

Heresiology and the (Jewish-)Christian Novel

Narrativized Polemics in the Pseudo-Clementine *Homilies*

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Reading the *Homilies* as Heresiology

In the history of scholarship on the Pseudo-Clementine *Homilies* and *Recognitions*, heresiological sources have played a pivotal role. The *Homilies* and *Recognitions* offer two different versions of a novel about Clement of Rome, which recounts his conversion, his travels with the apostle Peter, their debates with Simon Magus and his followers, and the providential reunion of Clement's long-lost family. In their redacted forms, the *Homilies* and *Recognitions* both date to the fourth century.¹ Nevertheless, ever since Ferdinand Christian Baur (1792–1860) proposed that this pair of parallel novels preserves elements of “Jewish-Christian” traditions from the church of Peter and James, modern scholars have paid little attention to their literary forms and late antique contexts.² Instead,

* Translations of the *Homilies* are revised from A. Roberts and J. Donaldson, eds., *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, reprint edition, vol. 8 (Grand Rapids, Mich., 1951), 224–52, 324–30, with reference to the Greek text in B. Rehm, *Die Pseudoklementinen, I: Homilien* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1969). Grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities (U.S.A.) and the Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada provided support for research and writing this article. I would also like warmly to thank the organizers of the Princeton conference for a stimulating event, and the participants and audience for their helpful comments on the oral version of this article. To Christopher Cubitt, Peter Petite, Karl Shuve, Gérard Vallée, Susan Wendel, and Holger Zellentin, I would like to express my gratitude for their help and feedback during the final stages of writing.

¹ The *Homilies* are commonly dated ca. 300–320 CE. This version of the Pseudo-Clementine romance of recognitions (see n. 14) is extant in the original Greek and probably of Syrian provenance. To this version are prefaced the *Epistle of Peter to James* and the *Epistle of Clement to James*. The *Recognitions* is commonly dated ca. 360–380 CE. Although originally written in Greek, this version is now extant only in Rufinus' Latin translation (407 CE).

² Esp. F.C. Baur, “Die Christuspartei in der korinthischen Gemeinde, der Gegensatz des petrinischen und paulischen Christentums in der alten Kirche, der Apostel Petrus in Rom,” *Tübinger Zeitschrift für Theologie* 5 (1831): 61–206. Notably, Baur had assumed a second-century date for these texts; their fourth-century dates were established later in

research on these texts has been source-critical in orientation, aimed at reconstructing their third-century shared source and at recovering the first-century traditions and second-century writings that may have been used by this source.³

Interestingly, however, it is precisely in the heresiological literature of Late Antiquity that source-critics have found the most tantalizing clues. Most significant in this regard is another text from the fourth century, namely Epiphanius' *Panarion*. In his comments on the so-called "heresy" of the Ebionites, Epiphanius describes a book which, like the Pseudo-Clementines, concerns the acts and teachings of the apostle Peter and which is attributed to Clement of Rome (*Pan.* 30.15).⁴ Later in the same passage (*Pan.* 30.16), he refers to another book used by the Ebionites, which concerns the apostle James and which bears some similarities to one specific portion of the Pseudo-Clementine *Recognitions*.⁵

the nineteenth century; see C. Biggs, "The Clementine *Homilies*," in *Studia biblica et ecclesiastica*, vol. 2 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1890), 191–92, 368–69; H. Waitz, *Die Pseudoklementinen Homilien und Rekognitionen: Eine quellenkritische Untersuchung*, TU 10.4 (Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs, 1904), esp. 372.

³ Since the *Homilies* and *Recognitions* share so much material as well as the same basic novelistic structure (albeit with different arrangements, distinctive material in each, and redactional variations that affect the emphasis and overall message of each) scholars speculate about their dependence on a single shared source. This hypothetical source, commonly called the *Grundschrift* or "Basic Source," is typically dated to the third century CE and situated in Syria. In light of the reference to ten books sent to James in *Rec.* 3.75, some scholars have speculated about a *Kerygmata Petrou* that may have been one of its sources (even as others dismiss the reference as merely a literary fiction); small portions of a possibly related text called *Kerygma Petrou* are quoted, e.g., by Heracleon (*apud* Origen, *on John*, 3.17) and Clement of Alexandria (*Strom.* 1.29.182; 6.5.39; 6.15.128). For other hypothetical sources of the *Grundschrift*, see notes 4–5 below. For the history of scholarship on these sources, see F. S. Jones, "The Pseudo-Clementines: a History of Research," *J ECS* 2.1 (1982): 14–33; P. Geoltrain, "Le Roman Pseudo-Clémentin depuis les recherches d'Oscar Cullman," in *Le Judéo-christianisme dans tous ses états: actes du Colloque de Jérusalem, 6–10 juillet 1998* (ed. S.C. Mimouni and F.S. Jones; Paris: Cerf, 2001), 31–38; and for critique of past source-critical research see e.g. J. Wehnert, "Literaturkritik und Sprachanalyse: Kritische Anmerkungen zum gegenwärtigen Stand der Pseudoklementinen-Forschung," *ZNW* 74 (1983): 268–301 as well as A.Y. Reed, "'Jewish Christianity' after the 'Parting of the Ways': Approaches to Historiography and Self-definition in the Pseudo-Clementine Literature," in *The Ways that Never Parted: Jews and Christians in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages* (ed. A.H. Becker and A.Y. Reed; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), 197–201, 224–31.

⁴ I.e., *Periodoi Petrou*, described by Epiphanius as a Clementine pseudepigrapha about Peter that was used by Ebionites; this too is sometimes thought to be a source of the Pseudo-Clementine *Grundschrift*.

⁵ I.e., *Anabathmoi Jakobou*, which may have some relationship to *Rec.* 1.27–72, a portion of the *Recognitions* that also happens to be unparalleled in the *Homilies* and distinctive from the rest of the *Recognitions* in its language and viewpoints. See further

Both for Baur and for later scholars like Hans Joachim Schoeps, the connection between the Pseudo-Clementines and the Ebionites seemed obvious.⁶ The Pseudo-Clementines were seen to preserve traces of a “Jewish Christianity” widespread in apostolic times.⁷ Accordingly, Epiphanius’ comments were thought to attest an inevitable development: after Christianity’s “Parting of the Ways” with Judaism, those who preserved and developed such traditions would – it was reasoned – surely have become a deviant minority, expelled as Judaizing “heretics” from a now dominant “Gentile-Christian” church.⁸ As a result of such views, scholars have tended to treat both the Pseudo-Clementines and the Ebionites as relics of an earlier age, more significant for our knowledge of Christian Origins than for our understanding of Christianity and Judaism in Late Antiquity.⁹

This approach, however, has been shown to have its limits. Proceeding from these assumptions, it has proved difficult to pinpoint the relationship between the Ebionites, their non-extant books, the witness of Epiphanius, and the extant forms of the Pseudo-Clementines. Even after over a century of methodical investigation into their connections, research on the *Homilies* and *Recognitions* largely remains mired in debates over a variety of hypothetical sources and their possible filiations.¹⁰

Elsewhere, I have suggested that this seemingly counter-intuitive focus on hypothetical sources reflects the continued influence of Baur as well as the continued sway of traditional ideas about the so-called “Parting of the

F.S. Jones, “The Martyrdom of James in Hegesippus, Clement of Alexandria, and Christian Apocrypha, Including Nag Hammadi: A Study of the Textual Relations,” in *Society of Biblical Literature Seminar Papers* 29 (ed. D. J. Lull; Atlanta, 1990), 322–35; idem, *Ancient Jewish-Christian Source*; R.E. Van Voorst, *The Ascents of James: History and Theology of a Jewish-Christian Community*, SBL Dissertation Series 112 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989).

⁶ See esp. H.J. Schoeps, *Theologie und Geschichte des Judenchristentums* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1949); idem, *Jewish Christianity: Factional Disputes in the Early Church* (trans. D.R.A. Hare; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1969). Other scholars have been much less optimistic about our ability to reconstruct both the Ebionites and their relationship with the Pseudo-Clementines; see e.g. F.S. Jones, “Ebionites,” in *Encyclopedia of Early Christianity*, Garland Reference Library of the Humanities 846 (ed. E. Ferguson et al.; New York: Garland, 1990), 287–88.

⁷ Esp. Schoeps, *Theologie*, 355–60, 457–79.

⁸ E.g. Schoeps, *Jewish Christianity*, 12–13, 18–37.

⁹ See further Reed, “Jewish Christianity,” 188–201.

¹⁰ So too Jones, “Pseudo-Clementines,” 14–33; Geoltrain, “Le Roman Pseudo-Clémentin,” esp. p. 36; D. Côté, *Le thème de l’opposition entre Pierre et Simon dans les Pseudo-Clémentines* (Paris: Institut d’Études Augustiniennes, 2001), 7–19; E.N. Kelley, “Discursive Competition and the Production of Truth in the Pseudo-Clementine *Recognitions*” (PhD diss., Harvard University, 2003), esp. 1–35.

Ways.”¹¹ Behind the scholarly neglect of the final forms of the Pseudo-Clementines, we may also find some tacit acceptance of Epiphanius’ judgment of the Ebionites as petty “heretics.” Just as the source-critical enterprise has necessitated a large degree of trust in the accuracy of Epiphanius’ summaries and quotations, so too have studies of the Pseudo-Clementines tended to treat him as a trustworthy ethnographer of error, taking his comments largely at face value. F. Stanley Jones, for instance, has shown how source-criticism of these texts has been hampered by a preference for the external evidence of heresiologists over internal evidence from the *Homilies* and *Recognitions* themselves.¹² Likewise, their association with Epiphanius’ marginalized Ebionites may have contributed to the dearth of past research on their fourth-century forms and their late antique contexts.

In this inquiry, I hope to help fill this lacuna by means of another approach to the same issues, questions, and connections. Instead of treating the Pseudo-Clementines as “heresy,” I will attempt to read them as part of the late antique discourse of heresiology. Epiphanius, then, will here serve us a very different purpose. Rather than appealing to him for evidence about the Ebionites (who may or may not have had a hand in producing this literature, even if they read it), I will treat his *Panarion* as a prime example of fourth-century Christian heresiology. Accordingly, my focus will fall less on its content and more on its rhetorics and the assumptions that inform them.¹³ This and other heresiological writings from Late Antiquity will serve as heuristic points of comparison and contrast with the Pseudo-Clementines – which, I will suggest, achieve many of the same aims, albeit within the framework of a novel.¹⁴

¹¹ Reed, “Jewish Christianity.”

¹² Jones, *Ancient Jewish Christian Source*, 35–37.

¹³ Here, I am especially indebted to Averil Cameron’s insightful essay, “How to Read Heresiology,” *JMEMS* 33 (2003): 471–92, repr. in *The Cultural Turn in Late Ancient Studies: Gender, Asceticism and Historiography* (ed. Dale Martin and Patricia Cox Miller; Durham: Duke University Press, 2005).

¹⁴ On the Pseudo-Clementines as novel, see B.E. Perry, *Ancient Romances: A Literary-Historical Account of their Origins* (Berkeley: U. of California Press, 1967), 285–93; T. Hägg, *The Novel in Antiquity* (Berkeley: U. of California Press, 1983), 154–65; M.J. Edwards “The Clementines: A Christian Response to the Pagan Novel,” *CQ* 42 (1992): 459–74; W. Robins, “Romance and Renunciation at the Turn of the Fifth Century,” *JECs* 8 (2000): 531–57; K. Cooper, “Matthidia’s Wish: Division, Reunion, and the Early Christian Family in the Pseudo-Clementine *Recognitions*,” in *Narrativity in Biblical and Related Texts/La narativité dans la Bible et les textes apparentés* (ed. G.J. Brooke and J.-D. Kaestli; Leuven: Peeters, 2000), 243–64; also F.S. Jones, “Eros and Astrology in the *Periodoi Petrou*: The Sense of the Pseudo-Clementine Novel,” *Apocrypha* 12 (2001): 53–78.

This experiment in reading the Pseudo-Clementines as heresiology forms part of my broader attempt to shed light on their fourth-century authors and redactors.¹⁵ It is often assumed that these texts were produced and read only on the margins of Christianity, by the Ebionites and groups like them. But, despite Epiphanius' comments about the Ebionite use of similar writings, our ample evidence for the *Nachleben* of the novels speaks to their broad circulation and appeal. By the early fifth century, forms of the Pseudo-Clementine novel had been translated from their original Greek into both Latin and Syriac, and epitomes are now extant in Greek, Arabic, Georgian, and Armenian.¹⁶ This data, in turn, may shed doubt on its "heretical" origins, leading us to look more closely at the texts themselves to determine their place within late antique culture.

If polemics can, in fact, provide the scholar with a cache of telling clues about religious self-definition and the social realities that shape it, then attention to the polemics (and the rhetorics of polemic) within the Pseudo-Clementines may help us to situate their authors/redactors within the religious landscape of Late Antiquity. In contrast to an imposed dichotomy between so-called "Jewish-Christianity" and so-called "Gentile Christianity," such an approach may aid us in recovering the complex dynamics of reaction, influence, and interaction with the range of late antique traditions – Christian, Jewish, and "pagan" – with which the final forms of these novels seem to be both conversant and conversing.

Towards this goal, this investigatory inquiry will focus on the *Homilies*, the version of the novel in which these dynamics are most evident. I will

¹⁵ Reed, "Jewish Christianity"; idem, "Fire, Blood, and Water: Demonology and Halakha in the Pseudo-Clementine *Homilies*," AAR Annual Meeting, Europe and the Mediterranean in Late Antiquity Group, Atlanta, Georgia, USA, November 23, 2003; idem, "The True Prophet in the Pseudo-Clementines: Prophethood, Apostolic Succession, and the Transmission of Truth," Colloquium on the Late Antique Roots of the Quranic Concept of Prophethood, Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton, N.J., U.S.A., June 2, 2004.

¹⁶ For Rufinus' Latin version, see B. Rehm, *Die Pseudoklementinen*, vol. 2: *Rekognitionen in Rufins Übersetzung* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1965). The Syriac version includes *Rec.* 1–4.1 and *Hom.* 10–12.24, 13–14.12 and is preserved in a manuscript from 411 CE; see W. Frankenberg, *Die syrischen Clementinen mit griechischen Paralleltext: Eine Vorarbeit zu dem literargeschichtlichen Problem der Sammlung* (Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs, 1937); F.S. Jones, "Evaluating the Latin and Syriac Translations of the Pseudo-Clementine *Recognitions*," *Apocrypha* 3 (1992): 237–57. For the other versions, see A.R.M. Dressel, *Clementinorum Epitomae Duae* (Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs, 1859); F. Paschke, *Die beiden griechischen Klementinen-Epitomen und ihre Anhänge: Überlieferungsgeschichtliche Vorarbeiten zu einer Neuauflage der Texte* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1966); C. Renoux, "Fragments arméniens des *Recognitions* du Pseudo-Clément," *Oriens Christianus* 62 (1978): 103–13; also M. D. Gibson, "Apocrypha Sinaitica," *Studia Sinaitica* 5 (1896): 15–54.

begin by exploring some of its rhetorical and ideological continuities with fourth-century Christian heresiology. Then I will consider the place of Judaism and Hellenism within its treatment of “heresy.” In conclusion I will speculate about the possibility of discursive continuities and cultural commonalities with Rabbinic Jewish as well as Greco-Roman traditions, in the hopes of opening a new window onto the redacted form of the *Homilies* and the fourth-century authors/redactors responsible for it.

The *Homilies* and/as Christian Heresiology

Central to the *Homilies* in its present form is the rivalry between Peter and Simon Magus.¹⁷ Much of the dramatic action is motivated by Peter’s attempt to draw Simon into public disputation. During the course of the novel, both travel from city to city, spreading their respective beliefs to crowds of curious Gentiles. Not only does the novel claim to record the public debates between apostle and arch-heretic, but its authors/redactors put in the mouth of Peter sermons and statements that serve to situate Simon within a genealogy of error that stretches back to the very beginning of human history. Moreover, as we shall see, they attempt to theorize the place of “heresy” in the cosmic plan of the One God.

The *Homilies*’ dramatization of religious disputation and totalizing approach to religious error fit well within the context of fourth-century Christianity.¹⁸ This context, moreover, may help us to understand its characterization of Simon Magus. Past research on the pseudo-Clementine depiction of Simon has focused almost wholly on the question of his identity, reading this character as a cipher for some enemy of “Jewish-Christianity.”¹⁹ In light of the anti-Paulinism evident in a portion of the

¹⁷ For a comprehensive consideration of this theme, see Côté, *Thème de l’opposition*.

¹⁸ See esp. R. Lim, *Public Disputation, Power, and Social Order in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley: U. of California Press, 1994).

¹⁹ Although many aspects of the Pseudo-Clementine characterization of Simon have parallels in other early Christian references to him (e.g., Acts 8:9–24; Justin, *1 Apol.* 26; Irenaeus, *Adv. haer.* 1.23), connections with the apostle Paul and/or Marcion have been cited most often, particularly by those who seek to highlight this literature’s “Jewish-Christian” elements; both figures are associated with an antinomianism from which Jesus, Peter and the apostolic church are pointedly distanced. Consistent with the polemic against philosophy, others have seen him as a pagan, or specifically Neoplatonist, enemy of Christianity, modeled on figures like Celsus (cf. Clement’s debate with Appion in *Hom.* 4–6). See further A. Salles, “Simon le magicien ou Marcion?” *VC* 12 (1958): 197–224; D. Côté, “La fonction littéraire de Simon le Magicien dans les Pseudo-Clémentines,” *LTP* 37 (2001): 513–23; idem, *Thème de l’opposition*; Edwards, “Clementina,” 462; A. Ferreiro, “Simon Magus: The Patristic-Medieval Traditions and Historiography,” *Apocrypha* 7 (1996): 147–65.

Recognitions and in an epistle now affixed to the *Homilies*,²⁰ some scholars have suggested that the arch-heretic Simon here represents the apostle Paul, who is seen as an enemy of Peter by virtue of his supposed role in authoring “Gentile-Christianity.”²¹ Others have suggested that the character is used to represent Paul’s most infamously anti-Jewish interpreter, namely Marcion.²²

In his recent work on the disputes between Peter and Simon in the Pseudo-Clementines, Dominique Côté has shown that the anti-Pauline material in this literature is, in fact, rarely associated with Simon.²³ Likewise, as Mark Edwards also notes, the pseudo-Clementine Simon does have many Marcionite traits, but Marcionism does not suffice to explain him.²⁴ He is, in their estimation, a conflate character. In him is combined some features from other traditions about Simon (such as his status as magician and his Samaritan lineage; see esp. *Hom.* 2.22–32)²⁵ and some features associated with Marcion (such as his hatred of Jews and denial of the goodness of the Creator; see esp. *Hom.* 5.2) but also a number of other features not easily explained through appeal to a single and simple enemy.²⁶

Côté thus concludes that Simon functions primarily as symbol in the Pseudo-Clementines, providing a literary foil for the characterization and exaltation of the apostle Peter.²⁷ His argument, in my view, is largely convincing. For our present purposes, however, it proves no less significant that Simon’s conflate characterization is also a narrative

²⁰ See esp. *Rec.* 1.70; *Epistle of Peter to James*; and discussion in G. Lüdemann, *Opposition to Paul in Jewish Christianity* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989), 169–94.

²¹ So Lüdemann, *Opposition*, 185–90; G. Strecker, *Das Judenchristentum in den Pseudoklementinen* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1958), 187; T.V. Smith, *Petrine Controversies in Early Christianity: Attitudes towards Peter in Christian Writings of the First Two Centuries*, WUNT² 15 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1985), 11, 59–61. For critique see Côté, “Fonction,” 514–17.

²² So Salles, “Simon.” For critique, see Côté, “Fonction,” 514–17.

²³ Côté finds only one possible case, namely, Peter’s statement to Simon in *Hom.* 17.14.2 (“You alleged that, on this account, you knew more satisfactorily the doctrines of Jesus than I do, because you heard His words through an apparition”), which some read as a reference to Gal 2:11; Côté, “Fonction,” 515–16.

²⁴ Côté, “Fonction,” 517–19; Edwards, “Clementina,” 462.

²⁵ Simon Magus is depicted as a Samaritan from Gitthi in earlier Christian sources (e.g. Justin, *1 Apol.* 26). In the Pseudo-Clementines, however, his Samaritan heritage may take on a special importance; note, for instance, the references to him as “Simon the Samaritan” throughout the *Homilies*, as well as the more general anti-Samaritan polemics in *Rec.* 1.54.4–5, 1.57.1 (statements which are, interestingly, made in the context of a discussion how Jesus’ followers fit among the Jewish sects).

²⁶ Côté, “Fonction,” 517–20; idem, *Thème de l’opposition*, 191–96.

²⁷ Côté, “Fonction,” 510–22; idem, *Thème de l’opposition*, 20–134.

realization of a common heresiological trope – the view of Simon Magus as the very father of Christian “heresy.”

This understanding of Simon is made explicit in *Hom.* 16.21:

Peter said to the assembled multitudes: “If Simon can do no other injury to us in regard to God, he at least prevents you from listening to the words that can purify the soul.” On Peter saying this, much whispering arose amongst the crowds: “What necessity is there for permitting him to come in here, and utter his blasphemies against God?” Peter heard and said: “If only the word against God for the trial of humankind [*ton kata tou theou pros peirasmon anthrōpōn logon*] went no further than Simon! For there will be, as the lord said, false apostles, false prophets, heresies, desires for supremacy [*pseudapostoloi, pseudeis prophētai, hairexies, philarchiai*] (cf. Matt 24:24) – who, as I conjecture, finding their beginning in Simon, who blasphemes God, will work together in the assertion of the same opinions against God as those of Simon [*to ta auta tō Simōni kata tou theou legein sunergēsousin*].”

Strikingly, Jesus’ warning in Matt 24:24 (“For false messiahs and false prophets will appear and produce great signs and omens, to lead astray, if possible, even the elect”) is here reframed to include “heresies,” “false apostles,” and “desires for supremacy.”²⁸ Furthermore, Peter asserts a radical continuity between Simon and all forms of post-apostolic “heresy.” Just as the first-century authors/redactors of the Gospel of Matthew use Jesus’ prediction to speak to their own times, so the fourth-century authors/redactors of this Clementine pseudepigraphon use Peter’s conjecture to assert that the errors of their own age are the same as those faced by the apostles.

Even more relevant are Christian heresiological traditions that depict Simon as the beginning of a line of succession that proceeds in inverse parallel to apostolic succession from Peter. In his survey of traditions about Simon Magus from the book of Acts to medieval literature, A. Ferriero notes that this particular trope is characteristic of the fourth and fifth centuries.²⁹ This unified depiction of “heresy” represents a shift away from the earlier contrast, by authors like Irenaeus, between the unity of “orthodoxy” and the multiplicity of “heresies.”³⁰ Perhaps not surprisingly,

²⁸ Notably, this is one of a number of sayings that the *Homilies* attribute to Jesus which find no direct counterpart in the New Testament; see further L.L. Kline, *The Sayings of Jesus in the Pseudo-Clementine Homilies* (Missoula: Scholars Press, 1975).

²⁹ Ferriero, “Simon Magus,” 158–59. See also idem, “Sexual Depravity, Doctrinal Error, and Character Assassination: Jerome against the Priscillianists,” *Studia Patristica* 28 (1993): 29–38; idem, “Jerome’s polemic against Priscillian in his *Letter to Cetesiphon* (133,4),” *Revue des Études Augustiniennes* 39 (1993): 309–32, on Jerome’s concept of a female line of succession.

³⁰ E.g. Irenaeus, *Haer.* 1.10–22; A. Le Boulluec, *La notion d’hérésie dans la littérature grecque II^e–III^e siècles*, Tome I: *De Justin à Irenée* (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1985), esp. 233–34; P. Perkins, “Irenaeus and the Gnostics,” *VC* 30

the development of the trope of “heretical” succession appears to accompany an intensification of interest in apostolic succession, in general, and in the succession of bishops of Rome, in particular.³¹

The latter could not be more evident than in the *Homilies*. On one level, the entire narrative can be read as a defense of Clement of Rome’s close connection to the apostle Peter. So too does Simon here serve both as progenitor and as paradigm of “heresy.” The notion of “heretical” succession as a false counterpart and pretender to apostolic succession is expressed both by the narrative frame of the *Homilies* and by the sermons and speeches embedded within it. Peter often speaks of Simon as spreading a false gospel which, if not promptly countered, will inevitably be accepted as the true one; “heresy” is dangerous precisely because of the similarities that mask both its falsehood and the reality of its contrast with true “orthodoxy.” And hence of Simon, he laments:

Though his deeds are those of one who hates, he is loved; and though he is an enemy, he is received as a friend; and though he is death, he is desired as a savior; and though he is fire, he is esteemed as light; and though he is a deceiver, he is believed as a speaker of truth. (*Hom.* 2.18)

Likewise, on the level of narrative, Peter and Simon are paralleled in their twin activities of missionary travel, public preaching, and debate.³² The Jewish Peter and the Samaritan Simon both seek to convert Gentiles away from “pagan” polytheism. In this, each has his own set of disciples. In both cases, these include three prominent Gentile travel companions, two of whom are paired (Aquila, Nicetas, and Clement for Peter; Appion, Annubion, and Athenodorus for Simon). This mirroring of opposites even extends to other elements of the plot, such as the tale of Clement’s miraculous recovery of his long-lost family.³³ This, moreover, occurs in a series of recognition scenes in which masked identities are revealed, thereby serving as a lesson in the pressing need to recognize truth in a world of misleading appearances.

(1976): 195–96; A. Y. Reed, “EYATTEAION: Orality, Textuality, and the Christian Truth in Irenaeus’ *Adversus haereses*,” *VC* 56 (2002): 43–46.

³¹ On the *successio haereticorum* in Hippolytus’ *Elenchos* and Epiphanius’ *Panarion*, see Gérard Vallée, *A Study in Anti-Gnostic Polemics: Irenaeus, Hippolytus, and Epiphanius*, *Studies in Christianity and Judaism/Études sur le christianisme et le judaïsme* 1 (Waterloo, Ont.: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1981), esp. 54–56, 70–72. As Vallée notes (p. 55), this approach has its origins already with the Epistle of Jude and is already important in Irenaeus (*Adv. haer.* 1.23–28), even as it would only be developed in detail in later centuries; by the fourth century, “the tradition of heresy now forms a counterpart to the history of salvation since the beginning of mankind” (71).

³² Côté, *Thème de l’opposition*.

³³ See Edwards, “Clementina,” 465, on the place of pairs and twins in the plot of the Pseudo-Clementine novels.

Theorizing “Heresy”

In the *Homilies*, we also find attempts at a systematic understanding of error that recall – in form and concern, if not wholly in content and aim – the tradition of Christian heresiology begun by Justin and Irenaeus and reflected, in its fourth-century form, by Epiphanius. For each, it does not suffice to counter individual “heresies.” The concern is “heresy” itself, and its character and origins must be explained in a comprehensive and systematic manner. Following Irenaeus, Epiphanius does so primarily through taxonomy, describing and categorizing each so-called “sect” and tracing their genealogies in meticulous detail.³⁴ By contrast, the *Homilies* achieve the same goal through narrative, by means of a conflated characterization of Simon Magus as the origins and embodiment of “heresy” who, in effect, contains in potentate all of the forms that lie in the future of the novel’s pseudepigraphical author (i.e., Clement) and in the present of its authors/redactors and readers.

Moreover, Epiphanius and the *Homilies* go even further, seeking the pre-Christian Origins of Christian “heresy.” Both trace the evolution of religious error back to the very dawn of human existence, by means of historiographical summaries of the early history of false worship (*Pan.* 1–3; *Hom.* 8–10). Their summaries are strikingly similar. In both cases, for instance, it is asserted that the first human being held no false belief or sectarian difference, such that their “religion” was, in effect, the same as each deems the true apostolic faith (*Pan.* 2.2.3–7; *Hom.* 8.10–11, 9.3). All false religion, including magic and astrology, began in the time of Nimrod who is sometimes called Zoroaster (*Pan.* 3.3.1–3; cf. 1.2; *Hom.* 9.4–8). Worship of gods originates with the deification of men (*Pan.* 3.9; *Hom.* 9.5) and found, early on, its most virulent form among the Egyptians (*Pan.* 3.11; *Hom.* 9.6, 10.16–18).³⁵

Of course, such similarities need not speak to any close connections between the *Panarion* and the *Homilies*. The parallels between their

³⁴ The overarching schema of Epiphanius’ taxonomy is the principle that there are eighty total “heresies,” as predicted by the reference to eighty concubines in Song of Songs 6:8–9. On this schema as well as his taxonomic and descriptive methods, see Vallée, *Study*, 65–74, 88–91.

³⁵ Of course, there are differences too. The *Homilies*’ account is distinguished by its stress on the role of demons in these developments and by its inclusion of a broader variety of non-Christian traditions, such as Persian fire-worship. Moreover, it outlines the conflict between true and false worship, always and everywhere, as a practical contrast between health and disease – a trope that may have some connection with the common metaphor of “heresy” as poison to which “heresiology” is antidote (e.g., as evident in Epiphanius’ choice of the title *Panarion* [medicine box] for his work, on which see Vallée, *Study*, 66–67), even as it moves well beyond it.

accounts of error's evolution are readily explained with reference to well-known traditions about early human history in Jewish pseudepigrapha, Christian apology and chronography, and Hellenistic historiography.³⁶ What proves interesting, in my view, is that the two seem to draw on much the same mix. Despite their use of different literary genres and the differences in their conceptualization of what constitutes "orthodoxy," they seem to be shaped by the same cultural context – and, moreover, they redepoly the same combination of traditions for the same aims.

Even more significantly, for our purposes, both the *Panarion* and the *Homilies* go on to integrate the history of pre-Christian error into the genealogy of Christian "heresy." In each their own way, they assert a radical continuity in religious deviance before and after the birth of Jesus. Blurring the earlier lines between apology and heresiology, they label certain pre-Christian and non-Christian traditions as "heresy."³⁷

For Epiphanius, the guiding principle is the assertion that "in Christ Jesus there is neither Barbarian, Scythian, Greek, or Jew" (*Pan.* 1.1.9; cf. Col 3:11; Gal 3:28) – a Pauline saying that he interprets in historiographical and heresiological terms. He thus puts Barbarism, Scythianism, Hellenism, and Judaism at the historical roots of "heresy" (*Pan.* 1–20),³⁸ outlining their respective developments and tracing their links to later Christian sects (Judaism, for instance, to the Ebionites; *Pan.* 30). When this principle is put in practice, Hellenism and Judaism loom large (see 8.2.2), while Barbarianism and Scythianism mainly become relegated to primeval times. Interestingly, Samaritanism is added to the list, as a "heretical" off-shoot of Judaism that bears its own branch of "heretical" progeny (*Pan.* 9–13). Epiphanius is thus able to present the very first Christian "heresy" – the Simonianism founded by the Samaritan Simon Magus – as a direct outgrowth of the most poisonous "heretical" product of an already "heretical" Judaism (*Pan.* 21).

The *Homilies* also treat pre-Christian and non-Christian traditions as "heresy," but they do so according to a different principle. This is the Law

³⁶ E.g., *Jubilees*, Josephus, Justin Martyr, Julius Africanus.

³⁷ For instance, both treat Greek philosophy as a natural extension of the early evolution of false worship that plays a role in the birth of "heresy." See *Pan.* 5–8 and discussion of *Homilies* below. On Epiphanius' conflation of Judaism and "heresy," see A. Cameron, "Jews and Heretics – A Category Error?" in Becker and Reed, eds., *Ways that Never Parted*, 345–60.

³⁸ As Vallée notes, however, these traditions are deemed "heretical" inasmuch as they represent a departure or fragmentation of "the primeval truth... transmitted orally, identical with the natural law which, in its turn, is identical with 'Christianity before Christianity' and... became manifest with the advent of Christ"; Epiphanius deems Samaritanism, "gnostic" sects, and so on "heretical" in a more narrow sense as well; *Study*, 77–78.

of Syzygy (esp. 2.15–18; 3.59),³⁹ a concept central and distinctive to the *Homilies*.⁴⁰ Consistent with the *Homilies*' overarching concern with apostolic succession and the transmission of true knowledge, this Law serves to explain the place of "heresy" with primary reference to the revelation and transmission of prophetic truth.

The *Homilies* speak of Jesus as the "True Prophet" (esp. 1.19, 2.5–12, 3.11–28),⁴¹ at times depicting him as the latest in a line of prophets and at times suggesting that he is an avatar of a single True Prophet who has been sent to earth on multiple occasions (3.20). In all cases, what is stressed is that Jesus proclaims the same message as his predecessors, among whom, most notably, numbers Moses. Likewise, its theory of the origins of error draws on a mirrored concept of succession and stresses the radical continuity between pre-Christian and Christian "heresy." Within the *Homilies*' salvation-history, God-sent prophets never come alone. Rather, each is preceded by a false counterpart. To each prophet is paired a prophetic pretender, such that the history of salvation always runs parallel to the history of religious error.

Accordingly, within the novel, Peter's first explanation of the Law of Syzygy (2.15–18) follows directly from a discourse on the True Prophet (2.5–14). The history of religious error is defined as a continuous line of false "female" prophecy, belonging to this world, which runs alongside the continuous line of true "male" prophecy, which belongs to – and points towards – the World to Come (2.15, 3.23–27).⁴² This dualistic system is attributed to the one true God,⁴³ who grants the means to learn truth with

³⁹ In light of the polemics against astrology in the Pseudo-Clementines (on which see Jones, "Eros and Astrology," 61–64), it may be significant that "syzygy" is a technical astronomical term (see e.g. Ptol. *Alm.* 5.1, 10).

⁴⁰ Although the *Recognitions* includes brief reference to ten "pairs" (*Rec.* 4.59, 61: Cain and Abel, giants and Noah, Pharaoh and Abraham, Philistines and Isaac, Esau and Jacob, magicians and Moses, "the tempter" and Jesus, Simon and Peter, "all nations and he who shall be sent to sow the word among the nations," Antichrist and Christ), this concept is nowhere as developed as it is in the *Homilies* – let alone presented as a cosmic principle.

⁴¹ For a general outline of the Pseudo-Clementine concept of the "True Prophet," see L. Cerfaux, "Le vrai prophète des Clémentines," *Recherches de science religieuse* 18 (1928): 143–63. On the related yet distinctive depiction of the "True Prophet" in the *Recognitions* (which, e.g., seems to place more stress on Jesus' singularity), see Kelley, "Discursive Competition," esp. ch. 3.

⁴² *Hom.* 2.15: "Since the present world is female, as a mother bringing forth the souls of her children, but the World to Come is male, as a father receiving his children from their mother, therefore into this world there come a succession of prophets, as being sons of the World to Come and having knowledge of men."

⁴³ Consistent with the extreme stress on monotheism throughout the *Homilies* (esp. 16–19, also 2.42–46, 3.30–59), the oneness of the God from which this dualism springs is explicitly asserted in *Hom.* 2.15: "Hence God, teaching men with respect to the truth of

one hand but also gives error with the other, as a means of testing faith and teaching discernment. The knowledge of this pattern is thus depicted as epistemologically and soteriologically critical; for, “if men in God-fearing had understood this mystery, they would never have gone astray, but even now they would know that Simon, who now entralls all men, is a fellow-worker of error and deceit” (*Hom.* 2.15).

In private teachings to his followers, Peter then reveals the secrets of the pattern:

Now, the doctrine of the prophetic rule [*ho de logos tou prophētikou kanonos*] is as follows: as in the beginning God, who is one, like a right hand and a left, made the heavens first and then the earth, so also he constituted all the syzygies [*tas suzugias*] in order....

Therefore from Adam who was made after the image of God, there sprang first the unrighteous Cain and then the righteous Abel (see also *Hom.* 3.18–26; *Rec.* 3.61). Again, from him who amongst you is called Deucalion [i.e., Noah], two forms of spirits were sent forth, the impure and the pure, first the black raven and then the white dove. From Abraham also, the patriarchs of our nation sprang, two first: Ishmael first, then Isaac, who was blessed of God. And from Isaac himself, likewise, there were again two: Esau the profane, and Jacob the pious. So too, first in birth, as the first-born in the world, was the high priest Aaron,⁴⁴ then the lawgiver Moses.

Similarly, the syzygy for Elijah, which was supposed to have come, has been willingly put off to another time, having determined to enjoy it conveniently hereafter. Therefore, also, he who was among those “born of woman” (Matt 11:11) came first [i.e., John the Baptist],⁴⁵ then he who was among the sons of men [i.e., Jesus] came second. (*Hom.* 2.16–17)

Peter goes on explicitly to identify Simon and himself as one pair of rivals in this long doubled chain:

It is possible, following this order [*tē taxei*], to perceive to which Simon belongs, who came before me to the Gentiles [*ho pro emou eis ta ethnē prōtos elthōn*], and to which I belong – I who have come after him and have come in on him as light on darkness, as knowledge on ignorance, as healing on disease. (*Hom.* 2.17)

existing things, being Himself one, has distinguished all principles into pairs and opposites – He Himself being one and sole God from the beginning, having made heaven and earth, day and night, light and fire, sun and moon, life and death. But humankind alone amongst these He made self-controlling, fit to be either righteous or unrighteous. To him also He has exchanged the image of Syzygies, placing before him small things first and great ones afterwards, such as the world and eternity....”

⁴⁴ The inclusion of Aaron in the evil line may be related to the polemic against sacrifice that pervades the Pseudo-Clementines; see further Reed, “Jewish Christianity.”

⁴⁵ I.e., the syzygetical counterpart for Elijah is Jesus, following the common equation of Elijah with John the Baptist (Matt 11:14; 17:10–13; Luke 1:17). Notably, the *Homilies* hold a very negative view of John the Baptist, even depicting Simon Magus as one of his disciples (*Hom.* 2.23). See also the depiction of John and his followers in *Rec.* 1.54.

Just as their rivalry is set against historical background, so it is also placed in eschatological context:

Thus, as the True Prophet has told us, a false Gospel must first come from some certain deceiver [*prōton pseudes dei elthein euangelion*].⁴⁶ Then, likewise, after the removal of the Holy Place [*meta kathairesin tou hagiou topou*; i.e., the Temple], the true Gospel must be secretly sent abroad [*euangelion alēthes krupha diapemphthēvai*] for the rectification of the heresies that shall be [*eis epanorthōsin tōn esomenōv haireōn*]. After this, also, towards the End, the Antichrist must first come, and then our Jesus must be revealed to be indeed the Christ. After this, once the eternal light has sprung up, all the things of darkness must disappear. (*Hom.* 2.17)

That **Simon and Peter are both sent to the Gentiles** and compete for their souls is further stressed in *Hom.* 2.33–34. This passage uses Peter to describe his pairing with Simon in a manner consistent with the two-fold salvation-history outlined elsewhere in the *Homilies* (esp. 8–11), whereby Moses first came to the Jews and Jesus then to the Gentiles, each bearing the same prophetic message.⁴⁷ Peter begins with a restatement of the Rule of Syzygy:

You must perceive, brethren, the truth of the Rule of Syzygy [*tēs suzugias kanonos*], from which he who departs not cannot be misled. For since, as we have said, we see all things in pairs and opposites – and as the night is first and then the day; and first ignorance, then knowledge; first disease, then healing – so the things of error come first into our life, then truth supervenes, like the physician upon the disease. (*Hom.* 2.33)

He explains its relevance first to the history of Israel and then to the nations:

Therefore straightway, when our God-loved nation [*tou theophilous hēmōn ethnous*; i.e., Israel] was about to be ransomed from the oppression of the Egyptians [i.e., during the Exodus], first diseases were produced by means of the rod turned into a serpent, which was given to Aaron, and then remedies were brought by the prayers of Moses.

Now also – when the Gentiles are about to be ransomed from religious service towards idols [*kai nun de tōn ethnōn mellontōn apo tēs kata ta eidōla lutrousthai thrēskeias*] – wickedness, which reigns over them, has by anticipation sent forth her ally like another serpent: this Simon whom you see, who works wonders [*thaumasia*] to astonish and deceive, not signs [*sēmeia*] of healing to convert and save. (*Hom.* 2.33)

Likewise, in *Hom.* 3.59, Peter is used to make further explicit that the travels and debates described in the novel are motivated by the race to counter polytheistic and “heretical” error with monotheistic truth:

⁴⁶ This statement is sometimes read as a veiled reference to Paul (e.g. Lüdemann, *Opposition to Paul*, 190).

⁴⁷ For discussion of this salvation-history and its importance for our understanding of the “Jewish Christianity” of the Pseudo-Clementines, see Reed, “Jewish Christianity,” 213–24.

While I am going forth to the nations that say that there are many gods [*eis ta ethnē ta pollous theous legonta* – to teach and to preach that the God who made heaven and earth and all things that are in them is one [*kēruxai kai didaxai hoti eis estin ho theos hos ouranon ektise kai gēn kai ta en autois panta*], such that they are able to love Him and be saved – evil has anticipated me, and by the very Law of Syzygy has sent Simon before me, in order that these men, even if they should cease from saying that there are many gods by disowning those that are called [gods] on earth, may think that there are many gods in heaven [*en ouranō pollous theous*], so that, not feeling the excellence of the sole rule [*tēs monarxias*; i.e., of God], they may perish with eternal punishment.

What is most dreadful, since true doctrine [*alēthēs logos*] has incomparable power, is that he forestalls me with slanders and persuades them to this, not even at first to receive me, lest he who is the slanderer is convicted of being himself in reality a devil, and the true doctrine be received and believed. Therefore I must quickly catch him up, lest the false accusation, through gaining time, wholly get hold of all people! (*Hom.* 3.59; cf. *Rec.* 3.65)

As noted above, the Law of Syzygy also serves as an epistemological function; those who know the Law will be able, in the novel's future and the reader's present, to recognize Simon's successors for who and what they really are, even despite what they seem to be (*Hom.* 16.21). This concern for the gap between reality and appearance is consistent with the epistemology expressed elsewhere in the *Homilies*, by means of Clement's first-person accounts of his quest for truth (*Hom.* 1.1–7) and by means of Peter's teachings about the True Prophet as the sole guarantor of truth (e.g. *Hom.* 2.5–12). In each case, the message is the same: truth and falsehood appear similar and can each be made to sound persuasive, and the difference can only be identified by attention to their messengers and the lines of transmission in which they stand. The same message is also expressed through the narrative into which these teachings have been placed. When read through the Law of Syzygy, for instance, the combination of commonality and contrast in the characters of Peter and Simon makes perfect sense; the two appear similar precisely because they are paired opposites.⁴⁸

In addition, much of the overarching story can be read as a narrative embodiment and illustration of the Law. Most striking in this regard is its conclusion, which finds Clement finally reunited with his long-lost family, only to have his father magically blighted with Simon's face (*Hom.* 20.12). Simon has wrought this magic in order to make a quick escape from his increasingly failed attempts to debate Peter (*Hom.* 20.14–16). The result, however, is a tragic splintering of the family that had been gradually yet progressively reunited concurrent with Clement's conversion and travels with Peter. The apostle, however, is readily able to recognize the true face of Clement's father even despite the power of Simon's spells (*Hom.*

⁴⁸ Côté, *Thème de l'opposition*, 29–32.

20.12). Furthermore, in the end, he is able to use the tricks of “heresy” to spread the truth: he prompts Simon’s doppelganger to proclaim publicly his errors in a surprising twist that serves to resolve the long series of debates firmly in Peter’s favor (*Hom.* 20.18–23).

Nevertheless, Peter’s exposition of the Law of Syzygy makes clear that this is only one in a series of battles between truth and error. This Law, notably, represents the *Homilies*’ unique articulation of the notion of twin lines of apostolic and “heretical” succession – a concern that fits well within a fourth-century context marked by Christian efforts to delineate “orthodoxy” from “heresy” by means of public debates no less than treatises and councils. Whereas Epiphanius stresses the continuity between pre-Christian and Christian error, the *Homilies* essentially erase the line between them: Jesus is not the first teacher of truth, nor is Simon the first “heretic.” Both are part of a broader pattern, stretching far into the past and far into the future.

Hellenism and/as “Heresy”

Analysis of each side of the dualistic pattern reveals a theory of Christianity’s relationship to other religious traditions that is also distinctive to the *Homilies*. It suggests, moreover, that its authors/redactors may draw the lines between “orthodoxy” and “heresy” in a manner different from fourth-century ecclesiarchs in the Roman Empire. Like Epiphanius (*Pan.* 8.2.2), the *Homilies* read pre-Christian history as defined by the difference between Hellenism and Judaism. Here, however, the lineage of “heresy” is wholly limited to the latter. Just as the *Homilies* use Peter’s speeches to argue against “pagan” polytheism and to persuade Gentiles to monotheism, so they also mount an extended polemic against Hellenistic philosophy. But, whereas polytheism is read as ignorance of the truth, philosophy – like “heresy” – is read as error.

It is telling, for instance, that Simon’s followers are Greek philosophers and astrologers.⁴⁹ He himself is closely associated with Hellenism, in what appears to be a Pseudo-Clementine innovation on the Simon Magus tradition.⁵⁰ And, even though our hero Clement was raised a good “pagan” with a proper Hellenistic education (*Hom.* 1.3, 4.7), the novel begins with his realization of the empty sophistry of philosophy and its inadequacy for addressing ultimate truths such as the fate of the soul (*Hom.* 1.1–4). It is because of this quest for truth that he discovers a different path by means

⁴⁹ E.g. Appion is an Alexandrian grammarian, Annubion an astrologer, and Athenodorus an Athenian Epicurean (*Hom.* 4.6).

⁵⁰ Côté, *Thème de l’opposition*, 195–96.

of the True Prophet (*Hom.* 1.6–22). Thereafter, Clement uses his education precisely to expose the vanity of Hellenistic philosophy. *Hom.* 1.9–12, for instance, describes how he uses his rhetorical skills to intervene in a debate between Barnabas and a group of Alexandrian philosophers. Likewise, in *Homilies* 4–6, he takes on the Alexandrian grammarian Appion and exposes the irrational anti-Judaism behind his philosophical veneer.

The latter finds no counterpart in the *Recognitions*,⁵¹ and its inclusion in the *Homilies* speaks to its unique twist on the discourse of “orthodoxy” and “heresy.” Appion, we are told, is a follower of Simon Magus but also a family friend of Clement’s (*Hom.* 4.6). He laments that Clement “although equipped with all Greek learning, has been seduced by a certain barbarian called Peter to speak and act after the manner of the Jews ... forsaking the customs of his own country and falling away to those of the barbarians” (*Hom.* 4.7). In these chapters, Clement responds by exposing the error of Hellenism and defending the truth of Judaism – with no reference at all, in fact, to Jesus. Furthermore, he condemns both Appion and Simon Magus for their rabid anti-Judaism, which he sees as the true motivation for their spread of doctrinal error (*Hom.* 5.1–29).

Here and elsewhere in the *Homilies*, the battle between “orthodoxy” and “heresy” is presented as an extension of the conflict between Judaism and Hellenism.⁵² Peter describes Jesus, himself, and his followers as taking up the fight against polytheism first – and still – fought by Moses and the Jews (*Hom.* 2.33, 8.5–7, 11.7–16, 16.14). Just as God sought to free the Jews from polytheism by means of the Exodus from Egypt, working through Moses, so He now seeks to free Gentiles from the same error, working through Jesus: following the Exodus, Aaron’s idolatry and illness-

⁵¹ *Hom.* 4–6 is often speculated to have its roots in a separate source, possibly Hellenistic Jewish in origin. For a recent treatment of these chapters, see W. Adler, “Apion’s Encomium of Adultery: A Jewish Satire of Greek *Paideia* in the Pseudo-Clementine *Homilies*,” *HUCA* 64 (1993): 15–49.

⁵² Epiphanius’ *Panarion* is marked by a similarly close connection between “heresy” and Hellenism, the latter of which is likewise defined primarily in terms of philosophy. In *Pan.* 5–8, Epiphanius describes ancient Greek philosophical schools as “heresies,” in an interesting twist on the original meaning of the term *hairesis* (see the introduction to this volume). Although this connection has some precedent (e.g. Irenaeus, *Adv. haer.* 2.14), Epiphanius takes it much further than earlier heresiologists, who often marshaled philosophy to articulate and defend their own views of Christianity; yet, in Vallée’s words: “Not only is philosophy thereby rejected [i.e., by Epiphanius], but also all links between Christian thought and the ancient philosophical tradition” (*Study*, 81). In other words, the *Homilies*’ negative take on Hellenism seems to fit within the accepted range of attitudes towards philosophy within “orthodox” Christian circles in the fourth century (in which, indeed, the Greco-Roman heritage of the church was being actively negotiated). One could, indeed, argue that what makes the *Homilies*’ heresiology distinctive is only its extremely positive view of Judaism.

inducing magic threatened the Jews' return to true monotheism. Aaron, however, was thwarted by Moses' prayer and piety. So too with God's plan to gather the Gentiles to monotheistic piety and purity: Simon's magic now threatens this aim. Peter, however, assures his listeners that he, continuing the tradition of Jesus, will prevail (*Hom.* 2.33).

Interestingly, the authors/redactors' sympathies towards Judaism seem to be matched by some knowledge of the Judaism of their time. As Albert Baumgarten has shown,⁵³ the authors/redactors of the *Homilies* seem aware of the Rabbinic doctrine of the Oral Torah. For instance, the text presumes the authenticity of a line of Jewish succession, whereby the truth was faithfully transmitted from the time of Moses.⁵⁴ In fact, the authors/redactors even use this idea to explain apostolic succession, which is presented as the new Gentile counterpart to the Jewish line. Perhaps most strikingly, neither succession negates the other: Moses' teachings are faithfully kept by the Pharisees, who sit on his seat (*Hom.* 11.29) – just as Peter sits on the seat of Jesus, as will bishops after him (*Hom.* 3.70). This doubled succession is consistent with the assertion, in *Hom.* 8, of the equality and identity of these two faces of the True Prophet: Moses for the Jews and Jesus for the Gentiles. Furthermore, throughout the novel, Jewish belief and practice are cited as examples of the proper piety and worship to which Gentiles should strive (*Hom.* 4.13, 7.4, 9.16, 11.28, 16.14). Jews, in effect, are held up as paradigms for “orthodoxy” and “orthopraxy” among Gentile followers of Jesus.

The authors/redactors of the *Homilies*, in other words, seem to see Christianity and Judaism as allies in the battle of truth against error. Together, the two make up the cause of “orthodoxy,” which is defined primarily in terms of monotheism. On the other side are aligned Hellenism and “heresy,” along with Samaritanism. Far from functioning as a foil for self-definition, Judaism is forerunner and ally of Christianity in the debate against Hellenism and “heresy” – and in the attempt to persuade “pagans” of prophetic truth.

⁵³ A. Baumgarten, “Literary Evidence for Jewish Christianity in the Galilee,” in *The Galilee in Late Antiquity* (ed. L. Levine; New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America; Cambridge, Mass.: Distributed by Harvard University Press, 1992), esp. 42–43.

⁵⁴ Note esp. *Hom.* 3.47: “The Law of God was given by Moses, without writing, to seventy wise men, to be handed down, so that the government might be carried on by succession.” See further below.

Narrativized Polemics in the *Homilies*

We have seen how the treatment of religious error in the *Homilies* resonates with late antique Christian heresiology, drawing on its tropes and traditions, even as it uses them to present an alternate view of the origins, nature, and enemies of “heresy.” By means of conclusion, I would like briefly to speculate about the significance of its narrativization of heresiological tropes, as it may relate to the distinctive view of Judaism and Hellenism thereby voiced.

Judaism is clearly not the main concern of the authors/redactors, who seem preoccupied foremost with “paganism” and “heresy.” Nevertheless, as we have seen, the attitude towards Jews and Judaism is quite positive. And, as others and I have shown, the cultural context that informs the text does seem shaped by close and continued contacts with contemporary non-Christian Jews.⁵⁵ Might we find, then, some parallel with Jewish heresiology?

Although there are obvious Christian precedents for the narrativization of religious polemics,⁵⁶ it remains significant that many, specifically heresiological parallels can be found in Rabbinic sources, such as *Bereshit Rabbah*, which were redacted around the same time as the *Homilies*.⁵⁷ Most notable is the Rabbinic subgenre of disputation tales: brief stories in which a Sage is approached in public by a “heretic” (*min*), Samaritan, Gentile, philosopher, or Roman matron, who asks him a leading exegetical question. The questions typically concern where Scripture appears to say something that goes against Jewish/Rabbinic belief, and the Sage answers by refuting the exegesis, often (although not always) with another exegesis of the same passage.⁵⁸

⁵⁵ See Baumgarten, “Literary Evidence”; Reed, “Jewish Christianity”; A. Marmorstein, “Judaism and Christianity in the Middle of the Third Century,” *HUCA* 10 (1935): 223–63; J. Bergman, “Les éléments juifs dans les Pseudo-Clémentines,” *RÉJ* 46 (1903): 89–98.

⁵⁶ Interestingly, Christian narrativization of polemics seems especially marked in the *contra Iudaeos* tradition, consistent with the precedent set by Justin Martyr’s *Dialogue with Trypho*.

⁵⁷ That some Rabbinic references to *minim* may refer to “Jewish Christians” makes the parallels of form and content all the more striking, in my view, raising the possibility that influence may have been mediated, at least in part, by contacts in argumentative settings. On cases and places in which *minim* may refer to Christians, see R. Kalmin, “Christians and Heretics in Rabbinic Literature of Late Antiquity,” *HTR* 87 (1994): 155–69.

⁵⁸ For more on this subgenre and Rabbinic traditions about *minim* more broadly, see Kalmin, “Christians and Heretics”; N. Janowitz, “Rabbis and their Opponents: The Construction of the ‘Min’ in Rabbinic Anecdotes,” *JECS* 6 (1998): 449–62.

Biblical exegesis is also central to the narrativized heresiology of the *Homilies*. In a manner reminiscent of Rabbinic tales of *minim*, the *Homilies* consistently depict Simon as arguing his points from Scripture. In *Hom.* 3.2, for instance, Peter is described as lamenting this very fact prior to their public debate in Caesarea:

Simon today is, as he arranged, prepared to come before everyone and to show from the Scriptures that He who made the heaven and the earth and all things in them is not the supreme God, but that there is another, unknown and supreme, as being in an unspeakable manner God of gods, and that he sent two gods, one of whom is he who made the world [*ho men eis estin ho kosmon ktisas*] and the other, he who gave the Law [*ho de heteros ho ton nomon dous*]. These things he contrives to say so that he may dissipate the right faith [*tēn orthēn proeklusei pistin*] of those who would worship the one and only God who made heaven and earth....

This characterization is later confirmed by Simon's own argument during this debate:

Why would you [i.e., Peter] lie, and deceive the unlearned multitude standing around you, persuading them that it is unlawful to think that there are gods and to call them so, when the Books that are current among the Jews [*tōv para Ioudaiois dēmosiōn biblōn*] say that there are many gods? Now I wish, in the presence of all, to discuss with you from these Books the necessity of thinking that there are gods; first showing with respect to him whom you call God that he is not the supreme and omnipotent being inasmuch as he is without foreknowledge, imperfect, needy, not good, and underlying many and innumerable grievous passions. When this has been shown from the Scriptures, as I say, it follows that there is another [God], not written of [*apo tōn grapsōn*], foreknowing, perfect, without want, good, removed froth all grievous passions. He whom you call the Creator [*dēmiourgon*] is subject to the opposite evils.

Therefore also Adam – the being made at first *after his likeness* – is created blind and is said not to have knowledge of good or evil and is found a transgressor and is driven out of Paradise and is punished with death. Similarly, He who made him, because He sees not in all places, says with reference to the overthrow of Sodom, *Come, and let us go down, and see whether they do according to their cry which comes to me; or if not, that I may know* (Gen 18:21). Thus He shows Himself to be ignorant. So too in His saying with respect to Adam, *Let us drive him out, lest he put forth his hand and touch the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever* (Gen 3:22) – in saying *lest* He is ignorant; and in driving him out lest He should *eat and live for ever*, He is also envious. Whereas it is written that *God repented that he had made humankind* (Gen 6:6), this implies both repentance and ignorance.⁵⁹ For this reflection is a view by which one, through ignorance, wishes to

⁵⁹ Cf. *BerR* 27.4: “A certain Gentile asked R. Joshua b. Karhah: ‘Do you not maintain that the Holy One, blessed be He, foresees the future?’ ‘Yes,’ he replied. [The Gentile said:] ‘But it is written, *And God repented that he had made humankind* (Gen 6:6)?’ ‘Has a son ever been born to you?’ he inquired. ‘Yes’ was the answer. ‘And what did you do?’ ‘I rejoiced and made all others rejoice,’ he answered. ‘Yet did you not know that he would eventually die?’ ‘Gladness at the time of gladness, and mourning at the time of mourning,’ he [i.e., the Gentile] replied. ‘So too with the Holy One, blessed be He’ was his rejoinder.”

inquire into the result of the things that he wills, or it is the act of one repenting on account of the event not being according to his expectation. Whereas it is written *And the Lord smelled a scent of sweetness* (Gen 8:21), it is the part of one in need; and His being pleased with the fat of flesh is the part of one who is not good. His tempting, as it is written, *And God did tempt Abraham* (Gen 22:1) is the part of one who is wicked and who is ignorant of the result of the experiment.” (*Hom.* 3.38)

For the most part, the debates in the *Homilies* feature such lengthy discourses by Simon and Peter respectively. In some cases, however, we find briefer interchanges, in which the formal parallels with Rabbinic disputation tales are especially clear. One particularly striking example can be found in *Hom.* 16.11–12:

Simon said: “Since I see that you frequently speak of the God who created you, learn from me how you are impious even to him. For there are evidently two who created [*hoi plasantes duo phainontai*], as Scripture says: *And God said, Let us make humankind in our image, after our likeness* (Gen 1:26). Now *Let us make* implies two or more – certainly not only one!”

Peter answered: “One is He who said to His Wisdom [*eis estin ho tē autou sophia eipōv*], *Let us make humankind*. But His Wisdom was that with which He Himself always rejoiced as with His own spirit (cf. Prov 8:30). It is united as soul to God, but it is extended by Him, as hand, fashioning the universe (cf. Prov 8:22–31).⁶⁰ On this account, also, one man was made and from him went forth also the female.” (cf. Gen 2:21–22)

As in Rabbinic disputation tales, a “heretic” here cites an apparent inconsistency in Scripture, which must then be refuted, lest incorrect exegesis lead to incorrect beliefs.⁶¹

The topic of the contested beliefs is also notable. Particularly within *Bereshit Rabbah*, we find a number of disputation tales that assert the singularity and goodness of God as Creator. Just as the *Homilies* depicts Simon as claiming “two who created,” so the interpretation of Genesis 1:1 in *Ber.R.* 1.7 occasions fervent contestation of the idea that “two powers created the world”:

Rabbi Isaac said... “No person can dispute and maintain that two powers gave the Torah or that two powers created the world [שתי רשויות בראו את העולם]. For ‘And gods spoke [(p.l.) וידברו אלהים]’ is not written here, but *And God spoke* [(s.) וידבר אלהים; Ex 20:1]; ‘In

⁶⁰ These same verses are cited in *Ber.R.* 1.1, with Wisdom interpreted as the Torah and said to have been consulted at Creation.

⁶¹ As discussed below, the *Homilies* offers a solution to the problem of scriptural inconsistency that differs both from Rabbinic Jewish and from “orthodox” Christian approaches, namely the doctrine of false pericopes, as described by means of Peter’s private conversations with Clement (*Hom.* 2.38–52, 3.4–6, 9–11, 17–21) as well as in his public debates with Simon (3.37–51, 16.9–14, 18.12–13, 18.18–22).

the beginning they created [(pl.) בראשית בראו] is not written here, but *In the beginning He created* [(s.) בראשית ברא; Gen 1:1].⁶²

As is well known, classical Rabbinic literature is rife with references to those who “heretically” claim “two powers in heaven.”⁶³ For our purposes, it also proves significant that, more specifically, the Rabbinic genre of disputation tales is often used to contest dualistic and polytheistic interpretations of those passages in the Torah where God is described in terms that could suggest His plurality.

Perhaps most notable are the traditions collected in *Ber.R.* 8.8–9. *Ber.R.* 8.8 begins with a striking admission of the problems raised by the plural forms that Genesis uses to describe God:

R. Samuel b. Nahman said in the name of R. Yohanan: When Moses was engaged in writing the Torah, he had to write the work of each day [i.e., of Creation]. When he came to the verse, *And God said, Let us make* (pl.) *humankind*, etc. (Gen. 1:27), he said: “Sovereign of the Universe! Why do you furnish an excuse to *minim* [מה אתה גותן פתחון פה] [למינים]?” “Write!” He replied, “Whoever wishes to err may err” [הרוצה לטעות יטעה].

Using the subgenre of the disputation tale, *Ber.R.* 8.9 turns to address the specific problems raised by the Torah’s use of *Elohim*, a Hebrew term for God that can be read as either singular or plural:

The *minim* asked R. Simlai: “How many gods [אלוהות] created the world?” “I and you must inquire of the first day,” he replied, “as it is written, *For ask now of the first days*. ‘Since the day *Elohim* created [(pl.) בראו] *humankind*’ is not written here (i.e., in Deut 4:32), but *Elohim created* [(s.) ברא].”

Then they asked him a second time: “Why is it written, *In the beginning Elohim* [s. or pl.] *created*?” “In the beginning *Elohim* created [(pl.) בראו] is not written here (i.e., in Gen 1:1),” he answered, “but *Elohim created* [(s.) ברא] *the heaven and the earth*.”

The midrash then returns to Gen 1:27, addressing the issue of its use of plural verbal forms and pronominal suffixes when describing God:

R. Simlai said: “In every place [i.e., in the Torah] that you find a point supporting the *minim* [בצדה אתה] [בכל מקום שאתה מוצא פתחון פה למינים], you find the refutation at its side [מוצא תשובה]!” They asked him again: “What is meant by *And Elohim said, Let us make* [(pl.) געשה] *humankind in our image* [בצלמנו] *and our likeness* [בדמותנו]?” “Read what

⁶² Translations of *Bereshit Rabbah* are revised from the Soncino edition (H. Freedman, trans., *Midrash Rabba*, vol. 1, ed. H. Freedman and Maurice Simon; London: Soncino Press, 1939) with reference to J. Theodor with C. Albeck, eds., *Midrasch Bereschit Rabbah mit kritischem Apparat und Kommentar*, repr. ed. (Jerusalem, 1965).

⁶³ The most extensive treatment of these traditions is still A.F. Segal, *Two Powers in Heaven: Early Rabbinic Reports about Christianity and Gnosticism* (Leiden: Brill, 1979). On possible Rabbinic references to Simon Magus, see H.J. Schoeps, “Simon Magus in der Haggada?” *HUCA* 21 (1948): 257–74. See also Burton Visotzky, “Goys ‘Y’n’t Us – Rabbinic Anti-Gentile Polemic in Yerushalmi Berachot 9:1,” in this volume.

follows,” he replied, “And *Elohim* created [(pl.) ויבראו] humankind is not written here (i.e., in Gen 1:27), but *And Elohim created* [(s.) ויברא].”

That this explanation does not suffice to explain the problem is made clear by the end of this unit, which features a shift from public to private discourse:

When they left, his disciples said to him [i.e., to R. Simlai]: “You dismissed them with a mere makeshift [קנה; lit. hollow reed]! But how will you answer us?” He said to them: “In the past Adam was created from dust, and Eve was created from Adam, but henceforth it shall be *In our image, after our likeness* (Gen 1:26): neither man without woman, nor woman without man, and neither of them without the Shekhinah.”

Just as the pseudo-Clementine Peter privately reveals teachings to his followers that might be misunderstood by the public,⁶⁴ R. Simlai is here depicted as offering to his disciples a more nuanced solution to the problem of plural forms used of God in Genesis. This solution, moreover, recalls the admission of the complexity within the unity of the Godhead in Peter’s appeal to Wisdom in *Hom.* 16.12. Here, however, appeal is made to another feminine hypostasis of God, namely the Shekhinah.

What is striking about R. Simlai’s answer to his disciples, however, is that the Sage never addresses the reason why Scripture contains misleading statements that need to be corrected by other statements beside them; he simply gives another exegesis. As in the tradition attributed to R. Samuel b. Nahman about Moses’ complaint to God about the inclusion of the plural divine statement “Let us make humankind” in the Torah (*Ber.R.* 8.8), the inconsistency is fully admitted but never resolved.

The authors/redactors of the *Homilies* seem to face the same problem, but they offer a very different solution. Perhaps most striking is Peter’s response to the litany of scriptural inconsistencies attributed to Simon in *Hom.* 3.38 (i.e., as quoted above). At first, Peter defends the perfection of God and the characters of biblical heroes by citing additional biblical prooftexts, in a manner reminiscent of the arguments used by Sages in Rabbinic disputation tales:

Peter said: “You say that Adam was created blind, which was not so; for He would not have pointed out the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil to a blind man and commanded him not to taste of it (Gen 2:17).” Then said Simon: “He meant that his mind was blind.” Then Peter: “How could he be blind in respect of his mind, who, before tasting of the tree, in harmony with Him who made him, imposed appropriate names on all the animals?” (Gen 2:20)

Then Simon: “If Adam had foreknowledge, how did he not foreknow that the serpent would deceive his wife (Gen 3:1–5)?” Then Peter: “If Adam did not have foreknowledge, how did he give names to the sons of men as they were born with reference to their future

⁶⁴ Esp. the doctrine of false pericopes, on which see n. 58 above and discussion below.

doings, calling the first Cain, which is interpreted *envy*, who through envy killed his brother Abel, which is interpreted *grief*; for his parents grieved over him, the first slain? And if Adam, being the work of God, had foreknowledge, how much more so the God who created him?” (*Hom.* 3.42–43)

Peter then, however, denies outright any description of God as imperfect or ignorant:

And it is false, that which is written that *God reflected* (Gen 6:6), as if using reasoning on account of ignorance; and that the Lord tempted Abraham, that He might know if he would endure it; and that which is written *Let us go down...*(Gen 11:7). And, not to extend my discourse too far, but whatever sayings ascribe ignorance to Him, or anything else that is evil – being overturned by other sayings that affirm the contrary – are proved to be false! (*Hom.* 3.43)

At first, the implication of the falsehood of some portions of Scripture is tempered by a return to arguments based on other prooftexts:

Because He does indeed foreknow, He says to Abraham, *You shall assuredly know that your seed shall be sojourners in a land that is not their own...* (Gen 15:13). And what? Does not Moses pre-intimate the sins of the people and predict their dispersion among the nations? If He gave foreknowledge to Moses, how can it be that He did not have it Himself?

Yet He has it! And if He has it, as we have also shown, it is an extravagant saying that He *reflected* (Gen 6:6) and that He *repented* (Gen 6:6) and that He *went down to see* (Gen 11:5) – and whatever else of this sort. (*Hom.* 3.43–44)

The resultant problem of scriptural inconsistency is then answered with a solution that is strongly reminiscent of R. Simlai’s dictum whereby scriptural sayings that support “heresy” are always countered by other sayings close beside them (*Ber.R.* 8.9). Peter very similarly proclaims:

Thus the sayings accusatory of the God who made the heaven are both rendered void by the opposite sayings that are alongside of them and are refuted by Creation. (*Hom.* 3.46)

Unlike R. Simlai, however, Peter does not stop there. *Bereshit Rabbah* implies that its “heretics” readily accepted the Sage’s dictum and that even his disciples were happy to settle for an alternative exegesis of the problematic passage. In the *Homilies*, however, Peter’s battle with his own “heretic” prompts him to push his version of the dictum to its natural conclusion: he proposes that the seemingly “heretical” passages in Scripture are, in fact, not scriptural at all:

They were not written by a prophetic hand. Therefore also they appear opposite to the hand of God, who made all things. (*Hom.* 3.46)

This view reflects another idea distinctive to the *Homilies*, namely its theory that Scripture contains statements that imply God’s multiplicity and

imperfection only because false pericopes have been inserted therein.⁶⁵ This theory is complex in its own right, and its precise connections to other late antique traditions have yet to be adequately explored.⁶⁶ For our present purposes, it suffices to note that parallels in heresiology expose the *Homilies*' surprisingly close connections with Rabbinic tradition – even in the case of a doctrine that might seem, at first sight, to run completely contrary to Rabbinic ideology, namely the *Homilies*' denial of the perfection of Scripture. Not only does Peter explain this theory in an heresiological context that recalls Rabbinic disputation tales and voice a dictum that recalls the Rabbinic sayings cited therein, but he goes on to explain the history of scriptural interpolation with appeal to the oral transmission of the Torah from Moses to the seventy elders (cf. Numbers 11) and on to their successors (*Hom.* 2.38, 3.47; cf. *m. Avot* 1.1).⁶⁷ In effect, the authors/redactors of the *Homilies* seem able to assert the imperfection of the Written Torah precisely because they accept the integrity of the Oral Torah.

Without further analysis, it is difficult to know the full import of these parallels. Some parallels in heresiological content and strategy, for instance, may reflect the character and argumentative tactics of specific enemies (e.g., Marcionites) shared by the Rabbis and the authors/redactors of the *Homilies*. Others may result from their common interest in defending the goodness of the Creator and in arguing for monotheism against dualism and polytheism. In my view, however, the formal parallels prove most telling, opening the possibility that similar heresiologies developed due to contacts between the authors/redactors of the *Homilies* and Rabbinic Jews. In other words, the very continuity and commonality with Judaism that is claimed by the authors/redactors of the *Homilies* may be evinced in the literary form (as well as the content) of its polemics.

Of course, the narrativization of heresiological tropes must also be seen as a result of the authors/redactors' choice of the genre of a Greco-Roman

⁶⁵ *Hom.* 2.38–52, 3.4–6, 9–11, 17–21, 3.37–51, 16.9–14, 18.12–13, 18.18–22.

⁶⁶ For this discussion of the doctrine of the false pericopes, I am indebted to my student Karl Shuve's work locating this doctrine within the context of late antique Jewish and Christian efforts to grapple with the problems raised by scriptural inconsistencies, esp. with regard to the character of God. On possible Rabbinic awareness of this idea, see Schoeps, *Theologie*, 176–79, esp. on *Sifre Deut.* 26 (cf. *Lev.R.* 31.4; *Deut.R.* 2.6).

⁶⁷ *Hom.* 2.38: "...after the prophet Moses, by the order of God, gave [*paradedōkotos*] the Law with the explanations [*sun tais epilusesin*] to certain chosen men, some seventy in number (cf. Num 11:16), in order that they also might instruct such of the people as they chose, the Written Law [*grapheis ho nomos*] had added to it certain falsehoods against the God [*pseudē kata tou monou*] who made the heaven and the earth and all things in them – the Wicked One having dared to work this for some righteous purpose." *Hom.* 3.47 is quoted above in n. 31 and 54.

novel.⁶⁸ Interestingly, it is particularly in the *Homilies* that we find fully exploited the polemical power latent in the adoption of a “pagan” literary form; for, as we have seen, the appropriation of the genre of the novel here serves an extended polemic against Hellenism as “heresy,” as expressed both through the words of Peter and Clement and through the story itself. Especially in light of the *Homilies*’ extremely close adherence to the generic conventions of the Greco-Roman novel, the choice of genre could be read as a sign of an intended readership of “pagans” and former “pagans.” If so, the polemic proves all the more poignant. The literary form of the *Homilies*’ attack on Hellenism and “Paganism” exposes its authors/redactors’ close connections with Greco-Roman culture.

A full understanding of these connections too must await further investigation. Nevertheless, it seems plausible that they reflect the cultural context and intended audience of our text – consistent with its characterization of Jesus as the teacher of Gentiles, its depiction of Peter as preaching for the conversion of “pagans,” and its characterization of Clement as a former “pagan” who found his philosophical education insufficient to fill his spiritual needs.

Consequently, the heresiology of the *Homilies* may speak to its place at a definitional interface between “Christianity,” “Judaism,” and “Paganism” in Late Antiquity. Read from this perspective, the novel is an innovative redeployment of the discourse of Christian heresiology, the narrativization of which may draw on the model of Rabbinic tales of disputations with *minim* – all framed and unified, moreover, by the overarching structure of the Greco-Roman novel. The account of error thereby expressed differs radically from those found in the Christian heresiologies of those whom we now label “orthodox.” This raises the possibility that the authors and redactors of the *Homilies* seek tacitly to counter, not only the “false apostles, false prophets, [and] heresies” predicted by Peter in *Hom.* 16.21, but also those Christians whose supersessionist and anti-Jewish views are, precisely in the fourth century, just in the process of being ratified by their “desires for supremacy.”

⁶⁸ This choice too has some Jewish parallel, on which see, e.g., Joshua Levinson, “The Tragedy of Romance: A Case of Literary Exile,” *HTR* 89 (1996): 227–44. Although there are also Hellenistic Jewish and early Christian precedents for the integration of novelistic tropes from the Greco-Roman literary tradition, it is notable that the Pseudo-Clementines’ wholesale adoption of the genre of the Greco-Roman novel remains distinctive (see sources cited in n. 14 for further discussion).