begotten" and "self-generated" seem to be contradictory. Michael Waldstein explains the latter in the context of Neo-Pythagorean and Middle-Platonic speculation: first, the title clarifies that "no causality foreign to or outside of the emerging figure is at work"; second, it guards against the implication of activity on the part of the first principle, which would compromise "its complete rest and immobility." "The Primal Triad in the Apocryphon of John" in *The Nag Hammadi Library after Fifty Years*, ed. John D. Turner and Anne McGuire (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1997), 172–173.

[119] *Ap. John*, NHC II 6.19–26; *NHLE*, 108.

(Father, Mother, and Son), light, and anointing, clearly echoes a tradition preserved by Philo. In *Fug*. 109–110, he writes:

> The high priest is not a man, but the divine Logos ... the offspring of parents incorruptible and entirely spotless, his father being God, who is likewise father of everything, and his mother Wisdom, through whom the whole universe came into being; for this reason his head has been anointed with oil, by which I mean his ruling faculty is illumined with a brilliant light.[120]

As Michael Waldstein notes, "all the major elements of *Ap. John*'s portrayal of the Self-Generated are present in this text, though the order of light and anointing differs."[121] Yet he also argues for a "specifically Christian setting" of the anointing passage in *Ap. John*, given the "insistent threefold repetition of the ⲭⲣⲏⲥⲧⲟⲥ [goodness] motif in an *anointing* scene, resulting in an *anointed* one, a ⲭⲣⲓⲥⲧⲟⲥ."[122]

According to the text, the Father proceeded to honor the Son "with a great honor" and "gave him all power (ἐξουσία) and subjected to him the Truth which is in him in order that he should know everything, he whose name will be said to those who are worthy."[123] As Van Den Broek points out, the ultimate source of this passage is the Hebrew version of Psalm 8:4–6:

> What are human beings that you are mindful of them, mortals that you care for them? Yet you have made them a little lower than God, and crowned them with glory and honor. You have given them dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under their feet.

Daniel 7:14 interprets this psalm in terms of God's honoring of the Son of Man; throughout the New Testament it is applied to Christ (cf. especially 1 Cor 15:27, Eph 1:22, and Heb 2:6). While the Hebrew Bible's "little lower than God" provides the reader with ample reason to apply the Psalm to a heavenly figure (whether it be Autogenes, Son of Man, or Christ), the Sep-

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[120] Philo, *Fug*. 108–110: "τὸν ἀρχιερέα οὐκ ἄνθρωπον ἀλλὰ λόγον θεῖον ... γονέων ἀφθάρτων καὶ καθαρωτάτων ἔλαχεν, πατρὸς μὲν θεοῦ, ὃς καὶ τῶν συμπάντων ἐστὶ πατήρ, μητρὸς δὲ σοφίας, δι᾽ ἧς τὰ ὅλα ἦλθεν εἰς γένεσιν· καὶ διότι τὴν κεφαλὴν κέχρισται ἐλαίῳ, λέγω δὲ τὸ ἡγεμονικὸν φωτὶ αὐγοειδεῖ περιλάμπεται." LCL 5:68. This passage creates an interesting problem – as stated previously, Philo normally *equates* the figure of Sophia with the Logos. Ronald Williamson offers a possible solution: "It would appear that, when [Philo] is thinking of the Logos as immanent in the world, he uses the word Logos, but that *sometimes* when he is thinking of the incorporeal Logos of the intelligible world he uses the term Wisdom." In other words, the transcendent Logos (sometimes called "Sophia") generates the immanent Logos.

[121] Waldstein, "Primal Triad," 174.

[122] Waldstein, "Primal Triad," 175.

[123] *Ap. John*, NHC III 11.6–14; ET: Van Den Broek, "Autogenes and Adamas" in *Gnosis and Gnosticism*, ed. Martin Krause (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1981), 21–22.

tuagint reading, "little lower than the angels (βραχύ τι παρ᾽ ἀγγέλους),"[124] provides no such impetus. For this reason, Van Den Broek concludes that the concept of Autogenes "was not conceived by the [Greek] composer of the original Apocryphon, but that this writer made use of an originally independent Jewish myth of the heavenly Anthropos."[125]

As in *Eugnostos* and *Soph. Jes. Chr.*, God's Son (Autogenes) generates his own Son, referred to as the "perfect Man, the first revelation, and the truth"; he is given the name "Adamas."[126] This act takes place both by the will of Autogenes and by the will of the Father.[127] Immediately after appearing, Adamas glorifies the Father, the Mother, and the Son; he proceeds to bring forth numerous creatures, which also "glorify the invisible Spirit."[128]

By way of contrast, *Ap. John* next recounts the generation of Yaldabaoth, which results from Sophia's desire "to bring forth a likeness out of herself without the consent of the Spirit, ... and without her consort, and without his consideration"[129] (unlike in *Orig. World*, where his generation appears to be unintentional on the part of Sophia). As in *Orig. World*, Yaldabaoth creates numerous powers and authorities – not to glorify the true God, but to attend his own self – and again, he ignorantly and arrogantly believes himself to be the only God.[130]

To correct Yaldabaoth's arrogance, the Mother-Father (appearing here in the masculine) "revealed his likeness in a human form."[131] Upon seeing it, Yaldabaoth declares to the authorities, "Come, let us create a man according to the image of God and according to our likeness, that his image may become a light for us."[132] Then (apparently without the nefarious purpose assigned to the act in *Orig. World*), "he created a being according to the likeness of the first, perfect Man" and named the being "Adam."[133] The text later makes plain that this creation involves not just the human mind or soul, but the "natural and perceptible body."[134]

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[124] Psalm 8:6, LXX 2:6.
[125] Van Den Broek, "Autogenes and Adamas," 23.
[126] *Ap. John*, NHC II 8.32–35; *NHLE*, 109.
[127] *Ap. John*, NHC II 8.30–31; *NHLE*, 109.
[128] *Ap. John*, NHC II 9.5–24; *NHLE*, 109–110.
[129] *Ap. John*, NHC II 9.28–31; *NHLE*, 110.
[130] *Ap. John*, NHC II 10.19–11.22; *NHLE*, 110–111.
[131] *Ap. John*, NHC II 14.23–24; *NHLE*, 113. In BG 47.20–48.2, it is the supreme God himself who reveals his image in human form.
[132] *Ap. John*, NHC II 15.2–4; *NHLE*, 113.
[133] *Ap. John*, NHC II 15.9–12; *NHLE*, 113.
[134] *Ap. John*, NHC II 19.30–32, 20.13–14; *NHLE*, 116.

The "first, perfect Man" who appears here in human form and who functions as the archetype of humanity is likely Adamas (and not Autogenes/Christ): first, the phrases "perfect Man" and "first revelation" have already been used in *Ap. John* to describe Adamas; second, the name Adamas indicates that this being is related in a unique way to Adam.[135] No doubt this is a development of the tradition as it appears in *Orig. World*, in which the *highest* manifestation of God (Immortal Man/Christ) fulfills these roles. Such a development would have been intended to place even more distance between God and the corporeal world. Of course, no such distance is needed for one who thinks of God as creator. Hence (as discussed in Chapter 5) Philo's Logos can function as the highest manifestation of God *and* as the archetype of humanity. Of course, the anthropomorphites would assign both of these functions to Christ.

6. The Teachings of Silvanus

Malcolm Peel and Jan Zandee characterize *The Teachings of Silvanus*[136] as "a rare specimen of Hellenistic Christian wisdom literature," displaying a "remarkable synthesis of biblical, late Jewish, Middle Platonic and late Stoic concepts."[137] The attribution 'Silvanus' probably refers to a New Testament figure, either the fellow traveler of Paul (Acts 15:22–40; 16:19–29) or the *amanuensis* named in 1 Peter 5:12. Based on the author's knowledge of the tradition regarding Christ's descent into Hell, Alexandrian Logos and Wisdom Christology (as well as the thinking of later Stoicism and Middle Platonism), Peel and Zandee date *Teach. Silv.* to the late second or early third century.[138]

The first part of the treatise addresses the usual concerns of wisdom literature – guarding oneself against the passions and base impulses, and allowing reason and wisdom to be one's guides (NHC VII 84.15–98.20). The second part (NHC VII 98.20–118.7) focuses on the salvation won for the soul by Christ. It begins:

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[135] In this I agree with Van Den Broek, "Autogenes and Adamas," 23.

[136] The text of *Teach. Silv.* is preserved in NHC VII 84.15–118.7; ET: Malcolm L. Peel and Jan Zandee, *NHLE*, 381–395.

[137] Peel and Zandee, "Introduction" in *NHLE*, 379.

[138] Peel and Zandee, "Introduction" in *NHLE*, 380–381. They identify the probable provenance as Alexandria. However, Zandee, "'The Teachings of Silvanus' (NHC VII,4) and Jewish-Christianity," *Studies in Gnosticism and Hellenistic Religions: Presented to Gilles Quispel on the Occasion of His 65th Birthday*, ed. R. Van Den Broek and M. J. Vermaseren (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1981), 566, argues for a Palestinian provenance, noting that *Teach. Silv.*, NHC VII 113.6–7 characterizes Christ as "Light of the Eternal Light," a phrase similar to the Creed of Caesarea's "light from light."

Live with Christ and he will save you. For he is the true light and the sun of life. For just as the sun ... makes light for the eyes of the flesh, so Christ illuminates every mind and the heart.[139]

The text goes on to declare, "You cannot know God through anyone except Christ who has the image of the Father."[140] It later records the following prayer:

O Lord Almightly, how much glory shall I give Thee? No one has been able to glorify God adequately. It is Thou who hast given glory to Thy Word in order to save everyone, O Merciful God. (It is) he who has come from Thy mouth[141] and has risen from Thy heart, the First-born, the Wisdom, the Prototype, the First Light.[142]

In *Teach. Silv.*, all the elements of the Jewish Anthropos tradition are explicitly applied to Christ: he is the "first light" (of Gen 1:3–4), the image of God, the "prototype" (of humanity), and the one who reveals God's glory.

7. The Life of Aphou *Revisited*

In light of these texts, it is necessary to take a closer look at *The Life of Aphou*. During the course of the debate recorded in the text, Theophilus argues that humans bear absolutely no resemblance to God, the "true, unapproachable light" (a reference to 1 Tim 6:16). Aphou responds by making an analogy with the Eucharist – if the host is regarded as Christ's body (on the authority of Scripture), then humans should be regarded as the image of God (likewise on the authority of Scripture). For Scriptural authority, he cites John 6:51: "I am the living bread that came down from heaven." According to Golitzin, it is significant that Aphou chooses to cite this passage. He reasons that, if Aphou merely wanted to establish the equivalence between the words of institution, "this is my body," and the words spoken to Noah in Genesis 9:6, "this is my image," he "would have been better served to quote one of the Synoptic narratives of the Last Supper, or else Paul in 1 Corinthians 11:24. Instead, he appeals to John 6:51," a "deliberate choice" that supplies "an important key to understanding his argument."[143]

Golitzin suggests that Aphou is here drawing on an ancient Jewish tradition that equated "bread from heaven" with "unapproachable light"[144]; in

[139] *Teach. Silv.*, NHC VII 98.20–28; *NHLE*, 387.

[140] *Teach. Silv.*, NHC VII 100.23–27; *NHLE*, 387.

[141] Given the context, it would seem that this statement is intended to identify Christ as God's Logos.

[142] *Teach. Silv.*, NHC VII 112.27–37; *NHLE* 393.

[143] Golitzin, "The Vision of God," 291–292.

[144] Golitzin, "The Demons Suggest an Illusion," 26–27 cites Ira Chernus, *Mysticism in Rabbinic Judaism*: *Studies in the History of Midrash* (Berlin; New York: W. de Gruyter, 1982), 75–77. Chernus points out that, in one saying from the Babylonian Talmud

its Christian form this tradition was applied to Christ, together with the notion that the Son is the image of the Father and the model after which humankind was created. For instance, Clement of Alexandria writes that the Son, like the angels but unlike the Father, "has his own form and body corresponding to his preeminence over all spiritual beings" – that is to say, "not like the bodies in this world."[145] Clement proceeds to describe the Son as "the face of the Father ... through whom the Father is known,"[146] "light unapproachable,"[147] and "the heavenly bread and spiritual food furnishing life."[148]

If Golitzin is right, then John 6:51 is Aphou's answer to Theophilus' quotation of 1 Timothy 6:16. In effect, Aphou is saying to Theophilus: if you fail to understand how fallen humanity can bear the image of the God who dwells in unapproachable light, look no further than the Eucharist. Christ, who is the living bread come down from heaven, is *also* the unapproachable light; "he has given us that same flesh of light to eat ... eating it, do we not become it?"[149]

Aphou's reference to "unapproachable light" may thus be understood in the context of the Nag Hammadi documents – it is the primordial light of Genesis 1:3–4, in which the Son of God functions as the image of God and the archetype of humanity. Of course, this connection is not certain, but it is perfectly consistent with anthropomorphite Christology as I have defined it – Christ, from all eternity, is the visible, embodied image of the

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(*bBerakot* 17a), the righteous are said to "feed upon the splendor of the Shekinah" (in reference to Exodus 24:11, "they beheld God and ate and drank"). The saying may be early, as it is attributed to Abba Arika (Rav), who died in 247 CE. Of course, it may also be much later, for the Babylonian Talmud did not take final shape until the sixth or seventh century. Cf. Jeffrey L. Rubenstein, *The Culture of the Babylonian Talmud* (Baltimore and London: The John Hopkins University Press, 2003), 1–3.

[145] Clement of Alexandria, *Excerpta ex Theodoto* 10: "μορφὴν ἔχει ἰδίαν καὶ σῶμα ἀνὰ λόγον τῆς ὑπεροχῆς τῶν πνευματικῶν ἁπάντων ... οὐχ ὅμοιον ... τοῖς ἐν τῷδε τῷ κόσμῳ σώμασιν." F. Sagnard, ed. SC 23 (Paris: Cerf, 1948), 76–78.

[146] Clement, *Excerpta ex Theodoto* 10: "τὸ Πρόσωπον τοῦ Πατρὸς ... δι' οὗ γνωρίζεται ὁ Πατήρ." SC 23:80.

[147] Clement, *Excerpta ex Theodoto* 12: "ἀπρόσιτον Φῶς." SC 23:82.

[148] Clement, *Excerpta ex Theodoto* 13: "Ἄρτος ἐπουράνιος καὶ πνευματικὴ Τροφὴ ζωῆς παρεκτική." SC 23:84. Golitzin notes that Clement cautions against thinking of the Son's "form" or "body" as humanlike; nevertheless, he argues that the other elements of Aphou's "exegetical complex ... are all present" ("The Demons Suggest an Illusion," 27, n. 44). Of course, by the time of the anthropomorphite controversy, the Alexandrian tradition would no longer ascribe to the Son a 'form' or 'body' at all, and the "unapproachable light" of 1 Timothy 6:16 would come to be associated with the consubstantial Trinity (and not exclusively with the Son).

[149] Golitzin, "The Vision of God," 294.

invisible, incorporeal Father. The divine body of Christ can been seen in prayer precisely because it first appeared in the light of the first day of creation.

D. Conclusion

The evidence points to some sort of connection between the anthropomorphites and certain texts contained in the Nag Hammadi codices. External evidence reveals the possibility that the anthropomorphites were directly influenced by these texts. First, the anthropomorphites belonged to communities (Nitria and Scetis) that had close ties with the Pachomian monasteries, where the codices were likely produced. Second, two of the texts (*The Gospel of Thomas* and *The Sophia of Jesus Christ*) were discovered among the papyrus fragments found at Pemdje/Oxyrhynchus, home to Apa Aphou's community. Third, the *Apophthegmata patrum* connects debate over the *imago Dei* with the reading of 'apocryphal' literature. Internal evidence reveals, in no fewer than six Nag Hammadi texts, a Christology with strong affinities to that of the anthropomorphites (as I have outlined it) – the notion that Christ appeared in human form in the light of the first day of creation.

Although it cannot be proved that the anthropomorphites were directly influenced by these Nag Hammadi texts, it seems certain that they shared a common tradition with the communities that produced them. In Chapter 5 I show that all of these communities were bearers of an ancient Jewish-mystical tradition concerned with God's Logos, the 'second God' who functions as intermediary between God and the world, is often personalized, and is sometimes even anthropomorphized. The primary witness to this tradition is, of course, Philo of Alexandria.

Chapter 5

Philo of Alexandria

A. Introduction

I have argued that the Evagrians, the anthropomophites, and the communities that produced certain Nag Hammadi texts all shared a common tradition, which held that the vision of God was available in prayer and that it was somehow made available through Christ. Within this tradition there was, of course, vast disagreement on several key questions. For the anthropomorphites – as well as in some of the Nag Hammadi texts – the vision was exclusively that of the Son (while the Father remains invisible), it was 'concrete' (available to the eyes of the body), and it was human in form. For the Evagrians, the vision was of the consubstantial Trinity (seen in the glorified Christ), it was interior (available only to the eyes of the mind or soul), and it was formless.

Philo of Alexandria, particularly in his Logos doctrine, is an important witness within this tradition – standing, as it were, at the intersection of these divergent streams of thought. He anticipates the anthropomorphites and the Nag Hammadi texts by associating the vision of God exclusively with the Logos (an exclusivity the Evagrians rejected), while he anticipates the Evagrians by insisting that the vision is interior and formless. Yet Philo sometimes describes the Logos in anthropomorphic language that could be taken in a literal, concrete direction. I argue that the anthropomorphites (and perhaps the authors of some of the Nag Hammadi texts) took such language precisely in that direction, ascribing to the Son a human form, visible in prayer.

In this chapter, I examine four aspects of Philo's Logos doctrine. First, I set it in its Middle Platonic context. Second, I show that Philo (sometimes) gives the Logos an independent, personal existence distinct from God; it is within this context that he occasionally anthropomorphizes the Logos, paving the way for the Christology of the anthropomorphites and those Nag Hammadi texts discussed in Chapter 4. Third, I demonstrate that Philo's exegesis of Genesis 1–2 compelled the authors of these Nag Hammadi texts – and perhaps the author of *The Life of Apa Aphou of Pemdje*, as well – to anthropomorphize the primordial light of Genesis 1:3–4 and to identify that light with the Logos. Finally, I show that the authors of these texts

need not to have read Philo in order to have become acquainted with this tradition, for his manner of thinking was widespread among Jews in late antiquity.

B. The Middle Platonic Context

Philo's Logos doctrine must be understood within the context of Middle Platonism. David T. Runia argues that Philo "made a careful reading of Plato's more important dialogues" and that "his interpretation is heavily dependent on the so-called Middle Platonist movement, which began to make headway during his lifetime."[1] According to Christopher Stead, that movement emerged from the fact that Plato (especially in *The Republic* and *Timaeus*) had left many questions unanswered – questions having to do with the precise relationship between the "Craftsman" and the Forms (particularly the Form of the Good), and which of these two (if either) constituted the supreme reality in the universe. Middle Platonism answered these questions by positing that "the supreme reality was a mind or intelligence, and that the Forms were 'ideas' or conceptions which originated in that mind and were used as 'examples' (*paradeigmata*) for creating the various kinds of things which the world contains."[2]

This understanding of the Forms was one of Philo's metaphysical starting points; another was the insistence that the supreme reality – God – is perfectly holy and transcendent. Philo's usual term for God as the transcendent deity is the Platonic τὸ ὄν, 'That which Exists' or 'the Existent.' All that human beings can know about τὸ ὄν is *that* it exists – not *what* it is in essence. Philo thus writes that whenever "the God-loving soul seeks to know what the Existent is according to essence, it embarks upon a quest for that which is beyond form and beyond sight."[3] Just as the human eye is "not able to look upon the beams of the sun," so also "it cannot bear the

[1] David T. Runia, "Philo, Alexandrian and Jew," *Exegesis and Philosophy Studies on Philo of Alexandria* (Aldershot, Hampshire: Variorum; Brookfield, VT: Gower, 1990), 15. Runia hesitates, however, to label Philo a Middle Platonist: "In the first place because there are certain elements in his thought – such as his emphasis on piety, on the role of divine grace, on human 'nothingness' before God – which are definitely not Greek. Secondly because it was not at all his intention to present himself as a Greek philosopher, but rather as a devout and law-abiding Jew."

[2] Christopher Stead, *Philosophy in Christian Antiquity* (Cambridge: University Press, 1994), 55.

[3] Philo, *Post.* 15: "φιλόθεος ψυχὴ τὸ τί ἐστι τὸ ὄν κατὰ τὴν οὐσίαν ζητῇ, εἰς ἀειδῆ καὶ ἀόρατον ἔρχεται ζήτησιν." LCL 2:336.

rays that pour from the Existent."[4] Not only is God cut off from the eyes of the body, but "he cannot be apprehended even by the mind, except for the fact that he is."[5] Hence, Philo can write:

> It is enough for a man to advance in his reasoning so far as to learn that the Cause of the universe is and subsists. To be anxious to go even further, and to inquire about God's essence or quality, is a primitive form of foolishness.[6]

However, it should not be thought that this problem is merely the result of a deficiency in the human intellect:

> Reason cannot advance so far as to rise up to God, who is entirely untouchable and unattainable, but it subsides and slips away, unable to furnish the proper words as a step toward revealing, I dare not say the Existent – for if the whole heaven became an articulate voice, it would lack the precise and appropriate terms needed for this.[7]

Of course, such apophaticism results in a serious difficulty – if God were absolutely transcendent, then Philo could write nothing about him, for he would know nothing about him. Yet Philo insists that God can be known – and even seen – by human beings. He writes, "the beginning and end of happiness is to be able to see God."[8] Ronald Williamson is certainly correct that, "when Philo states that God 'did not deem it right to be apprehended by the eyes of the body' (*Abr*. 76), he plainly implies, what he elsewhere states, that the 'eyes' of the soul can apprehend God."[9] How is this paradox to be resolved?

The solution lay readily at hand in another Middle Platonic[10] concept – the Divine Mind or Logos, which acted as intermediary between God and

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[4] Philo, *Abr*. 76: "οὐ γὰρ ἂν ἐχώρησε τὰς ἀπὸ τοῦ ὄντος ἐκχεομένας αὐγάς, ὁπότε οὐδὲ ταῖς ἀφ᾽ ἡλίου προσβλέπειν ἀκτῖσιν οἷα τέ ἐστι." LCL 6:42.

[5] Philo, *Deus* 62: "ὁ δ᾽ ἄρα οὐδὲ τῷ νῷ καταληπτὸς ὅτι μὴ κατὰ τὸ εἶναι μόνον." LCL 3:40.

[6] Philo, *Post*. 168: "ἀνθρώπου γὰρ ἐξαρκεῖ λογισμῷ μέχρι τοῦ καταμαθεῖν ὅτι ἔστι τε καὶ ὑπάρχει τὸ τῶν ὅλων αἴτιον προελθεῖν· περαιτέρω δὲ σπουδάζειν τρέπεσθαι, ὡς περὶ οὐσίας ἢ ποιότητος ζητεῖν, ὠγύγιός τις ἠλιθιότης." LCL 2:428.

[7] Philo, *Legat*. 6: οὐ γὰρ φθάνει προσαναβαίνειν ὁ λόγος ἐπὶ τὸν ἄψαυστον καὶ ἀναφῆ πάντῃ θεόν, ἀλλ᾽ ὑπονοστεῖ καὶ ὑπορρεῖ κυρίοις ὀνόμασιν ἀδυνατῶν ἐπιβάθρᾳ χρῆσθαι πρὸς δήλωσιν, οὐ λέγω τοῦ ὄντος—οὐδὲ γὰρ ὁ σύμπας οὐρανὸς ἔναρθρος φωνὴ γενόμενος εὐθυβόλων καὶ εὐσκόπων εἰς τοῦτο ἂν εὐποροίη ῥημάτων." LCL 10:4.

[8] Philo, *QE* 2.51, tr. (from Armenian) by Ralph Marcus, LCL Supplement 2:99.

[9] Ronald Williamson, *Jews in the Hellenistic World* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 67.

[10] Winston writes: "Under the influence of the 'scientific' teachings of the Stoa, the Middle Platonists (such as Atticus and Albinus) merged Plato's Demiurge with his World Soul into the single concept of a *Nous*/Logos .... Following in the footsteps of the Middle Platonists, Philo too adopted the Stoic Logos, though like Plutarch and Atticus he drew a clear distinction between it and God." *Logos and Mystical Theology*, 15.

creation, and through which God is seen and known. Of course, Philo had no difficulty in assimilating this concept to the biblical 'word' of God, rendered in the Septuagint by the term *logos*. In fact, mediation by the Logos is central to Philo's theology. An important text in this regard is *De Somniis* 1.65–71, in which he is commenting on the Septuagint text of Genesis 22:3–4: "He [Abraham, representing the soul that longs to see God] came to the place about which God had told him.... and looking up with his eyes, he saw the place from afar."[11] Philo wonders (rhetorically) how it could be that, if Abraham had already arrived at the place, he saw the place "from afar."[12] In response, he suggests that the two usages of the term 'place' have two different significations:

> One of these is the divine Logos, and the other is God, who was before the Logos. Now the one guided by wisdom arrives at the former place, finding that the main part and end of propitiation is the divine Logos, in which the one who is fixed does not advance so far as to reach the One who is God according to essence, but sees him from afar; rather, he is not even able to contemplate him from afar, but discerns only this, that God is far away from all creation, and that any comprehension of him is removed to a great distance from all human understanding."[13]

Philo thus understands the place to which Abraham arrived to be the Logos. When the soul is fixed in the Logos, it sees God in the only way that God can be seen – not in his essence, but "from afar." That is to say, with respect to the divine essence, seeing God is nothing other than discerning that there is a "great distance" between God and oneself.[14]

Abraham therefore does not (and cannot) see God, but only the divine Logos. Yet there is a sense in which God is encountered in the vision, as Philo later makes clear (recalling Exod 24:9–10): "Moses also [i.e., just like the Logos] 'leads out the people to a meeting with God,' well knowing

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[11] Genesis 22:3–4: "ἦλθεν ἐπὶ τὸν τόπον, ὃν εἶπεν αὐτῷ ὁ θεός.... καὶ ἀναβλέψας Αβρααμ τοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς εἶδεν τὸν τόπον μακρόθεν." LXX 1:30.

[12] Philo regards an apparent inconsistency in the biblical text as an indication that the author is speaking allegorically.

[13] Philo, *Somn*. 1.65–66: "ὧν τὸ μὲν ἕτερον θεῖός ἐστι λόγος, τὸ δὲ ἕτερον ὁ πρὸ τοῦ λόγου θεός. ὁ δὴ ξεναγηθεὶς ὑπὸ σοφίας εἰς τὸν πρότερον ἀφικνεῖται τόπον, εὑράμενος τῆς ἀρεσκείας κεφαλὴν καὶ τέλος τὸν θεῖον λόγον, ἐν ᾧ γενόμενος οὐ φθάνει πρὸς τὸν κατὰ τὸ εἶναι θεὸν ἐλθεῖν, ἀλλ᾽ αὐτὸν ὁρᾷ μακρόθεν· μᾶλλον δὲ οὐδὲ πόρρωθεν αὐτὸν ἐκεῖνον θεωρεῖν ἱκανός ἐστιν, ἀλλὰ τὸ μακρὰν τὸν θεὸν εἶναι πάσης γενέσεως αὐτὸ μόνον ὁρᾷ καὶ τὸ πορρωτάτω τὴν κατάληψιν αὐτοῦ πάσης ἀνθρωπίνης διανοίας διῳκίσθαι." LCL 5:332.

[14] The influence on Gregory of Nyssa is clear. In his own *Life of Moses*, Gregory writes: "the true knowledge and the true vision of what we seek consists precisely in not seeing, because the one we seek transcends all knowledge and is cut off from us in every way by the darkness of incomprehensibility (ἐν τούτῳ γὰρ ἡ ἀληθὴς ἐστιν εἴδησις τοῦ ζητουμένου καὶ ἐν τούτῳ τὸ ἰδεῖν ἐν τῷ μὴ ἰδεῖν, ὅτι ὑπέρκειται πάσης εἰδήσεως τὸ ζητούμενον οἷόν τινι γνόφῳ τῇ ἀκαταληψίᾳ πανταχόθεν διειλημμένον)." *De vita Moysis* 2, GNO 7.1:87.

that God comes invisibly toward souls longing to meet with him."[15] God thus appears to the soul longing to see him – not in his essence, but in the Logos. Philo makes this point once again in *Somn*. 1.230, commenting on the Septuagint text of Genesis 31:13: "I am the God who was seen by you in the place of God."[16] He argues that the use of the article in the expression "I am the God" (ἐγώ εἰμι ὁ θεὸς) indicates that "the true God" (ὁ μὲν ἀληθείᾳ θεὸς) is in view; however, the lack of the article in the expression "the place of God" (τόπῳ θεου) indicates that the author is here referring to God's "most ancient Logos" (τὸν πρεσβύτατον … λόγον).[17] Philo's meaning could not be clearer: God is seen only in the Logos.

Thus, the Logos is (at the least) the visible aspect of the God who, according to essence, is invisible even to the eyes of the soul. However, the Logos is visible *only* to the eyes of the soul, being invisible to the eyes of the body. Philo writes, "the Logos of God surpasses even beauty itself, that is, the beauty that exists in nature,"[18] and "it does not come into visible appearance, inasmuch as it does not resemble any sensible thing."[19] Yet while the Logos is "invisible and without form," it can be "comprehended only by soul as soul."[20] Philo thus writes, "God gives to the soul a seal, a most beautiful gift ... having perfected the whole cosmos, he impressed upon it an image and appearance, namely, his own Logos."[21] Hence, Samuel Sandmel can write: "the Logos never descends from the intelligible world into the sensible world; man must move into the intelligible world to encounter the Logos."[22]

In Philo's hands, the Logos thus becomes God's "world-immanent activity,"[23] "the face of God turned toward reality,"[24] and "the knowable

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[15] Philo, *Somn*. 1.71: "καὶ γὰρ Μωυσῆς 'ἐξάγει τὸν λαὸν εἰς τὴν συνάντησιν τοῦ θεοῦ,' σαφῶς εἰδὼς ἐρχόμενον αὐτὸν ἀοράτως πρὸς τὰς ποθούσας ψυχὰς ἐντυχεῖν αὐτῷ." LCL 5:334.

[16] Genesis 31:13: "ἐγώ εἰμι ὁ θεὸς ὁ ὀφθείς σοι ἐν τόπῳ θεοῦ." LXX 1:48

[17] Philo, *Somn*. 1.230, LCL 5:418. Recall from Chapter 2 the importance of the phrase 'place of God' for Evagrius; only for him, the 'place of God' is not the Logos, but the human mind.

[18] Philo, *Opif*. 139: "θεοῦ δὲ λόγος καὶ αὐτοῦ κάλλους, ὅπερ ἐστὶν ἐν τῇ φύσει κάλλος, αμείνων." LCL 1:110.

[19] Philo, *Fug*. 101: "εἰς ὁρατὴν οὐκ ἦλθεν ἰδέαν, ἅτε μηδενὶ τῶν κατ᾽ αἴσθησιν ἐμφερὴς ὤν." LCL 5:64. Cf. *Her*. 119.

[20] Philo, *Migr*. 5: "ἀόρατος, ἀειδής, ψυχῇ μόνον ὡς ψυχῇ καταλαμβανόμενος." LCL 4:134.

[21] Philo, *Somn*. 2.45: "δίδωσι γὰρ οὗτος τῇ ψυχῇ σφραγῖδα, πάγκαλον δῶρον … τελειώσας τὸν ὅλον ἐσφράγισε κόσμον εἰκόνι καὶ ἰδεᾳ, τῷ ἑαυτοῦ λόγῳ." LCL 5:462.

[22] Samuel Sandmel, *Philo of Alexandria: An Introduction* (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), 95.

[23] David Winston, *Logos and Mystical Theology*, 15.

[24] Runia, "Philo: Alexandrian and Jew," 9.

aspect of God ... the intersection in the intelligible world of *To On* and man."[25] The idea of the Logos proved so helpful in solving the paradox of transcendence and immanence that Williamson concludes, "if there had not been Logos doctrines already in existence for his use, Philo would almost certainly have created the concept with its associated vocabulary."[26]

C. Two Visions of the Logos

Philo has much to say about the Logos, yet he never explicitly defines it.[27] His treatment of the subject (or of any other subject, for that matter) is not systematic; rather, his thoughts regarding the Logos appear in the context of Scriptural exegesis, resulting in numerous tensions – if not outright contradictions.[28] Indeed, at least two visions of the Logos emerge from his writings. According to the first, the Logos is nothing more than an aspect of God – the divine Mind or Reason – having no independent existence distinct from God. In this scenario, God is the agent of creation, usually (but not always) depicted as using the Logos as a tool or instrument for creating. According to the second vision, the Logos – while yet being regarded as the divine Mind or Reason – has its own personal, independent existence distinct from God. In this scenario, the Logos is the agent of creation.

1. The Logos as an Aspect of God

Philo's doctrine of the Logos is most fully developed in *De Opificio Mundi*, an exegetical treatise covering the first three chapters of Genesis. In his comments on the first day of creation, Philo explains that God must first create the "intelligible cosmos" (τὸν νοητόν κόσμον) to serve as a model for the "visible, corporeal cosmos" (τὸν ὁρατὸν κόσμον … τὸν σωματικὸν). He writes: "God, being God, knew in advance that a beautiful copy could not come into existence apart from a beautiful model, and that a sense-perceptible object could not be faultless unless it was modeled

[25] Sandmel, *Philo of Alexandria*, 94.

[26] Williamson, *Jews in the Hellenistic World*, 103.

[27] If one were to compile all that Philo wrote about the Logos into a single volume, it would prove to be quite large. By my count, he uses the term (in the singular) 1097 times. Of these instances, 166 refer unambiguously to the Logos of God; most of the others refer to 'right reason' or to the mind/reason of human beings – concepts intimately connected in Philo's thought with the divine Logos.

[28] Williamson, *Jews in the Hellenistic World,* 103, even wonders "whether it can be said that Philo had a *single* Logos doctrine."

after an archetypal and intelligible idea."[29] Philo explicitly rejects the notion that the intelligible cosmos exists in some place. Rather, it exists in the Mind – that is, in the Logos – of God. To explain, Philo makes the analogy of an architect preparing to build a city. After observing the climate and location of the site, he makes a complete plan of the city that is to be built – a plan that can be located nowhere other than in his mind. Only then "does he begin to construct the [city] out of stones and timber, like a good craftsman keeping an eye on the model, ensuring that the corporeal objects correspond to each of the incorporeal ideas."[30] In the same way, God first conceives of the intelligible cosmos, which then serves as a model for the construction of the sense-perceptible cosmos.

In fact, Philo goes on to equate the intelligible cosmos with the Logos. In *Opif*. 24 he writes: "If one wished to use language that has been stripped down to essentials, he would say that the intelligible cosmos is nothing other than the Logos of God as God is already making the cosmos."[31] After all, "the intelligible city is nothing other than the reasoning of the architect who is already planning to build the city."[32] The meaning of the analogy is clear: God is to the architect as the Logos is to the *mind* of the architect. One consequence of *Opif*. 24 is that the sense-perceptible cosmos, which is obviously the image of the intelligible cosmos, is therefore the image of the Logos. This makes perfect sense to Philo, for it is analogous with his interpretation of Genesis 1:27. He points this out in *Opif*. 25:

> When later describing the genesis of the human being, [Moses] explicitly declares that the human being was formed *according to* [i.e., not *as*] the image of God. And if the part is an image of an image, then clearly so too is the whole.[33]

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[29] Philo, *Opif*. 16: "προλαβὼν γὰρ ὁ θεός, ἅτε θεός, ὅτι μίμημα καλὸν οὐκ ἄν ποτε γένοιτο δίχα καλοῦ παραδείγματος, οὐδέ τι τῶν αἰσθητῶν ἀνυπαίτιον, ὃ μὴ πρὸς ἀρχέτυπον καὶ νοητὴν ἰδέαν ἀπεικονίσθη." LCL 1:14. Philo does not present arguments for interpreting the text in this way; Runia, *Philo of Alexandria: On the Creation of the Cosmos according to Moses*, (Brill: Leiden; Boston, 2001), 132; 164–165, provides two possible arguments: first, heaven and earth are each mentioned twice in Genesis 1 (heaven again in v 8, earth again in v 10); second, the LXX text of Genesis 1:2 refers to the earth as "invisible and unconstructed" (ἀόρατος καὶ ἀκατασκεύαστος), which Philo seems to have understood in terms of Plato's realm of the ideas.

[30] Philo, *Opif*. 17–20: ... οἷα δημιουργὸς ἀγαθός, ἀποβλέπων εἰς τὸ παράδειγμα, τὴν ἐκ λίθων καὶ ξύλων ἄρχεται κατασκευάζειν, ἑκάστη τῶν ἀσωμάτων ἰδεῶν τὰς σωματικὰς ἐξομοιῶν οὐσίας. LCL 1:16

[31] Philo, *Opif*. 24: "εἰ δέ τις ἐθελήσειε γυμνοτέροις χρήσασθαι τοῖς ὀνόμασιν, οὐδὲν ἂν ἕτερον εἴποι τὸν νοητὸν κόσμον εἶναι ἢ θεοῦ λόγον ἤδη κοσμοποιοῦντος." LCL 1:20.

[32] Philo, *Opif*. 24: "οὐδὲ γὰρ ἡ νοητὴ πόλις ἕτερόν τί ἐστιν ἢ ὁ τοῦ ἀρχιτέκτονος λογισμὸς ἤδη τὴν πόλιν κτίζειν διανοουμένου." LCL 1:20.

[33] Philo, *Opif*. 25: "τὴν γοῦν ἀνθρώπου γένεσιν ἀναγράθων ἐν τοῖς ἔπειτα διαρρήδην ὁμολογεῖ, ὡς ἄρα κατ᾽ εἰκόνα θεοῦ διετυπώθη (Gen. i. 27). εἰ δὲ τὸ μέρος εἰκὼν εἰκόνος, δῆλον ὅτι καὶ τὸ ὅλον." LCL 1:20.

That is to say, the entire sense-perceptible cosmos (just like the human being) was formed as an image of God's image, the Logos.

However, one encounters a serious difficulty when turning to Philo's discussion of Genesis 1:26–27, located in *Opif.* 69–71 – this concept of the Logos as intermediary between God and the human being is nowhere to be found. Rather, as Thomas Tobin points out, "the mind of man is made as an image of the Mind of the universe, a Mind which serves as the archetype in accord with which each human mind is formed."[34] There is no mention of the Logos in *Opif.* 69–71; the "archetypal Mind" is none other than God himself. One must, in fact, look elsewhere for Philo's doctrine of the Logos as intermediary. In addition to *Opif.* 24–25, Tobin identifies six passages in Philo's corpus.

(1) In *Her.* 231, Philo writes:

> God made humanity not "the image of God" but "according to the image." Thus the mind in each of us, which properly and truly speaking *is* the human being, is an image at third hand from the Creator, while between them [the Logos] is a model of the one and a copy of the other.[35]

(2) In his allegorical interpretation of Exodus 31 (in which a certain Bazalel is named the artificer of the Tabernacle and Ark of the Covenant), Philo interprets the name "Bazalel" to mean "in the shadow of God" (ἐν σκιᾷ θεοῦ). "But God's shadow," he adds, "is his Logos, which he made use of like an instrument, thus making the world."[36] He goes on to say that, "just as God is the pattern of the image, which has just now been called 'shadow,' so also the image becomes the pattern of others."[37] That is to say, "as the image has been made so as to represent God, so also the human being has been made so as to represent the image."[38]

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[34] Thomas Tobin, *The Creation of Man: Philo and the History of Interpretation*, Catholic Biblical Quarterly Monograph Series 14 (Washington, DC: The Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1983), 58.

[35] Philo, *Her.* 231: "'ἐποίησε' γάρ φησιν 'ὁ θεὸς τὸν ἄνθρωπον' οὐχὶ εἰκόνα θεοῦ, ἀλλὰ 'κατ' εἰκόνα.' ὥστε τὸν καθ' ἕκαστον ἡμῶν νοῦν, ὃς δὴ κυρίως καὶ πρὸς ἀλήθειαν ἄνθρωπός ἐστι, τρίτον εἶναι τύπον ἀπὸ τοῦ πεποιηκότος, τὸν δὲ μέσον παράδειγμα μὲν τούτου, ἀπεικόνισμα δὲ ἐκείνου." LCL 4:398.

[36] Philo, *Leg.* 3.96: "σκιὰ θεοῦ δὲ ὁ λόγος αὐτοῦ ἐστιν, ᾧ καθάπερ ὀργάνω προσχρησάμενος ἐκοσμοποίει." LCL 1.364.

[37] Philo, *Leg.* 3.96: "ὥσπερ γὰρ ὁ θεὸς παράδειγμα τῆς εἰκόνος, ἣν σκιὰν νυνὶ κέκληκεν, οὕτως ἡ εἰκὼν ἄλλων γίνεται παράδειγμα." LCL 1.364–366.

[38] Philo, *Leg.* 3.96: "ὡς τῆς μὲν εἰκόνος κατὰ τὸν θεὸν ἀπεικονισθείσης, τοῦ δὲ ἀνθρωπου κατὰ τὴν εἰκόνα." LCL 1.366.

(3) In *Spec.* 1.81, Philo writes that "the immortal soul ... was shaped according to the image of the Existent. And the image of God is the Logos, through whom the whole cosmos was created."[39]

(4) In the third volume of the same work, Philo explains why it is a sacrilege to commit murder – because of all the things in the universe, "none is more sacred or divine than humanity, a most beautiful copy of a most beautiful image, shaped according to the pattern of the archetypal form of the Logos."[40]

(5) Later in that same volume, Philo writes that "the human mind is divine in form, being shaped according to the archetypal idea, the Logos that is above all."[41]

(6) Finally, in *QG* 2.62, Philo seeks to explain why the text of Genesis 9.6 says, "as if (speaking) of another God, 'in the image of God he made man,' and not 'in His own image.'" He reasons:

> Most excellently and veraciously this oracle was given by God. For nothing mortal can be made in the likeness of the most high One and Father of the universe but (only) in that of the second God, who is His Logos. For it was right that the rational (part) of the human soul should be formed as an impression by the divine Logos, since the pre-Logos God is superior to every rational nature.[42]

In all of these texts, the Logos stands as intermediary (in Tobin's words, a *tertium quid*) between God and humanity, relating to God as God's image or representation, and relating to humanity as a paradigm or archetype.[43]

Tobin provides a compelling explanation for the discrepancy between these texts and *Opif.* 69–71. The overall thesis of Tobin's study, *The Creation of Man*, is that "Philo functioned both as a representative of a tradition of interpretation and as an interpreter in his own right."[44] Thus various layers of tradition underlie Philo's works, with later layers (and Philo's own interpretations) superseding previous layers. According to Tobin, *Opif.* 69–71 belonged to an earlier, anti-anthropomorphite stage of interpretation. Such an interpretation was isolated, intended to answer specific objections, and unaffected by the interpretation of other texts. On the other

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[39] Philo, *Spec.* 1.81: "ψυχὴν τὴν ἀθάνατον ... τυπωθῆναι κατὰ τὴν εἰκόνα τοῦ ὄντος· λόγος δ' ἐστὶν εἰκὼν θεοῦ, δι' οὗ σύμπας ὁ κόσμος ἐδημιουργεῖτο." LCL 7.146.

[40] Philo, *Spec.* 3.83: "οὐδὲν οὔτε ἱεροπρεπέστερον οὔτε θεοειδέστερόν ἐστιν ἀνθρώπου· παγκάλης εἰκόνος πάγκαλον ἐκμαγεῖον ἀρχετύπου λογικῆς ἰδέας παραδείγματι τυπωθέν." LCL 7.526.

[41] Philo, *Spec.* 3.207: "θεοειδὴς ὁ ἀνθρώπινος νοῦς πρὸς ἀρχέτυπον ἰδέαν, τὸν ἀνωτάτω λόγον, τυπωθείς." LCL 7.604.

[42] Philo, *QG* 2.62, tr. (from Armenian) by Ralph Marcus, LCL Supplement 1:150–151.

[43] Tobin, *Creation of Man*, 58–59.

[44] Tobin, *Creation of Man*, 9.

hand, *Opif*. 24–25 (along with the other 'Logos' passages) belonged to a later stage of interpretation, one that sought more coherent and integrated explanations of the biblical text. Such an interpretation was intended to meet the Middle Platonic need for some sort of intermediary figure between God and the sensible world. For Philo, that intermediary figure is the Logos.[45] In nearly all the texts identified by Tobin, it is God who shapes the human being (or at any rate, the human mind or soul) in the image of the Logos. In these texts (especially *Leg*. 3.96), the Logos is nothing more than God's instrument in creating the cosmos in general, and humanity in particular.

2. The Logos as a Person

On the other hand, Philo often describes the Logos as more than a mere instrument in God's hands, but rather as a person and the agent of creation. Remarkably, he does so in *Opif*. 20 – a passage occurring in the middle of the 'architect' analogy cited previously (see p. 125):

> As, then, the city which was imagined beforehand within the mind of the architect had no location in the outer world, but was engraved on the soul of the craftsman, in the same way the cosmos that consists of the ideas would have no other location than the divine Logos, which set those ideas in order.[46]

In the analogy Philo is developing throughout *Opif*. 17–25, God is the craftsman while the Logos is his mind at work, essentially equated with the intelligible cosmos. *Opif*. 20 is at odds with this analogy in two significant respects: first, the intelligible cosmos is located *within* (rather than being equated with) the Logos; second, the Logos is the craftsman (and not merely the *mind* of the craftsman), himself responsible for ordering the cosmos.

Furthermore, in *QG* 2.62 (the sixth text identified by Tobin), Philo has no difficulty in referring to the Logos as "the second God," which Alan Segal takes to mean "a second, principle, divine creature ... who nevertheless is only the visible emanation of the High, ever-existing God."[47] Again, the Logos here is no mere instrument of creation, but the one who actually fashions the human mind.

Finally, Philo personalizes the Logos by referring to it as God's son. For instance, in *Agr*. 51 the Logos functions as the superintendent of the

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[45] Tobin, *Creation of Man*, 56.

[46] Philo, *Opif*. 20: "καθάπερ οὖν ἡ ἐν τῷ ἀρχιτεκτονικῷ προδιατυπωθεῖσα πόλις χώραν ἐκτὸς οὐκ εἶχεν, ἀλλ᾽ ἐνεσφράγιστο τῇ τοῦ τεχνίτου ψυχῇ, τὸν αὐτὸν τρόπον οὐδ᾽ ὁ ἐκ τῶν ἰδεῶν κόσμος ἄλλον ἂν ἔχοι τόπον ἢ τὸν θεῖον λόγον τὸν ταῦτα διακοσμήσαντα." LCL 1:16.

[47] Alan Segal, *Two Powers in Heaven: Early Rabbinic Reports about Christianity and Gnosticism* (Leiden: Brill, 1977), 164.

cosmos, God's "first-born son, who receives the charge of this mighty company, like the lieutenant of some great king."[48] In *Somn*. 1.215, the Logos is the "high priest" (ἀρχιερεὺς) of the cosmos, and again, God's "first-born" (πρωτόγονος).[49] Of course, as discussed in Chapter 4 (see p. 113), Philo sometimes ascribes to the Logos *two* parents: God and Sophia.

There is some question as to whether Philo really intends to personalize the Logos. Ronald Williamson thinks not, writing, "it cannot be stressed enough that the Logos for Philo is God's Logos, the incorporeal Word or Thought of God, not a distinct and separate being having its own divine ontological status, subordinate to God."[50] Hence Philo's "habit of personifying the Logos ... must not be mistaken for full-blooded personalization."[51] Williamson acknowledges that the Logos, "as the Mind or Reason in which the Ideas exist, acquires a certain independence of God's essence."[52] Nevertheless, he concludes that "there is no need ... to see evidence of belief in a being apart from God, though one may perhaps properly refer to an aspect of, or an element within, the totality of the Godhead."[53]

Other authors read Philo differently. M. J. Edwards writes that the Logos was both "an eternal notion in the mind of the Creator and the organ of his work in time and space. Under this last aspect, it receives such epithets as Son, King, Priest, and Only-Begotten; in short it becomes a person."[54] Daniel Boyarin goes so far as to characterize Philo's Logos doctrine as "the beginning of trinitarian reflection," arguing that "for one branch of pre-Christian Judaism there was nothing strange about a doctrine of a *deuteros theos*, a 'second' God (although, to be sure, Philo uses this 'shocking' term only once), and nothing in that doctrine that precluded monotheism."[55]

Boyarin concedes that Philo himself "oscillates about whether the Logos, God's Son, exists separately or is totally incorporated within the godhead."[56] For instance, in *Her.* 205–206, Philo writes:

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[48] Philo, *Agr*. 51: "πρωτόγογον υἱόν, ὃς τήν ἐπιμέλειαν τῆς ἱερᾶς ταύτης ἀγέλης οἵα τις μεγάλου βασιλέως ὕπαρχος διαδέξεται." LCL 3:134.

[49] Philo, *Somn*. 1.215, LCL 5:412.

[50] Williamson, *Jews in the Hellenistic World*, 107.

[51] Williamson, *Jews in the Hellenistic World*, 108.

[52] Williamson, *Jews in the Hellenistic World*, 111.

[53] Williamson, *Jews in the Hellenistic World*, 113.

[54] M. J. Edwards, "Justin's Logos and the Word of God," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 3, no. 3 (Fall 1995): 263.

[55] Daniel Boyarin, *Border Lines: the Partition of Judaeo-Christianity* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 113.

[56] Boyarin, *Border Lines*, 114.

The Father of all has given to his archangelic and eldest Logos a remarkable gift, to stand on the border separating the creature from the Creator.... Now the Logos rejoices in the gift, and exulting in it, he describes it as such: "And I stood in the middle, between the Lord and you" (Deut. 5:5), neither being uncreated as God, nor created as you, but in the middle between the two extremes.[57]

Given this 'oscillation,' I suggest that Tobin's method (applied fruitfully to other 'oscillations' in Philo) should also be applied here. Tobin argues that two layers of tradition are embedded within Philo's works: a first layer, in which God directly creates the sensible world, and a second, in which God creates through the intermediary of the Logos. I would further divide this second layer of tradition into two: a first layer, in which the Logos functions as an impersonal aspect of God's being, and a second, in which the impersonal Logos takes on a personal existence, distinct from God. It may be that Philo himself was struggling to choose between these alternative visions of the Logos. In terms of reception-history, there is no question that later Christian readers of Philo understood his Logos to be a person with its own divine ontological status.[58]

3. Anthropomorphizing of the Logos

Within this tradition of personalizing the Logos, there is a further tendency to anthropomorphize the Logos. In *De Confusione Linguarum*, Philo explicitly refers to the Logos as a "man." First, he extolls "those who have chosen one and the same father, who is not mortal but immortal, the man of God, who being the Logos of the eternal [God] is of necessity himself also incorruptible."[59]

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[57] Philo, *Her.* 205–206: "τῷ δὲ ἀρχαγγέλῳ καὶ πρεσβυτάτῳ λόγῳ δωρεὰν ἔδωκεν ἐξαίρετον ὁ τὰ ὅλα γεννήσας πατήρ, ἵνα μεθόριος στὰς τὸ γενόμενον διακρίνῃ τοῦ πεποιηκότος.... ἀγαλλεται δὲ ἐπὶ τῇ δωρεᾷ καὶ σεμνυνόμενος αὐτὴν ἐκδιηγεῖται φάσκων· 'κἀγω εἱστήκειν ἀνὰ μέσον κυρίου καὶ ὑμῶν,' οὔτε ἀγένητος ὡς ὁ θεὸς ὢν οὔτε γενητὸς ὡς ὑμεῖς, ἀλλὰ μέσος τῶν ἄκρων." LCL 4:384. Commenting on this passage, Boyarin declares: "If Philo is not on the road to Damascus here, he is surely on a way that leads to Nicaea and the controversies over the second person of the Trinity."[57] *Border Lines*, 114.

[58] Philo's popularity among early Christians is well documented; cf. David T. Runia, *Philo in Early Christian Literature: a Survey* (Assen: Van Gorcum; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 3–7; 31–33. This popularity derived largely from the fact that Philo could be regarded as anticipating (or learning from one of the apostles!) the Christian notion that the Logos/Christ is a divine person distinct from the Father. His status began to wane in the fourth century, as his Logos doctrine began to appear (in light of Nicaea) suspiciously subordinationist (a suspicion based, of course, on the assumption that he actually intended his Logos to be understood as a person distinct from God/the Father).

[59] Philo, *Conf.* 41: "ἕνα καὶ τὸν αὐτὸν ἐπιγεραμμένοι πατέρα οὐ θνητὸν ἀλλ' ἀθάνατον, ἄνθρωπον θεοῦ, ὃς τοῦ ἀιδίου λόγος ὢν ἐξ ἀνάγκης καὶ αὐτός ἐστιν ἄφθαρτος." LCL 4:32.

Later, in his explication of the Sinai theophany of Exodus 24:9ff., he asserts:

> Now the mark of those who serve the Existent ... is that they ascend in their thoughts to the heavenly height, setting before them Moses, the nature loved by God, to lead the way. For then they will behold the place, which is in fact the Logos, where the unswerving and unmoving God stands, and also what lies under his feet ... the world perceived by the senses.[60]

Segal explains the meaning of this passage. According to the Septuagint translation of Exodus, Moses and the elders did not see God, but only "the place where God stands" (in an attempt to avoid the obvious implication that human beings can see God). Philo, in turn, takes the word 'place' to refer to the Logos. "Therefore, the mystic, here Moses, does not see God himself, but the logos, 'the place where God stands,' who is manifested in the narration ... as a human figure astride the world."[61]

Finally, in *Conf.* 145–147, Philo writes:

> Those who live in the knowledge of the One are rightly called sons of God .... But if anyone is not yet worthy to be called a son of God, let him strive to be adorned according to God's first-born, the Logos. He is the eldest of the angels, the chief angel as it were, having many names; for he is called Ruler, Name of God, Logos, Man according to the image, He who sees, (that is) Israel.... For if we have not yet become fit to be thought children of God, we may still become children of His incorporeal image, the most holy Logos; for the Logos is the eldest image of God.[62]

Here Philo suggests that those who have been perfected (those who live in the knowledge of God) can take their place as sons of God beside the Logos. Those who fall short of perfection must take their place under the Logos, God's first-born Son.

Of course, Philo regards the Logos as being without form, visible only to the soul. Even in *Conf.* 147, he describes it as God's *incorporeal* (ἀειδοῦς) image. Thus Philo clearly intends this anthropomorphizing of the Logos to be taken metaphorically. Nevertheless, it appears that some

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[60] Philo, *Conf.* 95–96: "Ἴδιον δὲ τῶν τὸ ὂν θεραπευόντων ... ἀναβαίνειν δὲ τοῖς λογισμοῖς πρὸς αἰθέριον ὕψος, Μωυσῆν, τὸ θεοφιλὲς γένος, προστησαμένους ἡγεμόνα τῆς ὁδοῦ. τότε γὰρ τὸν μὲν τόπος, ὃς δὲ λόγος ἐστί, θεάσονται, ᾧ ὁ ἀκλινὴς καὶ ἄτρεπτος θεὸς ἐφέστηκε, τὰ δ' ὑπὸ τοὺς πόδας αὐτοῦ ... τὸν αἰσθητὸν κόσμον." LCL 4.60.

[61] Segal, *Two Powers*, 168.

[62] Philo, *Conf.* 145–147: "οἱ δὲ ἐπιστήμῃ κεχρημένοι τοῦ ἑνὸς υἱοὶ θεοῦ προσαγορεύονται δεόντως .... κἂν μηδέπω μέντοι τυγκάνῃ τις ἀξιόχρεως ὢν υἱὸς θεοῦ προσαγορεύεσθαι, σπουδαζέτω κοσμεῖσθαι κατὰ τὸν πρωτόγονον αὐτοῦ λόγον, τὸν ἀγγέλων πρεσβύτατον, ὡς ἂν ἀρχάγγελον, πολυώνυμον ὑπάρχοντα· καὶ γὰρ ἀρχὴ καὶ ὄνομα θεοῦ καὶ λόγος καὶ ὁ κατ' εἰκόνα ἄνθρωπος καὶ ὁ ὁρῶν, Ἰσραήλ, προσαγορεύεται.... καὶ γὰρ εἰ μήπω ἱκανοὶ θεοῦ παῖδες νομίζεσθαι γεγόναμεν, ἀλλά τοι τῆς ἀειδοῦς εἰκόνος αὐτοῦ, λόγου τοῦ ἱερωτάτου· θεοῦ γὰρ εἰκὼν λόγος ὁ πρεσβύτατος." LCL 4.88–90.

Christian communities took such language literally – including those who produced the Nag Hammadi documents examined in Chapter 4, as well as the anthropomorphites.

D. The Logos and the Double Creation of Humanity

As discussed in Chapter 4, numerous Nag Hammadi texts (and probably *The Life of Aphou*) anthropomorphize the primordial light of Genesis 1:3–4. This move was partly explained by the fact that in Greek, the word for 'light' (φῶς) and one of the words for 'man' (φώς) are homonyms. However, there is another reason, to be explored here. In the tradition represented by Philo, the 'ideal' creation of humanity (in the technical, Platonic sense) must precede (ontologically, not temporally) the 'empirical' creation. Many studies, focusing especially on *Opif.* 134 and *Leg*. 1.31, understand Philo to draw the line between ideal and empirical at Genesis 2:4 – with Genesis 1:26–27 describing the creation of the ideal, archetypal human being and Genesis 2:7 describing the creation of the empirical human being.[63] However, there are difficulties with this approach: (1) it is not the most natural interpretation of these Philonic texts, and (2) it is inconsistent with Philo's interpretation of the Genesis text elsewhere, in which the line between ideal and empirical is clearly drawn at Genesis 1:5. Of course, this line compelled interpreters to seek the archetypal human being in the first verses of Genesis, which they found in the "light" of Genesis 1:3–4.

In the two key passages mentioned above, Philo comments as follows on the text of Genesis 2:7:

> There is a very great difference between the human being molded now and the one who came into being previously, according to the image of God; for the human being molded as sense-perceptible already participates in quality, consisting of body and soul, either man or woman, and by nature mortal; but the human being according to the image is a kind of idea or genus or seal, perceived by the intellect, incorporeal, neither male nor female, and immortal by nature.[64]

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[63] Cf. Joachim Jeremias, "᾽Αδάμ," *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, trans. and ed. Geoffrey Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964), 1:143; Oscar Cullmann, *The Christology of the New Testament*, 2nd rev. ed., trans. Shirley C. Guthrie and Charles A. M. Hall (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1963), 149–151; Valentin Nikiprowetzky, *Etudes philoniennes* (Paris: Cerf, 1996), 65 (article originally published in 1963); Christopher Stead, *Philosophy in Christian Antiquity*, 62; See also David Winston, *Logos and Mystical Theology*, 25, who argues that it is only Genesis 1:27a that Philo interprets as referring to the ideal human being, while verses 26, 27b and 28–30 refer to the empirical human being, also described in 2:7.

[64] Philo, *Opif.* 134: "διαφορὰ παμμεγέθης ἐστὶ τοῦ τε νῦν πλασθέντος ἀνθρώπου καὶ τοῦ κατὰ τὴν εἰκόνα θεοῦ γεγονότος πρότερον· ὁ μὲν γὰρ διαπλασθεὶς αἰσθητὸς ἤδη μετέχων ποιότητος, ἐκ σώματος καὶ ψυχῆς συνεστώς, ἀνὴρ ἢ

There are two types of human beings; one is the heavenly man, and the other is the earthly man. The heavenly man, inasmuch as he was born according to the image of God, has no participation whatsoever in perishable or earthly substance. But the earthly man is brought together out of scattered material, which Moses calls "clay." For this reason he says not that the heavenly man was molded, but that he was stamped with the image of God, while the earthly man is molded, but not begotten, by the Craftsman.[65]

At first glance, the traditional interpretation of these passages appears to be correct. Philo sharply contrasts the human being of Genesis 1:26–27 ("heavenly," not participating in "perishable or earthly substance," "stamped with the image of God") with the human being of Genesis 2:7 ("earthly," "brought together out of scattered material," and "molded"); and the contrast certainly seems to be that between ideal and empirical, with Philo describing the human being of Genesis 1:26–27 as "incorporeal," "perceived by the intellect," and the "idea or genus or seal" of the human being of Genesis 2:7.

However, a serious difficulty with this interpretation is presented in *Opif.* 29–36, in which Philo comments on the first day of creation. He writes:

First, then, the Creator made an incorporeal heaven and an invisible earth and the form of air and the void.... Then he made the incorporeal essence of water and spirit, and seventh of all light, which once again was incorporeal and the intelligible model of the sun and all the other light-bearing stars about to be established in heaven.[66]

It is clear that Philo here interprets Genesis 1:1–5 as describing the intelligible – or ideal (in a Platonic sense) – cosmos. Of course, this in itself would present no problem at all to the traditional view that Philo locates the ideal/empirical dividing line at Genesis 2:4. However, Philo proceeds to argue for the *uniqueness* of the first day, basing his argument on the fact that the Septuagint text of Genesis 1:5 numbers this day with the cardinal "day one" (ἡμέραν μίαν) rather than the ordinal "first day" (ἡμέραν πρώτην), as all the other days of creation are numbered.[67] He concludes

γυνή, φύσει θνητός· ὁ δὲ κατὰ τὴν εἰκόνα ἰδέα τις ἢ γένος ἢ σφραγίς, νοητός, ἀσώματος, οὔτ' ἄρρεν οὔτε θῆλυ, ἄφθαρτος φύσει." LCL 1:106.

[65] Philo, *Leg.* 1.31: "διττὰ ἀνθρώπων γένη· ὁ μὲν γάρ ἐστιν οὐράνιος ἄνθρωπος, ὁ δὲ γήϊνος. ὁ μὲν οὖν οὐράνιος ἅτε κατ' εἰκόνα θεοῦ γεγονὼς φθαρτῆς καὶ συνόλως γεώδους οὐσίας ἀμέτοχος, ὁ δὲ γήϊνος ἐκ σποράδος ὕλης, ἣν χοῦν κέκληκεν, ἐπάγη· διὸ τὸν μὲν οὐράνιόν φησιν οὐ πεπλάσθαι, κατ' εἰκόνα δὲ τετυπῶσθαι θεοῦ, τὸν δὲ γήϊνον πλάσμα, ἀλλ' οὐ γέννημα, εἶναι τοῦ τεχνίτου." LCL 1:166.

[66] Philo, *Opif.* 29: "Πρῶτον οὖν ὁ ποιῶν ἐποίησεν οὐρανὸν ἀσώματον, καὶ γῆν ἀόρατον, καὶ ἀέρος ἰδέαν, καὶ κενοῦ ... εἶθ' ὕδατος ἀσώματον οὐσίαν, καὶ πνεύματος, καὶ ἐπὶ πᾶσιν ἑβδόμου φωτός, ὃ πάλιν ἀσώματον ἦν καὶ νοητὸν ἡλίου παράδειγμα, καὶ πάντων ὅσα φωσφόρα ἄστερα κατὰ τὸν οὐρανὸν ἔμελλε συνίστασθαι." LCL 1:22.

[67] Philo, *Opif.* 35, LCL 1:26.

that it was so named "because of the separateness of the intelligible cosmos, which has the nature of the unit."[68] Then, in his introductory comments on the second day of creation, he confirms this approach: "The incorporeal cosmos now completed, having been established in the divine Logos, the sense-perceptible cosmos was ready for birth according to this incorporeal model."[69]

Philo is therefore insistent in *Opif.* 29–36 that the ideal creation ends at Genesis 1:5, with the empirical creation beginning at Genesis 1:6 (not temporally, of course, but ontologically). There is thus an apparent contradiction between this passage and *Opif.* 134 (cited on p. 132), which seems clearly to draw the line between ideal and empirical at Genesis 2:4. If these passages were drawn from two different works, one might attribute this disparity to development in Philo's thought, but how is one to handle such a contradiction in a single work?

Tobin answers this question by applying his method of uncovering multiple layers of interpretation. First of all, he takes the contradiction to be an actual contradiction (and not merely apparent); that is, he understands Philo in *Opif.* 134 to be contrasting the creation of ideal humanity in Genesis 1:26–27 with the creation of empirical humanity in Genesis 2:7. However, he takes this to be a contradiction not in Philo's thinking, but in the pre-Philonic Alexandrian traditions that Philo incorporated into his work. Tobin argues that, in Alexandria, there was an old tradition that took Genesis 1:26–27 and 2:7 to be complimentary accounts of the creation of a single human being. However, in a later tradition, the text was read Platonically so that Genesis 1:26–27 refers to the ideal human being while Genesis 2:7 refers to the empirical. Such an interpretation, according to Tobin, solved what any Platonically inclined Alexandrian exegete must have regarded as a problem – there is "no mention of the creation of an 'intelligible man'" in Genesis 1:1–5 to function "as a paradigm for the man of the sensible world."[70] That is to say, some interpreters would have found it odd that Genesis 1:1–5 refers to the creation of cosmological objects but not to the creation of humanity.

Reading the text in this way, however, created another problem:

> If the distinction between the ideal world and the sensible world is the distinction between 'day one' (Genesis 1.1–5) and the other five days, then the fact that the heavenly

[68] Philo, *Opif.* 35: "διὰ τὴν τοῦ νοητοῦ κόσμου μόνωσιν μοναδικὴν ἔχοντος φύσιν." LCL 1:26.

[69] Philo, *Opif.* 36: "Ὁ μὲν οὖν ἀσώματος κόσμος ἤδη πέρας εἶχεν ἱδρυθεὶς ἐν τῷ θείῳ λόγῳ, ὁ δ' αἰσθητὸς πρὸς παράδειγμα τούτου ἐτελειογονεῖτο." LCL 1:26.

[70] Tobin, *Creation of Man*, 119.

man is created on the *sixth* day, a day otherwise devoted to the creation of creatures of the *sensible* world, is anomalous.[71]

The solution to *this* problem was, of course, obvious – move the division between ideal and empirical from Genesis 1:5 to Genesis 2:4 so that all of Genesis 1:1–2:3 represents the creation of the ideal cosmos, while all that follows represents the creation of the empirical cosmos. According to Tobin, this entire history of interpretation, with all of its twists and turns, is laid bare in *De opificio mundi*.

There are two difficulties with Tobin's approach. First, he assumes that Philo, in *Opif.* 134, is distinguishing ideal humanity (Gen 1:26–27) from empirical humanity (Gen 2:7). However, it is not at all clear that he is doing so, and that is certainly not the way he handles the Genesis text elsewhere. If it can be shown that Philo is seeking to make some other sort of distinction between the two creation accounts, then there is no inconsistency in *De opificio mundi*. Second, Tobin's work implies that Philo was aware of the inconsistency in the interpretive tradition, but then he would also have been aware of the resulting inconsistency in the text of *De opificio mundi*. Knowing that he was about to interpret Genesis 1:26–27 as belonging to the creation of the incorporeal cosmos (in *Opif.* 134), could he really say of Genesis 1:5, "the incorporeal cosmos now completed" (in *Opif.* 36)?[72]

At least two interpreters – Richard A. Baer[73] and David T. Runia[74] – read *Opif.* 134 differently (and, in the process, render Tobin's solution unnecessary): Philo is not contrasting ideal humanity with empirical humanity; rather, he is contrasting two different aspects of empirical humanity. They point out that Philo does not refer to the human being of Genesis 1:26–27 as "ideal," but as "a kind of idea" (ἰδέα τις), which may indicate that he is not using the term in its technical, Platonic sense.[75] Furthermore, Baer shows that Philo elsewhere uses Genesis 1:26–27 to establish "the close likeness of empirical man's rational soul with the Logos and thus ultimately with God, not in reference to the idea of man, a concept which as

[71] Tobin, *Creation of Man*, 119.

[72] This is especially true if, as Tobin argues, Philo's own view is based on the latest stage of the tradition (*Creation of Man*, 34, 142).

[73] Cf. Richard A. Baer, *Philo's Use of the Categories Male and Female* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1970), 21–31.

[74] Cf. David T. Runia, *Philo of Alexandria and the Timaeus of Plato* (Leiden: Brill, 1986), 336–338 and *Philo of Alexandria: On the Creation of the Cosmos according to Moses*, introduction, translation and commentary by David T. Runia (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 322–323.

[75] Baer, *Categories*, 30; Runia, *On the Creation*, 323.

such does not appear in Philo's writings at all."[76] As evidence, Baer cites *Her.* 230–231 and *Opif.* 69:

> [The Logos] that is above us is the archetype, while [the Logos] that we possess is its copy.... God made humanity not "the image of God" but "according to the image." Thus the mind in each of us, which properly and truly speaking *is* the human being, is an image at third hand from the Creator, while between them [the Logos] is a model of the one and a copy of the other.[77]

> [Moses] says that humankind was made according to the image of God and according to his likeness. This is very well said, for nothing earth-born resembles God more than humankind. But let no one infer that the resemblance is bodily in character. For neither is God in human form, nor is the human body divine in form. Rather, "image" refers to the mind, the ruler of the soul. For according to one mind as an archetype (the mind of the whole universe), the mind in each of those made according to the image, in turn, was copied.[78]

In these passages, Philo describes the human being created in the image of God (Gen 1:26–27) as the "mind in each of us," which "in turn, was copied." He is clearly referencing the rational *nous* within empirical humanity, and not ideal humanity or even the ideal human mind. For Philo, the ideal or archetypal *nous* is the Logos, which both images God and serves as the model for the human mind.[79]

Of course, this analysis raises two obvious questions: if Genesis 1:26–27 refers not to ideal humanity, but to the mind of empirical humanity, then to what does Genesis 2:7 refer, and what does Philo intend by his contrast in *Opif.* 134 between the human being "molded now" and the one "according to the image of God"? According to Baer, the answer lies in two Philonic distinctions: (1) that between humanity's higher and lower natures, and (2) that between genera and species. Regarding the former, Philo writes, "humankind is on the border between mortal and immortal

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[76] Baer, *Categories*, 22.

[77] Philo, *Her.* 230–231: "ἕνα μὲν ἀρχέτυπον (τὸν) ὑπὲρ ἡμᾶς, ἕτερον δὲ μίμημα τὸν καθ᾽ ἡμᾶς ὑπάρχοντα.... "ἐποίησε" γάρ φησιν "ὁ θεὸς τὸν ἄνθρωπον" οὐχὶ εἰκόνα θεοῦ, ἀλλὰ "κατ᾽ εἰκόνα". ὥστε τὸν καθ᾽ ἕκαστον ἡμῶν νοῦν, ὃς δὴ κυρίως καὶ πρὸς ἀλήθειαν ἄνθρωπός ἐστι, τρίτον εἶναι τύπον ἀπὸ τοῦ πεποιηκότος, τὸν δὲ μέσον παράδειγμα μὲν τούτου, ἀπεικόνισμα δὲ ἐκείνου." LCL 4:396–398.

[78] Philo, *Opif.* 69: "τὸν ἄνθρωπόν φησι γεγενῆσθαι, κατ᾽ εἰκόνα θεοῦ καὶ καθ᾽ ὁμοίωσιν (Gen. i. 26)· πάνυ καλῶς, ἐμφερέστερον γὰρ οὐδὲν γηγενὲς ἀνθρώπου θεῷ. τὴν δ᾽ ἐμφέρειαν μηδεὶς εἰκαζέτω σώματος χαρακτῆρι· οὔτε γὰρ ἀνθρωπόμορφος ὁ θεός, οὔτε θεοειδὲς τὸ ἀνθρώπειον σῶμα. ἡ δε εἰκὼν λέλεκται κατὰ τὸν τῆς ψυχῆς ἡγεμόνα νοῦν· πρὸς γὰρ ἕνα, τὸν τῶν ὅλων ἐκεῖνον ὡς ἂν ἀρχέτυπον, ὁ ἐν ἑκάστῳ τῶν κατὰ μέρος ἀπεικονίσθη." LCL 1:54.

[79] Cf. *Spec.* 1.171, 3.207; *Det.* 83; *Plant.* 18. Philo is consistent in identifying the human being of Gen. 1:27 as the mind or soul of empirical humanity.

nature ... mortal in respect of the body, immortal in respect of the mind."[80] Regarding the latter, he writes (commenting on Gen 1:26–27), "after naming the genus 'human being,' [Moses] distinguished the species, asserting that they had been created both male and female, although not yet taking shape as individuals."[81]

Taking both distinctions into account, Baer suggests the following construction of Philo's thought:

> Because man is a composite ..., God first forms the genus of each part of man, which only "afterwards" together form the first empirical man, the species Adam. Neither of these "men," the earthly or the heavenly ..., is to be thought of as an actually existing man but only as a generic component part of the first empirical man.[82]

Regarding *Opif*. 134, Baer argues that the human being "molded now" (Gen 2:7) is the generic earthly man (body animated by irrational soul[83]), while the human being "according to the image" (Gen 1:26–27) is the generic heavenly man (the rational *nous*). Then, according to Baer, in *Opif*. 135 Philo turns to a description of the first empirical man, the species Adam: "The structure of the sense-perceptible and individual human being is a composite of earthly substance and divine spirit, for the body came into being when the Craftsman took clay and molded a human form out of it."[84]

Baer's analysis encounters a serious difficulty: it results in a rather unnatural and overly complicated reading of *Opif*. 134–135. In reading the text as contrasting three different entities (the generic earthly man, the generic heavenly man, and the first empirical man), Baer must take "the human being who has been molded as sense-perceptible object" and "consists of body and soul" (*Opif*. 134) as distinct from the "sense-perceptible and individual human being ... composed of earthly substance and divine spirit" (*Opif*. 135). However, it makes far more sense to take these as identical and therefore to read the text as describing only two entities: the human being "after the image" and the human being "molded now."

Runia's interpretation of Philo avoids this difficulty. He agrees with Baer that Philo understands Genesis 1:26–27 to be describing the rational

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[80] Philo, *Opif*. 135: "τὸν ἄνθρωπον θνητῆς καὶ ἀθανάτου φύσεως εἶναι μεθόριον ... θνητὸν μὲν κατὰ τὸ σῶμα, κατὰ δὲ τὴν διάνοιαν ἀθάνατον." LCL 1:106.

[81] Philo, *Opif*. 76: "τὸ γένος ἄνθρωπον εἰπών, διέκρινε τὰ εἴδη φήσας ἄρρεν τε καὶ θῆλυ δεδημιουργῆσθαι, μήπω τῶν ἐν μέρει μορφὴν λαβόντων." LCL 1:60.

[82] Baer, *Categories*, 28.

[83] Baer defines the irrational soul as "the power of sheer animal vitality in man." *Categories*, 31.

[84] Philo, *Opif*. 135: τοῦ δ᾽ αἰσθητοῦ καὶ ἐπὶ μέρους ἀνθρώπου τὴν κατασκευὴν σύνθετον εἶναί ... ἔκ τε γεώδους οὐσίας καὶ πνεύματος θείου· γεγενῆσθαι γὰρ τὸ μὲν σῶμα, χοῦν τοῦ τεχνίτου λαβόντος καὶ μορφὴν ἀνθρωπίνην ἐξ αὐτοῦ διαπλάσαντος." LCL 1:106.

nous in empirical humanity (rather than "ideal" humanity in a Platonic sense).[85] However, he reads *Opif*. 134–135 naturally as contrasting only two (and not three) entities. According to Runia, the distinction Philo is making here is not between genera and species, let alone between the rational and irrational soul; rather, it is a moral or ethical distinction: while Genesis 2:7 refers to the composite, empirical human being (consisting, for sure, of a heavenly part and an earthly part), Genesis 1:26–27 refers to "an idealization of human nature in terms of the intellect ... the 'true human being' such as he should and can be when the cares of the body and earthly life have entirely fallen away."[86]

Strong support for this interpretation can be found in at least two passages. In *Her*. 57, Philo writes:

> There are two kinds of people: on the one hand those who live according to the divine spirit, (that is) reason; and on the other hand those who exist according to blood and the pleasure of the flesh. This kind is formed of the earth, but that other is an accurate copy of the divine image.[87]

In *QG* 1.8, he addresses the question of why God placed the "moulded" man in the garden and not the man "made in his image":

> Paradise should be thought a symbol of wisdom. For the earth-formed man is a mixture, and consists of soul and body, and is in need of teaching and instruction .... But he who was made in His image is in need of nothing, but is self-hearing and self-taught and self-instructed by nature.[88]

Although Runia cautions against conflating *Opif*. 134–135 with *Leg*. 1.31 (cited on p. 133), I would argue that the two texts should be read as expressing a similar[89] concept: in *Leg*. 1.31, the difference between the "heavenly man" of Genesis 1:26–27 (who "has no participation whatsoever in perishable or earthly substance") and the "earthly man" of Genesis 2:7 (who "is brought together out of scattered material") is moral or ethical. This interpretation finds confirmation in *Leg*. 1.32:

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[85] Runia, *On the Creation*, 323.

[86] Runia, *On the Creation*, 323.

[87] Philo, *Her*. 57: "ὥστε διττὸν εἶδος ἀνθρώπων, τὸ μὲν θείῳ πνεύματι λογισμῷ βιούντων, τὸ δὲ αἵματι καὶ σαρκὸς ἡδονῇ ζώντων. τουτοῦ τὸ εἶδός ἐστι πλάσμα γῆς, ἐκεῖνο δὲ θείας εἰκόνος ἐμφερὲς ἐκμαγεῖον." LCL 4:310–312.

[88] Philo, *QG* 1.8, tr. (from Armenian) by Ralph Marcus, LCL Supplement 1:5.

[89] But not quite the same; while in *Op*. 134–135 Philo reads Genesis 2:7 as referring to empirical humanity (composed of body and soul), in *Leg*. 1.31 he interprets both Genesis 1:26–27 and Genesis 2:7 as referring *only* to the mind/soul of empirical humanity. This is not unusual; Philo makes the same move in *Op*. 139, *Her*. 56, and *Plant*. 19.

We must consider the earthly man to be the mind that is to be infused into the body, but has not yet been so infused. Now this mind would be earthly and perishable in nature, except that God breathed into it the power of true life.[90]

Furthermore, in *Leg.* 2.4, Philo adds that "senses, passions, vices, and myriad other things are combined with and adapted to the mind"[91] of the earthly man, while the man made according to the image "longs for that of which it is a copy, and is placed in the same rank with it."[92]

There is no question that Philo conceives of Genesis 1:1–5 as recording the ideal creation (in the technical, Platonic sense). However, if Baer and Runia are correct, the ideal creation is *confined* to day one; all that follows – including both accounts of the creation of humanity – pertains to the empirical creation. At this point Tobin's problem emerges once again but without his proposed solution. That is to say, Genesis 1:1–5 recounts the creation of the intelligible heaven, earth, water, spirit, and light, but there is no explicit mention of the creation of the intelligible human being. Any reader of the Genesis text working with the notion that the ideal creation is complete after v. 5 would certainly have found this omission troubling. Yet Philo resists transferring the ideal/empirical dividing line from Genesis 1:5 to Genesis 2:4.

However, another solution lay readily at hand: anthropomorphize the intelligible light of Genesis 1:3–4, so that the creation of ideal humanity *is* contained within the opening verses of Genesis. As demonstrated in Chapter 4, this is precisely what one finds in numerous Nag Hammadi texts and perhaps in *The Life of Aphou*. I suggest that this is the case because the communities that produced these texts followed Philo (directly or indirectly) in dividing ideal from empirical at Genesis 1:5; and, furthermore, because Philo himself points toward this solution of anthropomorphizing the light of Genesis 1:3–4.

He does so by connecting the light with the Logos, whom (as shown on pp. 130–132) he does at times anthropomorphize. Philo often uses the metaphor of light to describe the divine nature generally. He writes, "just as when the sun rises the darkness disappears, all things being filled with light, so when God, the intelligible sun, rises and shines upon the soul, the darkness of passions and vices is scattered."[93] He refers to God as "the sun

[90] Philo, *Leg.* 1.32: "ἄνθρωπον δὲ τὸν ἐκ γῆς λογιστέον εἶναι νοῦν εἰσκρινόμενον σώματι, οὔπω δ᾽ εἰσκεκριμένον. ὁ δὲ νοῦς οὗτος γεώδης ἐστὶ τῷ ὄντι καὶ φθαρτός, εἰ μὴ ὁ θεὸς ἐμπνεύσειεν αὐτῷ δύναμινγ ἀληθινῆς ζωῆς." LCL 1:166.

[91] Philo, *Leg.* 2.4: "αἰσθήσεις καὶ πάθη καὶ κακίαι καὶ μυρία ἄλλα τούτῳ τῷ νῷ συνέζευκται καὶ συνήρμοσται." LCL 1:226.

[92] Philo, *Leg.* 2.4: "ποθεῖ τοῦτο, οὗπέρ ἐστι μίμημα, καὶ μετ᾽ ἐκείνου τάττεται." LCL 1:226.

[93] Philo, *Virt.* 164: "καθάπερ γὰρ ἀνατείλαντος ἡλίου τὸ μὲν σκότος ἀφανίζεται, φωτὸς δὲ πληροῦται τὰ πάντα, τὸν αὐτὸν τρόπον ὅταν θεός, ὁ

of the sun, perceived by the mind as the sun is perceived by the senses, and supplying from invisible fountains the visible light that is seen."[94] He declares, "when the knowledge of the Existent shines, it outshines everything else, thus rendering invisible even those things that seemed to be brilliant in themselves."[95] Williamson sums up Philo's teaching on the subject:

> Just as when we look up at the sun we have an intense, even blinding, awareness of its real presence, without being able to describe it in terms of its essential characteristics, so men can become aware, with that same intensity of awareness, only at an intellectual level, of the real presence of God.... His sense may be beyond man's knowledge, but there are those who enjoy or experience a vivid sense of the dazzling brightness of God's reality.[96]

The vision of God is therefore a vision of light – but the vision is available only to the eyes of the soul and "is possible for men only because God has expressed his inward thought in his Logos."[97]

Hence, in *Opif*. 31 Philo emphasizes the close relationship between the Logos and the primordial, intelligible light:

> Now that invisible light, perceived by the mind, has become the image of the divine Logos, which explains its generation. And it is a star above the heavens, the source of the stars that are perceived by the senses. It would not be far off the mark if someone were to call it "universal light."[98]

Runia is surely correct that Philo's interpretation is informed by the text of Genesis 1:3: "Then God said, 'Let there be light'; and there was light." This is the first time in the text that God speaks, indicating to Philo that the divine Logos is not only the model, but also the agent of creation.[99] Philo again comments on this relationship in *Somn*. 1.75:

> God is light ... and not only the light, but also the archetype of every other light, or rather, he is older and higher than every archetype, holding the position of the model of a

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νοητὸς ἥλιος, ἀνάσχῃ καὶ ἐπιλάμψῃ ψυχῇ, ὁ μὲν τῶν παθῶν καὶ κακιῶν ζόφος ἀνασκίδναται." LCL 8:264.

[94] Philo, *Spec*. 1.279: "ἡλίου ἥλιος, νοητὸς αἰσθητοῦ, παρέχων ἐκ τῶν ἀοράτων πηγῶν ὁρατὰ φέγγη τῷ βλεπομένῳ." LCL 7:262.

[95] Philo, *Ebr*. 44: "ἐπιλάμψασα γὰρ ἡ τοῦ ὄντος ἐπιστήμη πάντα περιαυγάζει, ὡς καὶ τοῖς λαμπροτάτοις ἐξ ἑαυτῶν εἶναι δοκοῦσιν ἐπισκοτεῖν." LCL 3:340.

[96] Williamson, *Jews in the Hellenistic World*, 66. Note that he could just as easily be describing the mystical theology of Evagrius or Cassian.

[97] Williamson, *Jews in the Hellenistic World*, 106.

[98] Philo, *Opif*. 31: "τὸ δὲ ἀορατον καὶ νοητὸν φῶς εκεῖνο θείου λόγου γέγονεν εικὼν τοῦ διερμηνεύσαντος τὴν γένεσιν αὐτοῦ· καὶ ἔστιν ὑπερουράνιος ἀστήρ, πηγὴ τῶν αἰσθητῶν ἀστέρων· ἣν οὐκ ἂν ἀπὸ σκοποῦ καλέσειεν ἄν τις παναύγειαν." LCL 1:24.

[99] Runia, *On the Creation*, 168.

model; for the real model was his most perfect Logos, the light ... for God himself is like no created thing.[100]

There is an obvious inconsistency between these passages: in *Somn*. 1.75 the light[101] and the Logos are equated, while in *Opif*. 31 the intelligible light is the *image* of the Logos. The inconsistency is especially stark given the fact that in *Opif*. 24–25 (cited on p. 125), the entire intelligible cosmos is equated with the Logos. Why would the light – a chief component of the intelligible cosmos – be merely an image of the Logos? Pointing out the numerous textual variants in the manuscript tradition at *Opif*. 31 (none of which resolve this problem), Runia suggests that "perhaps the text is corrupt."[102] It may also be that Philo is simply inconsistent on this point. In any case, he clearly intends a close likeness – perhaps even identity – between the Logos and the intelligible light.

Philo never anthropomorphizes the light of Genesis 1:3–4. However, he does identify it with the Logos, whom he sometimes anthropomorphizes. It would not be a great leap for one influenced by Philo (or by the tradition he represents) not only to identify the light with the Logos/Christ, but to anthropomorphize it – thereby solving the problem created by the apparent absence of the creation of the intelligible human being in Genesis 1:1–5. Again, this is precisely what one finds in certain Nag Hammadi texts and (perhaps) in *The Life of Aphou*.

E. Philo and Fourth-Century Egyptian Christology

As discussed in Chapter 1, long before Philo there was an established Jewish tradition that took the biblical theophanies literally. Philo would have been aware of this tradition, and he clearly intended his negative theology to serve as a correction to it – God has no body and therefore cannot be seen. Nevertheless, Philo was not willing to abandon hope for the vision of God in this life. His Logos doctrine therefore bridged the gap between his belief in such a vision and his commitment to negative theology – while God is invisible and incomprehensible (even to the soul) according to essence, he is visible (to the eyes of the soul) in his Logos.

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[100] Philo, *Somn*. 1.75: "ὁ θεὸς φῶς ἐστι ... καὶ οὐ μόνον φῶς, ἀλλὰ καὶ παντὸς ἑτέρου φωτὸς ἀρχέτυπον, μᾶλλον δὲ παντὸς ἀρχετύπου πρεσβύτερον καὶ ἀνώτερον, λόγον ἔχον παραδείγματος (παραδείγματος) τὸ μὲν γὰρ παράδειγμα ὁ πληρέστατος ἦν αὐτοῦ λόγος, φῶς ... αὐτὸς δὲ οὐδενὶ τῶν γεγονότων ὅμοιος." LCL 5:336.

[101] I agree with Runia, *On the Creation*, 168, that although the light is not explicitly called 'intelligible' here, it may be assumed.

[102] Runia, *On the Creation*, 168.

Both the Evagrians and the anthropomorphites belonged to this Philonic tradition; however, the two sides appropriated different aspects of the tradition, while making further modifications to suit their needs. The anthropomorphites followed Philo in associating the vision of God specifically with the Logos – of course, no longer distinguishing between God and his subordinate Logos, but between the divine persons of Father and Son. However, the anthropomorphites represent a late vestige of the older Jewish tradition, understanding the vision to be concrete and somatic. Thus they took literally the sort of anthropomorphizing of the Logos that one encounters in Philo, without any trace of his insistence that the Logos is formless and invisible to the eyes of the body. The Evagrian tradition followed Philo in his negative theology, and thus in his insistence that the vision of God is formless and interior, available only to the eyes of the soul. However, for the Evagrians, the vision was no longer exclusively that of the Son, but of the consubstantial Trinity (as any distinction between Father and Son in this area was ruled out by the emerging Nicene orthodoxy).[103]

The question remains of just how these various aspects of the Philonic tradition filtered down to these fourth-century Christians. I am not aware of any evidence showing that Evagrius depended directly upon the writings of Philo; nevertheless, it is known that he spent his formative years in circles heavily influenced by Philo – first among the Cappadocians, and later in Alexandria.[104] Thus it would come as no surprise to find that Evagrius was influenced (either directly or indirectly) by Philo.

One would be hard pressed to demonstrate a direct influence of Philo upon the anthropomorphites. Indeed, it seems highly unlikely that they would have read his writings (or if they did, that they would have had any positive use for them). Nevertheless, it is plausible that the anthropomorphites were influenced *indirectly* by the tradition(s) underlying Philo's Logos doctrine. First, a case can be made (and is made in Chapter 4) that the anthropomorphites were readers of the Nag Hammadi texts, and that some of those texts betray Philonic tendencies. Second, Philo's Logos was not an aberration in late-antique Judaism; it appears in numerous texts, some of which the anthropomorphites may well have read approvingly.

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[103] Of course, this move created the need for a new solution to the problem of how God can be seen and yet is completely incomprehensible and invisible, even to the soul. Whether or not Evagrius and his followers provided a satisfactory solution is an open question, but a full millennium later this problem persisted as a source of conflict in the monasteries of the Christian east, with the Hesychast controversy resulting in Gregory Palamas' distinction between essence and energies in God.

[104] The influence of Philo upon the Cappadocians and the Alexandrians (particularly Clement and Origen) is well-documented; cf. Runia, *Philo in Early Christian Literature*, 132–183; 235–260.

Recent research has shown that Philo's Logos doctrine was widespread, and perhaps even commonplace, among the Jews of his day. Boyarin writes:

> Were we to find such notions in Philo alone among non-Christian Jews, we could regard him, as he often is regarded, as a sport, a mutant, or even a voice crying in the wilderness. However, there were other Jews and not only Greek-speaking ones who manifested a version of Logos theology.[105]

One indication that Philo was not alone is that, although Logos theology is central in his writings, he never *argues* for it. He writes as if the Logos is, in the words of Winston, "something his readers will immediately recognize without further explanation."[106]

Since Philo likely wrote for an audience of Alexandrian Jews, then it may be assumed that his Logos doctrine was commonplace at least in Alexandrian Jewish thought. Runia believes "Philo must have had important predecessors, and that it is very likely that his work continues a long tradition of allegorical exegesis in the Jewish community of Alexandria."[107] He continues:

> Presumably Philo perceived that he stood at the end of a rich period of exegetical activity in Alexandria, and so felt the need to record, and integrate where possible, as many interpretations of his predecessors as he could .... Due to Philo's intervention ... we are given the chance to observe the intellectual achievements of a flourishing and quite exceptional Jewish community.[108]

Certainly there were anticipations of Philo's Logos in Middle Platonism.[109] Nevertheless, according to Darrell Hannah, "neither in Platonism, Stoicism, nor Aristotelian thought do we find the kind of significance that the concept has for Philo, nor the range of meanings that he gives to the term λόγος"; he therefore concludes that Philo was "dependent upon a tradition in Alexandrian Judaism which was attributing a certain independence to God's word."[110]

Moreover, Logos theology was not confined to Alexandrian Judaism. Two authors in particular – Segal and Boyarin – have shown that the notion of the personified Word as a 'second God' was also common among Semitic-speaking Jews (except here, of course, we are not dealing with the Greek *logos*, but the Aramaic *memra*). Boyarin notes that, in the Palestin-

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[105] Boyarin, *Border Lines*, 116.
[106] Winston, *Logos and Mystical Theology*, 11.
[107] Runia, "Philo, Alexandrian and Jew," 13.
[108] Runia, "Philo, Alexandrian and Jew," 14.
[109] Cf. discussion in Boyarin, *Border Lines*, 288–289.
[110] Darrell D. Hannah, *Michael and Christ: Michael Traditions and Angel Christology in Early Christianity* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1999), 80.

ian Targums,[111] the word *memra* is used to translate "various terms that in Hebrew either simply mean 'God' or are names of God." He goes on to show that these usages "parallel nearly exactly the functions of the Logos, the *deuteros theos*, in Logos theology."[112] He cites numerous examples. The Memra functions as the agent of creation: "And the *memra* of the Lord said: 'Let there be light,' and there was light through his *memra*" (Gen 1:3).[113] It speaks: "And the *memra* of the Lord called to Adam" (Gen 3:9).[114] It punishes the wicked: "And the *memra* of the Lord ... began to bring down upon them sulphur and fire from before the Lord, from the heavens" (Gen 19:24).[115] It saves the people of Israel: "And the *memra* of the Lord was leading before them by day, in a pillar of cloud" (Exod 13:21).[116]

When we turn to rabbinic literature, we find opposition to Logos/Memra theology. The term *memra* "disappears entirely, and in the more rabbinized Targums it appears much less frequently, suggesting a struggle between the forms of piety that were current in the synagogues and those that were centered in the Houses of Study of the Rabbis."[117] In fact, rabbinic literature consistently anathematizes Logos/Memra theology as the 'heresy' of 'two powers in heaven.' Hence *Sifre* on Deuteronomy 32:39 ("See, then, that I, I am He"), states:

> This is the refutation to those who say that there is no reshut (i.e., atheists who claim that there is no power in heaven). He who says that there are two powers in heaven is refuted by saying it has already been written, "There is no God beside Me."[118]

The content of 'two powers' heresy becomes clear in other rabbinic texts. For instance, an early midrash on Exodus 12:29 reads: "*And the Lord Smote All the First-Born*. I might understand this to mean through an angel

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[111] These are Aramaic translations of the Hebrew Bible. They were products of the synagogues, and contain religious ideas often at odds with rabbinic literature. According to recent research, the Rabbis did not gain control of the synagogues until the Middle Ages; cf. Günter Stemberger, *Jews and Christians in the Holy Land: Palestine in the Fourth Century* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1999), 277–279 and Seth Schwartz, *Imperialism and Jewish Society from 200 B.C.E. to 640 C.E.* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2001), 13.

[112] Boyarin, *Border Lines*, 118–119.

[113] Michael L. Klein, ed. and trans., *The Fragment-Targums of the Pentateuch According to Their Extant Sources* (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1980), 2:3.

[114] Klein, *Fragment-Targums*, 2:6.

[115] Klein, *Fragment-Targums*, 2:15.

[116] Klein, *Fragment-Targums*, 2:40.

[117] Boyarin, *Border Lines*, 131.

[118] *Sifre Deut* 329 in Louis Finkelstein, ed., *Sifre on Deuteronomy*, reprint ed. (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1969), 379. H. L. Strack and G. Stemberger, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash*, Markus Bockmuehl, tr. (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1991), 273, date the final redaction of the text to the late third century CE.

or through an agent, therefore it says: 'And I will smite' (v. 12) – not through an angel nor through an agent."[119] Significantly, a variant reading adds the words, "nor by means of the Logos."[120] According to Boyarin, "it has frequently been theorized that when the midrash writes 'I might have understood,' another, 'sectarian,' interpretation is being raised in order to discredit it."[121] In this case, the discredited interpretation is promoted in the Targum of Exodus 12:29, which reads: "And I will pass in my *Memra* through the land of Egypt this night of the Passover, and I will kill all the first-born in the land of Egypt."[122] Even more troubling to the Rabbis must have been Wisdom of Solomon 18, according to which the plague was carried out by the Logos.[123]

Finally, there are indications that Logos/Memra theology was at one time present even within rabbinic circles. The Babylonian Talmud records the story of four Rabbis who interpret the "Son of Man" of Daniel 7 to be a distinct divine figure, enthroned at God's right hand. Of the four, one is excommunicated, one dies, and one becomes insane; only Rabbi Akiva "comes out safely" – that is to say, he repents.[124] Segal characterizes this story as "an etiology of heresy. It explains how certain people ... risk the heretical designation of 'two powers in heaven.'"[125]

Philo, in his Logos theology, was therefore but one representative of a broad exegetical tradition among the Jews of late antiquity (and not just

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[119] *Tractate Pisha* 13 in Jacob Z. Lauterbach, ed., *Mekhilta de-Rabbi Ishmael: A Critical Edition, Based on the Manuscripts and Early Editions*, second ed. (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 2004), 67. David Stern, "Introduction to the 2004 Edition" in *Mekhilta de-Rabbi Ishmael*, ix, dates the final redaction of the text to the second half of the fourth century CE, "at the latest."

[120] Cf. Israel Abrahams, "Some Egyptian Fragments of the Passover Haggada," *Jewish Quarterly Review,* old series 10 (1898): 41.

[121] Boyarin, *Border Lines*, 135.

[122] Cf. Martin McNamara, trans., *Targum Neofiti 1: Exodus* in *The Aramaic Bible* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1994), 47–48.

[123] Wis 18:14–16: "While gentle silence embraced all things, and night in its haste was half finished, your all-powerful Logos leapt from heaven, from the royal throne, into the midst of the land doomed to destruction, like a relentless warrior carrying the sharp sword of your authentic command, and standing there he filled all things with death, and touched heaven while standing on the earth (ἡσύκου γὰρ σιγῆς περιεχούσης τὰ πάντα καὶ νυκτὸς ἐν ἰδίῳ τάχει μεσαζούσης ὁ πανταδύναμός σου λόγος ἀπ' οὐρανῶν ἐκ θρόνων βασιλείων ἀπότομος πολεμιστὴς εἰς μέσον τῆς ὀλεθρίας ἥλατο γῆς ξίφος ὀξυ τὴν ἀνυπόκριτον ἐπιταγήν σου φέρων καὶ στὰς ἐπλήρωσεν τὰ πάντα θανάτου καὶ οὐρανοῦ μὲν ἥπτετο, βεβήκει δ' ἐπὶ γῆς)." LXX 2:374.

[124] *Hagiga* 14a–15a in *The Babylonian Talmud Seder Mo'ed Hagigah*, ed. I. Epstein. tr. I. Abrahams (New York: Rebecca Bennet Publications, 1959), 83–93. The final redaction of the Babylonian Talmud is generally dated to the sixth or seventh century CE. However, it may be possible to date this pericope much earlier, for other condemnations of the two powers 'heresy' appear in texts dated to the third or fourth centuries CE.

[125] Segal, *Two Powers*, 62.

the Greek speaking ones). The anthropomorphites, as well as the communities that produced certain Nag Hammadi texts, thus had ample opportunity to encounter and absorb this Logos/Memra theology.[126] I contend that they inherited a particular version of this tradition, numerous features of which anticipated the Christology of these communities as I have outlined it: the Son is the visible image of the invisible Father, appearing in human form in the light of the first day of creation and functioning as the archetype of humanity. The anthropomorphites were seeking a concrete image of the Logos/Memra – which they understood to be the divine body of Christ – in prayer.

F. Conclusion

We have thus arrived at the intersection of Evagrian and anthropomorphite thought – the point at which they part ways – and there we find Philo of Alexandria. Rather, I should say Philo *the Jew*, for as we have seen, Philo's Logos doctrine (although no doubt influenced by Greek ways of thinking) represents a widespread and thoroughly Jewish tradition. According to this tradition, the vision of God is available in this life, and it is available through God's Logos or Memra. The anthropomorphites were firmly planted within this tradition, as were the Evagrians. Of course, the two sides appropriated different elements of the tradition. With Philo, the Evagrians considered the vision to be formless and bodiless, visible only to the eyes of the soul. What they were seeking was the vision of God's Word in his glory or divinity, which (in a way that Philo obviously could not have anticipated) they regarded as synonymous with the vision of the con-

[126] Although the direct influence of Philo upon Coptic monks cannot be shown, there is no question that Judaism exerted a powerful influence on Egyptian Christianity. A. F. J. Klijn, sums up the scholarly consensus: "To speak about Jewish Christianity in Egypt is, at the same time, to discuss early Christianity in Egypt ... a form of Christianity that is closely related to an underlying Judaism in language, ideas, and theology. The character of this language, these ideas and that theology changes according to the form of Judaism adopted by Christians in a particular area. This form of Christianity is not necessarily 'heterodox.' The lines between heterodoxy and orthodoxy, on the one hand, and those between Christianity and Judaism, on the other, are vague." "Jewish Christianity in Egypt," *The Roots of Egyptian Christianity*, ed. Birger A. Pearson and James E. Goehring (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986), 162–163. Consistent with this assessment is the thesis of Boyarin's *Borderlines* – that the line between Judaism and Christianity was invented rather than discovered. This was certainly true in Egypt; hence Origen, *hom. In Lev.* 5.8 (PG 12:458C–459D) can write (disapprovingly) of Christians who attend both church and synagogue, and the fourth-century POxy 903 in *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri: Part VI*, ed. Grenfell and Hunt (London: Egypt Exploration Fund, 1908) can speak of visiting both synagogue and church.

substantial Trinity. Against Philo (whose writings they probably did not read anyway), the anthropomorphites regarded the vision as human in form and visible to the eyes of the body. However, in one important respect they preserved the tradition as it is found in Philo and in the Aramaic texts explored in this chapter: they made a distinction between the Father, who is ever invisible, and the Son, whose divine body may be envisioned by the one who seeks him in prayer.

Chapter 6

Conclusion

The anthropomorphites of the Egyptian desert have proven to be rather elusive. With one exception, history has not preserved any texts they may have produced. The writings of their opponents must be read with caution, for these are highly polemical – the work of Evagrians who were themselves on the defense against the charge of heresy. Nevertheless, these are the primary texts available; we must construct anthropomorphite theology in a way that renders them comprehensible, even if we do not find their claims entirely believable.

According to their opponents (our chief witnesses being John Cassian and the historian Socrates), the anthropomorphites crudely believed that God has a body, based upon their erroneous and extremely literal reading of Genesis 1:26-27. This portrayal of anthropomorphite belief went unchallenged until the discovery of *The Life of Apa Aphou of Pemdje*, first published in 1883. The lone extant text written from the anthropomorphite perspective, *The Life of Aphou* sets about to defend the image of God in humans without explicitly ascribing a human body to God. Significantly, it bases this defense upon the doctrine of the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist.

After the discovery of *The Life of Aphou*, scholars began to rethink the anthropomorphite controversy. Throughout much of the twentieth century, historians (such as Georges Florovsky, Graham Gould, and Elizabeth Clark) portrayed the anthropomorphites as defenders of the reality of the Incarnation and of the legitimacy of forming mental images of Jesus in prayer, against the Evagrian notion of 'pure' prayer and supposed rejection of the doctrine of the Incarnation. The term 'anthropomorphite,' therefore, was merely a codeword invented by Origenists to describe (and discredit) their mainstream monastic opponents. However, an alternative account has recently been offered, chiefly by Alexander Golitzin. According to Golitzin, the anthropomorphites were indeed defending the *imago Dei* and seeking mental images of Christ in prayer. However, it was not the image of Christ *incarnate* that they were seeking; rather, it was that of the preincarnate Christ – the divine body of the eternal Word of God.

In this study, I have sought to defend, clarify, and expand upon Golitzin's thesis: the anthropomorphites were seeking in prayer the vision of

the divine body of the Son, who functions at once as the image of the invisible Father and the archetype of human beings. This thesis is consistent with the writings of Theophilus, whom modern scholarship tends to portray as an Origenist who (along with fellow Origenists Cassian and the historians) mischaracterized his theological opponents as 'anthropomorphites' when in reality these opponents were merely contending for the doctrines of the Incarnation and the *imago Dei*. However, a careful reading of Theophilus' extant writings reveals that he was no Origenist. He believed that the *imago Dei* (defined as immortality), although lost through the Fall, is restored through the Incarnation. Furthermore, although he rejected locating the image of God in the human body, he affirmed that the body (along with the soul) shares in immortality as it participates in Christ. Theophilus would not, therefore, have opposed anyone merely for affirming the doctrines of the Incarnation and the *imago Dei*; he would, however, have opposed anthropomorphism as I have defined it – the locating of the image of God in the divine body of Christ and, by extension, in the human body.

Furthermore, both Theophilus (in a letter dating to 403) and Jerome (in his treatise *Contra Johannem*) claim to occupy some sort of theological middle ground between Origenism and anthropomorphism. In the case of Theophilus (who did, after all, form a temporary alliance with the anthropomorphites), this claim may not be entirely credible. However, I argue that it must have been comprehensible; that is, Theophilus' and Jerome's initial readers must have understood anthropomorphism in such a way as to believe that one could be, at least in theory, both anti-Origenist and anti-anthropomorphite. Yet according to the twentieth-century account of the controversy, there was no middle ground: 'anthropomorphism' was nothing other than insistence upon the doctrines of the Incarnation and the *imago Dei*, while 'Origenism' was (among other things) the rejection of these doctrines. On my thesis, middle ground did, in fact, exist: one could (with Theophilus and Jerome) reject the Origenist denial of the *imago Dei*, while also rejecting the anthropomorphite locating of the image in the human body.

Regarding John Cassian, the twentieth-century account of the controversy requires that he held three propositions and that he opposed the anthropomorphites because they rejected them: (1) 'pure' prayer consists of escape into blankness or nothingness, (2) it is wrong to seek mental images of the incarnate Christ in prayer, and (3) humans have lost the image of God. However, a careful reading of Cassian's writings (particularly *Conferences* 9–10) indicates that he held none of these views. First, he regarded 'pure' prayer to be *image*less but not *vision*less; in prayer, one should seek the vision of Christ in his divinity, which is precisely the vision of the consubstantial Trinity. Second, Cassian considered mental im-

ages of the incarnate Christ to be appropriate in the early stages of contemplation; nevertheless, he insisted that one must go *beyond* somatic images of Christ, which the anthropomorphites (in Cassian's view) refused to do. Third, he affirmed the *imago Dei*, rejecting only an ascending reading of Genesis 1:26-27, which would ascribe to God a human form. Thus Cassian's opposition to the anthropomorphites makes perfect sense on the thesis put forward in this study – that they were seeking mental images of the divine body of the Son.

The Life of Apa Aphou of Pemdje is more difficult to assess. In arguing for the *imago Dei*, the text uses an important analogy: if the image of an emperor is recognized as his image despite its many defects, how much more should human beings be recognized as the image of God. According to Dmitrij Bumazhnov, the use of this analogy demonstrates that *The Life of Aphou* presents no anthropomorphite thesis whatsoever, for its author is careful to point out the vast *unlikeness* between the emperor and his image, and therefore between God and humans. Bumazhnov reads the text thus: in terms of bodily weaknesses and imperfections, humans do not bear God's image, while in terms of certain non-corporeal features (possession of the Spirit, activity, and dominion over the animals), they do. However, I wonder why, if the author wanted to draw attention to non-corporeal features, he would use the analogy of an emperor's image in the first place; for an image does, after all, bear some physical resemblance to the emperor. I therefore propose the following reading of the text: just as imperfections do not preclude an image from resembling the emperor's bodily form, so imperfections do not preclude humans from resembling the divine bodily form. On this reading, *The Life of Aphou* lends support to the thesis put forward in this study – that the anthropomorphites were seeking mental images of the divine body of the eternal Word.

Finally, this thesis is confirmed in the writings of Cyril of Alexandria and Augustine of Hippo. In his *Answers to Tiberius and His Companions* and *Doctrinal Questions and Answers*, Cyril engages opponents whom he initially describes as 'crude' anthropomorphites – those who believe the divine nature to be human in form. However, in both writings he proceeds to clarify that his opponents' 'error' is actually Christological; they regard the pre-incarnate Word as somehow embodied (measurable, limited, and occupying space). Furthermore, Cyril accuses them of 'Arianism,' indicating that he considers them to be making an illegitimate distinction (in this case) between an invisible, incorporeal Father and a visible, corporeal Son.

Augustine's testimony is of limited value, for he seems to have no direct knowledge of anthropomorphite belief. However, like Cyril, he associates the anthropomorphites with Arianism, placing them between "Arians" and "semi-Arians" (Homoians) in his list of heresies, *De haeresibus*.

More importantly, in numerous writings (*De Trinitate* 2.8–9 and Letters 147–148), he opposes the Homoian distinction between a visible Son and invisible Father, indicating that the anthropomorphite manner of thinking about Christ was somewhat commonplace in the late-fourth and early-fifth centuries.

The anthropomorphites' Christology (as I have outlined it) was not unique to them; it is clearly paralleled in numerous texts discovered at Nag Hammadi: *The Gospel of Thomas, Eugnostos the Blessed, The Sophia of Jesus Christ, On the Origin of the World, The Apocryphon of John*, and *The Teachings of Silvanus*. Of course, external evidence proves no direct connection between these texts and the anthropomorphites, who certainly had nothing to do with the actual manuscripts found buried in the Egyptian desert. However, a strong case can be made that the anthropomorphites were aware of these texts and may even have read them approvingly. First, the evidence suggests that the Nag Hammadi codices were produced by Pachomian monks who regarded them as edifying reading material. Furthermore, there seems to have been, throughout the fourth century, a free exchange of people and ideas between the Pachomian monasteries and those that housed the anthropomorphites. In addition, Greek fragments of *The Gospel of Thomas* and *The Sophia of Jesus Christ* were discovered at Pemdje/Oxyrhynchus, the home of Apa Aphou's community. Finally, the desert father Abba Sopatros implies a direct link between 'apocryphal' literature and 'speculation' about the image of God.

Internal evidence suggests a strong connection between anthropomorphite Christology (again, as I have outlined it) and certain Nag Hammadi texts. Throughout these texts runs the notion that a primordial Anthropos appeared in the light of the first day of creation; furthermore, this figure is usually associated with Christ. In *The Gospel of Thomas*, Jesus identifies himself as the primordial Anthropos, claiming to be the light through which all things were created, to pervade the entire cosmos, and to hold all things together. The non-Christian *Eugnostos the Blessed* obviously does not associate this figure with Christ, but other features of anthropomorphite Christology are present: the heavenly Anthropos functions as intermediary between God and creation and as the one through whom God's glory is revealed. *The Sophia of Jesus Christ*, a Christianized version of *Eugnostos*, identifies Christ as the immediate offspring of the primordial Anthropos. *On the Origin of the World* takes this association one step further, not only placing the primordial Anthropos within the light of the first day of creation and identifying him as the archetype after which human beings are created, but equating him with Christ. The *Apocryphon of John* presents a complex version of the myth encountered in these other texts, equating Christ with the heavenly Anthropos (as in *Orig. World*), the high-

est manifestation of God, but assigning to his immediate offspring the role of human archetype. Finally, *The Teachings of Silvanus* explicitly applies all the elements of this Anthropos tradition to Christ: he is the primordial light, the image of God, the archetype of the human being, and the one who reveals God's glory.

The Christology shared by the anthropomorphites and certain Nag Hammadi texts did not emerge in a vacuum. It had antecedents, particularly in Jewish-mystical literature. Most important in this regard was Philo of Alexandria. In Philo, God's Word (the Logos) functions first and foremost as intermediary between God and humanity, at once the visible image of the invisible God and the archetype of the human being. Furthermore, Philo often describes the Logos as a person distinct from God, and sometimes in anthropomorphic language that (although certainly meant figuratively) could be taken concretely. Finally, Philo insists that the vision of God is available to those who seek it in this life, but only through the Logos.

Philo was not alone in holding such views; in fact, the concept of God's Word as a "second God," functioning as intermediary between God and the world, is not even particularly Greek. It was current in Aramaic literature as well. For instance, the Targumim contain references to God's Memra as a distinct divine figure, enthroned at God's right hand and functioning as God's agent in creating, saving, and punishing. Moreover, rabbinic literature repeatedly condemns such a notion, which indicates that it was common enough to be considered a dangerous threat to the Rabbis' strict understanding of monotheism. There is even evidence that these ideas about the Memra were at one time held by some Rabbis.

This tradition was shared not only by certain Nag Hammadi texts and the anthropomorphites, but by the Evagrians as well. All accepted the notion that the *visio Dei* is available in this life and that this vision is somehow made possible by the Logos/Christ. There was, however, disagreement on some key issues. Against the anthropomorphites, but with Philo, the Evagrians considered the vision of God to be formless and bodiless, available only to the eyes of the purified *nous*. Against Philo *and* the anthropomorphites, the Evagrians refused to distinguish between an invisible Father and his visible Son. To be sure, the vision they sought was of the glorified Christ – that is, Christ in his divinity. However, in typical Nicene fashion, they regarded such a vision to be not merely of Christ, but of the consubstantial Trinity.

This study has thus cast light on an ancient Jewish-Christian tradition according to which the *visio Dei* is available in this life through God's Word. Although this tradition was shared by anthropomorphites and Evagrians alike, the anthropomorphites clung to certain elements of it that the

Evagrians found unacceptable – particularly, that while the Father remains ever invisible, the vision of the Son's divine body is available in prayer, and it is available to human sight. For this reason, John Cassian labels the anthropomorphites' tradition as "Jewish weakness." However, it was his tradition too. He could just as easily be accused of "Jewish weakness," except that he and his fellow Evagrians were willing to make some key adjustments to the tradition – adjustments the anthropomorphites were unwilling to make. Thus the anthropomorphite 'heresy' does not represent a departure from traditional Christian 'orthodoxy'; rather, the departure was being made by the Evagrians – away from an ancient tradition in which the Son functions as the visible image of the invisible Father, and in the direction of a Nicene orthodoxy in which Father and Son (together with the Holy Spirit) share the attribute of invisibility. The anthropomorphites, then, were bearers of the older tradition.

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