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THE THEORY OF LATIN ETYMOLOGIA IN THE EARLY MIDDLE AGES: FROM DONATUS TO ISIDORE

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate School of The Ohio State University

By

Mark Eugene Amsler, B.A., M.A.

* * * * * *

The Ohio State University
1976

Reading Committee:
Alan K. Brown
Walter Scheps
Christian K. Zacher

Approved By

Walter Scheps
Adviser
Department of English
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VITA

February 14, 1949 .......... Born - Evansville, Indiana
1971 ....................... B.A., The Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, Maryland
1971-76 .................... Teaching Associate, Department of English, The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio
1973-74 .................... Research Associate, Department of English, The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio
1973 ....................... M.A., The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio

PUBLICATIONS


FIELDS OF STUDY

Major Field: Medieval Literature

Studies in Chaucer: Professor Francis Lee Utley

Studies in Old English: Professors Alan K. Brown and Walter Scheps

Studies in Medieval Latin: Professor Carl Schlam

Studies in Old Norse: Professor Wolfgang Fleischauer
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGMENTS</td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VITA</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABBREVIATIONS</td>
<td>viii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. THE GREEK AND ROMAN HERITAGE</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. THE PAGAN TRADITION</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. The Technographers: From Donatus to Priscian</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. The Mythographer: Fulgentius</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. FROM NOMEN TO NUMEN: SACRED ONOMASTICS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AND THE LATIN FATHERS</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. The Bible: Immanent and Imminent Meaning</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Logos: Plato, Stoicism, and Christian Etymology</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Origen and Christological Onomastics</td>
<td>118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Augustine and the Christian Signum</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. Jerome: &quot;In figura Christi sub etymologia&quot;</td>
<td>141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. ISIDORE OF SEVILLE AND CHRISTIAN ETYMLOGIA</td>
<td>171</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Etymologia: Definitions and Concepts</td>
<td>173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. The Etymological Model</td>
<td>195</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

vi
TABLE OF CONTENTS (Cont'd)

C. Origines verborum ..................... 216
D. Origines rerum .......................... 229

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY ............... 253
ABBREVIATIONS

In addition to the standard MLA abbreviations (as listed in the MLA Bibliography), the following abbreviations are used throughout:


CCSL = Corpus Christianorum Series Latina.

Collart, Varron = Jean Collart, Varron grammarien latine.

Curtius, ELLMA = Ernst R. Curtius, European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages.

Fontaine, Isidore = Jacques Fontaine, Isidore de Seville et la culture classique dans l'Espagne Wisigothique.

Fox = Remegii Autissiodorensis in Artem Donati Minorem Commentum, ed. W. Fox.

Helm, Opera = Fulgentius, Opera, ed. Rudolph Helm.

KGL = Heinrich Keil, Grammatici Latini.

Manitius = Max Manitius, Geschichte der lateinischen Literatur des Mittelalters.

OCD = The Oxford Classical Dictionary.


PW = Pauly-Wissowa Real-Encyclopädie der klassischen Altertumswissenschaft, N. B.

RAC = Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum.


Schanz = Martin Schanz, *Geschichte der römischen Literatur.*

Thurot = Charles Thurot, *Notices et extraits de divers manuscrits latins pour servir a l'histoire des doctrines grammaticales au Moyen Age.*

TLL = *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae.*

Whitbread = *Fulgentiius the Mythographer, tr. Leslie G. Whitbread.*
INTRODUCTION

*Etymologia* as a concept (as distinguished from what moderns call "etymology") has not attracted much attention from students of classical and medieval grammar or hermeneutics. Most discussions of *etymologia* have been concerned with its use as a rhetorical trope or with the adequacy or absurdity of particular etymologies or with discovering the source for an author's use of an etymology. The few pages which comprise E. R. Curtius' account of "Etymology as a Category of Thought"¹ remain the single most comprehensive survey of *etymologia* from the classical period through the end of the Middle Ages. J. E. Sandys' treatment of Greek grammar and etymology and the Greek and Roman uses of *etymologia* as an interpretive device² is too diffuse to stand as a coherent discussion of the concept in its epistemological context. More recently, Roswitha Klinck has undertaken a study of Latin *etymologia* in the Middle Ages, but she focuses almost exclusively on the twelfth century and on what she sees as a distinct shift in the later medieval etymological orientation away from "das tradierte Gut."³ Historians of medieval grammatical theory also have been more inclined toward the later Middle Ages and the so-called "grammatica speculativa." As a result these historians have found no "theoretical or practical
developments" in the area of etymologia or else have lamented the "disastrous legacy" of the search for etymologies which the early grammarians bequeathed to the philosopher-grammarians of the twelfth through fourteenth centuries.4

The study of medieval etymologia has been further restricted by the lack of a comprehensive historical survey and analysis of general medieval grammatical theory and practice. Etymologia must be viewed in the context of the other basic grammatical categories which the Middle Ages inherited from the Greek and early Roman grammarians: pars orationis, analogia, diasynthetica, figurae et schemata verborum, and so forth. However, the only complete surveys of medieval grammatical theory are Charles Thurot's important but limited nineteenth-century collection of and commentary upon French manuscript materials and R. H. Robins' Ancient and Mediaeval Grammatical Theory, which is very good as an outline of general developments from the standpoint of the history of linguistics but is inadequate in terms of intellectual, epistemological, and even literary theory.5 Sandys' work is still the closest thing we have to a complete history of medieval grammar.6

The aim of the present study, therefore, is to fill in at least one gap in our knowledge of grammatical theory in the Middle Ages, namely the development during the fourth
through sixth centuries of Latin etymological theories of grammar and exegesis. Our focus will be on the various procedures and methods which the etymologists and grammarians during this period employed, as well as on the kinds of criteria they invoked to justify their grammatical and hermeneutical explanations. Such a focus necessarily leads us also to consider the various philosophies of language which motivate or are manifested in the theories of both pagan and Christian grammarians and etymologists. The history of medieval Latin etymologia is largely the story of the interplay between these secular and sacred traditions, as the ensuing chapters shall indicate.

What we discover, through an analysis of not only the epistemological concepts but also the terminology and formulae these writers use, is that etymologia was one of the most important parts of early medieval grammar and accounts in large part for the most significant contributions which these grammarians and etymologists made to the received classical grammatical and exegetical tradition. Prior to the reintroduction of Aristotle and the novum organum into Western European intellectual circles in the twelfth century, both pagan and Christian grammarians and etymologists (Pompeius and Priscian as well as Jerome and Isidore) thought of etymologia primarily as a word-oriented concept, whereas after the twelfth century's redefinition of grammar in terms of logical propositions and the study of syntax,
etymologia was frequently equated with the merely mechanical elaboration of the inflections of the parts of speech. In the sixth century Priscian and Isidore, for all their obvious differences, still shared certain predispositions toward a philosophy of language which centered on the individual word as the basic unit of meaning. It's not surprising then to find that their respective comprehensive etymological theories of meaning and interpretation represent not wholly distinct systems but rather relative emphases on the same fundamental grammatical assumptions. However, as we shall see, Isidore's unique achievement was to combine the etymological tradition of secular grammar with the Fulgentian form of mythographic interpretation and the early Latin Church Fathers' use of sacred onomastics in the interpretation of Biblical names.

We shall now turn to a brief discussion of some of the principal theories of etymology in Greek and Roman grammar in order to set out the basic etymological materials and terms which the Latin Middle Ages received from its classical predecessors. Succeeding chapters will focus on the secular and Christian etymological traditions, culminating in the Isidoran synthesis in the sixth century.
NOTES


5 Thurot is especially sketchy concerning Patristic and Carolingian grammatical and etymological theory.


7 The complete history of medieval etymologia obviously must include not only Latin and romance and Germanic vernaculars but also the Greek, Syriac, and Arabic traditions. These various lines sometimes cross and interrelate,
as for example with the Arabic tradition in Spain during the time of Isidore. But one must be careful not to make too much of these interrelations prior to the eleventh century. Isidore, for example, does not seem to have been aware of the grammatical work of Priscian, his near contemporary in Byzantium.

The development of Latin etymologia is obviously of importance to the history of medieval grammatical theory. However, the Greek tradition of etymologia, and especially the work of the commentators on Plato and the Neoplatonists, is fundamental to a complete history and understanding of medieval theories of etymologia. Besides the work by Raymond Klibansky on the transmission of Platonic texts in the Middle Ages (The Continuity of the Platonic Tradition in the Middle Ages (London: The Warburg Institute, 1939), two forthcoming works should add measurably to our knowledge of Plato and Platonism in the Middle Ages and particularly with regard to grammar and hermeneutics: James Coulter, The Literary Microcosm: Theories of Interpretation of the Later Neoplatonists (Leiden: E. J. Brill) and Alice S. Riginos, Platonica: The Anecdotes Concerning the Life and Writings of Plato, Columbia Studies in the Classical Tradition, Vol. 3 (Leiden: E. J. Brill).
CHAPTER I: THE GREEK AND ROMAN HERITAGE

To clarify the context of the Greek and early Roman grammatical traditions of etymologia as they relate to medieval etymological theory, we shall center our discussion in this chapter on two key texts: Plato's Cratylus, which encompasses in the positions of its three speakers (Hermogenes, Cratylus, and Socrates) the basic classical approaches to etymology and the philosophy of language, and Varro's De Lingua Latina, which filtered into the early Middle Ages many Platonic etymological ideas as well as provided the first fully developed Latin etymological model for grammatical explanation. Since the Cratylus and De Lingua Latina stand as the most significant statements during the classical period of the concepts of grammar, etymology, and the origin of language, other classical grammarians and etymologists will be noted in this chapter only as they relate to one or more of the viewpoints contained either in Plato's dialogue or Varro's treatise.

In essence Plato extended the Greek study of grammar which the Sophists had hinted at in the fifth century B.C. According to the Stoic Diogenes Laertius, Plato was "the first to study the significance of grammar,"¹ and it is fairly certain that Diogenes was referring primarily to the Cratylus.
In the *Cratylus*² Plato presents three views of how names are given in language: Cratylus' position that "he who knows names knows also the things which are expressed by them" (435), Hermogenes' view that "there is no name given to any thing by nature; all is convention and habit of the users" (384), and Socrates' more moderate position that "the knowledge of names is a great part of knowledge" (384) and that *etymologia* is primarily a tool of dialectical investigation and exposition (410). The extreme positions which Cratylus and Hermogenes take essentially define the classical argument about the status of nature (*physis*) and convention (*thesis*) in language. As Socrates points out, Cratylus' argument that the origin of language is natural must of necessity be accompanied by the belief that "if the name is to be like the thing, the letters out of which the first names are composed must also be like things" (434). This is the philosophy of language propounded by Pythagoras and his followers. According to Pythagoras, the names of things were given by divinities of supreme wisdom who could accurately fashion words to represent the things they signified.³ As a result the Pythagoreans considered language to be a divine creation by which men could discover universal truth; in particular, etymological speculations, that is, investigations into the true values of words, became an important philosophical activity with a mystical aspect attached to them.⁴
Similarly, Heraclitus (whom Cratylus calls his teacher) had said that a word by its very nature reproduces the complete idea it signifies, that it is an image of the perfect idea which informs all temporal manifestations.⁵ In both the Pythagorean and Heraclitan views of language, meaning is immanent in the word itself and etymologia is the principal means of comprehending that meaning since it is the grammatical activity which endeavors to discover the causes of language in the forms of words. Thus, like Cratylus these philosophers made words (names) themselves the objects of investigation, rather than the things to which the words refer; to apprehend the etymological meaning of the name was to apprehend the thing itself as well as the nature of the creator of all names.

Hermogenes, on the other hand, presents the extreme opposite viewpoint, declaring that language is totally conventional and arbitrary. There is no "principle of correctness in names other than convention and agreement; any name which you give, in my opinion, is the right one, and if you change that and give another, the new name is as correct as the old—we frequently change the names of our slaves, and the newly-imposed name is as good as the old" (384).⁶ This is a rather hyperbolic portrayal by Plato of the view held by Democritus (and later Aristotle) with regard to the role of convention in language. In fact, Hermogenes' position is not really "conventionalism" at all but a version
of Humpty Dumptyism with its emphasis on a unique vocabulary for each speaker. According to Democritus, there are four fundamental flaws in the Pythagorean-Cratylan philosophy of language: if names are the actual transcendent images of things, 1) why does homonymy exist? 2) why does synonymy exist? 3) why do meanings of words sometimes change? and 4) why do some words drop out of the lexicon? However, it is important to note that, while Democritus, unlike the myopic Hermogenes, argued that language originated primarily as a result of man's efforts to cooperate in a social environment, he nevertheless did not deny that in many cases there was a significant relationship between a word and its referent. So, for example, he declared that the names of the gods were their "verbal images."

In a similar kind of qualification Aristotle refers all language to mental operations, but he goes on to note that the "mental experiences, which these [speech sounds] directly symbolize, are the same for all, as also are those things of which our experiences are the images" (De Interp., 16a1). Therefore, "nothing is by nature a noun or name--it is only so when it becomes a symbol; inarticulate sounds, such as those which brutes produce, are significant, yet none of these constitutes a noun" (De Interp., 16a2). Aristotle thus tempers Hermogenes' notion (similar in kind to Diodorus the Megarite's concept of total arbitrariness in language) that one
word is as good as another to designate a thing by insisting upon some point at which a name was chosen, for any one of a variety of reasons, to symbolize a thing and thus became integrally linked to its signifié. In addition Aristotle's scattered uses of etymological investigation indicate that he conceived of some sort of appropriateness between symbol and signifié, which often formed the basis for the original imposition of the name, whether it be onomatopoeia, association, or whatever. But unlike the Pythagoreans, Aristotle denied that language by its nature imaged reality in any consistent way or provided a necessary entrée into transcendent truth. The use of etymology therefore could only determine how a name was imposed upon a thing, not how the name reveals some form of truth about that thing.

These then are the contexts within which Hermogenes and Cratylus maintain their respective positions. But of course most of Plato's dialogues use straw men like Hermogenes and Cratylus as vehicles to help articulate Socrates' own viewpoint. As revealed in the Cratylus, Socrates (and presumably Plato) adopts a middle position with regard to the origin of language and the value of etymologia (or ἐνοματική) as an explanatory concept. He develops a skeptical perspective on the value of naming and declares that true knowledge is discovered by the direct investigation of things rather than secondary
imitations of things, such as words. Accordingly, Socrates easily subdues the lesser argument by Hermogenes by insisting that language is a species of mimesis and as such it must strive to imitate as closely as possible the nature of things (423-24). Cratylus' position, however, is the more dangerous one for Socrates since it would make dialectic impossible, in that Cratylus posits a mimetic relationship between words and things which would deny language qua language as the primary means to knowledge (i.e. language as the path to nonlinguistic reality). The essence of Socrates' assault on Cratylus is the way in which he undermines Cratylus' argument with the example of the two Cratyli (432-33). If two objects exist, says Socrates, one Cratylus and the other the image of Cratylus, such that the image expresses the entire reality in every point, then there is not one Cratylus but two. Thus, he concludes that "images are very far from having qualities which are the exact counterpart of the realities which they represent," nor are names identical to the things they designate (432).

What is most important for our purposes about Socrates' particular arguments against Hermogenes and Cratylus is their distinctly etymological character. According to Socrates, Cratylus' principle of a primal namer who "must have known the things which he named" is untenable because if, as Cratylus argues, we learn the
nature of reality as we learn the names of things, then how could the first namer "have learned or discovered things from names if the primitive names were not yet given?" (437-38). Socrates therefore reduces Cratylus' principle of a first namer to total subjectivity because "he who first gave names gave them according to his conception of the things which they signified," so that "he who follows names in the search after things, and analyses their meaning, is in great danger of being deceived" (436; my emphasis).

To avoid this sort of subjectivism in the etymological investigation of language and meaning, where one must decide almost arbitrarily which of two names or two etymologies is correct and true, Socrates proposes having recourse "to another standard [than names] which, without employing names, will make clear which of the two are [sic] right; and thus must be a standard which shows the truth of things" (438). Of course in the Platonic hierarchy such truth cannot reside in "real things" which are never in the same state but always in flux; knowledge "cannot continue to be knowledge unless continuing always to abide and exist" (440). Rather than seeking the truth about reality through a knowledge of the origins and meanings of names, Socrates argues for an a priori knowledge of "pure things" (Ideas) which themselves signify names (438). Rather than making names themselves the objects
of etymological investigation, Socrates concludes that "every man should expend his chief thought and attention on the consideration of his first principles:—are they or are they not rightly laid down? and when he has duly sifted them, all the rest will follow" (436).

Socrates' somewhat lighter treatment of Hermogenes' extreme conventional theory of language is made up chiefly by Socrates' famous etymological digression in the dialogue (391-422). Against Hermogenes, Socrates declares that just as a craftsman considers the idea of a perfect shuttle whenever he makes a particular shuttle—where his success as a craftsman depends upon the degree to which the shuttle corresponds to the ideal—, so too does a true namer "know how to put the true natural names of each thing into sounds and syllables, and to make and give all names with a view to the ideal name" (389). But just as different craftsmen might use different types of wood to produce a shuttle which nonetheless conforms to the ideal shuttle in terms of its function, so "different legislators will not use the same syllables" to produce a true name of a thing: "The form must be the same, but the material may vary" (389). This is an important qualification of Hermogenes' position and in part conforms to Aristotle's view that all languages refer to the same form of human mental experience. So, says Socrates, "the legislator, whether he be Hellene or barbarian, is
not therefore to be deemed . . . a worse legislator, pro-
vided he gives the true and proper form of the name in
whatever syllables." Such a position thus opens the way
for the dialectician who "must be [the legislator's] di-
rector if the names are to be rightly given" (390).

Having established this principle, Socrates goes on
to discuss at length the nature of particular names and
the value of etymology as a means to determine their truth.
Because the essential element of a name is its referent,
it makes no difference "whether the syllables of the name
are the same or not the same [as its original form] . . .
provided the meaning is retained; nor does the addition
or subtraction of a letter make any difference so long as
the essence of the thing remains in possession of the name
and appears in it" (393; my emphasis). Thus it is the
meaning immanent within the name, rather than its partic-
ular verbal form, which is the proper object of the ety-
mologist's investigation. Names follow the example of
other natural things; "a king will often be the son of a
king, the good son or the noble son of a good or noble
sire; and similarly the offspring of every kind, in the
regular course of nature, is like the parent, and therefore
has the same name" (394). Continuing this analogy between
names and natural things, Socrates says that the etymolo-
gist is like the physician. Words may have the same
meaning,
Yet the syllables may be disguised until they appear different to the ignorant person, and he may not recognize them, although they are the same, just as any one of us would not recognize the same drugs under different disguises of color or smell, although to the physician, who regards the power of them, they are the same, and he is not put out by the addition or transposition or subtraction of a letter or two, or indeed by the change of all the letters, for this need not interfere with the meaning. (394)

That Socrates, at this point in the dialogue, is speaking of general rather than particular meaning is indicated by his example that while the names Hector and Astyanax have only one letter in common, "yet they have the same meaning" since both were kings (394). Earlier Socrates had observed that Hector "appears to me to be very nearly the same as the name of Astyanax—both are Hellenic; and a king (̄αναξ) and a holder (ἔκτωρ) have nearly the same meaning, and both are descriptive of a king" (393). Similarly, Socrates notes that some people refer to Zeus as Ἐνας and others as Δίκαιος. As Socrates explains, "the two [names] together signify the nature of the God, and the business of a name, as we were saying, is to express the nature. . . . Whereupon we are right in calling him Zena and Dia, which are one name, although divided, meaning the God through whom all creatures always have life" (396; my emphasis).14

This associative relation in the practice of etymological analysis is a common one in Homeric
allegorization, and later with Stoic interpretation, Boethian paronyms, and Patristic onomastics, but we must not be too sure that it is Socrates' or Plato's final position. As his ensuing discussion of particular etymological interpretations reveals, Socrates is uncertain as to the objectivity of the knowledge which the etymological enterprise produces. As he examines the names of the gods, his response to Hermogenes' remark that Socrates seems like "a prophet newly inspired" (recall Pythagoras) is the ambiguous claim that "I believe that I caught the inspiration from the great Euthyphro of the Propaltian deme, who gave me a long lecture which commenced at dawn: he talked and I listened, and his wisdom and enchanting ravishment has not only filled my ears but taken possession of my soul, and today I shall let his superhuman power work and finish the investigation of names" (396). Knowing what we do about Socrates' opinions of long lectures, inspiration, and rhapsodic interpretation, it is clear that his refutation of Hermogenes' conventionalism through an investigation of etymological meaning is to be qualified by Socrates' skepticism as to divinely-inspired interpretation, a view which points toward the important argument later in the dialogue concerning the two Cratyli and the subjectivity of naming.

We might, however, look at the kinds of etymologies which Socrates offers in the etymological digression, as
a clue to particular etymological methods in the classical period. First, Socrates discusses the origins of words almost exclusively in terms of their meanings and referents. So Agamemnon (admirable for remaining) is properly named because he is "one who is patient and persevering in the accomplishments of his resolves, and by his virtue crowns them" (395). Indulging in euhemeristic interpretation, Socrates notes that Poseidon is derived from ποσιδέσμος (the chain of feet) because "the original inventor of the name had been stopped by the watery element in his walks, and not allowed to go on, and therefore he called the ruler of this element Poseidon" (402), while Pluto "gives wealth (πλοῦτος), and his name means the giver of wealth, which comes out of the earth beneath" (403). Many names are said to be compounds whose etymological (i.e. true) meanings depend upon a knowledge of the elements which are compounded as well as on the relationship between the referents of those elements. Plato appears to be the first to have made this important etymological distinction between simple and compound words. Thus, says Socrates, Hermes is derived from the joining of εἰρήν (concerning the use of speech) with the Homeric word ἐμήσατο (he contrived), so that "out of these two words . . . the legislator formed the name of the God who invented language and speech" (408). In a number of other instances Socrates uses, not without traces
of irony, an associative approach to etymological meaning, as when he suggests several etymologies for Artemis:
"Artemis is named from her healthy (ἀρτεμής), well-ordered nature, and because of her love of virginity, perhaps because she is proficient in virtue (ἀρετή), and perhaps also as hating intercourse of the sexes (τὸν ἀρωτόν μισονατὰ). He who gave the Goddess her name may have had any or all of these reasons" (406). What is significant in these and most of the other etymologies which Socrates uses in the dialogue is their appeal to some form of extraverbal reality which establishes the appropriateness or truth of the derivation. Since, as Socrates had pointed out, the etymologist's proper activity is to investigate the connections between not words but the things which the words signify, the source of a word must be determined on the basis of the etymological relationship among referents and meanings. This is the primary Platonic notion of etymologia as a concept, the attention to the extraverbal rather than verbal connections between words, an attention which provides the means for attaining stable truth and a knowledge of the proper relationships between words and things.

There are moments in the Cratylus when Socrates seems to be paying some attention to strictly verbal aspects of etymology. He discusses a variety of derivations in part in terms of the addition or subtraction of letters.
For instance, he explains that δίκαιον (justice) is derived from διαίων (it pierces), where the "letter K is only added for the sake of euphony" (412). But as we noted earlier, Socrates considers such verbal changes as incidental and generally not indicative of extraverbal changes; therefore the etymological categories pertaining to formal aspects of word change (addition, subtraction, variation, and transposition) are subordinated to what, for Socrates and Plato, is the more important question of the etymological relationship among the meanings immanent in words. Hence, Socrates does not find any reason to discriminate among kinds of derivation as did later theorists of etymology and interpretation. When he does invoke in the Cratylus primarily verbal criteria for etymological explanations, he usually does so either to poke fun at the Greek philosopher-grammarians who reason that if a word's derivation is uncertain then the word must be of foreign origin, or to express the view that language is constantly changing, so that different dialects arise which nonetheless refer to the same extraverbal reality.

Socrates uses the concepts of verbal criteria and the existence of various dialects to demonstrate the difference between actual language as it is really used by men and ideal language, whose criteria of explanation must always be extraverbal in order that it may be a more perfect means through which to attain objective truth.
"Custom and convention," says Socrates later, "must be supposed to contribute to the indication of our thoughts," but "if we could always, or almost always, use likenesses, which are perfectly appropriate, this would be the most perfect state of language" (435). Thus, even though popular legend would say that the Egyptian king Theuth gave to the various sounds of the human voice the names of letters, nevertheless Socrates attempts to determine which letters perfectly represent extraverbal reality. For example, he says (partly in jest) that "the letter p appears to me to be the general instrument expressing all motion (κίνησις)" (426). Only those names are rightly given whose "proper letters are those which are like the things" (433).

Socrates' middle position between Hermogenes and Cratylus with regard to the origin of language and the effectiveness of the etymological investigation of names makes etymologia (ἐνωματική) a tool of the dialectician (390) and the name an "instrument of teaching and of distinguishing natures" (388). His (and Plato's) skepticism as to the validity of Cratylus' view that the name itself is the object of epistemological study is partly reflected by many later and even Christian etymological theorists and practitioners whom we shall examine in later chapters. Augustine, for example, like Socrates argues that rather than knowing the reality from the name (à la Cratylus)
one understands the name from an a priori knowledge of reality. Isidore of Seville would seem the most likely of all the early medieval etymologists to embody Cratylus' position that language represents transcendent reality, and to some extent (as we shall see) this is true. But Isidore, like all Christian etymologists, begins with a priori principles and thus circumvents Socrates' skepticism with a belief in an omnipotent God who spoke and thereby created all reality without error or significant ambiguity. In essence, these Christians took for granted what Socrates had only hoped for: "another standard which, without employing names, will make clear which . . . names are right, . . . a standard which shows the truth of things" (438).

What Plato suggests in the Cratylus through Socrates' middle position is that human language does not originate as a gift from the gods but is primarily a product of man's imposition (sometimes arbitrary) of names on things. If a language were truly god-given, says Socrates, then all signs would be totally and consistently perfect and adapted to the things signified. Instead, Socrates proposes that the ideal of a perfect, immutable language is not so much something for men to try to achieve as it is a norm by which to measure the capacity for accuracy and determinateness in human, imperfect, conventional language.
However, the Christian tradition of etymology as an interpretive and explanatory principle was not fed directly by the Platonic-Socratic concept of the origin of language and meaning. Early Christian etymologists such as Jerome and Isidore were much influenced by the Stoic philosophers and grammarians, especially as they were transmitted into the Latin tradition by Cicero and Varro. Stoic concepts of *etymologia* provided Christian grammarians with the framework for their belief in an original, perfect language which was not only recoverable through the etymological enterprise but capable of functioning as a norm for contemporary, *fallen* man's imperfect use of language as an expression of God's universe.

The early Greek Stoics—Zeno, Cleanthes, Chrysippus, and Crates—accorded grammar, and especially etymology, a unique (but not autonomous) place in their philosophical system. For the Stoics, the thought of speech was the essence of speech; physical language itself was a transparent medium which could reveal things as they really are.27 Truth and meaning are immanent in words and accessible to all who dutifully seek them. Therefore they especially valued the study of words as basic elements in the dialectical process. All pure language was said to be descended from the perfect union of sounds which formed words and the perfect union of words which formed phrases and sentences. Thus the Stoics upheld the concept
of Atticism and linguistic purity; everything should be called by its proper (i.e. correct) name. Since early man had named each object according to its nature, each word has a reason for existing which can be discovered by a search for the word's true origins. The Stoics did acknowledge, however, a certain amount of convention in naming (a nod in the direction of the Epicureans) and sometimes opted for usage (consuetudo) over inflected paradigms (analogia) to determine a word's form, but these concessions did not alter their general theory of the natural origin of language.

As we indicated above, the Stoics were interested in etymology primarily as a means of purifying speech. Following the lead of contemporary rhetoric, they considered etymology as a trope and hence as the basis for three modes of meaning. Words were formed by: 1) the imitation of things, as similarity of sound (onomatopoeia) or similarity of meaning (metaphor); or 2) the association of things, as metonymy (urbs from orbis), synecdoche, and antonomasia; or 3) opposition, as antiphrasis (bella from bellum) or litotes. Etymology revealed the origins of words in terms of one of these three modes, so that to articulate a word's origin through its relation to extraverbal reality was the same as identifying the word's trope-like nature. Since a word's meaning was said to be immanent in the word itself and discoverable by etymological investigation, words and things are nearly coeval. To search for the
origins of the one is tantamount to searching for the origins of the other.

The Stoic influence on the etymological thought of the early Middle Ages was primarily the result of Crates' broken leg and the introduction of Stoic grammar and philosophy to Rome. Greek Stoicism had removed grammar from the purely technical realm of the concern with reading and established it as fundamental to philosophical analysis. But it was Roman grammar and particularly the work of Varro which presented the Stoic theory of the etymological investigation of language and meaning to the early Latin Middle Ages. Therefore we shall conclude this survey of the classical concepts of etymology with a discussion of the most important etymologist among the early Roman grammarians, M. Terentius Varro.

We should note first, however, that not all of Rome was Stoic in its orientation. The Pythagorean view of language and etymology was continued in Rome by Nigidius Figulus and others. According to Aulus Gellius, Figulus' elaborate Commentarii Grammatici (now preserved only in fragments) affirmed that words are natural in origin, are transcendent, and represent the true images of our ideas. In diametrical opposition to the Pythagorean position, the early Roman grammarian Palaemon continued the work of the Greek grammarians from Alexandria, who emphasized that "grammar is an experimental knowledge
of the usages of language as generally current among the poets and prose writers. These grammarians were concerned with halting an already declining standard of usage. But whereas the Neo-Pythagoreans, like their Greek predecessors, made extensive use of etymological interpretations in their quest for transcendent reality, the Roman grammarians who inherited the mantle of the Alexandrian technographers made little if any use of etymology in their writings (outside of a few brief etymological definitions of the names of the parts of speech as taken from Dionysius of Thrax).

Varro, however, united these two seemingly irreconcilable positions with a comprehensive theory of etymologia as a method of interpretation and grammatical analysis. In doing so, he not only transmitted to the early Middle Ages the fundamental Stoic grammatical doctrine but also established one of the principal models for medieval etymological investigation. In addition, as we shall see, Varro's approach to the use of etymology is much like Socrates' middle position in the Cratylus. He qualifies the extreme Stoic view of language as thoroughly natural and transcendent and thus mediates between the opposing theories of language as natural or conventional. It can be said that a good many Platonic (i.e. Socratic) ideas about language and etymology found their way into the Middle Ages through the works of Varro,
and thence Cassiodorus and Isidore. But, as most medieval writers demonstrate, these Platonic views were for the most part not recognized as being particularly Platonic. Origen and Augustine, for example, name the Stoic grammarians (especially Varro) as their intellectual ancestors in the theorizing about language and etymology, even though what they have to say about the origin of language and the value of etymology for interpretation is comparable to what Socrates says in the Cratylus.

As the earliest extant example of the Middle Ages' paradigm of a classical grammar, Varro's De Lingua Latina holds a special significance for the study of medieval etymologia. Unfortunately the first four books of the work, which examined the nature of etymologia (what Varro calls declinatio) as well as set out Varro's arguments for and against the grammatical concept, are lost. But we may still get some sense of the context of Varro's etymological theory by looking briefly at Quintilian's attacks in the first century A.D. upon the general Stoic use of etymology and upon Varro in particular. In his Institutiones Oratoriae Quintilian approved of etymology as a useful tool for the orator to help prove an argument or as a device to determine the correct form of individual words. However, he cautioned against what he considered the absurd etymologizing of the names of persons and places when there was little if any concrete evidence to
support the derivations. Furthermore, Quintilian demanded that *etymologia* as a grammatical concept be restricted to a limited auxiliary role in rhetoric and grammar and denied the status of an epistemological category.

The very things which Quintilian denied as proper etymological activity represent the essence of Varro's attempt to structure a model of grammatical analysis which is based fundamentally on *etymologia* as the principle of explanation. The extant portions of his *De Lingua Latina* abound with etymologies to justify the forms of declensions and conjugations as well as the names attributed to particular things by nature or artificial imposition. We can infer, therefore, that Varro's work was at least in part an exercise in the application of the theory of *etymologia* to practical problems of grammar, interpretation, and meaning. But Varro's intent was not only to elucidate particular impositions of names or poetic inventions of words but also to probe the philosophical basis of the revelation of the nature of language and perhaps to glimpse in the process the mystery of full knowledge which is implied in the Stoic etymological enterprise. Thus Varro develops the first really comprehensive etymological model for the study of Latin (or for that matter Greek) grammar, and in doing so, he defines the principal strands of etymological explanation and interpretation as they appear in the early Middle Ages. On the one hand, *etymologia* is
considered to be part of the grammarians' efforts to fix the standard of Latin usage and, parallel to the Alexandrian grammarians' ideal of Hellenismos, to preserve the Latinitas of Latin's Golden Age (Cicero, Virgil) and pass it on to future generations of Latin speakers. This use of etymologia we shall refer to in this study as "technographic," as it reflects primarily pragmatic concerns, an attention to paradigms, word classes, and syntax, and most important, the invocation of a verbal kind of authority, based upon the forms of Latin words, to justify its explanations. On the other hand, etymologia is also used as a form of interpretation and explanation in the manner of the Pythagoreans and the Stoics. This strand, which we shall call "mythographic," invokes some form of extraverbal reality (whether natural, moral, or divine) to justify its etymological interpretations and grammatical explanations.

Varro neatly summarizes his etymological model with his distinction between the spring and the brook:

Due igitur omnino verborum principia, impositio et declinatio, alterum ut fons, alterum ut rivus. Impositicia nomina esse voluerunt quam paucissima, quo citius ediscere possent, declinata quam plurima, quo faciulus omnes quibus ad usum opus esset dicere. (8,5)

[The origins of words are therefore two in number, and no more: imposition and inflection; the one is as it were the spring, the other the brook. Men have wished that imposed nouns should be as few as possible,
that they might be able to learn them more quickly; but derivative nouns they have wished to be as numerous as possible, that all might the more easily say those nouns which they needed to use.

All derived words refer back to a set of primitive words which define various categories of human reality: body, place, time, and action (5, 11-13; 6, 37-39). In Varro's theory, impositio denotes the principal form of a word as it is used to designate some aspect of reality (e.g. lego); declinatio refers to the derivation, declension, or conjugation of a word (e.g. legis, legit) which does not alter or denature the essence of a principal form's meaning. 40

In addition to this broad differentiation between primary and derivative words, Varro also distinguishes between voluntaria declinatio and naturalis declinatio (8, 9). The difference between the two kinds of derivation depends upon whether or not the form of a word is subject to syntactic considerations (such as case endings, gender, or number). Thus the word Ephesi, referring to the people, is derived from Ephesus, because the people are named after the place where they live (an etymology by association); but in a sentence the forms of Ephesi operate under the grammatical rules for collective nouns (8, 21-22).

The first kind of declinatio is "voluntary" and emphasizes the relationship between words and things and the extra-verbal criteria to explain the derivation. The second
kind is based on syntactic rules, is regular and hence "natural," and reflects technographic (i.e. verbal) criteria of grammatical explanation. In terms of the origin of language, voluntaaria declinatio precedes naturalis declinatio, just as the spring is the source for the brook. But in both of these approaches to grammatical explanation, it is Varro's use of etymological concepts which forms the basis for the grammarian's task to emend and solidify Latinity.

Varro's concept of voluntary and natural derivations can create some confusion for the modern student who may think only of the more rhetorical mode of describing how things are named, i.e. by nature or artificial imposition. In fact, both kinds of naming are included in Varro's notion of voluntaaria declinatio. Some historians of ancient and medieval grammar have erroneously labelled voluntary derivation as etymologia and natural derivation as the study of word formation and inflection (derivativa). While this distinction is somewhat valid in view of Varro's own separation of etymologia and semantics (5,1), it nonetheless obscures the fact that both varieties of declinatio, like the further study of syntax, are part of Varro's and the early Middle Ages' concept of etymologia as a method of interpretation.

Thus Varro, like Socrates, occupies a middle position between the extreme views of nature and convention
in the origin of language, positions which correspond in part to our distinction between mythographic and technographic approaches to grammar and etymology. In general those Varronian etymologies which are usually labelled as fanciful or absurd belong to the category of voluntaria declinatio and reveal a tendency toward the kind of mythography and allegorization which had been manifested in the Greek expositions of Homer and which was later to motivate Fulgentius' etymological interpretations of the Greek myths and the Aeneid. For example, Varro explains that Venus' grove is called lubentina because "it is pleasing" (lubeat; 4,5). Similarly he observes that a grove (lucus) is so named because "it does not shine" (non luceat; 5, 50)—an etymology by antiphrasis—and that libido is derived from lubendo because of the pleasure of desire (6,6). Elsewhere Varro derives cura from cor urat (6,6). Besides the use of extraverbal reality to justify these etymologies, it is also important to note the formula which Varro often uses to articulate the derivations: "Cura, quod cor urat"; "terra ex eo quod teritur" (5,2; my emphasis). This use of a quod construction to express an etymological explanation is a common one in Varro and other mythographic etymologists (such as Fulgentius and Isidore), and emphasizes the use of extraverbal reality to justify derivations. A certain feeling is referred to as cura "because" the heart burns with anxiety. Thus
Varro's concept of voluntaria declinatio implies a concept of immanent meaning. Words image and point to "literal" reality; in addition, they can be combined to produce other words which also point to that reality. In Varro's theoretical framework, the explanation (quod) for why words are as they are is a reenactment of the primal, Saturnine activity of ordering and naming the universe and, obviously, is analogous to the Christian notion of the Edenic purity of names which Adam, at God's behest, articulated before the Fall. Varro's voluntaria declinatio, then, is very close to the later Patristic concept that the truest way to Numen is via Nomen since the justification for all human words is the Word Incarnate. Such an explanation of the derivations of words, whether in a pagan or a Christian context, is distinctly nontechnographic, as the concept of immanent meaning demands the primacy of things over words and invokes corporeal or spiritual reality to justify the forms of words.

Naturalis declinatio, with its concern for declensions and conjugations, reflects the more technographic approach to etymologia. Earlier we noted that Varro, like other Roman grammarians, relied upon literary authors to set the standard for Latin usage. However, he also observes that customary usage (consuetudo) is constantly changing (in motu) and can either improve itself or deteriorate (9,17). Therefore language is neither wholly uniform nor
completely haphazard and, says Varro, we ought to follow nature in all questions of analogy and anomaly (10,60). Furthermore grammarians cannot depend solely on literary usage for the development of and authority for their grammatical rules (10,4). Using these principles to evaluate the merits of the classical debate over the relative roles of analogy and anomaly in language, Varro maintains that there is certain to be both analogy and anomaly in languages, and more of the latter than the former, because both similarity and dissimilarity are in the nature of every aspect of verbal and nonverbal reality (9,65). But these small encroachments of the law of nature aside, Varro's technical discussions of declensions, conjugations, and adjectival and verbal forms are based primarily on linguistic evidence, especially analogies with Greek grammar and the conventional or poetic uses of those forms which are peculiarly Latin. Varro's use of technographic etymological explanation emphasizes the verbal reality of analogy and anomaly and focuses on the primal origins of linguistic purity as preserved in the Golden Age of Latin literature.

These two aspects of the justification of the forms of words—linguistic and extralinguistic, or as I prefer to call them, technographic and mythographic—make up for Varro the nature of oratio as revealed in the best books (8,1). Words are imposed on things according to the nature
of reality and human experience and then forms are agreed upon ("quo pacto") in order to effect *sententia* through *ratione coniuncta* (8,1). Declensions and conjugations are useful and necessary for all human languages, says Varro, because they are both shaped by and manifest men's participation in the rational order of community. But true to his Stoic heritage, Varro also holds that the words whose forms are thus shaped are generated by men's awareness and understanding of extraverbal reality prior to the verbal formations. Thus he, like Socrates, affirms the middle position between language as purely natural and transcendent and language as purely conventional and arbitrary.

The Middle Ages tended to keep separate the technographic and mythographic approaches to *etymologia*. In pagan Latin grammar Donatus and Priscian clearly emphasize the technographic criteria of grammatical explanation, while Fulgentius embodies the secular paradigm of mythographic *etymologia* as a mode of interpretation. For the Latin Fathers, the concept of sacred onomastics was by its very nature mythographic as we have defined the term. And while Isidore unites these secular and sacred etymological traditions for the first time in a systematic way, it is nonetheless clear that he subordinates secular grammar to the greater end of Christian etymological understanding. We shall now turn to an analysis of the
secular tradition and the development in Priscian of a truly technographic model of etymological explanation.
NOTES


2 References to the Cratylus will be from the translation by Benjamin Jowett, in The Dialogues (New York: Random House, 1937), 1, 137-229; section numbers will be included in the text of the chapter.


5 Cf. Theaet., 266.

6 Cf. Isidore, Etymol., 1, 29, 2.


10 References to Aristotle's work will be made from the translation by E. M. Edghill, in The Basic Works of Aristotle, ed. Richard McKeon (New York: Random House, 1941), pp. 41-61. On the nature of language and mental experience, cf. "Spoken words are the symbols of mental experience and written words are the symbols of spoken words"; De Interp., 1631.
Collart, Varron, p. 265.

E.g. Aristotle derives *ethica* from *ethos*; see Nicho. Ethics, 2, 1 (1103a).


Elsewhere Socrates says that β and beta are the same sign since the name beta is implicit in both (Crat., 393). For a modern use of this concept to reorient classical rhetoric, see Helmut Bonheim, "Bringing Classical Rhetoric Up-to-Date," *Semiotica*, 13 (1975), 375-88, esp. 375-80.

See below, pp. 23-25 and Chapter 3.


Cf. *vóιςις* (Crat., 411).

"The word *ἀγαθον* (good), for example, is, as we were saying, a compound of *ἀγαθοስ* (admirable) and *θος* (swift). And probably *θος* is made up of other elements, and these again of others. But if we take a word which is incapable of further resolution, then we shall be right in saying that we have at last reached a primary element, which need not be resolved any further" (422). Cf. Crat., 399, 402, 408, 409, 411, 414; Aristotle, *De Interp.*, 16°24-26.

Cf. the multiple etymologies of Athene (Crat., 407) and Atreus (395).

Later etymologists, such as Varro, Augustine, Priscian, and Isidore, make distinctions among the various kinds of etymological analyses (*antiphrasis*, *similitudo*, *vicinitas*, *derivativa*, etc.); see Klinck, *Die lateinische*
Etymologie, p. 23. On the addition and subtraction of letters, see Crat., 414 and Phaedrus, 244 (and elsewhere).

See e.g. Socrates' discussion of the "foreign-origin" of ἸΟΥ (Crat., 421): "One way of giving the appearance of an answer . . . [is] to say that names which we do not understand are of foreign origin." Cf. Crat., 414, 419, 425-26.

For Plato's recognition of the complexity of Greek dialects, see Crat., 395, 398, 402-3, 409, 414, 418-19, and 421.

Cf. Crat., 432; Republic, 5, 473; and Phaedrus, 278.

This passage reflects the general classical and medieval grammatical system which equates orthography with phonology. See, in Plato, Crat., 424, 425-26; Philebus, 18; Phaedrus, 274-75. For a general discussion of the basis for this equation, see Robins, AMGT, pp. 13-14.

Cf. Crat., 426-27 and the letters which imitate flux.

For Plato, true language (like other things) is composed of small parts which are accumulated into larger wholes (Crat., 424-25). Cf. Sophist, 261-64; Theaetetus, 207; Seventh Letter, 342. But in another context Socrates would deny even this imitative function of letters, saying that the invention of letters and writing resulted not in better memory and wit for man but forgetfulness and the mere semblance of truth. Truth, said Socrates, could properly be known only through the "living word of knowledge [graven in the soul of the learner] which has a soul, and of which the written word is properly no more than an image" (Phaedrus, 274-75, 276). Thus it would seem misleading to cite, as Richard McKeon does, Crat., 431 as a good example of the classical theory of imitation without also clarifying Socrates' discussion of onomastic imitation in light of his epistemological skepticism as to the accessibility of standards of imitation. For McKeon's discussion, see "Literary Criticism and the Concept of Imitation in Antiquity," in Critics and Criticism, ed. R. S. Crane et al. (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1952), pp. 152-53, 155.

For general accounts of early Stoicism, see (among others): Collart, Varron, pp. 267-78; Kennedy, Art of
Persuasion, pp. 295–97, 330–34; H. Steinthal, Geschichte
der Sprachwissenschaft bei den Griechen und Römern (Berlin:
Dummlers, 1890), 1, 271–374, esp. 327–56; Michel Spanneut,
Le Stoïcisme des Pères de l’Eglise de Clément de Rome à

28 Cf. Cicero, Ad familiares, 9, 22, 1. See Gaston
Boissier, Etude sur la vie et les ouvrages de M. T. Varro,
2nd ed. (Paris: L. Hachette, 1875), pp. 139–40; Kennedy,
Art of Persuasion, pp. 295–97. See also the brief but
enlightening comments by Robins, SH, pp. 16–17, 19, 22.

29 See Sandys, pp. 46f., 156f. For a general dis-
cussion of the analogy/anomaly debate in the classical
period, see F. H. Colson, "The Analogist and Anomalist

30 See P. B. R. Forbes, "Etymology," OCD; Kennedy,

31 "In my opinion, then, the first to introduce the
study of grammar into our city was Crates of Mallos, a
contemporary of Aristarchus. He was sent to the senate
by King Attalus between the second and third Punic wars,
at about the time when Ennius died; and having fallen
into the opening of a sewer in the Palatine Quarter and
broken his leg, he held numerous and frequent conferences
during the whole time both of his embassy and of his con-
valescence, at which he constantly gave instruction, and
thus set an example for our countrymen to imitate."
(Suetonius, De Grammaticis, 2; tr. J. C. Rolfe (Cambridge,

32 Noctes Atticae, 10, 4; 13, 10, 4.

33 The definition is from Dionysius of Thrax's
Ars Grammatica; see Thomas Davidson, "The Grammar of
Dionysius Thrax," The Journal of Speculative Philosophy,
8 (1874), 326.

34 For example, the pronoun (antônymiâ) is a part of
speech substituted for a noun (ônoma) and marked for person.
Cf. the definitions of the preposition (prôthesis) and
adverb (epirrhêma). See also the list of definitions of
the Greek parts of speech in Robins, SH, pp. 33–34. For
more information, consult Opelt, "Etymologie," RAC, 45:
804 and especially Karl Barwick, Remmius Palaemon und die römische Ars grammatica (Leipzig: Dieterich, 1922), pp. 148-64.

35 Origen, Contra Celsum, 1, 24; Augustine, De Dialectica, 6. Cf. Jerome's comment: "How many nowadays know the works or even the name of Plato?" (Epistle to the Galatians); tr. in Klibansky, Continuity, p. 21. See also Klinck, Die lateinische Etymologie, p. 23.


37 Inst. Oraet., 1, 4, 2; cf. Quintilian's other comments on etymologia: 1, 4, 12; 1, 6, 30-31; 1, 7, 23; 3, 14, 12; 5, 10, 55; 7, 3, 25-26.


40 Cf. Collart, Varron, pp. 190-93, 269f. Varro's term for etymology or derivation is declinatio and is not especially easy to translate since it means different things and different methodologies in different contexts. Kent says that in his Loeb translation "the term 'inflection' will be convenient oftentimes to express declinatio, including both declension of nouns and conjugation of verbs" (p. 372). TLL cites two speciatim: formatio (etymology) and flexio (inflection); see also TLL, s.v. "derivatio." For a careful consideration of one instance of this problem, see Daniel J. Taylor, "Varro, De Lingua Latina 10.76," AJP, 97 (1976), 119-20.

41 For such misleading distinctions, see Robins, AMGT, p. 53.

42 See Boissier, pp. 138, 150-51; Robins, AMGT, p. 53.
See DLL, 7, 1: "Non reprehendum igitur in illis qui in scrutando verbo litteram adiciunt aut demunt, quo facilius quid sub ea voce subsit videri possit."

Varro, however, is much more conscious than were the Latin Fathers of the varied linguistic backgrounds of the Latin language, and he incorporates not only Greek but also Sabine, Etruscan, and even Gaulish influences on Latin.

Cf. DLL, 9, 3; 9, 20-35 (esp. 23 and 35); 9, 10, 63. On the analogy/anomaly controversy and Varro's part in it, see Colson, pp. 26-27, 31 and Steinthal, pp. 347-63, 435-524 (passim).
CHAPTER II: THE PAGAN TRADITION

A. The Technographers: From Donatus to Priscian

Historians of medieval grammar generally have found little development or change in the basic grammatical theories of the late Latin and early medieval grammatici and little relevance for the history of grammar in the study of etymologia as a grammatical concept. The works in Heinrich Keil's Grammatici Latini, so the argument goes, have a "compelling sameness" and rehash, sometimes not very well, classical grammatical theory as it was articulated by the Alexandrian grammarians and to some extent by the Stoics. As a result, Donatus and Priscian are usually taken to be "illustrative" or "representative" of secular Latin grammatical thought from the second through the sixth centuries. ¹

But a careful investigation of the Latin grammars written during the short 120 years between Donatus and Priscian reveals a significant change in at least one aspect of grammatical methodology and explanation. In these grammatical writings there is a clear and persistent movement toward a comprehensive theory of etymologia, especially derivativa and composita, as the basis for verbal meaning. While the commentaries on Donatus'
*Ars Minor* and *Ars Maior* preserve much of Donatus' traditional grammatical material, they also add, bit by bit, etymological explanations of grammatical points and specifically etymological terminology which significantly alter the nature of grammatical methodology in the early Middle Ages. Furthermore, Priscian's unique development of the first fullfledged etymological method for grammatical explanation since Varro, together with his awareness of the problem of determining meaning in language, was one of the most significant inheritances of later medieval grammatical theory from the Latin technographic grammarians.

Most of the grammatici living under the later Roman Empire had a strong sense of the breakdown of the pure Latin tongue (*Latinitas*) as it had been established from the writings of Cicero and Virgil and codified by such early grammarians as Pansa (*De Latinitate*) and especially (as we have seen) Varro. The later grammarians often felt that the chief function of their grammatical treatises should be to preserve the *Latinitas* of the Golden Age and pass it on to future generations of Latin speakers. But preserving the purity of Latin literary language meant more than just teaching students to read (*legere*) Cicero and Virgil. Besides classroom teaching, the duties of the grammarian were to explain or interpret (*enarrare*) obscurities in specific passages and to emend (*emendare*)
passages corrupted by time or scribal error. In almost all cases the standard by which such judgments were to be made was the language of the best Latin poets and prose writers. Finally the grammarian was to evaluate (iudicare) the various works under consideration in the classroom\(^2\); but in terms of the actual treatises which the late Latin grammarians produced there is a clear distinction made between the kinds of technographic questions (outlined in Chapter One) pertaining to interpretation and emendation and those more "literary-critical" questions relative to the values of individual authors or works. Donatus, Charisius, and Priscian, for example, all composed treatises on grammar and technographic problems, but they wrote separate works on such literary-critical subjects as the plays and meters of Terence and the first line of each book of the *Aeneid*.\(^3\) Yet even in these latter works, the grammarians' emphasis was on the elucidation of grammatical problems, obscure passages, and the more technical aspects of literature (prosody, accents, and the like).

For the most part the Roman grammarians applied to their study of Latin the grammatical categories developed by the Alexandrian grammarians and incorporated into the Roman grammatical tradition by Palaemon and Varro.\(^4\) Thus the third-century text by the Pseudo-Probus reads very much like the late fourth-century treatises by Donatus, Diomedes, and Charisius. All use similar grammatical
terminology (although there are some important differences, as we shall see) and for the most part all employ the same basic word-class distinctions as articulated by Palaemon.⁵ Donatus probably drew much of the material for his *Ars Minor* and *Ars Maior* from his contemporaries Charisius and Diomedes and, according to Barwick's source study, all three were indebted to the now lost work of Palaemon, who in turn relied upon the Alexandrian Dionysius of Thrax and his teacher Aristarchus (2nd century B.C.).⁶ But beginning in the late fourth century in the commentaries on Donatus there emerges a distinct change in the nature of technographic grammatical description and explanation, a change based upon the use of etymology as a grammatical concept and which prepared the way in part for Priscian's restructuring of Latin technographic grammar in the sixth century. To appreciate the scope of this etymological development in Latin grammar, we need to look briefly at Donatus' own work and that of his contemporaries and then to examine in some detail the important fourth- through sixth-century commentaries on Donatus, as a prelude to Priscian.

Donatus' *Ars Minor* was the standard beginner's textbook for Latin in the Middle Ages and, together with his *Barbarismus* (Book Three of his lesser known *Ars Maior*), which circulated in a separate manuscript tradition and dealt with the virtues and vices of Latin usage, schemes,
and tropes, it was the Latin grammatical text most widely used in Europe until the late seventeenth century. Not only was the *Ars Minor* the basis for Lilly's Latin grammar (1513), but it also determined the basic grammatical terminology not only for the study of Latin but also for the study of the European vernaculars. It is curious, then, that Donatus seems to have had little if any impact on the terminology, methodology, or practice of *etymologia* in the Middle Ages. In fact Donatus' technographic grammatical works, as well as his commentaries on Terence and Virgil, make surprisingly little use of *etymologia* as an interpretive or grammatical principle.

Like his contemporaries Charisius and Diomedes, Donatus did continue the use in Latin grammar of some basic Greek etymological concepts. For example, all three of these grammarians discuss the notion of *figura* (word form) and the distinction first made by Plato between *simplex* and *composita* (compound) forms, usually relying upon the same set of examples. So in Donatus' *Ars Maior* in the section devoted to *nomen* we find this typical definition of the two types of *figurae*:

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Figurae nominibus accidunt duae, simplex et composita: simplex, ut doctus potens, composita, ut indoctus impotens. Conponuntur autem nomina modis quattuor: ex duobus integris, ut suburbanus; ex duobus corruptis, ut efficax municeps; ex integro et corrupto, ut ineptus ir-sulsus; ex corrupto et integro, ut pennipotens nugiger-ulus. Conponuntur etiam de conpluribus, ut
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inexpugnabilis inperterritus. (KGL, 4, 377)

[Two forms occur in nouns, simple and compound: simple, as doctus, potens; compound, as indoctus, impotens. Nouns are compounded in four ways: from two whole forms, as suburbanus; from two changed forms, as efficax, municeps; from a whole and a changed form, as ineptus, insulsus; from a changed and a whole form, as pennipotens, nugigerulus. Some words are compounded from several together, as inexpugnabilis, inperterritus.]

These grammarians also generally use the same definitions of the parts of speech, based on implied etymologies (found mostly in Dionysius) of the names for the word-classes as determined by their respective functions in the sentence; for instance, the pronoun is defined as the "pars orationis quae posita pro nomine minus quidem, paene idem tamen significat" (KGL, 1, 157) [the part of speech which is placed for the noun and, though lesser, yet signifies the same thing]. But besides this continuity of specific etymological features in the late Latin grammarians, there are some striking general etymological differences between Donatus and the other technographic grammarians of the period.

In general Donatus' Ars Minor and even his Ars Maior are by far the least elaborate of the many extant Latin grammatical works. This characteristic is in part due to Donatus' failure to extend the use of etymologia to justify other aspects of the word-classes or to devise a theory of language--Latinitas or whatever--or to account for various word forms in the way that Varro and some of Donatus' contemporaries did. This is not to say that
Donatus himself did not think through such matters, but the conspicuous absence of any explicit statement in his work makes one suspect the depth of his concern with such matters.

Another significant difference between Donatus and the etymological work of his contemporaries is in their uses of terminology. Apart from his use of the conventional terms figura, simplex, and composita and the incidental occurrence of the formulae traho and venio to describe the derivation of present and future participles from the verb, Donatus' work is really barren of any etymologia employed as an active grammatical principle. Pseudo-Probus, on the other hand, is fond of the formula nascitur to characterize word derivation, while Charisius uses nascitur to express the relationship between derivative and primary nouns. Charisius also employs etymological discussion beyond the derivations of the names of the parts of speech. For instance, he explains the concept of oratio in terms of the traditional etymology "oris ratio" (KCL, 1, 533). In addition he includes in his Ars Grammatica some material on derivativa as a general linguistic phenomenon and uses the concept to help argue his interpretation of the analogy/anomaly question. In all of these examples, Charisius exemplifies the technographic emphasis on etymologia as a grammatical principle of explanation whose authority is primarily verbal rather
than extraverbal. Diomedes' *Ars Grammatica* exhibits a similar diversity of etymological material, but he also develops at greater length than Pseudo-Probos, Donatus, or even Charisius a theory of language and speech, in part with the aid of some specifically etymological concepts. For example, besides the standard etymological definition of *oratio*, Diomedes adds that "oratio est structura verborum composito exitu ad clausulam terminata" (KGL, 1, 300) [oratio is the arrangement of words completed by means of the close of a period]. He further defines *poetica*, discriminates among *poetica*, *poemata*, and *poesis*, and discusses the kinds of *poematae* (genres) partially in terms of etymological principles.  

Unlike Donatus, both Charisius and Diomedes make very clear the rationales for their grammatical works. They are very conscious of their literary past, just as their Hellenistic ancestors, the Alexandrian grammarians, had been, and attempt to preserve and perpetuate Latinitas in the face of the breakup of Roman civil order and culture. The barbarians and rustics had been "misshaping" (deformant) and corrupting the language at the same time that they were misshaping and corrupting Roman social values as a whole. Thus, for the technographic grammarians, Latinitas often meant the value of not just the best Latin literary language but also the best Latin culture and ethics, as Charisius demonstrates:
Latinitas vero sermo cum ipso homine civitatis suae natus significandis intellegendisque quae diceret prae-stitit. sed postquam plane supervenientibus saeculis accipit artifices et solertiae hostiae observationibus captus est, paucis admodum partibus orationis normae suae dissentientibus, regendum se regulae tradidit et illam loquendi licentiam servituti rationis addixit. (KGL, 1, 50)

[Latinitas, the tongue inborn in every man of the city, excelled in expressing and conveying everything he had to say. But when with the passing centuries it adopted artificial expressions and was taken over by paying attention to enemy wiles, it surrendered its rules for governing itself to the very few parts of speech contradicting its norm and resigned that freedom of speech to the slavery of ratio.]

Curiously, while Donatus probably subscribed to this view of the grammarian's task in the face of a declining culture, he nowhere says as much in his technographic writings. There is no general statement in his work on grammar about Latinitas or the concepts of oratio or sermo, although it is clear that his aims coincide with, if not duplicate, those of Diomedes and Charisius. However, Donatus does not use, to the extent that his contemporaries did, etymological interpretations or rationales in his explanations either of word-classes or of general concepts of language. And unlike Varro, he does not marshal any etymological authority--technographic or mythographic--to justify the Latin usage which he was attempting to preserve.
Donatus' shortlived etymological activity, then, seems to have made no significant impression on the overall character of his grammatical thought. Whereas Pseudo-Probus, Charisius, and Diomedes all referred to the changes in the language since the days of the Republic, Donatus mentions just once in passing that the modern formation of the comparative adverb differs from that of his "veteres" (KGL, 4, 363). Thus while Donatus is distinctly technographic in the etymological material he does use, he is also prescriptive and nonexplanatory of Latin grammar. There is no discussion in his grammar of the nature of the origin of words, the character or quality of derivativa, or the philosophy of language.

But the problem with using this view of Donatus' relative paucity of etymological material to evaluate later medieval developments in grammar is that the "pure" Donatus text printed in Keil's edition was not always the version accessible to medieval grammarians, philosophers, and literary critics, nor was Donatus' text itself always consulted to determine the character of his grammatical principles. Very often the Carolingian and later medieval grammarians viewed Donatus through the coloring and recasting of his work by the fourth- through sixth-century commentators, whose works significantly increased Donatus' own limited use of etymologia as an explanatory concept.
The first extant commentary on Donatus, and one of
the most popular during the Middle Ages, is that by Ser-
vius, a contemporary of Donatus and author of the famous
commentary on the Aeneid. In many ways Servius faith-
fully repeats the grammatical principles embodied in
Donatus and inherited from the Alexandrian technographic
grammarians. But from the very beginning of his commen-
tary there is a new tone and substance insofar as
etymologia is concerned. Servius begins:

Ars dicta est vel ἀπὸ τῆς ἀρετῆς, id
est a virtute, quam Graeci unius cuiusque
rei scientiam vocant; vel certe ideo ars
dicitur, quod artis praecipit cuncta
concluadat. (KGL, 4, 405)

[Ars is so called from τες aretes, that is,
from virtue, which the Greeks call the
knowledge of each and every thing; or truly
it is named ars because it encompasses every-
thing with general principles.]

Servius here incorporates the traditional discussion of the
difference between ars and disciplina into the context of
Donatus' grammar, which omitted any account of such a dis-
tinction, and he does so with a specifically etymological
explanation. It is also significant that, after Donatus'
rather slight use of etymological terminology and formulae,
his first commentator (writing in Donatus' own lifetime)
should employ common medieval etymological formulae (id
est; quod) and even go so far as to offer two possible
etymologies of ars, one from Greek and the other from
Latin. A new approach to technographic grammar is being
used here, one which relies to a greater extent than did Donatus' on *etymologia* as a principle of grammatical interpretation and explanation.

Of course there is a good deal that is nonetymological in Servius' commentary. For example, although he adopts Donatus' own use of the traditionally implied etymological definitions of the parts of speech, he omits the common definition of the pronoun ("pro nomine"). But on the whole Servius adds a decidedly etymological character to Donatus' grammar. He is especially given to the etymological formulae "*X dictum est quia*" or "*X dicitur quod,*" which we have encountered before in Varro's writings as a distinctly mythographic form of etymological explanations. However, Servius usually (but not always) employs these formulae to express technographic explanations based on verbal criteria. So, for example, he uses a somewhat traditional Stoic definition of the verb (but one not used by Donatus) when he explains: "*verbum dictum est eo, quod verberato aere motus linguae haec pars orationis inventa sit*" (KGL, 4, 405) [the verb is so-called because this part of speech is contrived by the motion of the tongue disturbing the air].

*Etymologia* as an explanatory concept also appears in a wider variety of contexts in Servius' commentary. Establishing a concept of the organic derivation of words from a set of primal word categories (in the manner of
Varro), Servius states that the noun is the main or primal word class from which every other part of speech is born (procreatur; KGL, 4, 406). Then, in the section on figurae nomina, he defines simplex words as naturalis, while those formed through composita are said to be made from art or craft (ex arte fit; KGL, 4, 408). In addition to recapping the traditional four modes of composita, Servius discusses littera in explicitly etymological and etiological terms, explaining in a mythographic context that the Latin alphabet was invented by the nymph Carmenta and then giving two possible etymologies for littera in the familiar quod formula of mythographic interpretation: "Quae ideo dictae sunt litterae, quod legentibus iter praebent, vel quod iterentur, quasi legiterae" (KGL, 4, 421) [letters are so-called because they show readers the way or because they are repeated, as if to say readings]. Furthermore, all the terms in the littera section (consonants, semivowels, and vowels) are defined and discussed with primarily etymological criteria, as are the accounts of syllaba and pes (KGL, 4, 423-25). Finally, when Servius explains and elaborates on Donatus' account of solecisms, he uses the word itself—etymologia—which Donatus himself had never done in his Ars Minor or Ars Maior. Servius' commentary, then, represents a significant alteration of Donatus' own approach to grammatical description and explanation. Servius adds a
good deal of explicitly etymological material and formulae to Donatus, and in the main his commentary emphasizes technographic, verbal criteria as the basis for etymological explanations.

After Servius, this process of including etymological categories, definitions, and discussions in commentaries on Donatus seems to have continued, to varying degrees, into the fifth century with the commentaries and expositions by Sergius, Cledonius, Pompeius, Phocas, and Consentius. Sergius' commentary, for example, breaks no new ground and omits even some etymological material already added by Servius. Sergius continues the use of etymological definitions of littera, syllaba, vocabula, and so forth (KGL, 4, 477-78, 480) and includes the new Servian technographic etymology of verbum (which was applied to both the verb and a word): "Verbum est dictum eo quod vox aerem verberat" (KGL, 4, 488). However, he says little about figura and composita and barely preserves the traditional etymological definitions of the parts of speech which are found in most other technographic grammatical writings of the late Latin period.

Most of the other fifth-century commentaries on Donatus are more copious than Sergius' with regard to etymological explanations. With the exception of Pompeius' Commentum Artis Donati, which we shall consider more fully in a moment, these commentaries borrow from one another and from earlier Latin grammarians such as
Varro and Charisius. For the most part, they are concerned with technographic problems and incorporate discussions of the etymological concepts of *derivativa* and *composita* into their accounts of *figurae* in order to augment Donatus' traditional account of the four modes of *composita*. In so doing, they "etymologize" the version of Donatus as it was known to the early Middle Ages. It is sufficient to examine briefly just one of these commentaries, that by Cledonius, in order to see this process of etymological accretion more clearly.

In his *Ars Grammatica* Cledonius claims that Donatus is the *auctoritas* he will follow (KGL, 5, 10), but when he defines the verb as a class he uses the etymological definition and justification found not in Donatus but in Servius (KGL, 5, 10). Similarly, in his very extensive account of *compositae nominae* (KGL, 5, 43-44), Cledonius incorporates the non-Donatian material regarding the equation of *simplex* and *composita* with *naturalis* and *ex arte*; he likewise preserves the etymological description of the invention of Roman letters by Carmenta (KGL, 5, 26-27). Furthermore, Cledonius uses the interesting formula *nascitur* (e.g. KGL, 5, 33) which had been so popular earlier with the Pseudo-Probus. However, he alludes only briefly to the concept of *figura* (KGL, 5, 10). Cledonius exemplifies most fifth-century commentators and expositors on Donatus in that his use of etymological materials is based primarily on Servius and relies on *etymologia*
to explain particular grammatical points, terms, or concepts rather than to develop a methodology of grammatical description and explanation. However, one fifth-century commentator, Pompeius, does move toward the development of such an etymological methodology, and his work demands our examination before we take up the important work of Priscian.

With Pompeius' *Commentum Artis Donati* the technographic etymologizing of Donatus in the fifth century reached its peak. Pompeius seems to have adopted all of the etymological material interpolated into the Donatus tradition up to that time. But he goes even further. Pompeius' explanatory procedure in his commentary is one which seems characteristically etymological. Usually he quotes a definition or a passage from Donatus and then asks "Quare?"; the answer is almost always couched in a *quod* (or sometimes an *id est*) construction. Moreover, in his discussion of *figurae nomina* Pompeius incorporates the Servian equation of *simplex* with *naturalis*, but he alters the *composita-ex arte* connection slightly when he says that a *compositum* "accipit ornatum" (KGL, 5, 178) [receives embellishment]. When outlining the four traditional modes of *composita*, Pompeius makes more explicit the concept of the organic derivation of words from smaller to larger parts (e.g. from *territus* to *perterritus* to *imperterritus*; KGL, 5, 181) which Donatus
and others had only hinted at. (This concept of the organic building up of words is especially important and we shall return to it in more detail with Priscian.)

But what is most significant about Pompeius' commentary is his joining of etymologia as a concept so named in his work to the related theories of figura and composita. This is the first time since Servius' commentary that the word etymologia had appeared in a commentary on Donatus' grammar, and its occurrence is important:

Figura in nominibus aut simplex est aut conposita. simplex est a natura, id est quae de una re constat, ut doctus; conposita, quae de duabus constat rebus, quae accipit ornatum, ut indoctus. simplex est, quae unam rem habet, duplex quae de duabus rebus constat, id est conposita. habes in arte Probi, id est institutis ipsius, hoc tractatum: ait sic, nomina omnia posse conponi vel ex non intellegendis (hoc stultum est), vel ex integris ex vel corruptis (hoc bene dixit). 'ex non intellegendis' stultissimum est. puta columna, id est habere intellectum, 'colu feminea Parcarum dirupta,' et puta si dicas 'colu Parcarum, pereunte colu'; ecce habes intellectum eius. nna nihil significat. hoc si volueris sequi, omnia nomina conposita erunt, quaecumque sunt in rerum natura. numquam enim licet tibi referre rem ipsam ad etymologiam, nisi ipsa etymologia consentit rei principalis. colu aliquid est. numquid ideo dicta columna est, quod habet originem a colu? ergo cum illud alius significat, hoc alius significat, quare dico compositum est nomen ex integro et corrupto, cum ipsum etymum non habeat commune cum principalis? et quod non habet commune cum principali etymum, compositum non est. ergo hoc sequimur, ut illa dicamus corrupta, quae resoluta possunt fieri integra. <aliae> fiunt compositae figurae ex duobus integris, ut suburbanum; ex
duobus corruptis, ut efficax; ex corrupto et integro, ut nugigerulus; ex integro et corrupto, ut insulsus. et re vera illa possunt dici corrupta, quae fuerunt integra; in communi etiam sermone sic habemus. numquid possumus dicere birrum corruptum esse, nisi quia fuit integra? sic etiam non possumus dicere partes corruptas esse in oratione, nisi quae resolutae integrum faciunt. non possumus ergo dicere conpositas esse, nisi resolutas revoces ad integrum. (KGL, 5, 178-79)

[In nouns figura can either be simple or compound. A simple form is from nature; that is, what is composed of one thing, as doctus; a compound form, what is composed from two things and which receives embellishment, as indoctus. A simple form has one thing; a duplex or compound form is made of two things. In Probus' Ars, that is, his Institutes, there is this treatment: he says that all nouns can be compounded either from nonintelligibles (which is foolish) or from whole or changed forms (which is well said). "ex non intellegendis" is the most foolish of all. Consider columna: colu can be understood, as in "the broken woman's distaff of the Fates"; for instance, if you should say, "the Fates' distaff, the vanishing (?) distaff." Then you have the meaning of the word. mna signifies nothing. Should you wish to follow this [construction] out, all nouns will be compound ones whatever their real nature. Surely you cannot attribute the thing named to the etymology unless that etymology agrees with the original thing. It is otherwise with colu. Surely columna is not so called because it originates from a distaff? Therefore since the former means something different, the latter does so, too. Why, then, I ask, is the noun/name compounded of a whole element and a corrupt one, when the etymon itself has nothing in common with the origin? And since the etymon has nothing in common with its source, it is no compound. So we conclude that we can call those forms corrupt which can become whole when analyzed. There are other
kinds of compound forms: from two wholes, as suburbanus; from two partial forms, as efficax; from a partial and a whole form, as nugigerulus; and from a whole and a partial form, as insulsus. And in fact those which can be called corrupt were once whole; indeed we have this in ordinary language. How can we say that birrum is partial, unless because it was whole? Thus we cannot say that there are partial parts (partes) in speech, unless we mean those which when analyzed make a whole one. Therefore we cannot say that there are compound forms, unless when analyzed you can restore the wholeness (of the parts).

This lengthy quotation from Pompeius' section on the figurae nominae allows us to see clearly the way in which he develops his theory of figura. The whole passage is a tissue of traditional technographic grammatical materials as found in the Pseudo-Probus, Charisius, Diomedes, Donatus, and the fourth- and fifth-century commentators on Donatus. However, these elements are welded together by Pompeius' own etymologically-oriented explanation of the way in which words are compounded and how they signify. He begins by connecting the technographic and verbal distinctions between simplex and composita forms with the natural order of things, thus reorienting the distinction toward an extraverbal justification for the formation of words. Then he introduces etymologia into his discussion in what appears to be more than a merely technographic sense. Etymologia, he states, is not applicable to the explanation of a word's figura unless the relation between the
things signified by the verbal elements which are being compounded is also etymological (i.e. derivative). Thus Pompeius links very closely the technographic concept of derivation with the more mythographic notion that the meanings of things are analogous to or immanent in the meanings of words. This is a relationship which we observed earlier in Cratylus' view that names themselves were the objects of etymological investigation and also in the Stoics' belief in the transparency of words to reveal the original thought of speech. It is also a concept which in the Middle Ages reaches its zenith in the work of Isidore a little over a century later. Therefore it should not be surprising to find that Isidore's chief source for his treatment of the *ars grammatica* (*Etymologiae*, Book One) was Pompeius.  

Of course Pompeius' technographic goals are somewhat more limited than Isidore's plan for a comprehensive understanding of all knowledge. But Pompeius' work should alert us to the potential in Latin technographic grammar for the use of *etymologia* as a full-fledged explanatory concept. In addition, we must remember that his work is a commentary on Donatus, whose own grammatical writings were notably barren of all but the most minimal use of etymological explanations. In the fifth century Pompeius, along with the other commentators on Donatus, etymologized the Donatus tradition of the technographic
ars grammatica as it was received by the Carolingians and the later Middle Ages. What these commentators and expositors did not do was propose and implement a thoroughgoing etymological method of grammatical description and explanation in the manner of Varro. For such a comprehensive etymological theory of grammar and meaning, we must look to the sixth century and perhaps the most influential Latin grammarian before the twelfth century--Priscian.

Priscian's Institutiones Grammaticae has been called the "culmination of late Latin grammatical scholarship" and there is much in his work to support this claim. However, it is also important to see that from an etymological point of view Priscian's work in technographic grammar is the beginning of something new in the early Middle Ages. What is different in Priscian is not so much the individual pieces of grammatical doctrine as it is the overall conception of how language and meaning are created and understood, a conception which is fundamentally etymological and offers a new approach in the Middle Ages to the comprehension of the relation between words and things.

First we should note the traditional grammatical and the scattered etymological elements in Priscian which were contained in the Alexandrian and Latin grammars. Although he based his work primarily on the grammatical writings of Apollonius (KGL, 2, 1), Priscian seems to have been familiar with nearly all of the Latin grammarians
as well as with most of the Greek grammarians who preceded him.  

He continued to use the Alexandrians' formal word-class categories and incorporated some of the implied etymological definitions of the parts of speech which were found earlier in Donatus and especially in the work of his commentators. Priscian even added a new etymological definition of the supine form of the verb: "Supina vero nominantur, quia a passivis participiis, quae quidam supina nominantur, nascuntur" (KGL, 2, 412)[Supines are properly named because they are born (derived) from passive participles, which some call 'flat on the back' [i.e. passive] (supina)]. His account of the figurae nomina contains the traditional treatment of the four modes of composita, taken almost verbatim from Donatus (see KGL, 2, 178), and is based on the technographic principle that the noun or individual word is the basic unit of meaning. 

In addition to these traditional and limited uses of etymologia from the Greek and Latin grammatical tradition, Priscian continued the technographic efforts to preserve Latinitas, emend textual and grammatical errors (both theoretical and practical), and perpetuate with an abundance of poetic examples the language of literary Latin. But Priscian's general orientation toward the technographic standard of literary Latin was not a slavish dependence on the prior language of Latin literature. The fact that the auctores used forms like armor/armatus but denied the
propriety of analogous forms such as *tunicor/tunicatus* did not of itself justify for Priscian the grammarians' decree that contemporary speakers of Latin should refrain from using such forms. The *auctores*' timidity (*timiditas*), he said, should not prevent contemporary speakers from using new words derived from the "ipsa natura et significatio rerum" (KGL, 2, 442). If it did, then Priscian warned that *Latinitas* would be damned to perpetual narrowness or difficulty (*angustus*).

The method by which Priscian envisioned enriching the Latin language and concomittantly expanding human knowledge was based on the etymological concept of *derivativa*. Priscian never actually used the word "etymologia" to describe his methodology; except for Varro, Pompeius was the only Latin technographic grammarian before Isidore to do so. But Priscian's development of *derivativa* as a method of grammatical analysis was more profound in its significance for early medieval technographic grammatical theory than was Pompeius' brief but significant combination of *etymologia* and *figura*. Priscian, by constructing his theory of language and meaning on traditional Latin grammatical word-classes, the emphasis on the noun as the basic unit of meaning, and the concept of *derivativa* as the basis for determining true and proper signification, endowed his *Institutiones* with the fundamental and important task of investigating the nature of verbal meaning and the
signification of things. In doing so, he provided the later Middle Ages with an important etymological model for the interpretation of not only grammatical systems but also individual texts.

Priscian most fully articulated his innovative concept of derivativa in the section of the Institutiones devoted to the species of nouns (KGL, 2, 62-140). Like Varro and other grammarians, he distinguished between principales and derivativa nomina. The former category refers to those primal names which either were imposed on things by men or arose from the nature of things; for example, consul is said to be derived from consulendo (KGL, 2, 432). The second class includes patronyms, possessives, comparatives, superlatives, diminutives, and denominatives. Because Priscian considered derivativae to be distinguishable on the basis of differentiae resultant from but still implicit in the principalis form, he anchors his concept of derivativa not only to the context of figurae (as did most other Latin grammarians) but also to the very accidental forms of the subcategories of word-classes.

The essential element in Priscian's theory of derivativa is the concept of composita. Beside the traditional technographic distinction between simplices and compositae figurae, Priscian adds a third category (decomposita; compounds formed from compounds) which introduces a formal designation for the sort of organic building
up of words which the grammarians from Donatus to Pompeius had to varying degrees been aware of (KGL, 2, 177-78). Although all the parts of speech except interjections are thought to have simplicia, compositae and decompositae figurae (2, 177), Priscian differentiates true compositae from those which only seem to be so derived. True compound forms must be able to be broken down into intelligible parts (KGL, 2, 177-78). Therefore Priscian traces the derivation of magnanimitas not to the compounding of magno and animitas, since animitas "per se non dicitur" (KGL, 2, 177), but to the compound magnanimus and its parts, magnus and animus, "quae sunt intellegenda per se" (KGL, 2, 178). Thus while words like respublica and iusurandum may appear to be figurae compositae, they are in fact simplices because they refer to one and only one thing (KGL, 2, 177).

Priscian therefore expands on Pompeius' use of the res/verba relationship as a justification for the particular figura of a word and he makes derivativa a continuous part of the grammarian's tasks, to emend, interpret, and judge. As a tool for the technographic grammarian, derivativa could determine a Latin word's proper grammatical form and thereby help to correct the incipient barbarism which Priscian felt was everywhere polluting the Latin tongue (KGL, 2, 1-2). So Priscian uses derivativa principles to promulgate, among other things, stylistic standards of Latin composition, as when he argues that syncope in the
formation of words is analogous to brevity in the construction of sentences (KGL, 2, 454). Derivativa could also assist in the explication of obscure literary passages. Regarding Ovid's ambiguous "Tantaque simplicitas puerilibus adfuit annis" (Meta., 5, 400) Priscian says that the line makes no sense "quod derivativum non pertineret ad termines, nisi etiam 'puera' esset dictum" (KGL, 2, 231) [because the derivation would not pertain to the endings, unless *puera* could be said].

In addition to this technographic use of *derivativa* Priscian also manifests a special awareness of the relation between *derivativa* as a concept and the grammatical problems of *res/verba* and the nature of verbal meaning. In doing so, he invokes not only verbal criteria of explanation but also the criterion of nature to determine the source of a word's derivation as well as its signification. Thus Priscian remarks that accidents in word forms are caused both by chance and by natural necessity (KGL, 2, 369); the "natura rerum" resists making *puerperus* from *puerpera* or *nuptus* from *nupta*, except when authority (!) or the use of poetic figures intercedes (KGL, 2, 370). Similarly, some verbs have an active signification but not a passive one because in humans their action does not take an object ("quia nec in homines eorum actus transit"; KGL, 2, 375); says Priscian, it is not necessary that their movement ("transgressionem") be rationally extended to
another animal, the only reason, he says, "ob quam nascuntur verba passiva in prima et secunda persona" (KGL, 2, 375) [why passive verbs in the first and second persons are born (derived)]. However, we must add here that this principle of verba which represents res is not consistently applied by Priscian, as when he equates composita and decomposita nomina with derivativa yet connects simplicia nomina only with principales forms rather than with nature itself (KGL, 2, 177). Nonetheless Priscian's general awareness of the res/verba problem as a determinate of meaning leads him to use the concepts of derivativa and composita to comprehend the nature of grammatical signification, in particular the difference between true and accidental signifying figurae (KGL, 2, 83-89). As a result, Priscian is forced to question seriously the customary notion of one word—one thing meaning. Priscian cites the examples of some verbs which when compounded change their significations; for instance, sperno/spernere is active while aspernor/aspernari is deponent (KGL, 2, 435). Furthermore, a word's grammatical classification and its meaning depend upon the thing from which it is derived. Armatus, says Priscian, can either be a noun or a participle, depending upon whether it is derived from the Greek for "armis habendis" or from the Latin passive verb armor (KGL, 2, 441). Consequently armatus can have two different significations referring to
two different "naturae rerum" but both expressed by the same orthography. In Priscian, then, derivativa becomes not only a means of accurately pinpointing meaning and proper grammatical forms but also a method, based upon different etymologies, for discovering multiple significations within the same word. Thus he firmly links etymologia and meaning in his grammatical theory and considers multiplicities of meaning as parameters of interpretation contingent upon probable derivations.

At this point in our discussion of Priscian's method of grammatical analysis, we may turn our attention to the terminology and formulae which Priscian uses to further develop his concept of derivativa. Although he employs the intensifying or translating construction id est for many definitions and formulae such as quod derivatum est a when explicating obscure literary passages, his most characteristic formula for describing the derivation of one word from another is nascitur/nascuntur. As we have seen, a few previous Latin grammarians (notably Pseudo-Probus and Charisius) had used this construction spottily, but Priscian was the first grammarian to adopt the term as an integral part of his etymological model. He employs nascitur in all of the definitions of the parts of speech in the figurae nomina section when he explains how derivativa are drawn from principalia, and throughout his grammar when discussing the relation between a word and the source of its meaning. Furthermore, because composita is at the
heart of Priscian's theory of *derivativa*, the *nascitur* formula indicates Priscian's sense that language is built up organically from phonemes to morphemes to primary words (*simplicia*) to compound words, and then to *dictio*, the minimum intelligible part of construction (KGL, 2, 53) and finally to *oratio*, congruently ordered *dictiones* indicating completed sense (KGL, 2, 53). Thus Priscian reorients the traditional technographic example for simple and compound forms when he says,

> primo enim compositum est "perterritus", "expugnabilis", "extricabilis", et post "inperterritus", "inexpugnabilis", "inextricabilis", similiter "imperfectus", "ineluctabilis", et similia. est ergo illud quoque attendendum quod separata composita non solum in simplices resolvuntur dictiones, sed etiam in ante compositas (KGL, 2, 280).

[Indeed first *perterritus*, *expugnabilis*, *extricabilis* are compounded, and afterwards *inperterritus*, *inexpugnabilis*, *inextricabilis*; likewise, *imperfectus*, *ineluctabilis* and similar words. Therefore that (compound word) must also be attended to because separate compounds are resolved not only into simple words but even into previously compounded words.]

That Priscian conceives of the relationship between *simplicia* and *compositae* words as an organic one is demonstrated by his account of the *figura* of *vires*. Earlier Priscian had noted that *composita* could only occur when the compounded elements are independently intelligible. So he explains that *vires* is *simplex* rather than *composita* because, when divided as *vi-res*, the elements are not independently intelligible (i.e. are submorphemic) (KGL, 2,
53). But clearly *vi* and *res* do have intelligibility as Latin forms. Therefore what Priscian seems to mean by nonintelligibility is not just phonemic configurations but also unrelated significations; there is no necessary natural connection, says Priscian, between force and thing as applied to mankind. (Recall Pompeius' account of *figura* and *etymologia*, and the need for two elements to have some common origin in the order of things in order to be compounded.)

By using the term *nascitur* in the context of intelligible parts, Priscian indicates an organic connection between primary words and their *derivativa* where the *figura derivativa* is actually immanent within the *figura principalis*. Derivative forms, therefore, such as diminutives and superlatives, obtain their significations from their parent or primary words, which usually intimate connections with the order of things. And it is within this context, rather than merely the exposition of the parts of speech, that we are to understand Priscian's statement that the different parts of speech can only be distinguished through an analysis of meaning (KGL, 2, 55). To determine a word's proper meaning is tantamount to a determination of its organic development and derivation. And because there often is more than one possible form of organic derivation for a word, Priscian's theory and use of *derivativa* lead him to question the Stoic grammarians'
notion that the etymological process will of necessity
guide one to a certain and unique form of knowledge, and
also to qualify earlier technographic grammarians' cer-
tainty as to the direct relationship between pure
Latinitas and precise meaning.

The extent to which Priscian's use of derivativa as
a method motivates his entire grammatical system is seen
in his extension of the concept to explain syntax as well
as individual word forms. The noun and the verb are the
origins of not only the other parts of speech but also
the sentence itself. Prior to the eleventh century, most
Latin grammarians thought of regular syntactic order as
part of the substance/accident problem, that is, the sub-
stance (noun) is anterior to the act (verb); the verb
motivates the essential part of discourse, the noun. 34
Priscian's discussions of syntax in Books 17 and 18 of the
Institutiones Grammaticae were not especially well thought
of by later medieval grammarians, nor for that matter are
they well thought of today. But in terms of his etymo-
logical model of grammatical explanation, it is important
to see that Priscian, in the sections on syntax, deter-
mines to move from "singulis vocibus dictionum" to
"ordinatio," that is, the "constructionem orationis per-
fectae," in order to be able to interpret adequately all
authors (KGL, 3, 108). By analogy, just as syllabae are
the most appropriate ordering (coniunctio) of letters, so
oratio is the most appropriate understanding (comprehensio)
of ordered dictiones (KGL, 3, 108-9).

It becomes clear, then, that Priscian conceives of syntax, within the coordinates of oratio and dictio, as the logical extension of the organic development from phonemes to morphemes to primary words to compound words. His notion of syntax as the furthest reach of the organic development of grammatical forms becomes even clearer when we observe that, in his account of coniunctio, Priscian develops the concepts of ordo and ornatus as parts of the conjunction's signification (KGL, 3, 102; 3, 104). Therefore when he later refers in his remarks on syntax to the "coniunctio" of letters as analogous to the conjoining of dictiones into oratio, Priscian is certainly operating on the premise that such constructions of either individual words or of sentences are organically derived and complete the full sense of that to which they refer. Ornatus in Priscian's grammatical system should be construed as meaning not material added to either the word or the sentence (or even further, the narrative) but material which is integral to and necessarily and organically derived from the essential meaning of the primary word or sentence.

Clearly, then, Priscian's use of the etymological principles of derivativa and composita goes far beyond the use of any comparable set of etymological concepts by Donatus or any of his fourth-to-sixth-century commentators
and redactors. Whereas these other Latin grammarians used *etymologia* either not at all or primarily as an auxiliary mode of grammatical explanation, Priscian employs the etymological concepts of *derivativa* and *composita*, together with the organic and etymological formula *nascitur*, to structure his entire grammatical system—from phonemes and words to *oratio*. In so doing he transformed what for the most part had been a prescriptive system of rules in technographic grammar, based upon literary Latin, into a system generated and terminologically defined by an organic conception of the interrelation of parts, a system able to plumb effectively, for the first time in Latin technographic grammar since Varro, the nature of meaning and signification. From the standpoint of the development of etymological models of grammatical explanation, Priscian's success was to have looked at the traditional technographic materials in a new way and thereby to have produced a really different Latin grammatical model. Just how different would be borne out by the later medieval grammarians who found in Priscian a means of dealing with the complex philosophical problems of meaning and language and the equally complex problem of how to determine the boundaries for the interpretation of words and verbal constructions.

In the succeeding centuries the impact of the secular tradition of Latin technographic grammar was felt in two ways. First, the growth of an "etymologized Donatus" in
technographic grammar was perhaps the essential element (after the Incarnation) in Carolingian grammatical theory. Most of the Carolingian commentators on Donatus, for instance Remigius of Auxerre, made extensive and consistent use of etymological procedures and the familiar *quod* formula to discuss grammatical issues, much like Pompeius' fifth-century commentary. In addition these grammarians intensified the sort of etymological equation which Pompeius had made in his account of *figurae nomina* between the derivations of words and the derivations of things. They expanded the place of extraverbal etymological criteria to justify technographic explanations; in particular they emphasized specifically Christian justifications for grammatical forms, as when Smaragdus accounts for the eight parts of speech and the three primary tenses in terms of divine numerology and the Trinity.

But even more significant than the influence of the etymologized Donatus on Carolingian and later medieval grammar is the preeminent place of Priscian and his etymological method of grammatical analysis. Remigius of Auxerre employed Priscian's notions of *derivativa* and *composita* and especially the *nascitur* formula to gloss or refute Donatus on a number of technographic issues. Other grammarians in the Carolingian period also made use of various aspects of Priscian's etymological model of technographic explanation. Erchanbertus, for instance,
adopted the concept of *derivativa* as "born from" (using the *nascitur* formula) the *principalia* to argue against the "falsiosum Pompeium" and then (rather ironically in view of his dislike for Pompeius) to amplify Priscian's notion of the *derivativa* which are immanent in *principalia* in terms of extraverbal criteria. Peter of Pisa, after invoking Priscian, went further and made explicit (and almost literal) Priscian's concept of organic word building; he likened the development of language to the growth and pilgrimage of a man. The individual sounds and letters correspond to infancy, while *oratio*, the goal of all language competence, is implicitly equated with Heaven, the end of man's journey through life.  

Thus the growth of etymological models in secular Latin technographic grammar for technographic purposes paradoxically provided the entry point for later grammarians' increased use of extraverbal, mythographic explanations of concepts and problems previously justified primarily in technographic terms. Of course the development of a Christian *ars grammatica* (through Jerome, Augustine, and Isidore) in part accounted for this shift from technographic to mythographic grammatical explanation in the medieval commentaries on Donatus. But outside the Christian tradition, the fifth-century Donatus commentators and later Priscian's etymological model also played an important role in this shift. The skepticism which
Priscian had expressed as to the certainty of single meanings for individual words helped to form the basis in the eleventh and twelfth centuries for a criticism of the accuracy of everyday language and the resulting drive by philosopher-grammarians to generate a metalanguage (logical in nature), to which Priscian's theories of derivativa and composita as the basis for determining verbal meaning had much to contribute. The idea of composita to account for syntax was taken up by later medieval writers and used to develop a theory of poetic composition, and also by grammarians such as Peter Helias who used composita to show e.g. that while cappa nigra and cappa categorica are congruous (since the adjectives agree with the nouns), the union of caps and categories is "improprietas." The speculative grammarians' penchant for commenting upon Priscian's Institutiones is ample evidence of the outstanding Latin technographic grammarian's impact on later discussions of how the structure of language is rooted in the structure of reality. As with the Carolingians' use of the etymologized Donatus and the increase in mythographic etymological explanation, so in later medieval grammarians' reliance on Priscian there was a persistent effort to reorient the traditional technographic concern with primarily verbal criteria toward a more adequate explanation, in terms of extraverbal, often mentalistic, criteria, of why and how words signify things.
But this shift in the nature of medieval grammatical criteria of explanation was due in large part to the ground prepared by the late Latin and early medieval technographic grammarians and the growth of specifically etymological models of technographic description and explanation.

B. The Mythographer: Fulgentius

Besides the technographic approach to etymologia, the pagan tradition also manifested a strong mythographic approach, as was evidenced by our discussions of the Cratylus and Varro's De Lingua Latina. In the early Latin Middle Ages, it was Fabius Planciades Fulgentius (ca. 480-550) who more than any other figure represented the continuation of the pagan tradition of mythographic etymological interpretation. It is still uncertain exactly who the Fulgentius was who authored (so far as we know) the Mithologiae, Expositio continentiae Virgilianae secundum philosophos moralis, Expositio sermonum antiquorum, and perhaps the De aetatibus mundi et hominis and Super Thebaiden. But we can be fairly sure that he was a grammaticus or maybe a rhetor, who taught in North Africa during the sixth century. And although parts of his writings suggest that he was affiliated with Christianity, Christian beliefs as such do not significantly inform his discussions of mythology, literature, language, or history.
Fulgentius' immediate debt for his model of interpretation was to the Latin, Stoic, and Neoplatonic commentators on Homer, but the tradition of the mythographic interpretation of the gods and literary figures reaches back to Anaxagoras of Clazomenae (fl. 450 B.C.) and his followers, who defended Homer's representation of the gods by searching for the deeper sense (ντόνοια) in the myths. Whereas Anaxagoras himself usually discovered natural significances (e.g. Apollo's arrows are thought to be the rays of the sun), his followers, like Metrodorus of Lampascus, often found moral meanings in the myths. We saw in the Cratylus Socrates' somewhat ironic version of these Homeric defenders' predilection for etymological and moral allegorical interpretations of the names of the gods. The Greek Stoics, especially Cleanthes and Crates, continued this reliance on mythographic etymologia and it was transmitted to the early Middle Ages primarily by Cicero, Pliny the Elder, and Varro. Fulgentius' use of etymologia as a tool for euhemeristic or moral interpretations is clearly within this secular tradition of Greek and Stoic allegorical hermeneutic, rather than in the mainstream of a "systematic Christianizing of pagan myths and fables." However, Fulgentius' etymological moralizations are not incompatible with Christian allegorical interpretations, as is well demonstrated by the Carolingian grammarians and exegetes who mined his works for particular etymologies.
and interpretations and by the heavy dependence of the
three Vatican Mythographers, Boccaccio, and others on
him.  

Like previous Greek and Roman mythographers, Fulgenti­
tius was eager, as he put it, that "certos itaque nos
rerum praestolamur effectus, quo sepulto mendacis Greciae
fabuloso commento quid misticum in his sapere debeat
cerebrum agnoscamus" (Mith., 1, Pref.) [I look for the
true effects of things, whereby, once the fictional inven­
tion of lying Greeks has been disposed of, I may infer
what allegorical (misticum) significance one should under­
stand in such matters]. As Terrence McVeigh has pointed
out, Fulgentius' use of the adjective misticum to describe
his purpose in interpreting the myths clearly defines his
method of interpretation as allegorical.  
The means to
uncover the misticum cerebrum was etymologia (especially
composita) and the use of extraverbal criteria to generate
and justify the various truths which Fulgentius discerned
beneath the "lying fictions" of the Greek myths.

We should note that Fulgentius does occasionally
suggest a technographic approach to etymological analysis.
In his brief Expositio sermonum antiquorum he makes use
of only a few etymologies, primarily to elucidate (but
not to revive) old and difficult Latin words found in
ancient authors like Ennius or in more modern ones like
Petronius or Martianus Capella. The sixty-two hard words
are loosely organized by categories, in the manner of the grammatical encyclopedias of Varro and Nonius Marcellus; each word is defined and then illustrated with one or more literary quotations. Theoretically Fulgentius' authority in the Expositio for meaning was literary Latin usage, as it had been earlier for the Latin technographic grammarians. But his aims in the work are antiquarian and do not coincide with the regulative goals of the technographic enterprise to preserve Latinitas. Furthermore, when it came to using etymological explanations "rerum manifestationibus dantes operam lucidandis" (Expositio, Pref.) [in order to perform the office of clarifying the meanings of things], Fulgentius chose extraverbal rather than verbal criteria to justify his derivations. For instance, he declares that "Edulium ab edendo dictum, id est quasi praegustativa comestio" (Expositio, 40) [Edulium is derived from eating (edendo), that is so to speak a taste of food].

But it is in Fulgentius' more important and influential works, Mithologiae and Expositio continentiae Virgilianae, that we find a thoroughgoing and consistent use of etymologia as both a methodology and a theoretical framework. Correspondingly, it was these works which established Fulgentius as the most important pagan mythographic etymologist in the early Middle Ages. For purposes of expediency, we shall focus our discussion of Fulgentius' etymological procedures primarily on the Mithologiae, with
supplementary looks at his moral interpretation of the Aeneid. 51

In the Mithologiae Fulgentius' announced goal, as we mentioned before, was to get beneath the lying surface of the Greek fictions and understand their misticum cerebrum. He therefore indicates very clearly that his investigation and elucidation of the myths will clarify 'things as they in themselves really are' and thereby will restore through etymological analysis the true significations of words and narratives, whose meanings, said Fulgentius, the Greeks had purposefully obscured. Fulgentius does not tell us exactly why the Greeks had obfuscated these myths, but Fulgentius' persona in the work 52 does explain why he will be able to uncover their true meanings: "Primum itaque ego scientiae vestibulum puto scire quod nescias" (Mith., Pref.) [For I consider I have awareness of a new threshold of knowledge denied to you]. Whether that knowledge is specifically Christian or not is difficult to determine, but ultimately the question is not very important. In almost all cases, the "true effects of things" beneath the lying fictions are moral and philosophical, but not particularly Christian, truths.

Fulentius' procedure throughout the Mithologiae is fairly straightforward. He summarizes each classical legend and then provides the myth with an allegorical, symbolic, or generally moral interpretation. His primary interest in each myth is with the characters and the
etymological significances of their names as they point to ethical precepts. In the Cupid and Psyche myth (Mith., 3, 6), for example, Fulgentius states that Venus sends Cupid or greed (*cupiditas*) to destroy Psyche or the spirit (*anima*). Elsewhere the fable of Berecynthia and Attis is said to demonstrate that "quantus cumque amor sit potentibus, stabilis esse non novit" (Mith., 3, 5) [whatever love there may be among the powerful, it cannot be stable]. In this second explanation, it is the etymological relationship between the name *Attis* and the Greek word *antis*, meaning flower, which initiates the interpretation. Occasionally Fulgentius really shatters the boundaries of modern credulity, as when in order to make his interpretation of the Prometheus myth work he says that "iecor . . . quod nos cor dicimus, quia in corde aliquanti philosophorum dixerunt sapientiam" (Mith., 2, 6) [the liver . . . [is] what we call the heart, because no small number of philosophers have declared that wisdom dwells in the heart]. But in general the etymological interpretations and the moral and allegorical constructions they support do not really justify Fulgentius' modern reputation as eccentric or absurd. If one does not judge Fulgentius' work by the standards of modern "scientific" etymology, then the *Mithologiae* display a rather consistent format applicable to the interpretation of literary texts. With few exceptions Fulgentius explains only those characters' names
which are "etymologizable" in moral ways. The concentration on names can be accounted for by the tradition of allegorizing Homer's gods (recall the Cratylus) and also by the generally technographic notion that the primary unit of meaning is the noun. But unlike the technographers, Fulgentius of course emphasized extraverbal criteria of etymological explanation in the search for the true moral universals to which the names refer. As a methodology, mythographic etymological interpretation sought for the moral and ethical meanings immanent in the names and hence in the myth. Therefore if the etymology of a character's name did not yield any insight into the significance of a myth, then the name was simply not important.

The authority which Fulgentius invoked to justify his etymologies and moral interpretations was the order of things. Extraverbal reality was used to support several kinds of derivation, the most common of which was composita. Among the other varieties of etymologia in the Mithologiae is derivativa. Fulgentius explains, for example, that Saturn was so named because he seized people for his harvest prerogative, thus glutting (saturando) himself (Mith., 1, 2). Later he includes the popular classical and medieval etymology for Proserpine, proserpentem (creeping forward), so that the myth is euhemeristically interpreted as representing crops whose roots creep through the earth (Mith., 1, 10). In both of these examples it is the
derivation of things which motivates the derivation of words. Saturnus and Proserpine are names which are born from aspects of reality as Fulgentius conceived it; Saturn with a pagan harvest ritual, and Proserpine with a natural phenomenon.

However, composita is the principal kind of etymological explanation which Fulgentius used in the Mithologiae. Usually he interprets a name as compounded of a Greek and a Latin element. As an alternative, then, to the etymology of Saturn mentioned above, Fulgentius adds Apollonius' belief that Saturnus "est quasi sacrum nun—nun enim Grece sensus dicitur" (Mith., 1,2) [Saturnus is for sacrum nun, because nun in Greek means sense]. At other times he interprets a composita word as formed entirely of Greek elements, but mediated by Latin translations; for example, Poseidon is derived from ποιεω and ἐισός.

"quod nos Latine facientem imaginem dicimus" (Mith., 1, 4) [which in Latin we call making shapes]. (The wholly Latin etymologies of voluntas for Vulcan (Mith., 1, 11) and solus or solite for sol (Apollo; Mith., 1, 12) are rare in Fulgentius' work.) The basis for this easy passage from Greek to Latin is Fulgentius' belief that the two languages refer to the same extraverbal reality, that Latin vocabulary is derived from the Greek, and that the object of etymological analysis is the association of ideas or things to which the verbal signs refer rather than the actual verbal configurations. What justifies the etymologies
ultimately is the *mistica cerebra* they reveal. And as we mentioned earlier, a character did not have to possess an etymologizable name in order to reveal a *misticum cerebrum*.

We can perhaps see another aspect of Fulgentius' sense of immanent meaning if we examine the formulae which he used to articulate his etymological interpretations. For the most part, in the *Mithologiae* he employs either the intensifying-or-translation formula *id est* or one of the explanatory conjunctions (*quod*, *quia*, or *quasi*). These two formulae are mingled in almost every mythological exposition. For instance, in explaining the fable of Apollo, Fulgentius gives alternative Latin etymologies of *sol* which seek to explain the derivation of the word: "Sol vero dicitur ex eo quod solus sit aut quod solite per dies surgat et occidat" (*Mith.*, 1, 12) [For the sun is so called either because it is unique (*solus*) or because it habitually (*solite*) rises and sets each day]. From Fulgentius' mythographic point of view these two explanations are possible because they refer not to the linguistic derivation of *sol* but to true aspects of the natural order to which the word refers. We have observed other mythographic uses of the *quod* formula in the etymological writings of Varro and Servius, but its occurrence here in Fulgentius is the most comprehensive in Latin *etymologia* before Isidore. Fulgentius' use of the *quod* formula confirms our earlier findings as to its etymological
character; it indicates the coupling of word and thing which is the keynote of mythographic etymologia. When Fulgentius explains the misticum cerebrum of Juno in the story of Paris, he provides a string of quod constructions, each of which reveals some aspect of Juno's mythological significance. In each instance the quod clause is designed to reveal the moral or ethical truth which the lying fiction of the Greeks obscures; for example, "Iunonem vero activae praeposuerunt vitae; Iuno enim quasi a iuvando dicta est. Ideo et regnis praecisse dicitur, quod haec vita divitiis tantum studeat;...velato etiam capite Iunonem ponunt, quod omnes divitiae sint semper absconsae; deam etiam partus volunt, quod divitiae semper praeequaeces sint et nonumquam abortiant" (Mith., 2, 1) [They put Juno in charge of the active life, for Juno is named for getting ahead (at iuvando). She is said to rule over dominions, because this kind of life is so much concerned with riches; . . . They say that Juno has her head veiled, because all riches are always hidden; they choose her as the goddess of birth, because riches are always productive and sometimes abortive].

In both of these etymological explanations (of sol and Juno) we can see what Fulgentius considered to be essential to the etymological process. Etymologia was a means of determining the primal, perhaps even unconscious, signification of the Greek names. While it is not absolutely clear whether or not Fulgentius believed that the Greek themselves understood the real meanings of the names
which they imposed on their mythological representations of phenomena, it is certain that he considered his own age (whether Christian or pagan) to have better insight than the Greeks into the ethical truth and significance of the mythological fables. The use of etymologia provides Fulgentius with a way to span the gap between the language of Latin culture and moral (Fulgentius says Roman) truth, that is, with a bridge constructed primarily of Greek words. This sense of bridging is embodied in another persistent Fulgentian etymological formula—pro (e.g. "Tisiphone est pro tuton phone"; Mith., 1, 7), where Latin is substituted for the Greek. Hence Fulgentius' etymological method, although it uses primarily composita explanations in the manner of the Homeric allegorists, does not really demand that particular type of etymologia nor does it require translation from Greek to Latin. Rather, the primary goal of Fulgentius' methodology is the elucidation of the moral meaning and truth behind the mythological representations to which both the Greek and Latin names refer. The Greek names, by virtue of their having been bestowed first, mediate the flow of universal meaning to Latin culture and Fulgentius.

It is important to see that this concept of Greek as a bridge between moral truth and Latin is at the heart of Fulgentius' hermeneutic method and is not peculiar to the Mithologiae. In the Expositio continentiae
Virgilianae Fulgentius also uses Greek compounds translated into Latin as the basis for revealing the moral truth embedded in the narrative of the Aeneid. As in the Mithologiae the emphasis in the Expositio is on the names of the characters. So, to explain the shipwreck as an allegory of the dangers of birth ("naufragium . . . in modum periculosae nativitatis"), Virgil tells Fulgentius' persona that "Eolus enim Grece quasi eonolus, id est saeculi interitus; unde et Homerus ait: ὄνλομενη μετὰ μυρία Ἀχαιῶις ἄλκες ἔδωκεν" (sic) [Eolus is Greek for eonolus, that is, world destruction; as Homer says, "That baneful wrath which brought countless woes upon the Achaeans"]. Virgil adds that the name of AEolus' wife, Deiopea, is etymologized as a compound of demos (public) and iopa (eyes or vision), hence extending the allegory to public vision and the hope of future social achievement (Expositio, 12). Similarly, Polyphemus is said to symbolize "vainglory" since his name is compounded from apolunta and femen "quod nos Latine perdentem famam dicimus" (Expositio, 14) [which in Latin we call loss of reputation].

When applying this methodology in the Mithologiae, Fulgentius shifts back and forth between an etymologia which generates moral allegorical interpretations and those more general euhemeristic or allegorical interpretations which, although often tied to etymological
explanations, exist independent of them. In the legend of Leda and the Swan, for instance, Fulgentius explicitly states that the fable "mistici saporem cerebri consipit; Iuppiter enim in modum potentiae ponitur, Leda vero dicta est quasi lide, quod nos Latine aut iniuriae aut conuicium dicimus. Ergo omnis potentia iniuriae mixta speciem suae generositatis mutat" (Mith., 2, 13) [carries the flavor of an allegorical interpretation (mistici cerebri), for Jove is explained as the symbol of power, and Leda is for lide, which in Latin we call either insult or reviling. Thus all power getting involved with insults changes the appearance of its magnanimity]. The use of the strange etymology of lide-Leda initiates the moral interpretation, but the name Iuppiter is left unetymologized and simply incorporated into the explanation as the "symbol" of power. It is not necessary that the name of each figure in the fable be etymologized for the allegory to stand. It is enough, Fulgentius implies, to derive the name Leda from the Greek lide (cf. λοιδοφέω) to unveil the whole Roman truth beneath the lying Greek fiction. In essence, the task of interpretation becomes a test of one's skill at interpretation, as Fulgentius himself suggests to his patron in the Mithologiae: "si haec ante nescieras, habes arenam nostri studii ubi tui exercicas palestram ingenii" (Pref.) [. . . if you were ignorant of these matters before, you at least have from my efforts an arena in which you can
exercise your own mental habits].

This tendency on the part of Fulgentius to detach interpretation and etymologia from any regulative criteria outside the ingenuity of the interpreter casts a somewhat different light on his rejoinder to Calliope's inquiry into the sources of his knowledge: "I consider I have awareness of a new threshold of knowledge denied to you" (Mith., Pref.). Fulgentius considers etymologia to be a means to a great end (i.e. moral interpretation) rather than a grammatical framework or persistent hermeneutic principle. Once the etymological method has broken, as it were, the surface of language, he feels free to explore and fill out all aspects of the fabulous narrative under scrutiny in terms of the a priori philosophical or moral truth he perceives as informing the myth. So even though in the fable of Dionysius he does not provide an etymology for Agave as he does for the names of her three sisters, Fulgentius nonetheless includes her as an integral part of his allegoric interpretation of the four sisters (Semele Ino, Autonōe, and Agave) because her actions rather than her name fit the scheme (Mith., 2, 12).

Fulgentius feels bound, therefore, not by etymological connections per se but by the immanent meanings of the myths he examines; his procedure in the Mithologiae and the Expositio continentiae Virgilianae reflects an additive rather than a generative approach to etymologia.
In his efforts to discover moral truths in the Greek fables, he often stretches the idea of immanent meaning and, as with the examples of Agave and Jove, sometimes dispenses altogether with *etymologia* as a means to generate moral interpretations of texts. Of course we must not lose sight of the fact that it is Fulgentius' sense of the Roman truth beneath the verbal surfaces, together with the capacity for *etymologia* to help reveal that truth, which generally initiates his moral interpretations of the myths. But Fulgentius' method represents in part an extreme version of the potential ambiguity in language which Priscian's technographic etymological model had revealed, whereby the norms of interpretation are located primarily with the interpreter himself and *etymologia* becomes a potentially subjective process which equates the individual interpreter's perception of etymological connections with reality itself.

That Priscian and Fulgentius were contemporaries makes this epistemological and methodological connection between the two, although perhaps unusual at first glance, all the more significant. Ever since Plato's *Cratylus*, technographic and mythographic *etymologia* had wrestled with the problem of a valid and uniform form of a priori truth to justify derivations and explanations. The derivations of words could point to the nature of things, or extraverbal reality could provide an understanding of
etymologies; in addition, derivations could be justified by either verbal or extraverbal criteria. But in any case the truth of one's *a priori* reality was always a moot point. As concepts, *Latinitas* and *veritas Romana* were identifiable but not always immutable. Because pagan approaches to *etymologia* tended to keep investigations based on verbal criteria separate from those based primarily on extraverbal criteria, Socrates' desire for a unified etymological enterprise founded upon a permanent and static realm of objective truth remained outside the mainstream of the principal classical and early medieval secular etymological traditions.

But during the same period that these secular Greek and Latin traditions were developing, the Christian heritage of Biblical and sacred onomastics was flowering in the work of Jerome and other Church Fathers; indeed Augustine was articulating the concept of a general Christian hermeneutic. Until the sixth century the *a priori* nature of the Incarnation and God's revealed truth offered an alternative to the pagan technographic and mythographic etymological traditions, while often employing the same kinds of explanatory procedures. But in the sixth century Socrates' dream of a unified etymological theory was realized in Isidore of Seville's synthesis of the secular and sacred strands of *etymologia*. We turn, then, in these final two chapters to an analysis of the Latin Fathers'
concepts of *etymologia* and sacred onomastics and to Isidore's comprehensive methodology which established the character of Christian etymological explanation for the rest of the Middle Ages.
NOTES


2Varro's expression of the grammatical offices is typical: "Ars grammatica quae a nobis litteratura dicitur scientia est <eorum> quae a poetis historicis oratoribus dicuntur ex parte maiore. eius praeципua officia sunt quattuor . . . : scribere legere intellegere probare" and "artis grammaticae officia . . . constant partibus quattuor: lectione enarratione emendatione iudicio" (De grammatica, 1, 107, 109; Goetz and Schoell, pp. 227-28). Cf. the account of the grammarian's offices in Dionysius of Thrax's Ars Grammatica, 1 (Davidson, p. 326). On Latinitas and literary standards of usage, see Varro: "In his ad te scribam, a quibus rebus vocabula imposita sint in lingua latina et ea quae sunt in consuetudine*** apud poetis" (DLL, 5, 1). Cf. Ps-Augustine, Ars brevita (KGL, 5, 494) and Diomedes, Ars Grammatica (KGL, 5, 439). Barwick discusses Pansa's role in the formation of the grammatical concept of Latinitas (Remmius Palaemon, pp. 182-83, 185) and the nature of the grammarian's offices (pp. 224-34). Cf. Jean Collart, "'Ne Dites Pas . . . Mais Dites' (Quelques remarques sur la grammaire des fautes chez les latins," RELat, 50 (1972), 232-46.

3Actually most of the explicitly literary-critical commentary on authors by the technographic grammarians is found in those sections of their grammatical treatises devoted to the genres. For a typical technographic treatment of a literary work, see Priscian's Partitiones duodecim versuum Aeneidos principalium (KGL, 3, 459-515).


5For surviving portions of Palaemon's grammar, see Grammaticae Romanae Fragmenta, ed. Antonio Mazzarino (Loesch: Augustae Torrinorum, 1955), Frag. 3-8 (pp. 76-102). Cf. Schanz, 2, 728.

See Wayland J. Chase's introduction to his translation of Donatus' work; Donatus' Ars Minor (Madison: Wisconsin Univ. Press, 1926), pp. 5-26 (passim). The translations of the Ars Minor included in the text are by Chase.

See the etymological definitions of the other parts of speech: "adverbium . . . adiecta verba" (KGL, 4, 362); "participium . . . partem caperens nominis, partem verbi" (KGL, 4, 363); "praepositio . . . praeposita aliis partibus orationis" (KGL, 4, 365); [by synonymy] "coniunctio . . . adnectens ordinansque sententiam" (KGL, 4, 364). For the Greek origins of these terms in technographic grammar, see Dionysius Thrax's account of the parts of speech (above, Chapter 1, n. 35).

Participia trahuntur a verbo activo duo, praesentis temporis et futuri, praesentis legens, futuri lecturus" (KGL, 4, 361). Donatus uses an excessive number of participial constructions to discuss the formation of participles, in an apparent tour de force of imitative form; see KGL, 4, 363-64.

For Ps-Probus, see KGL, 4, 73 and 222, and elsewhere. For Charisius and nascitur, see KGL, 1, 113, 116, 118, 291; on analogy/anomaly, see KGL, 1, 155. Cf. Diomedes on analogy/anomaly (KGL, 1, 439).

See KGL, 1, 155.

Diomedes, for instance, uses the nascitur formula (KGL, 1, 323), the oratio from oris+ratio etymology (KGL, 1, 300), and the concept of derivativa (e.g. KGL, 1, 501).

Diomedes relies primarily on Greek etymologies to explain the derivations of the names of the genres, meters, and other formal poetic elements. On the nature of poematae, see KGL, 1, 473; for simple, compound, and derived meters, KGL, 1, 501-2; on metra in general, KGL, 1, 501-29. Diomedes notes, for example, that "historice est
qua narrationes et genealogiae conponuntur, ut est Hesiodu

14 Consult Lidia Mazzolani, The Idea of the City in
Roman Thought, tr. S. O'Donnell (Bloomington: Indiana Univ.
Press, 1970), passim for a good account of this concept in
its various manifestations throughout the intellectual world
of the period.

15 The passage does not occur in Donatus' expanded
discussion of the adverb in his Ars Maior.

16 This etymology is found in Quintilian, Inst. Orat.
1, 6, 34 as an example of a silly derivation.

17 See KGL, 4, 421-23.

18 “Soloecismus dictus est vel ex Graeca etymologia,
 quasi σώαυ χόγον αικισμός, id est sani sermonis vitium,
aut certe ideo, quod Σόλοσκήνον, venientes Athenas et male
loquentes nomen ex se vitio dederunt” (KGL, 4, 445-46).

19 See Pompeius on the etymology of ars (KGL, 5, 95),
the non-Donatian etymologies of the noun and the verb (KGL,
5, 96-97), and the etiology of the invention of litterae
by Carmenta (KGL, 5, 98).

One would like to think that Pompeius was familiar
with the general classical controversy over the nature and
value of etymologia, particularly in Varro and Quintilian,
as well as with early Patristic developments in the field
of onomastic interpretation. It is possible, for instance,
that Pompeius' use of the columna/colu problem in his dis-
cussion of figurae was suggested by Quintilian (Inst.
Orat., 1, 7, 29). Cf. Pompeius on figura and Quintilian,
Inst. Orat., 1, 6, 17 and 28-38.

20 See e.g. KGL, 5, 99: "dicit 'littera est pars
minima vocis.' quare? quod ultra ipsam numquam solvi-
tur." Cf. KGL, 5, 111 and 267.
Chase, p. 15, claims that Donatus was Isidore's chief source for Book I of the *Etymologiae*; but see Fontaine, pp. 97, 120, 123, and elsewhere.

Robins, *AMGT*, p. 64.

Priscian himself says that his work is based primarily on that of Apollonius (*KGL*, 2, 1; 3, 107). But see Robins' summary of Priscian's intellectual heritage; *SH*, pp. 57ff. See also W. Ensslin, "Priscianus," *PW*, 22: 2333-36.


Although Priscian is aligned primarily with the earlier grammarians who considered the noun to be the basic unit of meaning (see Ensslin, "Priscianus," *PW*, 22:2332), he does touch briefly but significantly on the analysis of syntax and propositions as the generators of meaning, a view which later medieval grammarians like Peter Helias and Thomas of Erfurt expanded upon and solidified. And as we shall see, Priscian's theory of *derivativa* contains some important connections between the individual word and the nature of composition (see below, pp. 73-74). Thus, Priscian stands somewhere between the early medieval grammarians' emphasis on the individual word as the basis for meaning and those later philosopher-grammarians who called attention to the role of syntax and logical propositions in the generation of verbal meaning.

"quosdam errores eorum deceptos imitari, in quibus maxime vetustissima grammatica ars arguitur peccasse" (*KGL*, 2, 1). The extent of Priscian's dependence on literary Latin usage is indicated by the over 1200 references to Virgilian lines alone in the *Institutiones*, as catalogued in Keil's index.

Priscian also discriminates between *nomen derivativa* and *verba derivativa* (*KGL*, 2, 62f. and 369), but in both categories he identifies *verba* (word) *principalis* and *verba derivativa*. Cf. the account of *derivativa* by Celsus (*Ars Grammatica*; *KGL*, 5, 323-24).

For another discussion of Priscian's theory of *derivativa*, see Klinck, pp. 16-17, 24-25. Although helpful
for an understanding of Priscian's grammatical theory, Klinck's account of derivative differs greatly from that given here and downplays what we feel to be the truly innovative aspects of Priscian's development of the grammatical concept.

But of course, like most Latin grammarians, Priscian admits exceptions to the norms of Latinitas when constructed by poets and other users of artificial forms of language. See e.g. KGL, 2, 369-70.

See also Priscian's adaption of the traditional etymology of bellum in his Partitiones duodecim versuum. Bellum (war) is derived from bellus (pretty; good) by antiphrasis (KGL, 3, 496). Priscian correctly notes that bellus is related to bonus, the diminutive form of bonus. But there is another aspect to Priscian's use of this etymology. Priscian says that the noun (bellum) is derived from the adjective (bellus-a-um), similar to the standard etymologies of consul a consulendo (KGL, 2, 432) and lucus a non luceat. Thus the point of contrast is not good with war (as in Erasmus) but good with war's bad quality. The derivation as articulated in Priscian, therefore, actually represents an epithet ironically transferred from an abstract moral norm (Good) to a particular human activity. Cf. Boethius' theory of paronyms, where the just man is said to participate in the Idea of Justice (PL, 64, 168; cf. De Trinitate, 2, 44-48) and D. P. Henry, "Why grammaticus?" ALMA, 28 (1958), 165-80 and 'The De Grammatico' of St. Anselm: The Theory of Paronymy (Notre Dame: Univ. of Notre Dame Press, 1964).

For other examples of compositae which change their signification, see uter/uterque with their divided and collective significations (KGL, 2, 82). Cf. Partitiones duodecim versuum, 1, 10-21 (KGL, 3, 461-64).

See e.g. Priscian's explication of the Ovid passage (KGL, 2, 231)--above, p. 68--and his account of why infinitives can have the force of nouns (KGL, 3, 226).

For instance, see the following: KGL, 2, 278 (Latin from Greek); 2, 372 ("ex verbis nascentur"); 2, 374 (moods); 2, 397 (figurae verba); 2, 412 (supine); 2, 413, 414-15; 2, 431 (nouns); 2, 432 (verbals; nascentur substituted for derivantur); 2, 441 (multiple significations); 2, 453 (verb
tenses); 2, 548 (participia); 2, 577 (pronomina); 3, 55 (praepositio); 3, 63 (species of adverbia).

33 Cf. the instructive comments on compositio and constructio in Aldo Scaglione, The Classical Theory of Composition from Its Origins to the Present (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1972), pp. 82-83, 97-105. Also consult Priscian's distinction between actio and passio (KGL, 3, 116) and Bursill-Hall, Speculative Grammars, p. 57.

34 See Thuot, pp. 216, 341-42, and Bursill-Hall, Speculative Grammars, pp. 48-55, for Priscian's account of oratio and constructio and for the twelfth-century distinction between ordinatio as the form of the parts and the form of the whole. See also the earlier account of compositio and constructio in Demetrius of Phalerum (1st c. B.C.), On Style, 91-93; Classical and Medieval Literary Criticism, ed. Alex Preminger et al. (New York: Frederick Ungar, 1974), pp. 149-50.

35 Cf. Priscian's concept of the organic structure of language with the earlier hints in Diomedes (KGL, 1, 426) and Dositheus (KGL, 6, 377); Barwick, Remmius Palaemon, p. 232.

36 "Quattuor sunt genera sicut quattuor elementa, ex quibus omnia nascentur, masculinum femininum neutrum et commune. Sed ex his duo sunt naturalia, masculinum et femininum, quia haec duo generant et generantur; duo sunt artificialia .i. ex arte descendentia" (Fox, p. 16). On the similarity of all of Remegius' commentaries on Donatus, see Thuot, p. 10; Manitius, 1, 507; Fox, p. iii.

37 See the text cited by Thuot, p. 65. Cf. Thuot, pp. 85-86 and Smaragdus' etymology of verbum ("vere bonum"); Manitius, 1, 465. Also compare Remigius' comments on the analogy between the Trinity and the Latin tenses (Fox, pp. 53-54), the legend of Roma (Fox, pp. 4-5), and the analogy between the four elements and the four modes of composita (KGL, 8, 242).

38 See e.g. Remigius' explanations and refutations of Donatus on pronomen (Fox, p. 39), verbum (p. 42), adverbum (p. 60), participio (pp. 70, 262).

E.g. see Abelard's theory of reality as relative and contingent (*Dialectica*, 339, 10-16). While etymologia can clarify the form or composition of a noun, it cannot make understandable the substance of the thing to which the noun refers; etymologia as a method cannot demonstrate, according to Abelard, the movement from a relative proposition to a real proposition. (But contrast Abelard elsewhere; *Dialectica*, 128, 4 and 29; *Glossae super Porphyryum*, 3, 549:3.) In essence, later medieval philosophers considered etymologia an incomplete mode of investigation because it only treated an aspect of a thing rather than the whole thing. Cf. Jean Jolivet, *Arts du Langage et Théologie chez Abélard* (Paris: J. Vrin, 1969), pp. 73-74.


Not everyone, however, was convinced of Priscian's adequacy on all points. William of Conches' criticism is typical of later grammarians' attitudes toward some aspects of Priscian's work: "tamen obscuras dat inde diffinitiones nec exponit; causas vero inventionis diversarum partium et diversorum accidentium in unaguaque pretermittit" (in E. Jeaneau, "Deux rédactions des gloses de Guillaume de Conches sur Priscian," *Recherches de Théologie ancienne et médiévale*, 27 (1960), 14. William takes this point from Peter Helias.


Whitbread (pp. 3-5) and Curtius (p. 411) state categorically that Fulgentius was a Christian, but the fact of
his Christianity does not of itself appear to significantly
further the methodology or hermeneutic principles he adopts.
The problem is compounded by scholars' general consensus
that Fabius Fulgentius is not to be identified with the
Fulgentius who was Bishop of Ruspa. See e.g. Whitbread,
p. 34 and note, and M.L.W. Laistner, "Fulgentius in the
Carolingian Age," The Intellectual Heritage of the Early
Middle Ages, ed. Chester G. Starr (1957; rpt. New York:

45 See Sandys, pp. 29-30 and Terrence A. McVeigh,
"The Allegory of the Poets: A Study of Classical Tradi-
tion in Medieval Interpretation of Virgil," Diss. Fordham,
1964, pp. 86ff. For a general discussion of the legacy of
the Homeric commentators, see Robin R. Schlunk, The Homeric
Scholia and the 'Aeneid' (Ann Arbor: The Univ. of Michigan

46 According to Sandys (p. 149) Cleanthes was the first
interpreter of Homer to use the term allegorias; cf. Sandys,
p. 156. The term then appears in Latin in Plutarch's
De audiendis poetis (Sandys, p. 29).

47 Bernard F. Huppé, Doctrine and Poetry: Augustine's
Influence on Old English Poetry (Albany: State Univ. of
any Christian interpretation of myth or narrative; see
Mith., 2, 4 and Expositio continentiae Virgilianae, 7. But
see the combination of Homeric and Christian allegory in
Fulgentius' discussion of the myth of Bellerophon (Mith.,
3, 1).
See Laistner, pp. 204-11 and Whitbread, pp. 24-27.


Expositio sermonum antiquorum, 5 (neferendi sues), 10 (iniuges bous), 18 (sultelae), 22 (catillatus), 52 (alucinare).

We might mention here that the De aetatibus mundi et homines, generally attributed to Fulgentius, surprisingly contains no etymologies aside from one section with a few transliterations from Greek; see De aetatibus, 10 (Helm, pp. 166-67). This lack of the kind of etymological material so characteristic of Fulgentius' other works should force us to question why Laistner says that the De aetatibus is full of "fantastic etymologies" (p. 204) and to wonder if the work is really by our Fulgentius at all.

See Whitbread, pp. 15-17 for a general characterization of the persona in the Prologue to the Mithologiae. Cf. Whitbread, p. 107 and Expositio continentiae Virgilianae, 4, where Virgil refers to Fulgentius' persona as "homunculus."

See Helm, Opera, p. 65n.

For example, Fulgentius does not provide etymological interpretations for Mith., 1, 17; 2, 13; 2, 15.


Cf. Mith., 2, 14 (Ixion) and 1, 2 (Ganymede). See also the Stoics' and Fulgentius' uses of the Tiresias myth to determine the origins of grammatical gender (e.g. Mith., 2, 5). For a general survey of euhemerism in classical and medieval hermeneutic, see J. D. Cooke, "Euhemerism: A Mediaeval Interpretation of Classical Paganism," Speculum, 2 (1927), 396-410.
Centauri from centippi. Fulgentius' rather extensive use (at least by medieval standards) of Greek etymologies may have been the result of his dependence upon Verrius Flaccus' De significatu verborum, with its many citations of Greek words as the etymologies of Latin words. See Henry Nettleship, "Verrius Flaccus (I)," in Essays in Latin Literature (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1885), pp. 212-13. Fulgentius' interest in Greek origins of Latin words differs, therefore, from Varro's preference for Latin etymologies of Latin words. The spirit of Varro's etymological procedure would seem to coincide with that of Socrates in the Cratylus, where he was doubtful as to the validity of the appeal to the "foreign origin" of difficult words.

In the Cratylus Socrates has speculated on whether or not Poseidon was a compound of Ποσί (for the feet) and δεσμός (fetter); see above, pp. 17-18.
CHAPTER III: FROM NOMEN TO NUMEN: SACRED ONOMASTICS AND THE LATIN FATHERS

The tradition of the Patristic sacred onomastics (the Christian search for the theological meaning and significance of the names in the Bible and other documents) is especially rich and complex. In this chapter our main interest is with the onomastic contributions of the chief Latin Fathers—Jerome and Augustine—to the Latin etymological thought of the Middle Ages. But we must also attend briefly to some key antecedents of the significant work of these two Latin writers; in particular, we must look at the Biblical sanctions for etymological explanation, the Patristic notion of Christ as the Logos, and the work of Jerome's predecessor in the area of sacred onomastics, Origen. These antecedents form the nexus of etymological and theological assumptions which, at almost exactly the same time (388-89 A.D.), Augustine adopted to formulate the major Latin Patristic theory of language and names and Jerome incorporated in the most significant and widely dispersed examples of practical Patristic onomastic interpretation.
A. The Bible: Immanent and Imminent Meaning

The Bible provided Christian grammarians and etymologists with many kinds of sanctions for the study of the meanings of names and the search for origins. The two most crucial instances, of course, are, in the Old Testament, God's creation of the world through his divine speech and, in the New Testament, the Incarnation of the Word. But for the Fathers and the Middle Ages generally, the Bible revealed a great number of other etymological paradigms and truths structured around these two divine events.

The Fathers' general propensity for commenting upon the Old rather than the New Testament was in part a result of the fact that the Old Testament (especially the Pentateuch) was much more given to the use of sacred onomastics than the New Testament. In ways similar to the Stoics many centuries later, Old Testament writers generally accepted as true the principle that the comprehension of names leads to the comprehension of the things which the names signify. For instance, since a name expresses the essence of a person, the Old Testament often stresses the significance of changing names. We need cite only two of the most familiar instances to explain this concept more clearly. When God makes his covenant with Abram (Gen. 17: 1-8) He gives him a new name and even provides the patriarch with an etymological gloss on the name to explain its significance: "Nec ultra vocabitur nomen tuum Abram, sed appellaberis Abraham: quia patrem multarum gentium consitui te" [No
longer will your name be Abram, but you will be called Abraham because I have planned for you to become the father of many peoples]. The etymology which God gives is based on the new name's similarity to the Hebrew word for "father of a multitude." Later in Genesis Jacob acquires the new name "Israel" after he wrestles with an angel: "Nequaquam, inquit, Iacob appellabitur nomen tuum, sed Israel: quoniam si contra Deum fortis fuisti, quanto magis contra homines praevalebis?" (32:28) [No more, He said, will your name be Jacob but Israel, since if you were strong against God, how much more will you prevail against men?] Again, an etymology of the name (Israel - He who strives with God) is supplied in order to confirm the significance of the new name and the episode. The Pentateuch abounds with such etymological events and also with etiological ("Just-So") stories which define the appropriateness of a name by reference to its extra-verbal origins. In addition, as in the two instances we cited above, it is important to note the sort of etymological formulae (quia and quoniam) which the Vulgate text uses to explain the names in terms of an extra-verbal reality. These examples, typical of the Latin etymological terminology in the Vulgate, indicate the way in which the formulae we found in the secular tradition of etymologia were also incorporated into the sacred tradition through Jerome's Latin translation and therefore helped
to establish a solid etymological paradigm in what the
Middle Ages thought to be the world's oldest writing.

These examples of name changing, however, are really
but versions of the major onomastic event in the Old Testa-
ment: the Genesis account of creation and Adam's naming
of the plants and animals. According to the Vulgate ver-
sion: "Dixitque Deus: Fiat lux. Et facta est lux. Et
vidit Deus lucem quod esset bona: et divisit lucem a
tenebris. Appellavitque lucem Diem, et tenebras Noctem:
factumque est veslere et mane, dies unus" (Gen. 1:3-5)
[And God said, "Let there be light." And there was light.
And God saw that the light was good and He separated the
light from the darkness. And He called the light Day and
the Darkness Night. And there was morning and evening, one
day]. God spoke and thereby caused all creation (as well
as all grammatical analysis of reality) to come into being.
Because He supplied things with their proper names (Dies,
Nox), the Christian search for the origins of words was
essentially an effort to comprehend God's rationale for
creation and an attempt (parallel to the Stoics' efforts
to regain the primal purity of meaning) to recapture the
original moment in human history when that creation took
place. For man to be able to call things by their proper
names was analogously to repeat God's act of creation.³

Adam, of course, was the first man to "recreate"
God's act of creation. God made the living creatures and
led them to Adam "ut videret quid vocaret ea; omne enim quod vocavit Adam animae viventis, ipsum est nomen eius" (Gen. 2:19) [to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name]. Although this account would seem to provide support for the view of someone like Aristotle or Epicurus that all language is arbitrary, nevertheless the Church Fathers did not believe that Adam arbitrarily bestowed names like some Edenic Humpty Dumpty. After all, the first man named the animals before the Fall and long before the unity of language collapsed with the Tower of Babel. Therefore Adam's names belong to the time when angels conversed with men, a time when language was whole and perfect. So for the same reasons as the Stoics' search for the primal Saturnine purity of language, the Christian's discovery of a word's etymology and true significance also meant the discovery of that perfect form of language which both God and man used in the Garden of Eden and which the Fathers and the early Middle Ages identified with Hebrew.

After Creation and the naming of the creatures, the most important Old Testament event for the justification of sacred onomastics is God's covenant at Sinai. In the early versions of the Pentateuch the two narrative strands (J and E) identified by Wellhausen and other Old Testament scholars reflect different Hebraic interpretations of the revelation of God's name to Moses on Mt. Sinai. In the
Vulgate, however, there is little distinction made between God (\textit{YHWH} = Vulgate \textit{Deus}) and Lord (\textit{Elohim} = Vulgate \textit{Dominus}), but the event nonetheless has great importance for later Judaeo-Christian philosophies of language and meaning. When God tells Moses that He is called "EGO SUM QUI EGO" (Ex. 3:14), He essentially provides the Hebrews with an etymological explanation of His name. That the explanation is a tautology reinforces God's primacy in the universe. At Sinai, language confronts the inexpressibility of simplicity and the bare truth of the divine essence. Moses becomes, as it were, the "keeper" of God's name, the intermediary between God and man and the possessor of the meaning of God immanent in the name itself. The status of Moses as the possessor of God's name and as the intermediary between God and the Hebrew people is especially significant since many early medieval exegetes traced the origins of all literary genres and of many of the other arts back to Moses. Thus the origin of letters is intimately linked in Christian sacred onomastics with the origin of man's first knowledge of God through His correct name.

Moses' reception of God's name in the Old Testament parallels the event in the New Testament which was the foundation for all specifically Christian \textit{etymologia} and grammatical explanation---the Incarnation in the terms of the Fourth Gospel: "In principio erat Verbum, Et Verbum erat apud Deum, Et Verbum erat Deum" (John 1:1). Just
as God gave the Hebrews knowledge of His divine name and therefore of His immanent and imminent presence, so He later gave to all persons the Word made flesh in order to fulfill and accomplish His sacred purpose implicit in Old Testament salvation history. In the Vulgate both word and Word were embodied in Latin, but the Fathers were of course aware that the original language of the Old Testament was Hebrew. However, they comprehended the movement from Hebrew to Greek to Latin versions of the scriptures (Hebrew Pentateuch to Septuagint to Vulgaje) not as a sequence in textual transmission but as a continuous unfolding of the word of God culminating in the revealed presence of the Word Himself. Therefore, God's design, which Christian exegetes considered to be immanent within the Old Testament writers' use of sacred onomastics, was made wholly manifest via the theological concept of imminency, the continual unfolding in clearer and clearer terms of the full meaning of the divine word. This concept fortifies the significance of the naming of Jesus: "Pariet autem filium: et vocabis nomen eius Iesum: ipse enim salvum faciet populum suum a peccatis eorum" (Matt. 1:21) [She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus (Savior), because he will save the people from their sins]. As the ultimate source for all knowledge, all reality, all language, Christ the Logos could only be fully received after the diachronic development of the tres linguae sacrae. The later Patristic period is thus
extremely important in the development of Christian concepts of *etymologia* since it was during that period that Latin began to be considered as the language of Christianity. However, it was not until Rome was established as the principal holy see that Latin truly was regarded as the absolute word of God and therefore solely representative of the Word.

The Incarnation, together with the Old Testament paradigm of God's etymological analysis which revealed the **numen** in **nomen**, provided the Middle Ages with the most obvious and significant archetypes for the creation and meaning of language and also with the ultimate source for all words. Without their origins in God and Christ, all words are just so much *flatus vocis* (loosely, "hot air"), devoid of substance because they lack any divine "derivation."

The concept of the Logos, then, is the major theological principle animating the Greek and Latin Fathers' use of sacred onomastics.

B. Logos: Plato, Stoicism, and Christian Etymology

In Greek Philosophy the concept of the Logos had already held a place of special importance. In the *Phaedo*, for example, Socrates indicates that he became truly self-conscious of himself as a philosopher when he moved from a consideration of mere things to the world of the Logoi, from natural philosophy to that alone which makes
philosophical thinking possible: "I was afraid that my soul might be blinded altogether if I looked at things with my eyes or tried to apprehend them by the help of the senses. And I thought that I had better have recourse to the world of the mind and seek there the truth of existence." 

While *logos* in early Greek philosophy originally meant the conception of speech before actual verbal articulation, the term later came to signify oral and written language as well as the living force of thought and speech.

But the doctrine of the Incarnation and the Logos in early Christian *etymologia* received special support from another school of classical philosophy—Stoicism, not the later Roman Stoicism of Marcus Aurelius or even of Seneca, but that of those early Greek dialecticians and etymologists who were so much a part of the development of Varro's *etymological* theories. As our previous account of Stoic theories of *etymologia* and language indicated, the early Stoics placed great emphasis upon recovering primal or Saturnine meanings, that is, the truth of things which resided in the first form of human speech. *Etymologia* as a methodology could resurrect pure, "Attic" meaning and thereby could allow men to glimpse the spiritual forces which infused the things to which language refers. In addition, such early Stoics as Zeno, in an attempt to combine Plato's theory of the imitation of forms with the imitation of action, elaborated upon Plato's notion of an
interior logos, parallel to the articulated logos, which is the source of all man's virtuous action. Thus the Stoics' logos signified both man's interior ability to reason toward virtue and the external expression of thought by word and dialectical reasoning. Also the Stoics proposed a series of lesser logoi spermatikoi which carried out the greater function of the logos to animate and generate the spiritual force of meaning in the world of matter. The early Christian apologists adopted the Stoic theory of the logos in order to help explain God's rationale for creating the Word, Jesus Christ, as explained in John's Gospel. Beginning in the second century A.D. with Justin, who was a Stoic disciple before his conversion, the divine logos was incorporated into Christian theology in the person of Jesus Who is said to penetrate the world of reason and life. All rational beings share in the universal Logos which is Christ, so that Socrates (according to Justin) was a Christian before Christ because, like other virtuous nonChristians, he participated in the logoi spermatikoi of divine reason which God planted in all men at creation. After Justin, other apologetic theologians identified the Logos as the objectification of the Holy Spirit in Verbum, thereby making Christ the paradigm of the harmonious and rational function of human language. In the work of Theophilus of Antioch (late second century A.D.) we find for the first time the distinction
between the innate Logos (λόγος ἐνθοτοκς) in God and the uttered Logos (λόγος ἀποφοριχος). Later, Hippolytus (c. 170-235 A.D.) associated not only creation but also Christ with the formation of the Logos and he discriminated three states of the Logos: 1) the innate Logos, 2) the uttered Logos, and 3) the Logos as Word Incarnate (literally "Final Son": υιος τελειος). The three states of the Logos in Hippolytus correspond to the Johannine description of the Logos and to the accepted Christian chronology of salvation history: Christ's eternal existence with God, the preparation for Christ in the words of the Old Testament, and then the Incarnation. Athanasius (c. 295-c. 373 A.D.) is typical of the Greek Fathers' highly developed theory of the Logos as the center of theological meaning: "Our nature is in fact Verbified in a certain measure in the individual nature assumed by the Logos." Accordingly, a person can achieve concorporeality with Christ through the imitation of the Logos in virtuous speech as well as in virtuous action. For Athanasius and the other Church Fathers, action is a kind of language, just as all creation is a result of God's divine speech, so that one can articulate the origins of things just as he can speak of the origins of words. Words and things are both derived from Christ, the Logos.

This notion of a truly Christological Logos, which Hippolytus had expanded from John, is fully reflected in
the Latin Patristic tradition first by Tertullian and then more importantly by Augustine. Tertullian's contribution to the Patristic theory of sacred onomastics is enhanced by the fact that he is the real founder of Latin theological terminology. Tertullian explicitly links Christ the Logos and the etymological concept of derivativa: "pater enim tota substantia est, filius vero derivatio totius et portio, sicut ipse profitetur: quia pater maior est" [The Father is the total substance, but the Son is the derivation of all and part of it, as He Himself declares: the Father is greater than I]. The Incarnation is a derivation of the pure Verbum located in God, and as such it is the paradigm for all derivations in human language. Two centuries after Tertullian, Augustine advanced the Christian doctrine of the Logos by adapting the Stoic notion of logoi spermatikoi (rationes seminales) from Plotinus in order to reconcile the Genesis account of continuous creation with the statement in Ecclesiasticus that God created all things together. Plotinus had transformed the Stoics' theory of the divine seeds planted in matter into the concept of ideal rationes seminales, present in matter, which created the potentiality of a knowable, sensible world. For Augustine, the presence of rationes seminales could explain how God created all things at the beginning of the world, even those things which were not at once in their full being. In addition, Augustine replaced Plotinus' Mind (Nous), which Plotinus had equated
with ideal Forms, with the Stoic and Christian Logos, thereby affirming the notion that the human world and word originated with the divine Word.

The conjunction of the Logos and *rationes seminales* reveals the essentially immanent quality of meaning in Augustine's theology. Christ is the Logos in time and therefore the true paradigm of speech, since individual syllables fly through the air to complete the entire statement, the meaning of which is immanent in any individual part of the statement. The order of writing or speaking corresponds to the order of the divine revelation in the Logos which completes the immanent meaning of God's plan for human salvation. The essence of Christian etymology rests for Augustine in knowing that the origin of the Logos in time and the origin of the human word are one and the same—the God through whose spoken word the world came into being.

C. Origen and Christological Onomastics

Origen (c. 185-253 A.D.), a pupil of Clement of Alexandria, contributed to the development of Patristic sacred onomastics in his attempt to interpret the Old Testament Christologically from an etymological perspective. Origen's connection with Clement is especially important since the school at Alexandria was generally favorable to grammatical and etymological kinds of Biblical interpretation,
following the example of Philo Judaeus (c. 20 B.C.-45 A.D.). Philo had sought to apply the methods of the Homeric allegorists to his reading of the Pentateuch; in so doing, he constructed an elaborated hermeneutic method which relied upon allegorical interpretation governed by grammatical, rhetorical, and etymological rules and by number symbolism. A Biblical name, says Philo, describes precisely the extraverbal reality to which it refers: "... with Moses the names assigned are manifest images of the things, so that name and thing are inevitably the same from the first and the name and that to which the name is given differ not a whit." That this notion of sacred onomastics as a primary key to Biblical meaning was pervasive in Alexandrian hermeneutics is indicated by this passage from a pseudo-Clementine homily:

Pythagoras held that he who gave names to things must be reputed, not only as the wisest, but as the most ancient of sages... We must search in names for the meanings which the Holy Spirit intended to relate to realities and which He teaches us by inscribing, so to speak, His thought in words, so that when we have studied them with care we may discover the sense of names which have multiple meanings, and that the meaning hidden in many of them may declare itself and shine forth, after being tested and studied.

Origen redirected the Alexandrian concept of onomastic interpretation to focus it more precisely on the Logos as the paradigm of human speech. In his reply to Celsus, Origen claims that the multiplication of nations
and languages (and hence of wars and noncommunication, i.e. barbarisms) was the punishment for man's sins from Adam on. "The original unity of mankind," he says, "the sign of which had been the unity of language," was destroyed as man wandered away from the Orient. For the Fathers, the Orient typologically signified both Eden and Christ; therefore, for Origen Christ is the motivating force of the unity of language, which itself is part of the eternal order of things. Origen declares that "historically" the narrative of the Tower of Babel represents the result of man's 'errining' from Eden, but "allegorically" (i.e. typologically) the story signifies the breakdown of the res-verba relationship in a language without Christ. The Incarnation thus becomes the essential element in the theory and practice of sacred onomastics.

Origen's sense of the Christological character of language reveals itself in what we call an etymological method. Christ is the source of a unified and perfect language and because all contemporary language is derived from an original Edenic language, the practice of searching for derivations and meanings of words is in essence a search for the significance of Christ. As The Word, He is the archetype for all words and, like roads to Rome, all etymologies lead to Christ. Accordingly, the names and titles of Christ in the New Testament (and proleptically in the Old Testament) are of special interest to Origen and later Latin Patristic writers who adopt his method.
of Christological onomastics (most notably Jerome).

From the many names for Christ (Wisdom, Word, Truth, Rock, Life, Lamb of God, Resurrection, and so forth) Origen abstracts two general categories of names: those which "denote the Word as He is eternally in Himself" and those which are in some way "bound up with the economy of the Redemption." In either category each name serves to point to Christ's "unfathomable riches" (Eph. 3:9). Each name indicates only an aspect of the referent's infinite substance, God the Son; says Origen, "the extent to which people receive the Word is proportionate to their likeness to Him." Origen's method of explaining Christ's names is revealing, as when he says that Christ is called "the alpha and omega" "because He became everything to everybody, to bring everybody to salvation." Christian spiritual reality, then, is the referent for any of Christ's names, and it should not be difficult to see how this fact was extended to include all names and words in human speech, since things are like their archetypes. The discovery of the original and complete form of a word is analogous to the discovery of the whole Christ. As Augustine formulated the principle, "nomen ille frustra sortitur qui Christum minime imitatur" [he bears this name (Christian) in vain who does not imitate Christ]. For the Fathers to separate the name Christian from the person was simply to deny the eternal order of things, to misread language, and therefore to etymologize falsely.
Origen elaborates upon the relations among Logos, word, and thing in his *De Principiis*: "This Son, then, is also the truth and the life of all things that exist; and rightly so. For the things that were made, how could they live, except by the gift of life? Or the things that exist, how could they really and truly exist, unless they were derived from the truth? Or how could rational beings exist, unless the Word or reason had existed before them?"

A paragraph later, Origen adds that all of Christ's titles "are derived from his works and powers . . . ." In this mixture of Stoicism, Platonism, and Christianity which is so much a part of all Patristic thought, and especially of the Fathers' concepts of *etymologia* as a principle of interpretation, we find that Origen adopts the Stoic idea, with a trace of Platonic innatism, that the Logos is immanent in the spirits of individuals (*logoi*): "In so far as a man possesses Wisdom, he shares in the life of Christ, who is Wisdom."

The importance of this concept of a Christ-centered language for the development of Patristic sacred onomastics cannot be overestimated. Like Boethius who remarked in his commentary on Aristotle's *Categories* that a prudent man participates in the Idea of Prudence, Origen affirms that the person who "shares in the life of Christ" is truly called a *Christian*. Accordingly, to understand the significance of a word is at once to understand its
significance as an aspect of Christ, since the Logos is the ultimate significance of all words. Meaning is immanent in the word itself, and a search for the origins of a derivation leads one simultaneously to Christ and the Father. \(^{32}\) This notion that the spiritual referent or source is immanent in the verbal form provides the justification for the general "associative" quality in sacred onomastic interpretation. Since the Son is infinite, any etymologia will perforce lead to one aspect of His nature. The etymological procedure, then, cannot stop with that one aspect but must continue on to explore the rest of the source (Logos) if it is adequately to account for the word's complete derivation and its derived meanings.

Origen's example of a Christological onomastics coupled with his emphasis on associated meanings and derivations was taken up by many later Patristic writers and etymologists. We might mention briefly the work of just one, Niceta of Remesiana (c. 335-c. 414 A.D.), a contemporary of Jerome's, in order to demonstrate the way Origen's general onomastic principles were put into practice and also to provide a context for the detailed discussion of Jerome's truly comprehensive work in Christian sacred onomastics. Even though Niceta himself was writing in the Byzantine area and was a leader of the Greek Church, his brief treatise on the names of Christ (De Diversis Appellationibus\(^{33}\)) reflects in part the
tradition of Latin *etymologia* and onomastics which we have been outlining here.

All of Christ's names or titles, says Niceta, which are found in the New Testament, help us to grasp the nature and range of His power; the names reveal the different qualities of one substance. Thus Niceta's Christology is essentially grammatical and paronomasiac in its articulation, since (in the words of Athanasius quoted earlier) "Our nature is in fact *verbified* in a certain measure in the nature assumed by the Logos." Nicetas asserts that Christ is the Word because He was begotten of the Father with no more passivity or substantial diminution in the Father than there is in a person who utters a spoken word (PL, 52, 863-64). Because God speaks through Christ to angels and men, there exists a direct *imago* relationship between God Who speaks and therefore creates and man who speaks and creates. The Greek Fathers' concept of *imago Dei* was that image and likeness were virtually indistinguishable and that a likeness must always obtain between the image and its archetype. The Latin Fathers, on the other hand, understood the image to be in the powers or faculties of the mind; likeness to God was the excellence and perfection of those powers and the virtues arising from them. In essence Niceta combines these two views in his notion of the educative function of the word: "Nam ut Patrem scias, ipsum quaere, quia
sapientia est" (PL, 52, 865) [If you would know the Father, listen to this Word, because He is Wisdom].

In accordance with the educative faculty of Christian onomastic investigation, Niceta arranges his work into three parts: a catalogue of Christ's names and titles, an explanation of the names, and an exhortation to the audience to participate in Christ's qualities by absorbing His adjectival and nominal descriptions into themselves. Niceta explains most of the names with either Biblical citations or statements of Christian doctrine, that is, extraverbal criteria. In each instance, it is what the name signifies or points to, rather than its verbal form, which generates the interpretation and explanation of its meaning. So, for example, Christ "Sapientia dicitur, quia per ipsum sunt in principio sapienter cuncta disposita" (PL, 52, 864) [is called Wisdom, because in the beginning all things were wisely ordered through Him]. Niceta's use of the quod/quia formula in this and every other onomastic interpretation in his treatise reenforces the extraverbal quality of his explanations of Christ's names. Not only does Niceta manifest a mythographic approach to etymological interpretation, but like Fulgentius in the secular tradition, he bases his procedure on a perception of a priori truth which is then read back into the text or name to generate etymological definitions and explanations. The all-important difference between Fulgentius and a Christian
etymologist like Niceta is that while Fulgentius' methodology (as we have seen) rests on a potentially subjective base with the interpreter's ingenuity as the norm for etymological explanation, the Father's use of sacred onomastics is founded upon a belief in the revealed Word, the Word Incarnate, Who provided the paradigm for human language and human action and Who exists as the ultimate justification for all etymological investigations.

These, then, are the fundamental Patristic assumptions as to the significance of language, origins, and etymologia: 1) the Biblical sanctions for naming and onomastic interpretation, 2) the Christian adoption of the Stoic logos to provide the paradigm of human speech and the connection between the search for the origins of words and the search for the origins of things, both of which arrive at God, and 3) the model of Christological onomastic interpretation, derived primarily from Origen, which significantly reoriented the focus of the Christian use of sacred onomastics. We shall now proceed to examine in some detail the two fourth-century A.D. models for Latin Patristic sacred onomastics: Augustine's general philosophy of language and names, and Jerome's influential practical interpretations of Hebrew names. Augustine and Jerome were the dominant models of Latin Christian etymologia prior to Isidore of Seville.
D. Augustine and the Christian Signum

In a recent and stimulating book on the nature of medieval sign theory and epistemology as the product of a linguistic mode of thought, Marcia Colish has succinctly summarized the impact of Augustine's conversion on medieval theories of verbal symbolism:

Augustine's conversion gave him the theoretical foundations for a positive theology. At the same time, it forced him to develop his views on the functions of language in the knowledge of God, and in the Christian life. Augustine's speculations on language bequeathed to his medieval successors a clearly outlined verbal epistemology, firmly grounded in both classical language study and the theology of the Incarnation. His extensive writings contain many practical applications of this epistemology.36

In his writings on language and meaning, Augustine redirected his extensive knowledge of classical grammatica, rhetoric, and logic to the formation of a specifically Christian grammar to be used in the service and love of God. The general theories of signum and interpretatio which he developed profoundly influenced the growth of later Patristic and early medieval grammar and especially the theory of etymologia. In this section we shall focus directly on these general theories and ideas about language, grammar, and etymologia, and in particular on the way in which they structure Augustine's theory of names and onomastics as contained in his De Magistro (written at almost the same time--389 A.D.--as Jerome's interpretations of Hebrew names).
We should make it clear at the outset that while Augustine recognized in his writings the value of various kinds of *etymologia* as keys to interpretation and Christian truth, he nonetheless was not an innovator in the practice of specific etymological interpretations. In general, Augustine uses *etymologia* as a rhetorical trope to explain particular words or concepts. Although he does develop a few new etymologies which became standard devices in exegetical and theological argumentation, the majority of his etymological explanations seem to come from the technographic grammatical tradition. Like Diomedes, Charisius, and Servius, Augustine employs *etymologia* to clarify the true sense of a word, but his aims in doing so are different from those of the technographers. For example, following the Stoics, he derives *dialectica* from *peritia disputandi*, hence its meaning "to discuss." In the *De Civitate Dei* he repeats the etymology of Latin *ars* from Greek *aretê*, incorporated by Servius and others into the Donatus tradition, as part of his demonstration that folly created the pagan gods and that virtues are "not themselves divinities ... [but] gifts of the true God." Henri-Irénéé Marrou has noted that Augustine also draws several etymologies from classical literature, especially Cicero (e.g. *nequitia* from *ne quidnam*). In any case, like the early Latin grammatici or orators, Augustine uses *etymologia* primarily to explicate words and to provide what he considers to be
an intrinsic and irrefutable form of argument.\textsuperscript{41}

But the justification which Augustine, unlike the pagan grammarians, invokes to support \textit{etymologia} as a truly absolute method of interpretation and argumentation is not just the familiar correspondence between words and things (\textit{res} and \textit{verba}), but a theory of meaning which is fundamentally verbal yet which encompasses both verbal and nonverbal signs, a theory motivated by the Incarnation, the Word made flesh, which is the source of all manmade words. Therefore Augustine's primarily verbal model for his discussion of all signs and symbols is, in the context of both classical and Christian education, grammatical. For Augustine, everything could be reduced to verbal signification; through Christ, all Nature was verbified.\textsuperscript{42}

The sort of grammatical training and knowledge Augustine received is rather easy to surmise when we remember that he lived at the same time as some of the most significant Latin grammarians---Donatus, Charisius, Diomedes, Servius, and Pompeius.\textsuperscript{43} Giuseppina Bellissima, in a very useful article for the study of Augustine's grammatical background,\textsuperscript{44} has catalogued most of Augustine's explicit statements drawn from the Latin \textit{ars grammatici}. Augustine cites the traditional definition of \textit{grammatica}: "recte loquendi scientiam et poentarum enarrationem,"\textsuperscript{45} and also repeats the definition of \textit{oratio} as the reasoned art of joining letters.\textsuperscript{46} Elsewhere Augustine affirms the
supremity of auctoritas for the most profitable grammatical study. Like Donatus and the other Latin grammarians, Augustine conceived of an essentially "literary" ars grammatica, rooted in texts not tongues, a fact reflected in his use of the traditional etymology of grammatica: "sicut grammaticam Latine litteraturam linguae utriusque doctissimi appellaverunt. Sicut enim a litteris denominata est grammatica, quoniam graece grammatas litterae dicuntur." The heart of classical and early medieval grammatical and etymological theory was the analysis of the partes orationis, and Augustine repeats a few of the traditional implicit etymological definitions used by the Latin grammarians and adapted from the Alexandrian technographers. He cites, for example, the explanation that "pronomen est pars orationis, quae pro ipso posita nomine minus quidem plene idem tamen significat" and includes the etymology of verbum found not in Donatus but in the Stoics' writings on grammar and in the commentaries on Donatus: "verbum est derivativa a verberando aerae." In the De Magistro Augustine creates a new etymology for nomen ("a noscendo") which has important implications for his grammatical theory of signs and etymological meaning, as we shall see in a moment. As Bellissima's study indicates, Augustine was well versed in the late Latin grammarians' analyses of the word classes and his remarks on the various kinds of nomina derivativa, nomina generalia, and nomina specialia
testify to his theoretical competence in grammatical analysis. However, there is nothing in Augustine's writings comparable to the extended technographic accounts of the species or figurae nomina in Pompeius or Priscian in the later fifth and sixth centuries.

In the main Augustine used grammatical theory as an auxiliary mode to justify particular textual emendations or to explain obscure or difficult passages. But it is not entirely accurate to say, as Marrou does, that Augustine's grammatical program was "Technique scolaire, elementaire" in contrast to that of Jerome "la grammaire savant" and Origen who adapted philology "aux besoins de l'exégèse chrétienne." While he may use grammatical and etymological ideas as modes of specific explanations, the criteria of explanation which Augustine invokes are extra-verbal and Christian rather than technographic and verbal. In the De Civitate Dei (13, 11), for example, he discusses the conjugation (declinatio) of the Latin verb moritur: "Unde non inportune neque incongrue arbitror accidisse, etsi non humana industria, iudicio fortasse divino, ut hoc verbum, quod est moritur, in Latina lingua nec grammatici declinari potuerunt ea regula qua cetera talia declinantur" [So I think it significant and appropriate—even though it happened not by human design, but perhaps by divine decision—-that not even the grammarians have been able to decline [moritum] by the same rule as other
verbs of this form]. To say that morientes is analogous to viventes and dormientes is to say, paradoxically, that the dead "are dying" as those in life are living or those in sleep are sleeping. Similarly, says Augustine, if one claims that the perfect form of moror is mortuus est and therefore analogous to orior/ortus est, he would be wrong because the double u in the first example places the form in a different category comprising forms such as fatuus, arduus, and conspicuus, forms which contain no reference to past time. Augustine then supplies a theological and distinctly extraverbal solution to this grammatical problem:

Illud autem, quasi ut declinetur, quod declinari non potest, pro particípio praeteriti temporis ponitur. Convenienter itaque factum est, ut, quem ad modum id quod significat non potest agendo, ita ipsum verbum non posset loquendo declinari.

[[the adjective mortuus] however is used instead of a perfect participle as if to give a conjugation for an impossible tense. And so, most appropriately, the verb cannot be declined in speech, just as the reality which it signifies cannot be declined [that is, avoided] by any action.]

Augustine then goes on to declare that "Agit tamen potest in adiutorio gratiae Redemptoris nostri, ut saltem secundam mortem declinare possimus" [Nevertheless it may happen that with the help of the grace of our Redeemer we are enabled to decline (declinare) (or avoid) that second death], with a pun on the grammatical term declinare. Augustine is careful to establish the framework necessary for a
specifically Christian grammar—the notion of extraverbal categories and truths which justify and initiate grammatical forms and etymological explanations.

Similarly, Augustine certainly must have been familiar with the offices of the classical grammarian (lectio, emendatio, enarratio, iudicio); yet when he applies the grammatical method of interpretation to Christian texts, he of necessity alters the Greek and Roman technographic approach which stressed emendation and recognized all four steps as discrete investigations. Augustine, like most other Patristic exegetes, assumed that emendatio and enarratio, the sense of the correct text and the meaning of the correct text, were inseparable, since the right word properly read would lead one to the real Word and hence to an understanding of God's moral truth. Augustine also did not see any real difference between the exegetical techniques applied to the literal sense of a text and those applied to the allegorical or spiritual senses. As he indicates in De Doctrina Christiana, one analyzes the tropes and other figures of words to determine both the literal and spiritual meanings.

The one text of Augustine which most fully articulates his theories of verbal meaning, grammar, and etymological explanation, and the one which sets out most directly the Augustinian context for Patristic sacred onomastics, is his De Magistro. Ostensibly a dialogue
between Augustine and his son Adeodatus, Augustine's treatise on the teacher is a fairly complete explanation of his theory of signs and symbolism, and as such, is fundamental to his conception of grammar and especially *etymologia* as a source of the Christian investigation of truth. In the *De Magistro* Augustine declares that all signs (both verbal and nonverbal) are to be used to arrive at, and not just understood to signify, the knowledge of the realities which they designate. Arguing on the basis of the interconnection of word, reality, knowledge of the word, and knowledge of reality, Augustine says that true signs (*signa*) point to real things (things signified—*significabilia*) greater than themselves and more valuable. This is the answer which he provides in the treatise to counter the view (similar to Cratylus' in Plato's dialogue) that the study of signs and words can of itself instill truth and knowledge in the mind of the listener or reader (*De Mag.*, 10, 33). Those signs (*flatus vocis*) which refer to nonexistent or false things (e.g. pagan poetry) are perversions of language and therefore are not "grammatical." Thus, Augustine establishes an important relationship between the speaker and his audience: "Qui enim loquitur, suae voluntatis signum foras dat, articulatum sonum" (1, 2). [When a person speaks, he gives an outward sign of what he wants, an articulated sound], whereupon, in the person who hears the words, the memory
is stirred and "facit venire in mentem res ipsas, quarum signa sunt verba" [brings to mind the realities themselves signified by the words (De Mag., 1, 2). Augustine therefore parts company with the technographic grammarians who, using verbal explanatory criteria, only explain "pro una voce notissima aliam vocem aeque notissimam, quaé idem significet" (De Mag., 2, 4) [a familiar word by an equally familiar word which means the same thing]. For Augustine, it is not enough to say that homo is a noun; the word also refers to a type of animal and the most noble of creatures (De Mag., 8, 24). But while Augustine correctly understands the technographers' use of primarily linguistic authority to justify grammatical rules and etymological interpretations, it is also important to observe that like Varro, and Priscian and Isidore after him, Augustine considers meaning as essentially immanent within the configuration or sound of the word. One learns "vim verbi, id est significationem, quae latet in sono" (De Mag., 10, 34; my italics) [the sense of a word, that is, the meaning hidden in the utterance]. In Christian grammar and sacred onomastics, the concept of immanent meaning rests on extraverbal criteria whereby etymologies and derivations are worked out within the framework of Christian belief; in other words, a proper meaning was already available if one could find the proper etymology to fit it.

The corollary which results from this matrix of reality, knowledge, and signs forms one side of the
fundamental debate of most, if not all, medieval theories of interpretation and exegesis: Does knowledge of the Christian order of things lead us to comprehend the formation of words or vice versa? Inverting the potentially subjective secular mythographic procedure of Fulgentius, Augustine argues that the authority for verbal signification is the extraverbal order of things in God's world: "Ita magis signum re cognita quam signo dato ipsa res discitur" [it is more a matter of the sign being learned from the thing we know, than it is of knowing the thing itself from the manifestation of the sign]; "potius enim ut dixi vim verbi, id est significationem, quae latet in sono, re ipsa, quae significatur, cognita discimus, quam illam tali significacione percipimus (De Mag., 33-34) [it is as I said more a matter of learning the sense of a word, that is, the meaning hidden in the utterance, from the reality (once we know it) than it is of perceiving that reality from a sign of this kind]. In the De Magistro, this principle of the extraverbal reality which reveals the meaning of the word reflects an interiorization of meaning and reality whereby Augustine declares that one does not learn anything by hearing and comprehending the spoken word. With a distinct echo of the early Christian doctrine of the Logos, Augustine says that true learning is achieved through the perception of truth as it is illumined by a person's Inner Light (De Mag., 1, 2).
Although he acknowledges that some words (which Augustine calls "external words") signify by virtue of their having been artificially imposed on things, the really true words are those internal, silent words which are flashes of the "heavenly communion beyond language," where Christ the Master speaking within us teaches truth. Augustine's theory of signs, then, leads directly to his theory of Christian (self) education; the magister in the classroom is a nonessential agent in that learning process which activates the inner light in the pupil. Augustine's theory of signs in the De Magistro also leads to his notion that the basis of interpretation is embodied in the allegorical relationship between letter and spirit, and in the concept of the New Testament doctrine of grace which is immanent but as yet unrevealed in the Old Testament.

In addition to this general account of signs and meaning, Augustine articulates in the De Magistro some concepts which were to be important for the development of specific approaches to sacred onomastics in the early Middle Ages. Building on the principle that the realities are more important than the signs which point to them, Augustine defines a word (verbum) as "quidem id videmus cum aliquo significatu articulata voce proferri" (De Mag., 4, 9) [that which is uttered with some meaning by the articulate voice]. Also, like Greek and Latin grammarians, Augustine believes that the noun and the verb are the
basis of all verbal meaning. Augustine uses two etymologies in the De Magistro to explain the nature of meaning; he derives nomen from noscendo (knowing) (5, 12) and verbum from verberando (striking) (5, 12). The context of the latter derivation is already familiar to us as an etymological definition used by the Stoics and the commentaries on Donatus for both the word and the verb. The derivation of nomen is more significant since it reveals that for Augustine, and other Patristic writers, the nomen alone is the really primary unit of meaning:
"demonstratur omnibus partibus orationis significari ali- quid et ex eo appellari; si autem appellari, et nominari, si nominari, nomine utique nominari" (De Mag., 5, 15) [it is shown that something is signified by every part of speech, and if signified, then called; if called, then named; if named, then surely named by a noun (name)].

These etymologies, based on sound and similitude rather than composita, help us to categorize one aspect of Augustine's theory of meaning. Because nomen is derived from nosco and is taken as the principal unit of meaning, it essentially reflects an act of the mind, or more precisely, an act of perception. But as the derivation of verbum indicates, the function of the verb is to articulate that act of knowing and to make it perceptible to the ear by creating sound. Thus, while the noun/name acts as the repository of meaning and significance, the
verb/word generates those audible sounds and syntactic constructions which create _oratio_ from _dictiones_. In a similar way, God is the repository of the Logos which, when divinely spoken, creates the world and when uttered by humans preaches the knowledge of God.

The special role which Augustine's grammatical epistemology accords the noun is further indicated by his separation of names (nomina) from other nouns and other parts of speech. In so doing Augustine establishes a very important methodological concept in the early medieval theory of _etymologia_ and sacred onomastics. Names, he says, are signs which mutually signify each other and therefore are not in the same mode as verbs, conjunctions and the other parts of speech (De Mag., 5, 11). For example, _homo_ is both a noun and part of the larger category _verbum_ (word); hence it has two names which designate the two categories to which _homo_ belongs. Accordingly, signs may be distinguished on the basis of sense, function, or mere sound. The latter _differentia_ is the least significant for Augustine and in fact words which differ only in sound are not really thought to be distinguishable; the Latin _nomen_ and Greek _onoma_ signify one and the same thing, as do _vocabula_ and _nomen_ (De Mag., 6, 18). This concept of the translatability of verbal signs without any loss of "significant" meaning provides the basis for many later medieval etymological procedures. Jerome and Isidore
are two notable examples of the customary practice of substituting a Latin translation of a Hebrew or Greek word and then proceeding to construct an etymological interpretation for the Latin word as if no substitution had been made. But Augustine demands that interpreters and etymologists make clear the categories they are using when talking about verbal signs so that confusions such as that between homo the noun and homo the type of animal do not occur (De Mag., 24). They must specify, that is, whether their explanatory criteria are verbal or extraverbal; but for the Christian etymologist only extraverbal criteria can be truly adequate for etymological and other grammatical explanations. Therefore, it is not a lie to say one thing and mean another, since a sign used "as a true signification cannot in any way be rightly called a lie." The validity of a particular derivation is determined by the degree to which it reflects or embodies Christian extraverbal truth and not whether or not it represents a true or false etymological relationship. So Augustine declares that fides is etymologically related to fero because "the Latin form is from the fact that what is said is done," a clear reference to God's acts of creation as recounted in Genesis (dixit et factum est). Augustine firmly links the human word and Word of God with the grammatical concept of truth which justifies the verbum through the res to which it points. As the De Magistro indicates, words are valid
signs of the true knowledge of God only as they are weighed against the inner light which perceives reality without language. So, too, *etymologiae* are valid as they correspond to and remind the Christian interpreter of the true origins of the things to which the words refer. Such is the basic Latin Patristic grammatical and etymological theory of meaning which enforces the concept of Christian sacred onomastics and interpretation. We now turn to the most important practitioner of Latin etymological interpretation and sacred onomastics in the Patristic period—Jerome.

E. Jerome: "In figura Christi sub etymologia"

For the student of sacred onomastics, *etymologia*, and Patristic exegesis, the corpus of St. Jerome's exegetical and textual writings and translations presents a varied, sometimes even contradictory, set of principles and tendencies. As Beryl Smalley has noted, Jerome "left a tradition on the one hand of fanciful interpretation, on the other of scholarly literal interpretation." These hermeneutic antipodes in Jerome are the result of his own development as a Christian exegete. Beginning with strong influences from the Stoics and from Origen and the Alexandrian mode of exegesis, Jerome broke with allegorical and spiritual interpretation following the controversy over Origen and finally embraced in his last commentary
Con Jeremiah) an extreme form of Antiochene literalism. Jerome's specifically onomastic works, the interpretations of Hebrew names which exercised the greatest impact on subsequent medieval uses of *etymologia* as a mode of interpretation, belong to Jerome's Alexandrian period, when Origen was his principle exegetical influence; they were all written around 388 A.D. during the time when Jerome was establishing his monastery at Bethlehem.

However, it is misleading, especially with his onomastic works, so rigidly to separate the "literal" from the "spiritual" in Jerome's interpretive methodology. The interpretation of the literal and the spiritual meanings is at the center of Jerome's etymological procedure. For Jerome, a concern with the literal text meant an understanding of the three "sacrae linguae" (Hebrew, Greek, and Latin). As we noted previously in this chapter, early and medieval Christians considered these three languages to be sacred by virtue of their special roles in the working out of Christian salvation history and the revelation of the Word in the word. Partly as a result of the work of Jerome (the Christian Aristarchus *par excellence*), grammatical and etymological studies in the Latin Patristic period were nearly equated. Just how deeply Jerome believed that true Christian faith depended upon a strong and accurate knowledge of the Bible is measured by his assertion that "ignoratio Scripturarum ignovatio Christi
est" [Ignorance of the Bible means ignorance of Christ].

When he refers here to the Bible, Jerome means not only its events and teachings but also its language. The revealed Word is comprehended in part through the divine word, since God transmitted His Word and His Spirit to the words of the sacred text. Therefore, the *ars grammatica* stood on the first step of man's ascent to the Trinity, and sacred onomastics revealed to the Christian the mystery and meaning of God's spirit.

Essentially, Jerome's onomastic writings are pragmatic and are intended to assist the Latin Christian in practical Biblical interpretation. In none of his major works on Hebrew names does he attempt anything like a systematic discussion of the theory of language, meaning, exegesis, or etymologia, as did Varro, Augustine, and later Priscian (in various ways, of course). Nonetheless we can examine Jerome's onomastic writings and infer from them certain methodological procedures which account for the most significant Patristic use of etymologia and the most important practical example before Isidore of Augustine's theories for Christian grammar and etymology.

In the *Liber Interpretationis Hebraicorum Nominum* Jerome employs a variety of glossulae and etymological methods: similarity of sound, context, association, *composita*, etiology, typology, and so forth. In many cases Jerome relies strictly on the similarity of sound
between Hebrew and Latin (or Greek and Latin) words to
generate and justify a variety of moral and spiritual ety-
mological interpretations. For example, Jerome glosses
Abel as "luctus, sive vanitas, vel vapor, aut miserabilis"
[sorrow, or emptiness, or steam, or miserable] and Cain
as "possessio vel adquisitio" [possessing or acquisition]
(CCSL, 72, 60). He then proceeds through composita
analysis to gloss Elcana as "dei possessio" (CCSL, 72, 75) and
to derive Canaan from Cain (based upon the similarity of
sound) but with a positive rather than a negative meaning:
"adquisitio aut possessio eorum" (CCSL, 72, 63). Similarly,
he glosses topazium (Job 28:19) as "bonum" and claims that
the word is derived from the Hebrew (CCSL, 72, 134),
an etymology based principally on the similarity of sound
between the Hebrew and the Latin words.

In the Liber de Situ et Nominibus Locorum Hebraicorum
we find an example of how Jerome can go beyond individual
glosses to construct an etymological interpretation based
essentially on the similarity of sounds. Thophet (Jer. 7:
31f.), he says, signifies "ara Thophet" in the valley of
Ennom, a derivation which provides an opportunity for
Jerome to recount the evils of pagan and idolatrous wor-
ship ("omnis pravae superstitionis religio servaretur"
[all religion is enslaved by vicious superstition]). He
then links Ennom to ge Ennom and explains that the Hebrew
ge becomes χν in Greek and vallem in Latin, while Ennom
is the Hebrew variant of the name of the first sinner, Adam, or else sounds like the Latin "gratiam" (!). Hence, says Jerome, Gehenna is ultimately derived from Thophet, "quod scilicet omnis populas Iudaeorum ibi perierit, offendens Deum" (PL, 23, 982) [because indeed the entire race of the Jews shall have perished there, offending God]. As is customary in early medieval etymologia, we find that Jerome uses the quod formula to express an extraverbal (in this case Biblical) standard of etymological explanation.

The derivation of Thophet is typical of the way in which extraverbal explanatory criteria justify Jerome's easy passage from Hebrew to Greek to Latin in many of his derivations. While Jerome was one of the most linguistically learned men of his time and also one of the few Latin writers who knew Hebrew, he nonetheless depended upon Grecised Hebrew as much as on the Hebrew itself. To cite just one of many examples, Jerome uses the Greek gloss on Salu to generate his Latin translation "fortuna vel vegetus" (CCSL, 72, 84) [fortune or animated]. For Jerome a static ("sempiternal") signification is immanent in diverse verbal configurations and it is the task of the Christian onomastician to peel away as much of the verbal form as possible to reveal the divine truth in the original Hebrew word. Thus, Jerome's etymological search for Hebraica veritas would seem to
resemble Fulgentius' search for Roman truth, but there is one fundamental difference between the two. In Fulgentius the Greek language obscured the true signification of the myths and had to be cut away completely. Jerome, on the other hand, regarded all three Biblical languages as sacred and capable of transmitting God's truth. In fact, Jerome's etymological procedure often goes forward from Hebrew to Greek to Latin, as with his interpretation of Salu, in the manner of a "read-off" hermeneutic or translation. The concept of God's ontological being as an eternal present demands the notion that all Christian spiritual and doctrinal truth be immanent in the original Hebrew text of the Old Testament. But just as the fullness of God's plan is only revealed to man through the development of salvation history, so the fullness of His immanent meaning in the Hebrew text is only revealed to the Christian world through the succeeding Greek and Latin versions of the Bible. Jerome emphasizes the value of the later translations of the Scriptures in salvation history when he remarks in his commentary on Amos that the authors of the Old Testament were men of their times and therefore had to use the language available to them, a language inadequate to express God's plan for salvation. Thus a language unredeemed by Christ could not fully represent extraverbal reality in a Christian universe.
The etymological interpretation of Gehenna from Thophet reveals for us two other fundamental aspects of Jerome's etymological procedure: his use of composita and association as etymological methodologies and his essentially atemporal (typological) modes of etymological explanation. In his Preface to the Liber Interpretationis Jerome associates himself with the onomastic tradition of Philo and Origen and then claims to extend and improve upon the work of these Greek etymologists. By mentioning Philo and Origen, Jerome helps to clarify for us the context for his use of composita and association and typological or Christological sacred onomastics.

In the Preface Jerome explicitly refers to Philo's interpretations of the names in the Old Testament as etymologiae (CCSL, 72, 59, 1.3) and we must recall that Philo's etymological procedure was to apply to the study of the Pentateuch a primarily composita method of etymological analysis, similar to that used earlier by the allegorical interpreters of Homer. Like Philo and the early Greek commentators, Jerome's use of composita analysis relies primarily on extraverbal criteria and is much more methodologically practical than that of Latin technographers with their theoretical discussions of simplices and compositae figurae or derivativae ones. However, there are some instances where Jerome invokes verbal criteria to justify composita etymologies. For example, he explains aseroth as
atria sive vestibula, si tamen per
beth et sade litteram scribitur: si
vero per aleph et sin beatitudinem
sonat (CCSL, 72, 86)

[foyers or entryways, if it is written
with the letters ֗ (heth) and GetObjectID
(ahaz); if [it is written] with the letters
א (aleph) and ס (sin), it means felicity
(beatitas)].

In this case it is the written Hebrew characters which are
at issue. But like Pompeius, Priscian, and Fulgentius
later, Jerome links meaning to the word's proper etymolog-
ical composition. Different composita have different mean-
ings based upon the cumulative significance of their separ-
ate elements. Jerome uses technographic composita and
verbal explanatory criteria in several other instances. In
the case of Micha, the etymological analysis depends upon
the sound of the name rather than its written form:

Tıs, ως, ex duabus orationis partibus
nomen compositum, quod apud nos sonat
quis quasi, aut quis velut? (CCSL, 72, 96)

[Tıś, os, the name is compounded from two
parts of speech, which according to us
means "who how" or "who as"]

Frequently Hebrew words are translated into Latin as a
composita explanation; e.g. "Engannim fons hortorum" (CCSL,
72, 93). Elsewhere Jerome, in the manner of a technographic
grammian, employs composita to clarify and correct pre-
vious etymological explanations. For example, the ancient
Hebrew city of Ἀρ, he says, "hodie ex Hebraeo et Graeco
sermone composita, Areopolis nuncupatur" [today is named
Areopolis, and is compounded from a Hebrew and a Greek
word], and is not derived, as some early Christian writers claimed, from the etymological relationship between the Greek Areos and Latin Martis. Jerome's recognition of the historicity of languages and his technographic efforts to establish correct etymologies and meanings seem at times to clash with his vocation as a Christian exegete. So we find him reminding the reader of the Bible to comprehend the Greek and Latin names in the New Testament (especially in Acts and the epistles) with "perspicuum" rather than violently (violenter) to interpret the names "secundum linguam hebraicam" (CCSL, 72, 148); the writers of the New Testament, he says, were men of the Hellenized world, not the world of the Patriarchs.

But while it is true that Jerome was a learned scholar and often a careful philologist, he was above all a Christian. His belief in the truth revealed by God's Word made him refrain most of the time from holding to this historical awareness of language. Therefore Jerome's primary criteria for *composita* and other kinds of etymological explanations are extraverbal (usually Christian) spiritual reality. Like Philo of Alexandria, Jerome glosses or explains many Hebrew names in terms of etymologies based upon the context, character, or events in the Old Testament with which the names are associated. So Nimrod, the monarch who established the kingdom of Babylon (Gen. 10: 8-10) is identified as a type of "tyrannus vel
profugus aut transgressor" (CCSL, 72, 69), [tyrant or fugitive or trespasser], while Jacob is referred to as subplantator (CCSL, 72, 67) [a supplanter]. In the Liber de situ Jerome states that the name Bethel was imposed on the place because of the altar which was built on the spot where Jacob slept while traveling to Mesopotamia (PL, 23, 90). Elsewhere he continues the traditional equation of Babel with Babylon (see Gen. 11:1-9). He then glosses Babel as "confusio" [confusion] and proceeds to recount the story of Nimrod's desire ("cupientes") to ascend into heaven and the consequent punishment of the multiplicity of languages (PL, 23, 92). In these and many other instances in Jerome's onomastic writings, we are beyond etymologia in the strictly grammatical sense and in the presence of the exegetical grammarian who substitutes qualities, transliterations, translations, or etymologies based upon extraverbal criteria for the various Biblical names. But like Philo and the Stoics, Jerome proceeds within the conceptual framework of the immanent meaning of words. To refer to Nimrod is to recall his transgression; to mention Babel is of necessity to relate the most significant event in the city's history and perhaps the most important event after the Incarnation for Christian grammar. Nimrod's presumptuous desire and the equation of Babel with Babylon are all within the "semantic field" of any of the persons or places associated with
those events and hence are immanent in all of the names.

Jerome's use of simple additive conjunctions—vel, aut, sive—emphasizes this swift and easy movement from association to immanent association. Such formulae are the glossator's linguistic staples, but they have particular significance for Jerome's onomastic activities because of their unobtrusiveness and sparseness. In the Liber Interpretationis Jerome uses these conjunctive formulae for the most part only in his discussions of Old Testament names; when treating names in the New Testament, he uses primarily the formula id est or hoc est, to the same effect. Explanatory, associative, typological, or etymological substitutions are made easily and directly, in part to reinforce the meaning of the gloss or derivation as a manifestation of the word's full immanent meaning.

The interpretation of the name Eden in the Hebraicae Quaestiones affords us a good extended example of Jerome's figurative glossulae and his use of context as an etymological method.

Et plantavit dominus deus paradisum in eden contra orientem. Pro paradiso hortum habet, id est gan. Porro eden deliciae interpretantur, pro quo Symmachus transtulit paradisum florentem. Nec non, quod sequitur, contra orientem in hebraeo mimizra scribitur, quod Aquila posuit ἄγηπεν and nos ab exordio possimus dicere, Symmachus vero ἐκ πρωτης et Theodotion ἐκ πρωτος, quod et ipsum non orientem, sed principium significat. Ex quo manifestissime comprobatur
quod prius quam caelum et terram
deus faceret, paradisum ante con-
diderat; sicut et legitur in hebraeo
plantaverat autem dominus deus para-
disum in eden a principio (CCSL, 72, 4).

[And the Lord God planted paradise in
Eden towards the east. For paradise
has a garden, that is gan. Moreover
eden means delight; Symmachus trans-
lated paradise "flowering." Also what
follows contra orientem is written
mimizra in the Hebrew text which Aquila
set down as apo archethen and which we
are able to call "from the beginning";
Symmachus indeed [set down] ek protes
and Theodotius ek protois, which does
not mean east, but beginning. From
which is shown most clearly that before
God made heaven and earth, He built
paradise, as indeed we read in the
Hebrew, the Lord God planted paradise
in Eden in the beginning.]

Jerome uses the Greek translation of the Hebrew text to gen-
erate his more properly "Hebrew" ("sicut et legitur in
hebraeo") Latin interpretation. In the Liber de Situ
Jerome extends this exegesis when he says that Eden is "sacri
paradisi locus ad orientem, quod voluptatem deliciasque
transfertur" (PL, 23, 938) [the place of sacred paradise
to the east, which in translation means pleasure and desire].

The noun Eden, therefore, is not to be understood fully as
a proper name but as a name signifying (via the grammatico-
rhetorical trope of translatio) pleasure or desire, especi-
ally of the sexual kind. Similarly, in his translation of
Genesis 2:8 (and passim) Jerome claims that the apparently
oxymoronic paradiso-voluptio accurately translates the
Septuagint Eden (cf. CCSL 72, 4). The equation of Eden
with desire was a popular Rabbinic exegesis so we need not assume that Jerome's use of the gloss was predicated on a Greekified Hebrew text. However, the equation of "contra orientem" with "a principio" reveals that Jerome's interpretation of the name Eden is clearly based on the extra-verbal contexts of the Biblical name and the Christian doctrine of original sin.

Frequently Jerome's etymological interpretations and translations reflect not just Biblical or even Christian reality but specifically figural or typological reality, in the manner of the Christian etymologist characterized by Origen. Adopting the framework of Christological onomastics, Jerome generates many etymological interpretations and glosses of Hebrew names in terms of the fulfillment of the Old Testament in the New. In Epistola 46 (to Paula and Eustochium), Jerome discusses the composita of the name Jerusalem and affords us a brilliant example of Christological onomastics and the use of the composita method:

[Our whole mystery is a native speaker
of the language of that province and city.
It shows our faith in the three names of
the Trinity: for it is called Jebus and
Salem and Jerusalem. The first name is
"trodden upon," the second "peace," the
third "vision of peace." Gradually indeed
we arrive at faith and after being despised
we are raised up to the peace of the vision;
from which peace Solomon, that is "peace­
ful," was born there and "his place was made
in peace," and in the figure of Christ
governed by the etymology of the city he
received the name "lord of lords" and "king
of kings."]

The etymology of Jerusalem, he says, is analogous to the
Trinity. The "mysterium" is immanent in and native to the
city and province themselves, but in order to comprehend
that fact one must account for the etymology of the name
of the city. In a verbified universe, the city and its
name are coeval; the Christian significance immanent in
the one must be immanent in the other. For Jerome, the
concept of Christological onomastics implies the belief
that the origins of things are analogous to the origins of
words. Furthermore, it is the "figura Christi" which is
the principal cause of the city's later titles—"dominus
dominantium" and "rex regnantium"; Christ is the real
presence Who accounts for the origins of the city's names.
This unfolding of significances is assisted by Jerome's
use of the loose conjunctive formulae (vel, id est) which
associate or "read off" the Christological meanings of
the city's titles. In addition, it is not beyond the
realm of possibility that Jerome, the pupil of Donatus,
is intentionally playing with the word *figura* in this passage: "in figura Christi sub etymologia urbis." The fact that he specifically mentions the concept of *etymologia* in conjunction with *figura* would indicate that both senses of *figura*, the grammatical and the exegetical, are to be taken into consideration. The "figura Christi" animates the language of the Christian and becomes the ultimate etymological source of all meaning.

Many of Jerome's glosses and derivations reflect a priori Christian typological reality as the criteria for etymological interpretations. It is the relationship between elements of extraverbal reality which determines the relationship between specific Hebrew or Greek and Latin words. Furthermore, because such typological derivations are atemporal, the concept of Christological onomastics prohibits any real historical perspective on language and *etymologia*. For instance, Jerome's interpretive translation of *Noe* (Noah) as "requies" or "requiescit" (CCSL, 72, 69; 132; 141; 151; 157) is based not only on the etymology of the name given in the Old Testament but also on the typological relationship between Noah and Christ. Jerome makes this Christological derivation more explicit in *Epistola 46*, when he explains that Noah signifies *requies* because the ark of the covenant in Jerusalem is associated with Christ's *sepulchrum* through Isaiah's prophecy that "'erit requies eius honor,' quod scilicet
sepulturae Domini locus esset ab omnibus honorandus" ["his rest will be honor," because certainly the place of the Lord's burial should be honored by all]. Similarly, **Ebraicus** is glossed everywhere in Jerome's writings as "transitor" or "transitus" (e.g. CCSL, 72, 74; 103; 145; 154; 155; 156), an interpretive derivation which reflects not just the extraverbal reality of the context of the Exodus as recounted in the Old Testament but also the figurative relationship between the history of the tribes of Israel and the life of the Christian man. Elsewhere Jerome specifies the typological character of this etymological gloss and explains each of the Israelites' **mansiones** (stopping places) in the desert in terms of both its Old and New Testament significances: "per has [phases] currit verus Hebraeus, qui de terra transire festinat ad caelum, et Aegypto saeculi derelicto, terram repromissionis ingreditur" [the true Hebrew races through these stages, who hastens to pass from earth to heaven, having abandoned the Egypt of this world, and enters into the promised land]. In such Christological etymologies, the effect is to collapse any real historical or temporal considerations and to make explicit the immanent and complete meaning of the original Hebrew word, a meaning which is revealed in the history of Christ's Incarnation and ministry and in the Greek and Latin scriptural texts which record that history.
While Jerome never fully articulated the methodological principles for his onomastic investigations, it is fairly evident that most of the time he agreed with Augustine that a word was primarily a sign which pointed to an a priori extraverbal reality and should be used to teach or affirm Christian truth. However, Jerome's approach to Christian etymologia and sacred onomastics was pragmatic and therefore fundamentally eclectic. At times he could employ the sort of etymological analysis used by some technographic grammarians to clarify or emend a scriptural passage. More significantly, his writings reflect several kinds of Patristic sacred onomastic interpretation: "literal" etymologies based upon the similarity of sounds or written configurations between Hebrew or Greek and Latin words or upon the actual meaning of the Hebrew word; derivations determined by the context of, or things associated with, events and names in the Old Testament; and finally, those Greek or Latin words which make explicit the figurual or typological significance considered by Christians to be immanent in the Hebrew words from which they are derived. Furthermore, as we observed in Jerome's account of the composita etymology of Jerusalem, his search for the derivations and meanings of words often focused on the derivations of things. Christ the Logos generated the significance of both the city and its name and thus sanctioned the equation of the origins of words with the origins of things.
After Jerome the mantle of Christian *etymologia* passed to Isidore of Seville. But Isidore, unlike his illustrious predecessor, viewed etymological and onomastic interpretation not solely as a tool of Biblical exegesis but as a methodology for the comprehension of all human knowledge, both sacred and secular. While wearing Jerome's mantle, then, Isidore added several other articles of etymological clothing to his hermeneutic wardrobe: among others, the technographic tradition of *etymologia* (represented primarily by Pompeius), the essence of the Cratylan and Pythagorean positions regarding the nature of etymological analysis, and a general strengthening of the epistemological equation of the origins of words with the origins of things. We turn now to the most comprehensive and broadly-based etymological model of the early Middle Ages and the one which synthesized for the first time the technographic and mythographic (or sacred onomastic) traditions of *etymologia*: Isidore of Seville's *Etymologiae sive Origines*. 
NOTES


All quotations from the Bible cited in the text are from the Vulgate version and are accompanied by the RSV translation.

2In the Pentateuch the principal elements of the narratives are eponyms, etiologies, and placename associations, and the cycles of narratives particularly in Genesis seem to have grown up around these three areas. The stories centered on Abraham are clearly eponymic, with a single individual whose name designates a tribe of Israel (e.g. the narratives of Jacob and Esau). Elsewhere various etiological stories account for the origins of places, as the narratives of Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen. 19) and Jacob. Finally the Pentateuch is loaded with places associated with persons and events (e.g. Abraham-Bethel, Isaac-Beersheba, and Jacob-Shechem). See further John H. Hayes, Introduction to the Bible (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1971), pp. 53-54 (esp. on etymologies of Moab and Ben-Ammi) 74, 137, 146, 179; Artur Weiser, The Old Testament: Its Formation and Development, tr. Dorothea M. Barton (New York: Association Press, 1961), pp. 57-60.

3Cf. the Stoics' search for Saturnine origins (above, pp. 24-25, 33-34). Cf. Origen, Hom. in Num., 11, 4; Jerome, Epistola, 18; Comm. in Zeph., 3, 18; Augustine, De Civ. Dei, 16, 11, 1.

4The Fathers scarcely noticed the mention in Gen. 4:26 that man knew the name YHWH since the time of Adam's grandson, Enoch. See the authoritative summary of previous scholarship and the development of the Pentateuch in Weiser, Old Testament, pp. 2-4, 81-142.

5Moses' role as the inventor of the genres becomes more significant towards the end of the Patristic period; see the discussion of Isidore's version of literary history (below, pp. 208-12).

7 This passage was the impetus for the typological relation between Joshua (in Greek, Jesus) and Jesus; see Jean Danielou, From Shadows to Reality, tr. Wulstan Hibberd (London: Burns and Oates, 1960), pp. 249-50.


10 Spanneut, Le Stoïcisme des Pères, p. 345.

11 First Apology, 46; PG, 6, 397. Cf. Justin's play with the etymology of ἄρτιανος, from both ἄρτιος (annointed) and άρτιος (honey); see First Apology, 4; PG, 6, 332-33. See Justin's discussion of the truth of divine names; Second Apology, 6; PG, 6, 336-37.

12 Second Apology, 8 (PG, 6, 457); 10 (PG, 6, 460); and 13 (PG, 6, 468).

13 Ad Autoclycus, 2, 10; PG, 6, 1064-65.

14 Philosophumena, 10, 33; PG, 10, 95. Cf. Irenaeus: "For all those who have the Spirit of God in them are led to the Logos, that is, to the Son, and the Son takes them and offers them to his Father. . . . Accordingly, without the Spirit one cannot see God's Logos, and without the Son one cannot reach the Father" (Adversus Haereses, 4, 7);


17 Adversus Praxean, 6, 9; CSEL, 47, 239. Cf. "visibilem vero filium agnoscamur pro modulo derivationis"; Adversus Praxean, 6, 14 (CSEL, 47, 250). Cf. Spanneut, Le Stoicisme des Peres, pp. 303-5, on Tertullian's use of other etymological terminology (prodire, procedere, etc.).

18 Gen. ad Litt., 6, 6; PL, 34, 342-43.


22 De Cherubim, 17; cf. De Mutatione Nom., 11-14, 89-91. See also Harry Wolfson, Philo (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1947), 1, 115-37.


25 Eden was said to have been planted ad orientem, while Christ (the Son/Sun) is oriens exalto. For a general account of the importance of the East as a concept in the theology and hermeneutics of Origen and other early Christian writers, see Danielou, Origen, pp. 28-30 and From Shadows to Reality, pp. 27, 29. See also on the verbum abbreviatum in Henri Lubac, The Sources of Revelation, tr. Luke O'Neill (New York: Herder and Herder, 1968), pp. 182-94.


27 De Oratione, 27; cited in Danielou, Origen, p. 261. Recall Hippolytus' distinctions among the kinds of Logos (above, p. 116). Parallel to Origen's concept of the imago Christiani is his notion that one's particular spiritual needs determine how the Word manifests itself to him. See Danielou, Origen, pp. 294-96.

28 Comm. in John, 1, 31; Danielou, Origen, p. 259.

29 De Vita Christ., 1; PL, 40, 1033. The entire passage is significant: "Christum unctum interpretari, sapientium et fidelium nullus ignorat. . . . Ex sacramento enim unctionis huius, et Christi et Christianorum omnium, id est, in Christo credentium, vocabulum descendit et nomen; quod nomen ille frustra sortitur qui Christum minime imitatur. Quid enim tibi potest vocari quod non es, et nomen tibi usurpare alienum?"
De Principiis, 1, 2, 4.


See Origen on the commonality of substance in the Father and the Son; De Principiis, 1, 2, 6.

The text used here is that in PL, 52, 863-66. For Niceta's biography and an account of his rather interesting career, see the introduction to Gerald G. Walsh's translation of Niceta's writings in The Fathers of the Church, Vol. 7 (New York: Fathers of the Church, 1949), pp. 3-8.

See e.g. Gregory of Nyssa, Oratio Catechetica, 6; 8.

See e.g. Augustine, De Trinitate, 10, 11-12 and Gen. ad Litt., 6, 2 and 8, where Augustine conflates the Greek and Latin Fathers' concepts of imago Dei. Cf. A. J. MacDonald, Authority and Reason in the Early Middle Ages (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1933), p. 17, and De Doct. Christ., 2, 32.

Colish, Mirror of Language, pp. 8-9. For Augustine's theory of signs and language, the most important works are: De Magistro, De Doctrina Christiana, De Mendacio, Contra Mendacium, Genesi ad Litteram, and Enarrationes in Psalmos (see bibliography).


"Quid est enim aliud dialecta, quam peritia disputandi?" Contra Cres. donat., 1, 13, 16; PL, 43, 455. Cf. De Civitate Dei, 8, 7.

De Civ. Dei, 4, 21. Cf. Servius on Donatus (KGL, 4, 405); Diomedes (KGL, 1, 421).
40 See De Vera Religione, 2, 8 (PL, 32, 864) and compare Cicero, Tusculanes, 3, 6, 8 and Varro, DLL, 10, 5, 81. Cf. Marrou, Saint Augustin et la fin, pp. 128-29.

41 However, Augustine occasionally employs an etymology for pure curiosity's sake; see e.g. the derivation of lupanar in De Civ. Dei, 18, 21. Cf. Marrou, Saint Augustin et la fin, p. 127.

42 De Doctrina Christiana, 2, 1, 1. Cf. Athanasius on the Logos (above, pp. 115-15) and Colish, Mirror of Language, pp. 67ff.


46 De Ordine, 2, 12, 35-36; De Magistro, 6, 17. Cf. Bellissima, p. 36.

47 See e.g. De Catechizandis Rudibus, 1, 6, 10 and Soliloquia, 2, 11, 19.


49 De Magistro, 5, 12-13. Bellissima (p. 37) says that Quintilian is the source for Augustine's etymological explanation of the verb (see Inst. Orat., 1, 6, 35), but in the context of the passage from Quintilian the etymology is used as an example of a silly and unfounded etymology. Cf. our discussion of the etymologization of Donatus; above, Chapter 2, A.
50 De Magistro, 5, 12.

51 Bellissima (pp. 36-39) cites Contra Cresconium Donatistam, 2, 1, 1 and 3, 74, 86; De Trinitate, 7, 6, 2; De Genesi ad Litteram, 5, 19, 37 (nomen); Epistola, 3, 5 and De Civitate Dei, 3, 2, 2 (verbum); De Magistro, 1, 2, 4 (praeposition); De Magistro, 6, 18 (conjunction); De Sermone Domini in Monte, 1, 8, 23 (interjection). Cf. Diomedes (KGL, 1, 323) and Servius (KGL, 4, 429) on nominae derivativa.

52 Saint Augustin et la fin, p. 443. Compare e.g. Locutiones in Heptateuchum, 1, 3, 4 and 7; Epistola, 166, 6, 17. Cf. Bellissima, p. 41.


54 Cf. Augustine's discussion of analogy and the infinitive of cupio (cupi or cupiri); Epistola, 3, 5. See Bellissima, p. 38.

55 Cf. Marrou on "grammatical exegesis" (Saint Augustin et la fin, p. 424). Marrou, however, does not make enough of the significant epistemological differences between the classical and Christian technographic and mythographic approaches to grammar.

56 De Doctrina Christiana, 3, 29, 40-41; cf. Quintilian, Inst. Orat., 8, 6, 4 and Donatus (KGL, 4, 400). Cf. Augustine's interpretation of God's promise to Abraham; De Civ. Dei, 16, 21; De Trinitate, 15, 9, 15-16. For Augustine's general accounts of the schemes, tropes, barbarisms, and solecisms, see De Doctrina Christiana, 2, 13, 19; 3, 29, 41.

57 De Magistro, 4, 7; future references to the De Magistro will be incorporated into the text. Cf. Confessiones, 5, 14, 24.

58 On words signifying other words (e.g. nomen) vs. words signifying things, see De Magistro, 4, 7. On the
difference between physical imitations vs. using words or other signs to signify things, see De Magistro, 3, 5-6 and 10, 32. Cf. on De Magistro in Colish, Mirror of Language, pp. 54-58.


60 Besides his De Magistro, cf. De Doctrina Christiana, 2, 25, 38; 2, 35, 53.

61 Cf. De Mendacio, 1-2; PL, 40, 487-88.

62 De Magistro, 3, 5-6; 11, 36-14, 46 (esp. 11, 38). Cf. De Doctrina Christiana, 1, 2-5; De Trinitate, 15, 17-20. See also Colish, Mirror of Language, pp. 49-50.

63 See De Spiritu et Littera, 6 and 27-30,


66 See e.g. on the nature of truth and typological truth in terms of past, present, and future; Contra Mendacium, 13, 22-28.

67 De Mendacio, 20.

68 The Study of the Bible, p. 22. Cf. J. N. D. Kelly, Jerome: His Life, Writings, and Controversies (London: Duckworth, 1975), pp. 153-54; Kelly calls Jerome's etymologies "dryly technical" and for the most part "erroneous, often to the point of fantasy."

69 See Paul Antin, Essai sur St. Jerôme (Paris: Letouzey and Ane, 1951), pp. 159f., 162, 164ff; Ferdinand Cavellera, Saint Jerôme: Sa vie et son œuvre (Louvain and Paris: Champion, 1922), 1, pt. 1, 144-45. Antin, however,

70 *Hebraicae Quaestiones in libro Geneseos; Liber Interpretationis Hebraicorum Nominum; Liber de Situ et Nominibus Locorum; Epistolae 20, 25, 28, 30, 42, 46, 78, and 84*. References to these works will be incorporated into the text; all translations are my own.

Etienne Gilson claims that Jerome was the main source for the medieval use of etymological explanations (*Les idées et lettres*, p. 179), but this claim needs to be qualified in view of our account of the secular technographic and mythographic approaches to *etymologia* (above, Chapter 2). Also, Isidore would seem to have provided as much, if not more, sanction as Jerome for the use of *etymologia* as a truly explanatory concept in the Carolingian and later Middle Ages; see our discussion of Isidore's etymological model (below, Chapter 4).


72 *Prologus in Commentum in Isaiam*; PL, 24, 17.

73 Compare Jerome's procedure with that of the early Greek Stoics' use of tropes to analyze the original meanings of words; see above, pp. 23-25.

74 Cf. the interpretations of Meetabel and Nazareth (CCSL, 72, 137). Also note Jerome's comments on *Roma*, which he says can signify either power (according to the Greek derivation) or sublimity (according to the Hebrew derivation); *Contra Jovinian*, 12, 38 (PL, 23, 357).

75 Similarly Jerome uses the Greek gloss ἔκροτον on the Hebrew *Thardema* to derive the Latin interpretation "gravem et profundum soporem," hence "Et dormivit" (CCSL, 72, 4). Cf. Gilson, *Les idées et les lettres*, p. 159.
The term "read off" is taken from I. T. Ramsey's *Models and Mystery* (London and New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1964). Ramsey distinguishes between "disclosure models" and "picture models" as the two modes of theological discourse (pp. 2f., 9f.). The disclosure model is articulation which attempts to transmit to the reader through various models an insight into structures and patterns of universal significance. The "naive" (Ramsey's word) picture model, however, is one from which the reader can or thinks he can "read off" discourse without restraint. Almost all medieval theology and allegory rests on picture models rather than disclosure models (at least from Ramsey's point of view). But our adoption of Ramsey's terminology here is pragmatic and heuristic, and does not imply our adoption of his judgments toward either the "naive" picture model or the nature of all theological discourse. Cf. Ramsey's other works: *Religious Language* (London: SCM Press, 1957) and *Christian Discourse* (London and New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1965).

Cf. Antin, *Essai*, pp. 150ff. See also Jerome's qualification of Origen's interpretation of the Seraphim (Contra Celsum, 5, 30); Daniélon, Origen, p. 228 (on Seraphim and Babel). Jerome uses an etymological explanation to interpret the angel as fire or the beginning of language, and he goes on to say that Hebrew was the original language "purified" by Scripture, see Comm. in Isaiah, 2, 86 - 3, 88 (PL, 24, 91-93). Cf. *Epistola* 18 and Antin, *Essai*, p. 73.

Comm. in Amos, 2, 4; PL, 25, 1029.


De Palestinae Locis, 294; PL, 23, 977-78. Cf. other examples of technographic composita analysis; e.g. Sarepta (CCSL, 72, 141).

"Andreus decus in statione vel respondeus pabulo. Sed hoc violentum. Melius autem est, ut secundum graecam etymologiam ἀντρό τῶν ἄνδρῶν, hoc est, a viro, virilis adpelletur" (CCSL, 72, 142).

At times Jerome can use etymological argument like a pagan mythographer, as when he explains that the Tigris river is so called "propter velocitatem, instar bestiae nimia perniciate currentis" (Liber de Situ, 251; PL, 23, 971). Many of his etymological interpretations attempt to preserve the Hebraic contextual meaning, but at least as many search out the words' derivations in terms of their Christological significances (see below, pp. 153-56).

Jerome explains a few etymological impositions by means of metonymy. See e.g. Samaria, the city which was named from the region which encircled it (Liber de Situ, 278; PL, 23, 970).

Jerome does make use of other, more specifically etymological formulae: exponere, impositum, interpretari, and so forth; but the emphasis is usually on their translational or substitutional functions. In the Prefaces to his Latin version of the books of the Old and the New Testaments, Jerome uses the formulae interpretari and exponere interchangeably to mean "translate" or "to give an explanation/exegesis." See Louis Hartmann, "St. Jerome as an Exegete," A Monument to Saint Jerome, ed. F. X. Murphy (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1952), p. 66. Jerome's Comm. in Amos contains such formulae as impositum and unde to explain, for example, why the names of the constellations, which originated from pagan myths, were used in the Bible (2, 5; PL, 25, 1041). Cf. Comm. in Isaiam, 13 (PL, 24, 468). In the Liber de Situ, see e.g. Jerome's etiological explanation of the name Bethesda: "Nam hostias in eo lavari a sacerdotibus solitas ferunt, unde et nomen acceperit" (182; PL, 23, 931 [my emphasis]). Note also Jerome's rather rare use of the technographic formula nascitur in his gloss on Evila (Liber de Situ, 199; PL, 23, 938).

See also Gilson's splendid description of how such figural glosses and derivations were incorporated into and often structured medieval exegesis (Les idées et les lettres, pp. 164-69). Frequently, the interpretation of Hebrew names
consisted of replacing the original Hebrew word with its Greek or Latin translation and then arguing as if the word had not been substituted for. The result often was that the exegete drew from the Hebrew word the sense attributed to it by the Greek or Latin translation. But in the scheme of the unfolding of God's plan for salvation in the tres linguae sacrae, such "etymological" reasoning is not only permissible but theologically correct.


88 On Jerome's specific uses of Origen's Christological onomastic interpretations, see Wutz, Onomastica sacra, pp. 30-50.


90 Epistola 78. Jerome provides etymological glosses on the names in Num. 33 and derives part of his material from Origen's Hom. in Num., 27; see Kelly, Jerome, pp. 211-12. Also see Epistola 30 and Jerome's etymological explanation of the spiritual meaning of the letters in the acrostic psalms (#9, 10, 25, 34, 37, 111, 112, 119, 145). He divides the letters into seven groups which signify seven fundamental Christian truths; cf. Kelly, Jerome, p. 97. Note also Jerome's interpretations of the entire Hebrew alphabet in terms of Christian truth; PL, 23, 365-66.

91 Furthermore, Jerome often explains the significance of Old Testament placenames in terms of their associations with events in the New Testament, thus emphasizing the typological/Christological quality of the etymologies of Hebrew names. For example, Bethsu and the Mount of Olives are interpreted through the baptism of Philip (Acts 8:36-39) and of course Christ's crucifixion; see Liber de Situ, 175, 247 (PL, 23, 928; 958).
CHAPTER IV

ISIDORE OF SEVILLE AND CHRISTIAN ETYMOLOGIA

It is a truth almost universally acknowledged (at least among medievalists) that the medieval use of etymologia as an epistemological concept was primarily the result of Isidore of Seville's Etymologiae sive Origines. As Fontaine has shown in his comprehensive study of Isidore's sources and intellectual environment, Isidore, in the manner of Kant, raised grammatical categories (differentia, etymologia, analogia, glossa) to categories of understanding and his account of the ars grammatica forms a prolegomenon to the structure and methodology of the remaining nineteen books of the Etymologiae. Fontaine correctly points out that most of Isidore's works (Differentiae, Synonyma, Allegoriae sive Analogiae, and Etymologiae) correspond to specific grammatical categories and, along with the bishop's De Natura Rerum and Liber Numerum, belong to the classical tradition of encyclopedic compendia of grammatical doctrine and human knowledge embodied in Pliny the Elder, Varro, Fulgentius, and others.

But Fontaine's study, broad as it is, does not explain in detail the methodology of Isidore's work and its connection with the secular and sacred etymological
traditions we have outlined thus far. Our primary interest in this chapter is of course with the Etymologiae, but all of Isidore's writings make use of etymologia as a basis for understanding and in interpretation; etymologia and the search for origins subsume and complement the other approaches in these works to the organization of reality and knowledge.³ "In origine veritas," said Isidore, in a clear allusion to Plato's Cratylus.⁴ But Isidore's primary achievement is clearly the Etymologiae, the most influential and widely disseminated of his writings and the one which received the most lavish attention from its author. Not only does it make manifest the etymological undertow in Isidore's intellectual development beginning with the Differentiae, but the work also stands as the premier etymological model of the early Middle Ages, a synthesis of the secular and sacred traditions which in part extends Augustine's plan in his De Doctrina Christiana⁵ for a truly Christian ars grammatica and education. By combining the technographic and mythographic approaches to etymologia, Isidore is able to unite the allegory of words with the allegory of things.⁶ From the Christian etymological point of view, the two cannot really be separated without seriously misconstruing the relation between the world's reality and the principal form of its revelation—the book. This chapter will seek to present more fully these aspects of Isidore's etymological method in terms of the
formulae he uses to help structure his explanations and the philosophy of language which informs them.

A. **Etymologia: Definitions and Concepts**

Isidore's view of grammar and grammatical study is indicated by his assertion that

Meliores esse grammaticos quam haereticos. Haeretici enim haustum letiferi succi hominibus persuadendo propinat, grammaticorum autem doctrina potest etiam proficere ad vitam, dum fuerit in meliores usus assumpta (Sent., 3, 13)

[Grammarians are better than heretics, for heretics persuade men to drink a deadly draught, while the learning of grammarians can avail for life, if only it is turned to better uses.]

Isidore continues the plan, formulated by Augustine in *De Doctrina Christiana*, which would incorporate secular as well as Christian learning. The passage also indicates what for many early Christians was the danger inherent in flirting with such "pagan" activities as grammar. A grammarian is better than a heretic only because he has the potential to instruct souls in the path to God. Grammar is useful to the Christian "dum fuerit in meliores usus assumpta."

To be a grammarian does not necessarily mean one can lead souls to God. To do so, the Christian grammarian must also be fortified with "sana sobriaque doctrina" [*De Natura Rerum*, Pref.). While somewhat analogous to Augustine's concept of the Inner Word which teaches truth, Isidore's
"reasoned and righteous doctrine" really abandons the notion of individual enlightenment for the more systematic and encyclopedic concerns of universal knowledge and the revelation of God. The idea of grammar does not provide Isidore with a model for personal spiritual fulfillment through the analogy of *Verbum—verbum* but rather offers a system of categories by which aspects of universal reality may be comprehended in terms of Christian precepts. Perhaps there is no real difference between the ultimate aims of these two approaches, but in terms of methodology there is a great deal of difference between Augustinian and Isidoran grammatical procedures. Both Augustine and Isidore believed in an *a priori* order of spiritual truth, in universal givens, but the Bishop of Seville seems to have parted company with his African counterpart over the question of whether a knowledge of things yielded a knowledge of words or *vice versa*. Whereas Augustine is more concerned with understanding the universe of God's signs in terms of an overall analogy between the language of God and the language of man, Isidore focuses specifically on the category of *etymologia* as the means by which to discover the truth of things in words: "Nisi enim nomen scieris, cognitio rerum perit" (*Etymol.*, 1, 2, 1) [For unless you know the name, the knowledge of things perishes]. In Isidore's enterprise we can hear the voice of another of Isidore's Latin Patristic ancestors—Jerome—and his belief that in the composition of Hebrew names there is Christian truth.
As we shall see later in this chapter, Isidore extends Jerome's etymological investigations of words which reveal things to encompass the understanding of the origins of the things themselves.

However, rather than working in the limited context of Jerome's Hebrew onomastic writings, the *Etymologiae* in its form belongs to both the Latin encyclopedic and isagogic traditions as defined by Varro, Verrius Flaccus, Pompeius Festus, Nonius Marcellus, Martianus Capella, Cassiodorus, Marius Victorinus' version of Porphyry, and Boethius. In fact the Archdeacon Braulio in his dedicatory epistola to the *Etymologiae* applies to Isidore Cicero's praise of Varro's erudition and encyclopedic writings:

> And with good right do we apply to him the famous words of the philosopher: "While we were strangers in our own city, and were, so to speak, sojourners who had lost our way, your books brought us home, as it were, so that we could at last recognize who and where we were. You have discussed the antiquity of our fatherland, the orderly arrangement of chronology, the laws of sacrifices and of priests, the discipline of the home and the state, the situation of regions and places, the names, kinds, functions and causes of all things human and divine."8

Ultimately Isidore achieves a comprehensive approach to epistemology, ranging from the Trivium to geography and lapidarian lore to the mystery of the Trinity and the orders of the Church, which is unparalleled before Thierry of Chartres' *Heptateuchon* (which concentrated only on the Trivium); but
the Etymologiae lacks depth of detail and analysis, so that it succeeds best as an isagoge to the study of any particular art or subject. As Isidore himself defined it, an isagoge is an introductio which demonstrates first principles ("primarum rationum") and focuses on definitions ("suaque certa ac substantiali definitione declaretur" [2, 25, 1]). So, as Fontaine's study of Isidore's sources has shown, the Etymologiae frequently contains condensations of several handbooks or manuals on a subject, in order to teach the elementary theory of all the arts. Therefore, for example, in his account of the ars grammatica Isidore often refers the reader to Donatus ("vide Donatum") for more elaborate explanations of grammatical questions. The Etymologiae functions very much like a modern reference work--something to dip into in order to obtain information and clarification on a particular subject, but not intended to be exhaustive. Accordingly Isidore includes separate discussions of the figures of speech and thought in both the sections on grammatica and rhetorica. Still operating with a unified set of categories, Isidore conceived of the isagoge in rather utilitarian terms; he sought to provide the essence, the epistemological rationale, of a subject, which as we have already observed was thought to be discoverable by means of etymological analysis.

Isidore's principal definition of etymologia occurs in his discussion of grammatica (Book 1):
Etymologia est origo vocabularum, cum vis verbi vel nominis, per interpretationem colligitur. Hanc Aristoteles symbolon, Cicero adnotationem nominavit, quia nomina et verba rerum nota facit exemplo posito; utputa 'flumen,' quia fluendo crevit, a fluendo dictum. Cuius cognitio saepe usum necessarium habet in interpretatione sua. Nam dum videris unde ortum est nomen, citius vim eius intellegis. Omnis enim rei inspectio etymologia cognita planior est. Non autem omnia nomen a veteribus secundum naturam imposita sunt, sed quaedam et secundum placitum, sicut et nos servis et possessionebus interdum secundum quod placet nostrae voluntati nomina damus. Hinc est quod omnium nominum etymologiae non reperiuntur, quia quaedam non secundum qualitatem, qua genita sunt, sed iuxta arbitrium humanae voluntatis vocabula acceperunt (1, 29, 1-3).

[Etymology is the derivation of words, when the essential potency (vis) of a word or name is ascertained through interpretation. This Aristotle called symbolon, and Cicero adnotation because it explains the names and words of things; as, for example, flumen is so called from fluere, because it arose from flowing. A knowledge of etymology is often necessary in interpretation, for, when you see whence a name has come, you grasp its essential potency more quickly. For every consideration of a thing is clearer when its etymology is known. Not all names, however, were given by the ancients in accordance with nature, but certain also according to whim, just as we sometimes give slaves and estates names according to our fancy. Hence it is that the etymologies of some names are not found, since certain things have received their name not according to the quality in which they originated, but according to man's arbitrary choice (Brehaut).]

The passage then continues with examples of various kinds of etymologies and derivations, which we shall consider
later. First we need to examine and elaborate upon the several important aspects of this definition in terms of Isidore's overall etymological procedure.

It is important to note first that Isidore, like most early medieval writers, considers etymologia, at least initially, to be a practical tool for interpretation. Like the earlier Stoics, who had made etymologia the essential element in their dialectical procedure, Isidore indicates that before any real understanding can take place the terms of the subject under discussion must be comprehended correctly. Thus he firmly unites words and things in his definition of etymologia, and in so doing establishes the basis for his important equation of the etymologies of things with the etymologies of words. In addition, Isidore distinguishes between natural and conventional names ("secundum naturam...et secundum placitum") as well as between names based on the qualities from which they derive and names imposed by man's arbitrary will. Here we have the rudiments of the broad distinction between mythographic and technographic principles of grammar and etymologia, based not on extraverbal and verbal criteria but upon whether names are derived from nature (e.g. onomatopoeia) or imposed by convention. The distinction is of course one common to Aristotle (De Interp., 16a2) and the Stoics. However Isidore does not carry out the distinction any further; instead he endeavors to discover the extraverbal criteria which justify all etymologies.
The examples which he gives later in this passage of the kinds of etymologies are, with one exception, based upon extraverbal criteria: "ex causa," "ex origine," "ex contrariis" (lucus-non luceat), "derivatio" (prudens-prudentia), onomatopoeia ("ex vocibus"), the names of places and peoples from nearby rivers, cities, etc. (recall Varro) (1, 29, 3-5). The one instance of strictly verbal criteria in the list is the mention of Greek loan words (e.g. silva, domus) (1, 29, 4). The fact that Isidore, for example, does not refer here to euphony or contraction as types of etymology indicates his emphasis on the use of extraverbal (i.e. mythographic) criteria for comprehending derivations and reality. Although he claims that not all etymologies are recoverable ("non reperiuntur") since arbitrary choice accounts for the origins of some words, he nonetheless suggests very strongly in his definition of etymologia that searching for etymologies of words is tantamount to searching for the origins of the things to which the words refer. It is easy, therefore, to see how Isidore continues not just Augustine's program for Christian semiotics but also Jerome's concept of the proper use of sacred onomastics. We can perhaps see this equation of words and things even more clearly if we look closely at Isidore's definition of etymologia.

According to Isidore's definition, etymologia is equated with the origin of words ("origo vocabularum"),
not with the knowledge of such origins or derivations. This statement may at first seem to be elliptical, but it is really quite precise. In the succeeding relative clause, Isidore appears to clarify what he means by *etymologia* and *origo*: "cum vis verbi vel nominis per interpretationem colligitur." The explanation hinges on the meaning of *vis*. I have not been able to find the term used more than a few times in Greek and Roman grammatical writings, yet after Isidore "vis verbi" and "vis nominis" become almost essential to grammatical discussions. Power, meaning, and signification all seem to apply, the latter two more than the others. But in the context of clarifying the meaning of "origo vocabularum" the awkward but more precise translation of "essential potency" for *vis* seems best.

In another context (crimes specified in law) Isidore himself defines *vis* as "virtus potestatis, per quam causasive res vel aperitur vel extorquetur" (5, 26, 4). Of course grammar is not law, but the parallel here can help. In law Isidore refers to *vis* as the "power of force," i.e. the potential for exercising force to accomplish a particular end to help control a particular action. Thus, in a grammatical framework predicated in large part upon the primacy of origins and *etymologiae*, *vis* indicates that essential meaning or value immanent within a word; it is that mystical, spiritual, or moral significance embodied in the literal word. Ultimately, then, *vis* is
the origin of a word, the universal preverbal power or essence which essentially animates and is physically expressed by a group of sounds or letters.

At first glance the rest of the phrase "vis verbi vel nominis" may be translated simply as "a verb or a noun." This meaning would reflect the traditional grammatical view that the noun and the verb are the two principal units of meaning from which all the other parts of speech are derived. But in light of the material actually covered in the Etymologiae and Isidore's general bias toward Patristic onomastics, it seems possible that in this phrase Isidore means "words and names." The phrase, then, would be parallel to the reference earlier in his definition to the "names and words of things" (nomina et verba rerum). Isidore's ambivalence here is in part indicative of his procedures. Book I of the Etymologiae is based largely on the technographic grammatical treatises and commentaries of the fourth to sixth centuries (see Chapter 2), and primarily on Pompeius' commentary on Donatus. But because Book I as a whole, and the section on etymologia in particular, forms a prolegomenon to the rest of his work, Isidore wants to reconcile the fundamentals of secular technographic grammar with what was for him the all-important concept of Christian grammar and sacred onomastics, as articulated by Origen, Jerome, and Augustine. The result was a new synthesis of
grammar and Christian doctrine structured on the concepts of etymologia, causa, and immanent meaning to form the basis for the interpretation of not only language but also God's physical word, Nature. Because the model for both kinds of "speech" (verbal and nonverbal) was the Word Himself, etymologia as an interpretive principle was as applicable to the causes of things as it was to the origins of words, and capable of revealing truth in both fields of inquiry.

The kinds of etymological models which Isidore assembles to explain and analyze the great range of subjects included in the Etymologiae depend upon several other concepts which are related to his fundamental definition of etymologia: the notions of derivativa, causa, ratio, origo, and the etymological formula quod/quia. We have encountered a few of these concepts, particularly derivativa and the quod formula, in our discussions of the secular traditions of mythographic and technographic approaches to etymologia. In Isidore's construction of etymological interpretation, these various aspects of etymologia are grounded upon his equation of the etymologies of words with the etymologies of things, as well as upon extraverbal criteria to justify derivations. Our analysis of the function of the quod formula in Varro and Fulgentius' etymological writings has already demonstrated that in their works it indicates primarily a mythographic approach
to etymologia, i.e. the use of extraverbal reality as the central etymological authority. In a moment we shall see how Isidore connects the mythographic quod formula with the more theoretical concepts of causa and etymologia.

As we have seen, in his definition of etymologia Isidore lists several specific types of etymologies: "ex causa," "ex origine," "ex contrariis," "ex derivatione," and so on (1, 29, 3-4). At first these would appear to be separate kinds of etymologies, but in terms of the structures of thought in the Etymologiae they are actually all aspects of causa. For instance, Isidore equates origo with causa and often substitutes one for the other, as with his account of the derivation of ludus in the section on spectaculum:

Unde et eum lusum invenum et diebus festis et templis et religionibus repertant. Nihil iam de causa vocabuli, dum rei causa idolatria sit. Unde et promiscue ludi Liberalia vocabantur, ob honorem Liberi patris. Ob hoc dis-picienda est originis macula, ne bonum aestimes quod initium a malo accepit. (18, 16, 2-3; my emphasis.)

[They discover the invention of their sport in festival days, temple days, and holy days. I shall say nothing more about the origin (causa) of the word when the origin (causa) of the thing is idolatry. Hence also the festivals of Liber are generally named in honor of father Liber. Therefore the stain of the origin (originis) is to be despised, to avoid regarding as good what took its origin in evil.]

In context causa can only be translated as "origin."

Isidore's notion of causa, then, owes more to the
grammatical concept of *origo* than it does to the rhetorical categories of deliberative, demonstrative, and judicial *causae*. The passage on the derivation of *ludus* also indicates the essentially extraverbal character of the concept of *causa* as it relates to *etymologia*; for Isidore, the true interpretation of the significance of spectacles rests not with the origin of the word spectaculum but with the origin of the thing itself. And although Isidore draws much of his material for the section on spectacles from Tertullian's *De Spectaculis*, the particular form that material takes and especially the expression of the interrelation of *causa* and *origo* are his own.

Isidore's association of *causa* and *origo* also involves the notion of *derivativa* and the structure of the Aristotelian categories. In Book X he distinguishes between two sorts of *denominatio*:

```
Licet origo nominum, unde veniant, 
a philosophis eam teneat rationem, 
ut per denominationem homo ab 
humanitate, sapiens a sapientia 
nominetur, quia prius sapientia, 
deinde sapiens; tamen claret alia 
specialis in origine quorundam 
nominum causa, sicut homo ab humo, 
unde proprie homo est appellatus.  
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[Though the derivation of words by the philosophers involves this belief, that *homo* comes from *humanitas*, *sapiens* from *sapientia*, because *sapientia* exists before *sapiens*, still another special cause is evident in the derivation of certain names, as *homo* from *humus*, whence in a true sense *homo* is so called (Brehaut).]
In his summary of Aristotle's categories as contained in Porphyry's *Isagoge*, Isidore had equated *denominatio* with *derivativa*:

*quaecumque ab aliquo solo differentia casu secundum nomen habent appellationem, ut a bonitate bonus, et a malitia malus (2, 26, 4).*

[all differentiae from any single case are named according to the noun, as good (*bonus*, adj.) from Goodness (*bonitas*, n.) and malus from *malitia*.]

Similarly in the definition of *etymologia* he had referred to certain *derivativa nomina* (e.g. *prudentia-prudens*; 1, 29, 4). This notion of *derivativa* (different in kind from that used by Priscian) accords well with the common Isidoran etymology in which the particular is derived from the universal and indicates the manner in which Isidore's Christian etymological writing is fundamentally based on a set of a *priori* universal categories or truths.

But we must not overlook the "ex origine" etymology which Isidore cites as an alternative to *derivativa*: "homo ab humo." This derivation, he says, is an example of a *specialis causa* and the authority for such an etymology is clearly extraverbal. But the "homo ab humo" etymology, together with the other types, also reveals that while Isidore elevated *etymologia* to the status of philosophical explanation (*denominatio*), he also refused to acknowledge the general philosophical position that all nouns originated with one derivation. Isidore did not bind himself
to the Aristotelian categories as he developed his etymological investigations of knowledge. So in Book XI Isidore further etymologizes *homo* on the basis of its Greek equivalent:

Graeci autem hominem ἄνθρωπον appel­laverunt, eo quod sursum spectet sub­levatus ab humo ad contemplationem artificis sui (11, 1, 5).

[The Greeks, however, called man anthropos, because he looks upward, raised above the earth to the contemplation of his maker.]

For Isidore, then, the categories were limited and subordinate aspects of reality. Beyond any human conception of universal reality (*humanitas*) or special quality (*humus*) there is God. He is the one Who provides the differentiation in reality and also the ground for unity. Just as he dissects and etymologizes definitions of the parts of the human body in Book XI, Isidore dissects and defines in the *Etymologiae* all knowledge and reality. But just as one must be sure to reassemble the body and perceive the ultimate unity and teleology of the various parts, so must Isidore reassemble reality, not according to the various categories—which are themselves *differentiae*—but according to the truth of God's universal plan. The *differentiae* in the world, therefore, like the distinction between the sexes (11, 1, 147), are the *causae* for man's discerning and distinguishing in order that he may more fully understand the unity and wholeness of God's world. Like earlier Patristic etymologists and onomasticians, Isidore
affirms the belief that God is the great grammarian, the one Who provides the key by which Isidore and others can raise grammatical argument to the level of divine knowledge and thereby proceed from nomen to numen.

In a similar manner Isidore identifies causa with ratio, in accordance with the example set for the early Middle Ages by Aristotle in his Categories and Metaphysics. So at the beginning of Book VII Isidore prefaces his distillation of Jerome's onomastic account of the ten Hebrew names for God with an important theoretical statement about etymologia and causa:

Vocabulorum enim expositio satis indicat quid velit intelligi. Habent enim quaedam ex propriis causis nominum rationem (7, 1, 2).

[For the explanation of words sufficiently indicates what they mean. For certain have the reason for their names in peculiar causes (Brehaut).]

The succeeding interpretations of the Hebrew names indicate that the causae are part of an extraverbal reality; for example, Isidore rephrases Jerome's explanation of the Hebrew name El:

quod alii Deum, alii etymologiam eius exprimentes ἰσχυρός, id est fortis interpretati sunt, ideo quod nulla infirmitate opprimitur, sed fortis est et sufficiens ad omnia perpetranda (7, 1, 3).

[because some say Deum while others, expressing its etymology as ischyros, have translated the word "strength," since He is not overwhelmed in any weakness but is strong and able to accomplish all things.]
Elsewhere in the *Etymologiae* Isidore says that each kind of measure (*pes*) has a particular *causa* for its name ("Ipsi autem pedes habent speciales causas nominum, quare ita vocentur"; 1, 17, 2); the subsequent etymologies of the measures are predominantly concerned with the quality and quantity of various sound patterns (1, 17), many of which are associated with or reflect extraverbal criteria (e.g. "Bacchius appellatus est eo, quod eo pede Bacchia, id est Liberi sacra celebrabantur"; 1, 17, 11). Therefore, to explain or interpret a word (*expositio*) in terms of its *causa* or *origo* is to account for the *ratio* for why a word or thing is as it is. The equation of *causa* with *ratio* also means that one term may be substituted for the other, as when Isidore, using *ratio* where one would expect *causa*, says that

Et si omnia considerentur, plura
tamen gentium mutata quam manentia
vocabula apparent; quibus postea
nomina diversa dedit ratio (9, 2, 39).

[All things considered, more altered words than unaltered ones belonging to the peoples are found; to which *ratio* afterwards gave various names.]

In all of these instances of *causa*, *ratio*, and *origo*, as with the general Aristotelian metaphysical framework for causality, the being of the thing itself (or for Isidore, its name) is dependent upon extrinsic causes which at their most "original" (that is, at their sources) are *necessary* being, not dependent upon any extrinsic criteria.
However, Isidore (and other Christian etymologists after him) see in the Aristotelian concept of causation and ratio an image of the paradigm of etymologia: God's revelation on Sinai of His pure essence, the origin of origins, in the divine tautology "I am Who am." As we observed in our analysis of Jerome's onomastic writings, such Christian concepts of etymology and origins partake of aspects of the Platonic theory of immanent meaning and significance, as well as of aspects of Stoic etymological thought. Isidore's etymological theory, then, is eclectic; it gathers a variety of traditions around the notion of causa: Aristotle's identification of causa with ratio; the best Stoic tradition of etymologia and dialectic ("Dialectia est disciplina ad disserendas rerum causas inventa"; 2, 22, 1); and the early Patristic onomastic ideas of immanent meaning and the divine origin of language.

Before we go on to examine in detail some particular models of etymological explanation in Isidore, we need to look at a few of the formulae which are used to account for the etymologies. Isidore's concept of causa is related to the verbal formulae which he uses in the Etymologiae. When he defines the causal conjunction, Isidore joins his example with the definition in a highly revealing manner:

Causales dicuntur a causa eo, quod aliquid cogitent facere, ut puta,
"occido illum, quia habet aurum";
causa est (1, 12, 4).²³

[Causales are so called because they
cause something to be done. Take
for example "I kill him because he
possesses gold"; that is a cause.]

As is evident, within the very example he gives of the use
of a causal conjunction, Isidore articulates the form of
the definition of the conjunction itself. The sample sen-
tence is equivalent in its syntax and epistemology to the
etymological definition of causales. The quod/quia formula
is of course the principal one which Isidore uses in the
Etymologiae. Essentially, the quod or quia clause reveals
the reason implicit in the proposition in the main clause,
which for its part manifests the conclusion inherent in the
material prior to it. From our discussion of mythographic
etymologia we have also seen how the use of quod/quia in
etymological explanations usually indicates the invocation
of extraverbal criteria to justify derivations and, in the
case of Varro and Fulgentius, occurs in conjunction with
composita as an etymological procedure. In Isidore, the
more extensive use of quod/quia encompasses not only
mythographic and extraverbal criteria but also techno-
graphic etymologies which rely on verbal criteria to sup-
port derivations,²⁶ and therefore indicates the strength
of his equation of the origins of words with the origins
of things.
However, Isidore's use of the *quod/quia* formula does not necessarily carry with it the use of explanation by *composita*, as it did for Varro and Fulgentius. For example, when Isidore included in Book VII an abridgement of Jerome's onomastic writings on the Hebrew names for God (7, 1, 2-17), he transposes Jerome's loose glossula formulae (*aut/vel, id est, hoc est, interpretari*) into his own characteristic etymological pattern of *quod/quia*. However, at the same time Jerome's familiar *composita* methodology is all but eliminated in Isidore's etymological explanations. Rather than adopting Jerome's method of subdividing a word into its significant elements, Isidore concentrates on whole-word, phrase, or clause explanations or translations. In addition, Isidore usually employs etymologies based upon similarity of sounds only when he draws upon Jerome's work. This is not to say that Isidore does not use *composita* at all in the *Etymologiae*, but that type of derivation, while it is used occasionally throughout, is concentrated for the most part in Book X.

Although the *quod/quia* formula is by far the one used most extensively in the *Etymologiae*, Isidore does employ a few other etymological formulae, many of which we have discussed previously in connection with Patristic onomastics and technographic grammar. Fontaine has offered the interesting suggestion that Isidore's method of etymological explanation demands the use of such passive forms as "dicitur,"
"interpretatur," "nascitur," "trahitur," and "est derivatus" because he is working back to the origins of words and our analysis of technographic and mythographic etymological methods would support this idea. In the manner of Jerome, Isidore uses the glossulae formulae interpretatur, id est, and dicitur and he employs the traditional idea that translation is one kind of etymological paradigm. As with most Christian etymologists other than Jerome, Isidore's Hebrew etymologies are mostly mediated through Greek terms which are in turn often interpreted in terms of Latin cognates. Isidore's use of formulae like nascitur and trahitur is consistent with the fact that their context is generally technographic. He employs trahitur almost exclusively in connection with verbal criteria of etymologia and often interchangeably with declinatio and derivatio.

Isidore's use of nascitur in the Etymologiae is interesting in light of our analysis of Priscian's development of the formula into a significant grammatical explanatory concept and in view of the fact that Priscian and Isidore were near contemporaries. That the formula occurs most frequently in Isidore's account of the parts of speech increases speculation that Isidore may have borrowed this particular technographic form of coupling word and etymological explanation from the Byzantine grammarian. However, Priscian, as we have seen, used the formula almost as a concept throughout his Institutiones Grammaticae.
Isidore, on the other hand, restricts *nascitur* to the initial definitions of the parts of speech which are "derived" from the noun and the verb ("Reliquae appendices sunt et ex his originem trahunt"; 1, 6, 2) and to scattered other grammatical aspects such as the *principalia nomina* which are so called "quia primam positionem habent, nec aliunde nascuntur, ut 'mons,' 'fons'" (1, 7, 7) [because they are not born from another source but occupy the initial position, as *mons* and *fons*], or the *verbalia nomina* named "quia de verbo nascuntur, ut 'lector'" (1, 7, 25) [because they are born from the verb, as reader (*lector*)]. Later he notes that "syllaba . . . ex pluribus nascitur litteris" (1, 16, 1) [the syllable . . . is born from several letters]. But our discussion of the commentaries on Donatus should make us aware that Isidore most certainly obtained his knowledge of technographic grammar from not only Donatus but also Servius, Pompeius, Cassiodorus, and others; in fact, most of the instances of Isidore's use of the technographic formula *nascitur* can be traced to the formula's occasional use in Donatus, Cledonius, Probus, and Pompeius and does not reflect any specifically Priscianic influence on Isidore's etymological method. What is significant about Isidore's employment of the formula is the way he couples it with his characteristic *quod/quia* construction (see e.g. 1, 7, 7 and 25, above). Isidore subordinates *nascitur* and the other technographic formulae to what for
him is the fundamental etymological formula (quod/quia). In the *Etymologiae*, as a result, the usually mythographic etymological construction is made to accommodate technographic and verbal criteria as well, and Isidore's general equation of the origins of words with the origins of things is further cemented. The impact of this subordination of technographic formulae is manifested in several ways, primarily Isidore's combination of sacred onomastics and mythographic *etymologia*, with technographic grammatical analysis in a decidedly secondary role, and should become clearer when we examine in detail some of Isidore's etymological models.

We can conclude our investigation of Isidore's characteristic etymological formulae by noting that, except for the use of nascitur, there is no substantial difference between the kinds of formulae employed in the grammatical and onomastic sections of the *Etymologiae* and the remainder of his work. The same basic constructions (quod/quia, dicitur, interpretatur) and the invocation of primarily extraverbal reality as justification for the etymologies are found throughout the accounts of the various subjects, perhaps to an even greater degree than in the earlier grammatical sections. By emphasizing one mode of grammatical analysis—*etymologia*—to the virtual exclusion of almost all others, Isidore effectively transformed technographic grammar from an analysis of the parts of speech and (in
Priscian) syntax into an investigation of all knowledge and reality predicated on the Christian concept of the revealed word. Priscian had extended the technographic use of etymologia to account for an entire grammatical system, but Isidore, in the mainstream of Christian tradition, raised etymologia to the level of a universal method capable of explaining and interpreting not only the forms of language but also "the nature of beings and things which the language forms designated." 36

B. The Etymological Model

Because Book I (De Grammatica) of the Etymologiae forms a prologomenon to the entire work, it is appropriate that we should begin our account of the details of Isidore's explanatory procedure with an analysis of the form of that book's etymological method. The format of Book I, like that of the rest of the Etymologiae, indicates a definition and delineation-of-parts schema, a continuous fragmentation or subdivision of the subject's terms, ideal for an etymological approach and similar to the arrangement adopted by most earlier technographic grammarians. 37 But unlike the technographers, for Isidore each terminological subdivision is a new point of etymological departure; the end effect of this procedure, then, is an apparently digressive, even "atomistic" quality in his work where etymological explanations are often linked by association. Whereas Jerome frequently uses typological or doctrinal associations
to fill out the semantic space of a sacred nomen in his onomastic writings, Isidore subdivides and etymologizes a subject in order to provide its essence.

Isidore's account of the art of grammar includes the familiar sections, encountered again and again in the writings of the technographic grammarians, on litterae, orthographia, Latinitas (barbarismus), partes orationis, meters, solecisms, figures, and genres. Early in Book I, in the analysis of parts of speech, most of the etymologies and explanations are traditional technographic ones and rely upon verbal criteria: e.g. "Adverbium dictum est eo, quod verbis accedat, ut puta, 'bene lege'";

"Participium dictum, quod nominis et verbis capiat partes, quasi particapium" (1, 10 and 11) [The adverb is so called because it augments the verb; take for example, "read well"; the participle is so called because it takes parts of the noun and the verb, as it were a "take parter."] Isidore adds a new etymological definition of the interjection ("Interiectio vocata, quid sermonibus interiecta, id est interposita"; 1, 14). In the section on the verb virtually every explanation of an aspect of that part of speech is etymological, with little use of any other kind of commentary; all invoke verbal criteria to justify the derivations. At times, however, Isidore includes etymologies based upon extraverbal criteria as in the definition of cognomen ("Cognomentum autem vulgo dictum eo, quod nomini cognitionis causa superadiciatur, sive quod
cum nomine est"; 1, 7, 2) [A cognomen, however, is so called because it is superadded to the name for the sake of identification, or because it is with the name] or upon a combination of verbal and extraverbal realities, as in agnomen ("Agnomen vero quasi accedens nomen, ut 'Metellus Creticus,' quia Cretam subegit"; 1, 7, 2) [Agnomen indeed is so named as if to say joining the name, e.g. Metellus Creticus, because he conquered Crete]. Also, analogous to his equation of the origins of words and things, Isidore will present parallel derivations of both the grammatical term and the verbal phenomenon itself; syllaba, he says, for example, is called in Latin "conceptio sive complexio."

Nam syllaba dicta est ἀπὸ τοῦ συλλαμβάνειν τὰ ἱεράμοματα, id est a conceptione litterarum. Συλλαμβάνειν enim dicitur concipere. Unde vera illa est syllaba, quae ex pluribus nascitur litteris (1, 16, 1).

[Syllaba is named from tou syllambanein ta grammata, that is, from the comprehension of the letters: Syllambanein is translated as "to comprehend." Wherefore that is a true syllable which is derived from (born from) several letters.] 41

The general bias toward verbal criteria in the etymological explanations of the parts of speech is limited on the one side by Isidore's complex and largely mythographic analysis and interpretation of litterae (1, 3-4), and on the other side by a decided movement toward the use of extraverbal etymological criteria in the definitions of the pedes (1, 17; see above on Bacchia, p. 188) and the analysis of literary history and the genres (prosa,
metri, fabula, and historia;1,138-144). Furthermore, after Isidore's account of etymologia (1, 29)—which we discussed earlier in detail—there is no major use of etymological explanation or interpretation in Book I until the sections on literary history and literary forms. Correspondingly, the lack of etymological analysis in the sections on barbarisms, solecisms, vitiae, metaplasm, schemes, and tropes (1, 32-37) is accompanied by a general absence of the quod/quia formula so characteristic of Isidore's form of etymological explanation. This lacuna in Book I affirms once again the fairly codeterminous relationship in the Etymologiae between Isidore's generally mythographic use of quod/quia and his specific use of etymologia as a descriptive and explanatory method.

Isidore's account of the nature of littera, which precedes the sections on the parts of speech, is especially important to his theory and use of etymologia as an interpretative concept because it provides the basis for his philosophy of language. That philosophy combines some by now familiar mythographic and Patristic concepts of immanent meaning and the Hebraic origins of language with the more technographic aspects of litterae. Following the Greek and Roman grammarians, Isidore equates the sounds of vowels and consonants (phonology, in the modern sense) with the letters' orthography (1, 4, 4-6 and 17), but the greater part of his account of litterae is devoted to an
evaluation of their extraverbal significations. Brehaut has claimed that Isidore was concerned solely with the origins of words rather than with the things the words stand for; but rather than conceiving of words as "transcendental entities," as Brehaut says, Isidore seems more given to articulating a philosophy of language as a transparent entity, a position which is entirely consistent with Isidore's equation of the origins of words and things.

Following the earlier Latin Fathers, Isidore claimed that the language spoken in the Garden of Eden and everywhere before Babel was Hebrew (1, 3, 4). Linking the diversity in post-Babel words with the infinite variety of things, he says that all languages and races are variants of the original Hebrew. In fact, declares Isidore, the various races are "derived" on the basis of the various languages, thus making even the foundation of Patristic anthropology a linguistic and grammatical one. Therefore, the purity of reference in Edenic language is extended to include the original purity of mankind; and like the etymological procedure itself, the subsequent diversities in languages and men should prompt the Christian searcher for origins to perceive the original harmony and unity of God's creation. (This relationship has important implications for Isidore's analysis of genres, since Adam was the first names and poet and Hebrew literature was the source and paradigm for all subsequent verbal arts.)
Isidore's emphasis on what Jerome had called the "Hebrew truth" was, of course, in no way handicapped by his ignorance of Hebrew. Substituting Eden for the technographers' Golden Age of Latinitas and using the concepts of the tres linguae, the economy of salvation, and the twin revelations of the Incarnation and the Bible, Isidore followed Augustine and others in the belief that Latin contained immanent within its verbal structure the spirit and essence of Hebrew truth. Isidore's etymological search for the Edenic purity of language, then, focused more on the spirit than the letter of language.

But this does not mean that Isidore discounted the value of litterae. In fact his discussion of letters in Book I elevates that grammatical category to a new philosophical and spiritual significance and actually conflates the traditional grammatical categories of exposition—orthographia and etymologia—into one epistemological and explanatory system. Essentially, Isidore's search for origins was an attempt to get beneath the letters or literal elements to the significance "fettered" (alligatus) beneath (1, 3, 2). Letters, he says, are "indices rerum, signa verborum, quibus tanta vis est, ut nobis dicta absentium sine voce loquantur" (1, 3, 2) [are the indices of things, the signs of words, in which there is such essential potency (vis) that words of absent persons speak to us soundlessly]. As the starting point for
Isidore's analysis of the *ars grammatica*, it is fundamental to see that the very essence of grammar is the analysis of the extraverbal and mystical significance of *litterae*:

"Grammatica autem a litteris nomen accepit... Haec in disciplinis post litteras communes inventa est, ut iam qui didicerant litteras per eam recte loquendi rationem sciant" (1, 5, 1) [Grammar took its name from the letters. . . .

This one of the disciplines was discovered next after ordinary letters, so that those who have already learned the letters may learn by it the method of speaking correctly.] Not only was Hebrew the source of all subsequent languages, but the Greeks based their alphabet on the Hebrew letters and the Romans based theirs on the Greek (1, 3, 4).^47 Thus Isidore establishes a direct *derivational/etymological* relationship among the Hebrew, Greek, and Latin alphabets (from *aleph* to *alpha* to α; 1, 3, 4), which parallels the concept of the *tres linguae* and the revelation of God's plan to man. His general ignorance of Hebrew, however, meant that for Isidore the Greek alphabet provided the entrée into the mystical significance of language. α and ω signify Christ at the beginning and the end of His life (Rev. 1:17); Θ indicates death, τ the Cross, and Ψ life (see 1, 3, 7-9). Isidore adopts the Neo-Pythagorean interpretation of the moral orthography of Ψ and provides us with a good example of the way in which the concept of immanent meaning informed his understanding of
The letter \( \gamma \), like the other mystical letters Isidore discusses, is formed on the model of life and moral truth, that is, on extraverbal reality, and contains within its very orthography that moral and spiritual significance which is derived from its origins. Isidore's concept of significance "fettered" within litterae is clearly the sanction for his entire etymological method and provides the basis for his analysis of not only the parts of speech but the literary genres and other verbal arts as well.

After the lengthy lapse in etymological explanation in Book I of the vitiae, figures, and barbarisms, Isidore returns once again to a fullfledged analysis of origins and etymologia in the examination of the literary genres. In the Middle Ages, more than in the classical period, the study of literary genres and the explication of
authors was to round out the formal grammatical treatises. Of course the grammatical treatises do not always reflect what may have actually occurred between teacher and student in the classroom, so there is no necessary reason to suppose that in their oral teaching the classical grammarians gave as short shrift to the study of genres as their written works indicate. But even the unusually lengthy discussions of genres in the grammars by Diomedes and Marius Victorinus do little more than illustrate the types of poetic meters. Instead, it is the Greek and Latin grammarians' commentaries on literary works which contain information and analysis concerning the genres and literary history. Yet, although these classical commentaries constitute the major sources for Isidore's account of the genres in Book I, his inclusion of such analyses in his discussion of the *ars grammatica* indicates a new direction in medieval grammar, one to which Isidore contributed a decidedly etymological approach. In the following pages on Isidore's treatment of the genres, we shall focus on three fundamental methodological concepts: the names of the genres and their inventors, the question of Moses and Christian literature, and the generic vs. the chronological accounts of literary history. Isidore's renewed use of the *quod/quia* formula in the genre section of Book I reflects of course his general etymological orientation toward the origins of the genres. Isidore's is certainly not the earliest treatment of the
nature of the genres in terms of their origins, but it is one of the most thorough and comprehensive such treatments in the Middle Ages, as well as the one which established many of the principles (frequently etymological) of medieval literary history. This procedure of analyzing a subject in terms of its originators is essentially new to the argument of the *Etymologiae*, although Isidore had earlier made brief mention of the inventors of the alphabets and of shorthand (1, 3 and 22). As a method of etymological explanation, the discussion of the inventors of a subject achieves prominence in the genre sections and then is maintained as a principal part of Isidore's investigations of origins throughout the remainder of the *Etymologiae*.

Isidore begins his discussion with the broad-genre distinction between *prosa* and *metra* (1, 38-39). *Prosa*, he says, is so called "quod sit profusa, vel ab eo, quod spatiiosius proruat et excurrat, nullo sibi termino praefinito" (1, 38, 1) [because it is poured out or because, extensive, it rushes forth and runs on, having no predetermined limit]. *Metra*, on the other hand, fixes and constrains language, as its name indicates: "Metra vocata, quia certis pedum mensuris atque spatiis terminantur, neque ultra dimensionem temporum constitutam procedunt. Mensura enim Graece * Métrov* dicitur" (1, 39, 1) [Metra are so called because they are bound by feet with fixed
measures and lengths, nor extend beyond the set limits of timing. Measure is called in Greek metros. Both names, therefore, are thought to reveal the formal qualities of the two kinds of writing and are derived from the extrinsic criteria of literary expression (which, paradoxically, is extraverbal in the context in which we have been using that term in this study).

Isidore then continues this formal classification of the genres and distinguishes among carmen, versus, and metrum as individual subgenres. However, as he articulates them, these distinctions are not entirely clear. For example, for carmen (poem) Isidore gives two separate etymologies, one based on formal properties ("quod carptim pronuntietur" [because it is pronounced rhythmically]) and the other on the qualities of the author ("quod qui illa canerent carere mentem existimabantur" (1, 39, 4) [because they who sang such things were supposed to be out of their minds].\(^{51}\) Then with the classes of metra, Isidore's use of primarily formal criteria breaks down completely and the subgenres of metrum are said to originate on the basis of several different kinds of criteria: the various meters and number of syllables, the content of the poems, and the inventors or most frequent users of the meters (1, 39, 5). Metra are often named for the kinds of pedes they employ: dactylica, iambica, trochaica; that is, the meter trochaicum is derived (nascitur) from trochaica,
dactylicum from dactylica, and so forth (1, 39, 6). Later, in Book VIII, Isidore accounts for the various genres in terms of their respective contents or their modes of performance. But of the categories used for the definition of these subgenres, that of the inventors of the genres and forms of poetry is by far the most extensive and the most significant for the development of Isidore's concept of etymologia and literary history.

Isidore briefly considers the origins of prosa and claims that it developed later than the varieties of metra (1, 38, 2); prosa originated in Greece with the orations of Pherecydus Syrus and then was brought to Rome as a discipline by Appius Caecus in his oration against Pyrrhus (1, 38, 2). Prosa, says Isidore, is the medium of eloquence ("Iam exhinc et ceteri prosae eloquentia contenderit"; 1, 38, 2). Isidore later treats more extensively the origins and inventors of a particular kind of prosa—historia (1, 40-44); but before doing so, he devotes a great deal of space to detailing the origins of the forms of poetry, both pagan and Christian. Therefore, because the model of generic analysis and literary history which Isidore develops in the section on poetry provides the basis for his later reexamination of historia as a prose form, we need to outline carefully his important account of the inventors of poetry.
Isidore traces the origins of the names of meters like Anacreonticum, Sapphicum, and Archilochium to the Greek lyric poets who originated them (1, 39, 7). That these inventors and their metrical skills are considered the essence of the metrical forms which the names designate is indicated by the mention of the only non-inventor of a meter who gave his name to a form; "Non enim [Asclepiadia] Asclepius invenit, sed proinde ita vocata quod ea idem elegantissime [et frequentissime] usus sit" (1, 39, 8) Asclepius did not invent the Asclepiadian meter, but it is nonetheless accordingly named because he could use it most elegantly and often. It need scarcely be mentioned that these etymologies of the names of various meters are clearly based on extraverbal criteria. Also, this and the other etymological analyses of the genres and other subjects in terms of their inventors further demonstrates the coeval nature in the Etymologiae of the origins of words and the origin of things. To explain adequately the meaning of the names of poetic forms, it is necessary for Isidore to determine the inventors of those forms and the course of their development from their origins to his own time.

However, as an alternative to this sort of classification of poetry by meter, Isidore also relies upon the distinction among poetic subject matters, an approach which he borrows from the early commentaries on Virgil: heroicum,
And within this tripartite generic framework, Isidore confronts pagan poetry with the greater antiquity of Christian literature and demonstrates, on the etymological basis of the inventors of the kinds of poetic subject matters, that the source and paradigm for literature and literary history is the earliest Christian poetry, which the Middle Ages considered to be the work of Moses.

Using the framework of the classical genres, Isidore constructs an elaborate comparison of earlier pagan and Christian poetry, seeking to demonstrate the greater antiquity of the Jews' use of the genres of Greek and Roman literature. Isidore of course was not alone in this endeavor to prove that Jewish literature in the Bible was older than that of Greece or Rome, but his analysis of literary history is more fully developed than that of the earlier Church Fathers and his etymological model for that analysis, based upon the inventors of the genres, became the standard one in the Middle Ages. Analogous to his idea that Hebrew was the pure tongue spoken in Eden and the origin of all human languages, Isidore takes Moses to be the original heroic poet. Moses, he says, used the oldest poetic meter—dactylica—before anyone else; "hunc primum Moyses in cantico Deuteronomii longe ante Pherecyden et Homerum cecinisse probatur" (1, 39, 11). [It is found that Moses was the first to use it in the song of Deuteronomy, long before Pherecydes and Homer.] Thus
Isidore claims that, because Moses was the earliest inventor of a poetic form, "apparet antiquiorem fuisse apud Hebraeos studium carminum quam apud gentiles, siquidem et Iob Moysi temporibus adaequatus hexametro versu, dactylo spondeoque, decurrit" (1, 39, 11) [It is evident that the making of poems was older among the Hebrews than among the heathens, since Job, too, who goes back as far as Moses, sang in hexameter verse, using the dactyl and the spondee.] Likewise in his account of the development of the bucolic tradition, Isidore, perhaps punning on his definition of the bucolic ("pastorale carmen"), describes the prophet and preacher (pastor) David as the first to compose and sing hymns in praise to God (1, 39, 17). As with the heroic form, the knowledge of the true Biblical inventor of bucolica provides the etymology for the name. The origins of the subject matter of the epithalamium are found in the Song of Solomon in praise of Christ and His Church ("in laudem Ecclesiae et Christi"; 1, 39, 18), while the name itself is derived from the place of performance, the bridal chamber (1, 39, 19). Thus, the Bible is said to contain not only the inspired word of "Hebrew truth" but also the paradigms of the forms of literary composition. According to Isidore (and other Fathers) the Bible was the fons and origo of western literature. As in his conception of littera and meaning and its emphasis on Hebrew as the original language of man, Isidore's etymological analysis of the inventors of the genres demonstrates the primacy
of Hebrew poetry and thereby effectively transforms classical technographic grammar and literary history into a truly Christian grammar. Isidore's initial discussion of the genres, then, can be seen in part as a fulfillment of the plan for a Christian grammar, rhetoric, and literary history which Augustine had earlier articulated in his De Doctrina Christiana. But at the same time we must also remember that the potential for such a Christian transformation had always been present in classical grammar in the Alexandrian technographers' Atticism and the Roman grammarians' ideal of Latinitas as the norm of linguistic purity.

After this elaborate treatment of the traditional "classical" forms of poetry, Isidore turns to the more contemporary genres of non-liturgical Christian poetry: epitaphium, epigramma, epodon, and cento (1, 39, 20-26). Isidore's account of these later forms, while interesting just because it occurs in his generic analysis of literary history, nonetheless displays no etymological explanation beyond the use of one of his infrequent composita etymologies ("Epigramma est titulus, quod in Latinum superscriptio interpretatur; epi enim super, graamma littera vel scriptio dicitur"; 1, 39, 22) [The epigram is an inscription, which in Latin is translated as superscriptio; epi is translated as over, graamma as letter or writing], and the derivation of cento from formal criteria ("Centones apud Grammaticos vocari solent,
Among grammarians they are wont to be called centones who take from the poems of Homer and Virgil with a view to their own works, and stitch together in patchwork fashion many bits found here and there so far as each subject matter allows.

Otherwise, Isidore's discussion of the more recent Christian genres is devoid of the emphasis on origins and inventors which had characterized his earlier analysis of the traditional forms of poetry. In fact, whereas in the earlier sections on genre Isidore had focused on the antiquity of the Biblical versions of the classical genres in an effort to demonstrate how the one was the source for the other, his approach with the contemporary kinds of poetry was essentially to indicate how they had been spiritualized and Christianized in the course of their development. Thus, in his definition of epitaphium, Isidore uses the Christian word for "decease" (dormitio) and thereby conjures up an entirely new context for the classical genre. While Proba and Pomponius are taken to be the originators of the Christian form of the cento (1, 39, 26), nonetheless Virgil himself is considered to be the source for their poems. Illustrating an important aspect of medieval literary theory, Proba and Pomponius took a pagan
grammatical technique, where pagan meters were still applied to pagan subject matters, and spiritualized the referents, while they preserved the grammatical form, of classical Latin. Thus Isidore's analysis of the genres of metrum displays two different but not wholly disparate kinds of explanation: in the traditional forms, a strong etymological mode of analysis focusing primarily on the inventors or the formal criteria which account for the names and the subject matter of the genres; in the minor contemporary genres, a less developed "progressive" mode which accounts for the Christianization of the forms of epigram, epitaph, and so forth as well as the spiritualization of the referents of Virgilian poetic diction. For the former, Moses, David, Solomon, and Jeremiah provide the formal paradigms; in the latter, Virgil and minor Latin poets.

After his lengthy section on the poetic genres, Isidore brings his general treatment of genres and literary history to a close with a discussion of fabula and historia. Although he distinguishes between the two kinds primarily on grounds of their content and inner coherence—fabula relates things that have not happened and cannot happen "quia contra natura sunt," while historia tells what has actually occurred (1, 44, 5)—nonetheless Isidore's actual analysis of the two genres also implies a distinction based upon form: fabula is generally poetry and historia prose.56 The etymological explanations which Isidore uses to analyze these two major kinds of writing refer primarily
to the distinction based on content. Thus Isidore says that "fabulas poetae a fando nominaverunt, quia non sunt res factae, sed tantum loquendo fictae" (1, 40, 1) [the poets named fables from "uttering," because they are not true deeds but only fictitious expression], where the familiar *quia* formula indicates the use of the extraverbal criterion of a lack of truth-to-life in order to justify the name of the genre. Similarly, *historia* is also called *monumentum* "quod memoriam tribuant rerum gestarum" (1, 41, 2) [because they allow remembrance of military campaigns].

A few lines before, Isidore had derived *historia* from the Greek, ἀπίσταντες τοῦ ὅστος, "id est a videre vel cognoscere" (1, 41, 1) [that is, from seeing or learning], invoking the criterion of *historia* as eye-witness truth to complement his earlier explanation that *fabula* depicts what can never happen:

> Apud veteres enim nemo conscribebat historiam, nisi is qui interfuisset, et ea quae conscribenda essent vidisset. Melius enim oculis quae fiunt deprehendinus, quam quae audi-tione colligimus (1, 41, 1).

[For among the ancients no one wrote history unless he had been present and witnessed what was to be described. For we understand what we see better than we do what we gather by hearsay (Brehaut).]

By distinguishing between eyewitness *historia* and secondary *annales* Isidore associates *historia* with the notion of the Gospels as eye-witness accounts (John 19:35) and with the
rhetorical device of adtestio rei visae.\footnote{57}

In addition to this rather brief use of etymological explanation of fabula and historia, Isidore includes some discussion of the inventors of the two forms. Alcmeon Croton Aesop was the originator of fabula and it is significant that Isidore accords to the genre which depicts things "contra naturam" a non-Biblical origin, in contrast to most other forms in the sections on literary history. Historia, on the other hand, is made from res verae and Moses is revered as the inventor of the form (1, 42, 1), after whom Dares, Herodotus, and Pherecydes wrote. Thus in his discussion of the different contents of historia and fabula Isidore uses some scattered etymological definitions and explanations; but, more significantly, he adopts the etymological concept of the inventors of the genres to characterize the essence of the two kinds of writing. The genre concerned with relating eye-witness truth is said to have been founded by the father of the Hebrew people, the recipient of Yahweh's divine etymology on Sinai, and the inventor of heroic poetry. Accordingly, the true purpose of historia is to educate moderns with the lessons and Christian morals of the past; and as such historia in Isidore's literary system is the handmaiden of theology and exegesis.\footnote{58}

Isidore's generic approach to literary history adopts the principles and follows the pattern of explanation
and organization which he had established at the beginning of Book I in the treatment of *littera*. The etymologies of the names of the genres and literary forms provide clear indications of their essential natures and principles of coherence. Furthermore, the origins and the inventors of the genres themselves, like the concept that all languages derive from Hebrew, reveal for Isidore the Judaeo-Christian basis of literature and thus provide the ultimate sanction for the further development of Christian poetry, *fabula*, and history. And the etymological formula which coordinates the explanations and analyses of both *littera* and *poetria*, and everything in between, is of course *quod/quia*.

As we stated earlier, Book I of the *Etymologiae* provides a prolegomena to the rest of Isidore's work. The overall methodological consistency of Isidore's discussion of grammatica and the underlying principles of the philosophy of language and meaning which buttress that methodology are maintained and extended throughout the remainder of his treatment of universal knowledge. Isidore did not take up the mantle of Arnobius, who three centuries earlier in his *Adversus Nationes* warned that Christ had instructed us not to inquire into the origins of things and severely criticized the Stoic method of interpretation.⁵⁹ For the Bishop of Seville, there is truth in origins and that meant the origins of not only words but also things. The
etymological nature of his inquiry essentially fuses res with verba, so that, as we have already seen, the knowledge of the inventor of a genre can lead one to an understanding of its nature just as much as can a knowledge of the etymology of its name. The same applies to the other disciplines, both verbal and nonverbal, and it now remains for us to consider some of these other artes to understand the full extent of Isidore's etymological method and the degree to which the principles articulated in the section on the ars grammatica inform the entire work.

C. Origines verborum

Besides the ars grammatica, the other verbal arts which Isidore discusses and analyzes in the Etymologiae include rhetorica and dialectica (Book II), sacred onomastics, i.e. the names of God, Christ, and so forth (Book VII), poetry and the poet (as a species of gentiles in Book VIII), and the origins of the languages (Book IX). In addition, he devotes all of Book X to an alphabetical listing of the etymologies of diverse names. Since we have already discussed in connection with the ars grammatica Isidore's assumption that Hebrew was the source of all languages, and since Isidore explicitly links the origins of languages with the origins of peoples, we shall leave our analysis of Book IX for our later examination of Isidore's etymological analysis of things. For the moment,
however, we shall focus on some of the specific applications of the principle of *etymologia* as an interpretative and explanatory concept which Isidore makes in the analysis of the various verbal disciplines.

As many writers on medieval intellectual history have mentioned, the treatment of rhetoric and dialectic in the *Etymologiae* is at best only once removed from Cassiodorus' material in his *Institutiones Divinarum Litterarum et Saecularium Litterarum*, while at worst it relies on redactions of Cassiodorus' redaction. Nonetheless, the overall plan and method of Isidore's discussion of rhetoric and dialectic is characteristically his own; he employs the formulae, etymological paradigms, and concepts of origins which motivate the entire *Etymologiae*. So while the search for sources can tell us a great and significant amount about what Isidore read and learned, it cannot ultimately show us how he conceived and organized the epistemological framework for that learning.

Due to his reliance upon Cassiodorus for his knowledge of classical rhetoric, many of Isidore's etymological definitions for rhetorical terms appear to derive from the *Institutiones*; for example, his implied etymologies of the kinds of oratory based upon the speaker's intent and of some of the *causae* of rhetoric (2, 5, 1&3), and his *composita* etymology of *argumenta*. But as we saw before with his borrowing from Jerome's onomastic work, Isidore
 alters Cassidorus' articulations to make them conform with his quod/quia pattern of organization and hence to foreground the extraverbal quality of the derivations. As before, the etymologies which Isidore employs in his account of rhetoric are based primarily upon extraverbal criteria: the speaker's intention, the efficient cause of argumenta, and so forth.

As we might expect, these same principles of etymological explanation also hold true for Isidore's treatment of dialectica. Cassiodorus' compendium of classical writings on logic is mined for etymological lore which is then shaped to fit into Isidore's plan. Dialectica is a subspecies of philosophia and is so called "quod in ea de dictis disputatur. Nam ΛΕΚΤΟΥ dictio dicitur" (2, 22, 2) [because there is discussion of words in it; for lekton is translated as dictio]. Later Isidore of course interprets philosophia with the composita etymology "amor sapientiae" (2, 24, 3; cf. 8, 6, 1). The essence of logica (or rationalis), to discover through language the true causes of things, is laid to the dual referent of its origin--Logos: "ΛΌΓΟΣ enim apud Graecos et sermonem significat et rationem" (2, 24, 7) [Logos according to the Greeks means "word" and "reason."] Although Isidore curiously does not use (in Book II) his customary quod formula to define the three branches of philosophy (naturalis, moralis, and rationalis), he does do so later in his
account of peoples' vocations:

Physici dicti, quia de naturis tractant. 
Natura quippe Graece φύσις vocatur. 
Ethici, quia de moribus disputant. 
Mores enim apud Graecos ἡθές appellantur. 
Logici autem, quia in natura et in moribus rationem adiungunt. Ratio enim Graece λόγος dicitur. (8, 6, 4-6)

[The natural philosophers are so called because they treat of nature. Nature in Greek is called physis. The moral philosophers are so called because they discuss morals. For morals in Greek are called ethé. The rational philosophers are so named because they add reason to nature and morals. For reason in Greek is called logos.]

In each of these explanations, the quia clause presents an extraverbal reason based upon the philosophical subject matter for the name of the particular branch of philosophy.

Besides the use of extraverbal etymologies to define the essential natures of rhetoric and dialectic, Isidore also makes much of the inventors of the various aspects of the two disciplines, particularly those subspecies of philosophy. For rhetorica, Isidore merely notes in general terms the founding of the discipline in Greece by Georgias, Aristotle, and Hermagoras and its "translation" (parallel to the translation of Greek terms into Latin) to Rome by Cicero and Quintilius, who, however, did so "with such eloquence, such variety that it is easy for the reader to admire, impossible to understand" (2, 2, 1). In the section on dialectica, however, Isidore is much more elaborate and interesting in his explanation of the inventors of the branches of philosophy and, as with the literary
genres, is at pains to establish their Jewish-Biblical antiquity over their classical counterparts.

While Isidore grants that Aristotle systematized the subject matter of dialectic (2, 22, 1) and that Thales, Socrates, and Plato invented natural, ethical, and rational philosophy, respectively (2, 24, 4-5&7), nonetheless the holy Scriptures also contain discussions of these kinds of inquiry:

Nam aut de natura disputare soient, ut in Genesi et in Ecclesiaste: aut de moribus, ut in Proverbis et in omnibus sparsim libris: aut de Logica, pro qua nostri Theoreticam sibi indicant, ut in Cantico canticorum, et Evangeliiis (2, 24, 8).

[For they are wont to discuss nature, as in Genesis or Ecclesiastes; or conduct, as in Proverbs and here and there in all the books; or logica, instead of which our philosophers assert the claims of theology, as in the Song of Songs or the Gospels (Brehaut).]

Thus, Isidore's definition of philosophia (repeated in the Etymologiae) would appear to be an attempt to accommodate Christian moral truth as revealed in the Bible with the best of pagan philosophical ethics: "Philosophia est rerum humanarum divinarumque cognitio cum studio bene vivendi coniuncta" (2, 24, 1; cf. 8, 6, 1) [Philosophy is the knowledge of things human and divine, united with a zeal for right living]. But unlike his earlier account of the Hebrew origin of literature, Isidore's treatment of the types of philosophical analysis contained in the
Bible does not mention their having been invented by Moses or Solomon, although that etiology is implicit in the explanation, given Isidore's view of chronology. In fact, in Book VIII, when he discusses once again the pagan philosophers, Isidore devotes a great deal of attention to the particular derivations of the names of the great pagan philosophies, in each case of course relying upon a variety of extraverbal material to support his etymologies. Some philosophies, like the Platonici, Epicurei, and Pythagorici, take their names from their inventors ("ex auctoribus"), while others, such as the Peripatetici, Stoici, and Academici, obtain theirs from their places of meeting ("a locis conventiculorum et stationum suarum") (3, 6, 6ff.). It is important to note, however, that while all of these derivations use extraverbal criteria, none is couched in the quod/quia formula. Instead, Isidore's use of an ablative of place from which construction ("Platonici a Platone philosopho dicti") indicates that these names are based upon their association with persons or places rather than actually caused by them in a strict etymological relationship.

The last specifically verbal discipline which Isidore takes up in the Etymologiae—sacred onomastics—is actually only implicit in the structure of Book VII (De deo, angelis et sanctis) and scattered throughout the alphabetical list of diverse etymologies in Book X (De vocabulis). We have
already said enough about the basic principles of medieval sacred onomastics in our analysis of Jerome's work on Hebrew names (Chapter 3) and in our account of Isidore's philosophy of language. It now remains to see how Isidore develops the concept of sacred onomastics in specific etymologies and how those etymologies are articulated.

Earlier we referred to the way in which Isidore borrows from Jerome's onomastic works and then alters the derivations to make them accord with his quod/quia pattern, which emphasizes the specifically extraverbal grounds for the etymologies, while at the same time omitting for the most part the composita etymologies which characterize Jerome's procedure (above, pp. 147ff.). Similarly, Isidore alters the form of the etymology of "Jesus" which the Evangelist Matthew ascribes to God at the Annunciation; says Isidore, "Etymologiam autem nominis huius etiam Evangelista significat, dicens: 'Vocabis nomen eius Salvator, quia ipse salvum faciet populum suum'" (7, 2, 8; my italics) [The Evangelist also signified the etymology of his name, saying: You will call his name Savior, because he will become the savior of his people]. The name Christus is explained in several ways which reveal the nature of Isidore's method. Like Jerome, Isidore says that Christ "a chrismate est appellatus, hoc est unctus" (7, 2, 2; my italics) [Christ is named from chrismate, that is, anointed]. Then he develops this gloss in terms of the extraverbal quod/quia
formula:

inde Christi dicti a chrismate, quod
est unctio...Nam chrisma Graece,
Latine unctio nuncupatur, quae etiam
Domino nomen adcommodavit facta
spiritualis, quia spiritus unctus
est a Deo Patre, sicut in
actibus...(7, 2, 2-3)

[whence Christ is named from christmate,
which is ointment...For chrisma in Greek
is called unctio in Latin, a spiritual
deed which provided a name suited even
to the Lord, because the anointed spirit
is from God the Father, as is related in
Acts . . .]

In this example, as with much of Book VII, the quia clause
presents an extraverbal Biblical support for the etymology
in question (cf. on Noah; 7, 6, 15).

As Isidore states at the outset of Book VII, the
explanation of the holy names is sufficient to enable men
to comprehend the causes and origins, i.e. the truth, to
which they refer: "Vocabulorum enim expositio satis indicat
quid velit intellegi. Habent enim quaedam ex propriis
causis nominum rationem" (7, 1, 2) [For the explanation of
words sufficiently indicates what is meant. For certain
have the reason for their names in peculiar causes (Bre­
haut).] And this principle accords with another etymo-
logical precept that unless we know the names of things,
the things themselves vanish. But what is especially
significant about the concepts of causa and ratio in
Book VII is the way in which Isidore replaces the temporal
framework of etymologia with an essentially atemporal form
of typological etymological interpretation. So in the
episode from Matthew's gospel, Jesus' name is conferred
because of what He shall do in the future, a "cause," how­
ever, which is potentially present in the sempiternity of
God's omniscience. Likewise, when explaining the names
of Old Testament figures, Isidore makes explicit what was
only implicit in his source--Jerome's onomastic work:

\[
\text{plerique primorum hominum ex propriis}
\]
\[
\text{causis originem nominum habent.}
\]
\[
\text{quibus ita prophetice indita}
\]
\[
\text{sunt vocabula, ut aut futuris aut}
\]
\[
\text{praecedentibus eorum causis conveniant}
\]
\[
(7, 6, 1).
\]

[Most of the men in early times have
the origin of their names in appropriate
causes. Their names have been given in
such a prophetic way that they are in
harmony with either their future or their
antecedent causes.]

Thus the extraverbal reality to which such names refer and
from which they are derived is to be comprehended from the
Christian standpoint of the eternal present. From Isidore's
vantage point in the sixth century, Adam's reason for naming
his firstborn son Cain ("Possedi hominem per Deum") can be
fully comprehended only in terms of the prophetic nature
of the name based upon Cain's later envy and greed. The
full nature of the \textit{propria causa} for the etymology of Cain
must take into account events which occurred after the
name itself was imposed, yet given God's omniscience, which
must have been potentially immanently "present" at the
naming. Thus Isidore's statement that his interpretation
of the prophetic names will concentrate on the literal meaning in history ("tantum ad litteram intellectum historiae") and retain the sacramental meaning ("manente spirituali sacramento") would seem to indicate that given the kind of etymological interpretations he offers, he considers what we observe as the context and inner spiritual meaning to be an integral part of the name's literal meaning (7, 6, 2). The etymologia of Job, transmuted through the Latin dolens, prefigured his calamities ("Calamitates enim suas nominis etymologia praefiguravit"; 7, 6, 42). Elsewhere, Iosue is interpreted salvator and "Ipse enim in figura Christi populum a deserto salvavit, et in terram repromissionis induxit" (7, 6, 51) [For he in the figure of Christ saved his people from the desert, and led them into the promised land].

These examples from the section in Book VII devoted to prophetic names indicate the scope of Isidore's dependence on Jerome. In fact, after 7, 6, 48 (Aaron) Isidore appears to have tired, and most of the derivations which he presents omit the quod/quia formula and adopt Jerome's glossula technique (id est, hoc est, vel): e.g. "Barach fulgurans. Debbora apis vel loquax" (7, 6, 53). Also, in the succeeding sections of Book VII which treat of the names of the patriarchs, prophets, apostles, martyrs, the ranks of the clergy, monks, and miscellaneous names ("De ceteris fidelibus"), there is a great preponderance of
another Jeromian formula—interpretatur. Most often, the formula contains a spiritual or typological explanation of the name; e.g. "Esaias interpretatur salvator Domini" (7, 8, 7) [Isaiah is interpreted as savior of the Lord] and Stephanus "qui Hebraeo sermone interpretatur norma, quod prior fuerit in martyrio ad imitationem fidelium" (7, 11, 3) [which in Hebrew is interpreted as norm, because he was first in martyrdom for the imitation of the faithful] (an etymology based wholly on the similarity of sound between the Greek and the Hebrew).

The sections devoted to the names of the clerical ranks and types of monks are structured on etymological grounds parallel to those which inform the analysis of the names of the Trinity, etc. in terms of extraverbal reality. So, says Isidore, "Monachus Graeca etymologia vocatus, eo quod sit singularis" (7, 13, 1) [Monk (monachus) is derived from a Greek etymology, because he is alone]. Offering another of his infrequent composita etymologies, Isidore declares that

Orthodoxus est recte credens, et ut credit [recte] vivens. ὅπερεν enim Graece recte dicitur, ἀδεξα gloriam est: hcc est vis rectae gloriae. Quo nomine non potest vocari, qui aliter vivit quam credit (7, 14, 5).

[Orthodoxus is right believing and living as one believes. Orthos is translated from the Greek as right, doxa as glory. This word (orthodoxus) has the essential potency of right glory, by which name one is not able to be called who lives other than he believes.]
This latter etymological explanation is especially interesting for the assumption which governs it, namely, that the truth of the name is a direct function of the truth of the thing, attitude, or spiritual state to which it refers. The entire section in Book VII on miscellaneous names reflects this principle and also links it to the truth of cognomina, whereby the name is the thing itself, as when Isidore explains: "A Christo enim Christiani sunt cognominati; sicut a Iuda Iudaei. De magistri quippe nomine cognomem sectatoribus datum est" (7, 14, 1) [Christians are named from Christ, just as the Jews are from Judah; for the cognomen is given to the followers from the master's name].

Book X with its alphabetical listing of a great variety of derivations and extraverbal explanations is the last book of the Etymologiae to treat strictly verbal arts, and it resumes the dominant quod/quia formula. The book begins with a general statement about two different kinds of etymological interpretations: the philosophical denominative/derivativa approach (sapientia—sapiens) and the more mythographic, origin-oriented method (homo ex humo) (10, 1). We have already demonstrated how both of these methodologies (in Isidore) use extraverbal criteria to justify derivations and therefore how both make use of the quod/quia form of explanation. So Isidore says that benivolus is so called "quia bene vult," (10, 26) [benevolent is so called because he wishes well]. By far the
greatest part of the derivations in Book X belong to the
mythographic, rather than the philosophical, category of
etymology as is evidenced by the derivations Isidore
presents in the book proper for *sapiens*:

\[
\text{Sapiens dictus a sapore; quia sicut}
\text{gustus aptus est ad discretionem}
\text{saporis ciborum, sic sapiens ad}
\text{dinoscentiam rerum atque causarum;}
\text{quod unumquodque dinoscat, atque}
\text{sensu veritatis discernat (10, 240).}
\]

[The wise man (*sapiens*) is named from
taste, because just as taste (*gustus*)
is adapted to distinguishing the tastes
of foods, so is the wise man to the dis-
cerning of the things and causes;
since he discerns each and every one and
discriminates it by the sense of the
truth.]

All in all, Book X is a hodgepodge of miscellaneous derivations and explanations, much like the late classical hand-
lists of hard words or encyclopedias which listed etymologies for the terms of a great wealth of subjects.\(^{64}\) However,
Isidore is unusual, although not unique, in his use of an alphabetical arrangement.

The scope of Isidore's treatment of the various specifically verbal disciplines, together with the ety-
omological explanations and interpretations he offers to ac-
count for the nature of those arts, reveals the extent to
which his discussions of rhetoric, dialectic, and Biblical onomastics grow out of the procedures and models which he
develops in the section on *grammatica*. The discipline's
terminology and names provide entrées into the subject's essence, while a knowledge of the subject's
origins and inventors yields an understanding of its place in Christian epistemology and doctrinal truth. But just as Isidore's explanatory model for rhetoric and dialectic is grammar, so too is grammar the model for the etymological explanation of the nonverbal disciplines (astronomy, mathematics, music, etc.). The conjoining of an etymological knowledge of words with an etymological knowledge of things is characteristic of the accounts of both the verbal and the nonverbal arts and their terminologies. So by raising the grammatical category of etymologia to the status of an interpretive principle, Isidore essentially "verbifies" the universe and demands an etymological approach to physical reality, parallel to the comprehension of the actual Word through the written word. It remains now for us to look closely at a few of Isidore's discussions of nonverbal disciplines, to establish the precise nature of his application of the etymological method to the realm of natural phenomena.

D. Origines rerum

Responding to the complain by Quintilian and Augustine that writing produced in an individual a poor memory of things, Isidore claims that "Unless we know the names of things, the knowledge of things vanishes" ("Nisi enim nomen scieris, cognitio rerum perit"; 1, 7, 1). Language, then, is the noetic apprehension of the universe and for
Isidore man's most significant contact with his world. And as our analysis of Isidore's treatment of grammar and the other verbal subjects has demonstrated, man by means of etymological investigation can pierce through the tissue of language to perceive the actual essence of things. With the concept of etymologia, Isidore preserved language as a unified construct with reference to a unified world. Isidore's hermeneutic program is analogous to the Stoics' efforts to glimpse through revelation the true nature of reality; but unlike that of his pagan predecessors, Isidore's reality was primarily Judaeo-Christian in origin and therefore fundamentally moral and spiritual. It is the Biblical sanction for etymologia, coupled with the Alexandrian Fathers' mode of exegesis, which, in the end, imbues Isidore's steady use of extra-verbal criteria to justify etymological interpretations.

Isidore's etymology of Musica indicates the complex integration of word and thing in his accounts of the nonverbal disciplines:

Musica est peritia modulationis sono cantuque consistens. Et dicta Musica per derivationem a Musis. Musae autem appellatae ὀπὸ τοῦ Μάσαι, id est a quae rerendo, quod per eas, sicut antiqui voluerunt, vis carminum et vocis, modulation quae reretur (3, 15, 1; my italics).

[Music is the practical knowledge of melody, consisting of sound and song; and it is called music by derivation from the Muses. And the Muses were so-called apo tou masai, that is, from]
inquiring, because it was by them, as the ancients had it, that the potency of songs and the melody of the voice were inquired into (Brehaut).]

First of all, we can note in this etymological explanation both technographic and mythographic perspectives with their corresponding formulae. Focusing on the verbal relationship, Isidore says that Musica is a noun derived from Musae, which is translated from the Greek, but the ultimate rationale for this technographic derivation is that the Musae are so named because (quod) they inquired into the potency (vis) of songs and the melody of the voice. So while Isidore initially provides a verbal derivation for Musica, the fundamental justification for the term is to be found in its extraverbal origins. Furthermore, as his etymological account indicates, the derivation of the word is equated with and actually posterior to the derivation of Music itself.\(^{67}\)

Isidore's discussion of the various aspects of Musica reveals several other important procedures for his treatment of the nonverbal arts. As with the analysis of the literary genres, most of the books in the Etymologiae devoted to nonverbal disciplines include accounts of the inventors of the arts. So, for example, on the authority of Moses, Tubal Cain is referred to as the discoverer (repertor) of the art of music, but Isidore also includes the Greeks' claim that Pythagoras discovered the art "ex
malleorum sonitu et cordarum extensione percussa" (3, 16, 1) [from the sound of the hammers and the striking of tense cords]. However, unlike his attempt in Book I to demonstrate the antiquity of Hebrew literature, Isidore presents Christian and classical history as competitive hypotheses with no effort to adjudicate between the sacred or pagan origins of music. Similarly, when explaining the nature of chorda as a part of rhythmica, Isidore juxtaposes Mercury's invention (excogitio) of chorda with the Psalmist's invention of the instrument ("Psalterium, quod vulgo canticum dicitur, a psallendo nominatum, quod ad eius vocem chorus consonando respondeat"; 3, 22, 6-7) [The psalter, which in the popular tongue is called a monody, is named from playing upon a stringed instrument (psallendo) because the chorus responds to its sound by singing with it.] Thus, while Isidore considers a knowledge of the inventors of music as fundamental to a proper etymological account of the musical basis of all knowledge (secular and sacred), since no discipline can be perfect without music, nevertheless it is not essential that he establish the primacy of Hebrew origin for either musica or most of the other non-verbal arts. Isidore implies therefore that for the quadrivium and related mechanical and physical subjects classical origins are as good as Judaeo-Christian ones, whereas the verbal disciplines Hebrew origin is a necessary part of the etymological explanation. The section...
on music also contains etymological explanations of the various instruments, most of which reflect extraverbal reality as the basis for the derivations and accordingly use the mythographic quod/quia formula. For example, the lyra is so called because the name is taken from the Greek \(\lambda\eta\rho\epsilon\iota\upsilon\nu\), "id est a varietate vocum, quod diversos sonos efficiat" (3, 22, 8) [that is, from the variety of sounds, because it makes diverse noises],\(^6^9\) while cithara derives its name from the Greek word for breast, whose shape the instrument resembles (3, 22, 2).

All of these types of etymological analysis of music should be familiar to us. Initially we encountered them all in Book I in Isidore's treatment of grammatica and they are the basis of his explanations of nearly every other subject in the Etymologiae. So in Book IX (De linguis, gentibus, regibus, militia, civibus, affinitatibus) Isidore links the development of different races to the fragmentation of languages after Babel and therefore traces the origin of all peoples to the Hebrews in Eden (9, 1, 1).\(^7^0\) Hebrew origins, then, form the basis for not only the Christian study of language but the Christian study of anthropology as well. Later, Isidore extends the use of extraverbal criteria in his explanatory model to account for the names of the various peoples; some take their names from their leaders or mythic founders (e.g. "Gothi a Magog filio laphet nominati putantur, de similitudine
ultimae syllabai, quos veteres magis getos quam Gothos vocaverunt"; 9, 2, 89) [The Goths are thought to be named from Magog the son of Japhet, from the likeness of the last syllable. These the ancients called Getae, rather than Goths.] where the verbal and extraverbal criteria are merged in the manner of musica—Musae (above), while others obtain their names from the psychological quality of their races, based upon the environment where they live71 or from some aspect of their social customs ("Anthropophagi quia humanis carnibus vescuntur"; 9, 2, 132) [The Anthropophagi... because they eat human flesh].72

This method of anthropological investigation is essentially no different from Isidore's method of sacred onomastics (Book VII) whereby the various epithets for Christ are explained in terms of his spiritual nature (see above, pp. 221ff.).

There is no need to detail the organization and etymological method for each of the other nonverbal disciplines (cosmology, architecture, stones and metals, agriculture, weapons, spectacles, games, ships, tools, and so forth) since they all embody most if not all of the etymological concepts we have outlined thus far: the equation of the origin of words with the origins of things, a general emphasis on the inventors of the disciplines, and the use of extraverbal criteria and mythographic formulæ (especially quod/quia). However, we can round out our
discussion of Isidore's treatment of the nonverbal subjects with a look at one discipline—Arithmetic—whose direction in the Middle Ages was largely a result of Isidore's etymological analysis of its essence and its parts.

Like his chief Latin predecessors in the analysis of arithmetic (Varro and Boethius), Isidore included the subject, along with geometry, astronomy, and to a lesser degree music, within the larger discipline of mathematics (3, Pref.). But arithmetic was considered to be the origin of the other classes of mathematics:

Arithmetica est disciplina numerorum. Graeci enim numerum ἀριθμόν dicunt. Quam scriptores saecularearum litterarum inter disciplinas mathematicas ideo primam esse voluerunt, quoniam ipsa ut sit nullam aliam indiget disciplinam. Musica autem et Geometria et Astronomia, quae sequuntur, ut sint atque subsistant istius egent auxilium (3, 1, 1-2).

[Arithmetic is the science of numbers. For the Greeks call numbers arithmon. The writers of secular literature have decided that it is first among the mathematical sciences since it needs no other science for its own existence. But music and geometry, which follow, need its aid in order to be and exist (Brehaut).]

But even more important than the position of arithmetic as the essential factor in the study of abstract quantity (abstracta quantitas), and hence in the intellectual analysis of all physical reality, was arithmetic's capacity to initiate one into the mystical significance of things, almost on a par with the way the etymological analysis of language
provides an insight into essential reality. The difference between etymologia and numerus, of course, is that before one can comprehend the mystery of nature through number, he must use the grammatical category of etymology to discover the true nature of the subject in its verbal structure.

The names of the numbers reflect a variety of etymological approaches, ranging from pure arbitrariness to the analogy with geometrical forms to the particular number's function in calculation. Invoking the criterion of euphony in language, which had been articulated by Plato and Jerome, Isidore explains the number viginti (20) as a composite etymology: "Porro viginti dicti quod sint decem bisgeniti, U pro B littera posita" (3, 3, 4) [Again twenty is so called because it is ten twice-produced, the U having been substituted for the letter B]. Except for those of the names of the numbers 4 and 5, all of the etymologies which Isidore uses are drawn in part from the Greeks; in this, the etymologies support the idea of the subject's pagan origins and also Isidore's claim that Pythagoras was the first to write about the discipline of arithmetica (3, 2).

In addition, through the work of Nicomachus, Isidore received a set of arithmetic terms which were in fact fundamentally etymological; odd numbers, for example, were distinguished as either prime (simpexus), compound (composita),
or prime and compound (mediocris) (3, 5, 1). That classi-
cal and medieval number theory bore strong connections with
some etymological models of interpretation is reflected in
Isidore's definition of a compound number: "Compositi sunt,
qui non solum unitate metiuntur, sed etiam alieno numero
procreantur, ut novem, XV et XXI" (3, 5, 7; my emphasis)
[Compound numbers are those which are not only measured by
unity, but are produced by another number,
as 9, 15, and 21]. As Isidore's terminology indicates,
there are similarities between the theory of compound num-
bers and that of organic derivativa as developed by Pris-
cian.76

This relation between the terminology of etymologia
and the terminology of arithmetica brings us to the major
contribution which Isidore made to the etymological study
of arithmetic. In his treatment of numbers and calcula-
tion, Isidore cautions the reader not to despise number
("Ratio numerorum contemnenda non est"; 3, 4,1). Citing
Wisdom 11:21, he argues for the mystical significance of
numbers and hence of all abstractae quantitae which the
intellect perceives.77 Six (senarius) declares the per-
fection of the universe (presumably either because God
finished creation on the sixth day or because two Trinities
are better than one), while forty (quadraginta) obtains
its special typological significance from the fasts of
Moses, Elijah, and Christ (3, 4, 2). Thus, echoing his
earlier claim that unless we know the names for things the things vanish (1, 7, 1), Isidore declares "Tolle numerum in rebus omnibus, et omnia pereunt" (3, 4, 4) [Take number from all things and the things perish]. In the Christian universe, all reality is founded upon proportion and harmony, which exists largely to instruct man rather than confound him ("Per numerum siquidem ne confundamur instruimur"; 3, 4, 4). By breaking reality down into the constitutive elements of its structure and then analyzing the spiritual significance of those elements, Isidore extended the Augustinian program for a Christian education and provided one of the principal justifications for later medieval interest in the sciences of arithmetic and mathematics. The proportions themselves were considered as transparent realities through which one could perceive the nature and purpose of God and His universal plan.

Even though the numbers may reveal divine truths, it is important to remember that for Isidore the grammatical category of etymologia provided the means to analyze the terminology of the disciplines of arithmetic and the other areas of knowledge. Above all, Isidore's development of a comprehensive etymological model was motivated by his perception of reality as a primarily verbal structure which could be penetrated by an understanding of the meanings and significations of words and other verbified realities. Such an understanding, of course, was generated by the analysis of words' origins and sanctioned ultimately by
the Incarnation of the Perfect Word which revealed in its
c fullness the divine truth immanent in the original Edenic
language. In the tradition of the Christian study of gram­
mur and sacred onomastics established by Origen, Jerome,
and Augustine, Isidore relied primarily upon extraverbal
reality to justify the derivations he cites as the basis
for his synthesis of man's knowledge of God's world. In
particular, in his analysis of grammatica, Isidore's
steady reliance upon such extraverbal criteria and what we
have characterized as the "mythographic" approach to
etymologia is the model for his entire Etymologiae and
reveals that grammar and knowledge are inextricable, that
knowledge of the causes of things necessarily demands
knowledge of the language which structures those things.
After Isidore, medieval Biblical schools generally went
to his work to solve linguistic problems. 78 In essence,
the Etymologiae became for the Middle Ages the great
thesaurus of Christian significations and essential mean­
ings. In addition, Isidore's work provided an elaborate
and commanding model for any future etymological inves­
tigations by medieval writers; and in fact, Tatwine and
many Carolingian grammarians (e.g. Remigius of Auxerre,
Erchanbertus, and Clement the Scot) wrote versions of
Donatus and commentaries on Biblical and classical litera­
ture which incorporated not only the etymological materials
of the fourth- to sixth-century technographic commentators
on Donatus but also the mythographic and mystical bases of grammar which Isidore developed so fully.

E. R. Curtius has written that "Isidore's 'poetics' integrates the doctrines of pagan late Antiquity into the systematized didascalium of the western church. His writings thereby acquired an importance which can hardly be overestimated. He is usually regarded as a compiler, his work as a mosaic . . . [But] above all, we must read the Etymologiae as the medieval reader did—as a book which is all of a piece and of binding authority."79 Those who have criticized Isidore's atomistic, fragmentary procedure do not identify clearly the informing principle and purpose of his work. The Etymologiae represents the flowering of Patristic sacred onomastics (as articulated in the Latin tradition by Augustine and Jerome) and the convergence of that tradition with the secular tradition of Pompeius and the growth of an etymologized Donatus. While the technographers remained primarily within the confines of verbal criteria, Isidore developed a theory of language which builds upon the mythographic perception of language as a verbal construct motivated by extraverbal reality, in order to transform language from an end into a means to a higher truth. Thus Socrates' dream of a static, extraverbal reality which justifies language and etymologies was realized in Christian grammatica and most fully in Isidore's Etymologiae. As with his Patristic predecessors, Isidore
reaches the numen through the nomen, but his paradigm is at once deeper and broader than any which had been articulated in Christian sacred onomastics before him. Thus we may go beyond Curtius' claim that the Etymologiae "is all of a piece" and say that the work presents the most fully developed etymological model for the interpretation of language and reality before the growth of philosophical analyses of grammar and the structure of reality beginning in the mid-eleventh century. Between Isidore and Anselm, the use of etymologia as an explanatory concept, either in the study of grammar or of any other subject, was 'derived' from Isidore or based upon a more limited etymological model (technographic, secular mythographic, or Biblical onomastic).

With the introduction of Aristotelian logic and philosophical systems into the ars grammatica, the dichotomy between technographic and mythographic etymologia and grammar was effectively transformed into a new set of categories. With that transformation, Isidore's concept of words as transparent entities and his equation of the origins of words with the origins of things was transmuted into the speculative grammarians' analysis of the structures of language and meaning in terms of the cognitive operations of the human mind. But Isidore's model persisted, at least implicitly, in practical exegesis and literary interpretation, where the word was still sacred and the numen still present in the very articulation of the name.
NOTES

1 Fontaine, Isidore, pp. 27-210.


3 In the Preface to his Differentiae (PL, 83, 9-10) Isidore uses the explanation by contrast (etymologia by antiphrasis) to recover true similarities and differences both between words and things. In the Differentiae the grammatical concept of differentia is superseded by the philosophical use of the term: "interponentes differentias, quousque ad propriam eius de quo quaerimus signata eius expressione perveniamus" (Diff., 2, 25, 2; cf. 2, 25, 3; 2, 29, 7). See also Michael Murrin, The Veil of Allegory (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1969), pp.64-65, on the continuity of what he calls the "lucus a lucendo" mode of allegory.

The Allegoriae, which includes not only interpretations of proper names of people and places but also material relating to events and concepts in the life of Israel and in the life of man, can properly be called Analogiae since the work emphasizes the analogy between the macrocosm and the microcosm and the Scriptural typological correspondences between Old Testament prophecy and New Testament acts. Thus the grammarian-exegete's perception of similarities in the Allegoriae (applied to the greatest of all analogical texts—the Bible) represents the inverse view of differentia but is nonetheless a truly synthesizing principle. In fact, allegoria or analogia (see Isidore's definition of allegoria in Etymol., 1, 37, 22 and 26) is much more likely to be synthetic than is differentia. Indicative of Isidore's methodology, the goals in both modes are to organize and synthesize all knowledge and reality—physical, moral, and spiritual.

4 See Fontaine, Isidore, p. 42; cf. Isidore's comment that "omnis enim rei inspectio etymologia cognita planior est" (1, 29, 2).

These two sorts of allegorical meaning and significance are usually equated with the allegory of the poets (allegory of words) and the allegory of the theologians (allegory of things). Consult the convenient summaries of the predominant medieval positions in R. H. Green, "Dante's 'Allegory of the Poets' and the Mediaeval Theory of Poetic Fiction," CL, 9 (1957), 118-25; Charles Singleton, "The Irreducible Dove," CL, 9 (1957), 129-35; John MacQueen, Allegory (London: Methuen, 1970), pp. 46-58; David Aers, Piers Plowman and Christian Allegory (London: Edward Arnold, 1975), p. 68 and Chapter 4 (passim).


For the classical and medieval tradition of the isagoge, consult above, note 7; for the specific developments of the isagoge and the introduction to an author and his work (accessus ad auctores) through the development of a series of standard topoi, see Eduard Norden, "Die Composition und Litteraturgattung der Horazischen Epistula ad Pisones," Hermes, 40 (1905), 494-97, 508-9, 524-28; Franz Quadlbauer, Die antike Theorie der Genera Dicendi in Lateinischen Mittelalters (Vienna and Cologne, 1962), pp. 439-43; Edwin A. Quain, "The Medieval Accessus ad Auctores," Traditio, 3 (1945), 215-64. For collections of important texts, see Accessus ad Auctores, ed. R. B. C. Huygens, Collection Latomus, Vol. 15 (Brussels, 1954) and Huygens' materials in Latomus, 12 (1953), 296-311, 460-84 (esp. on Priscian and Horace). See also Porphyry, Isagoge et in Categorias Commentarium, ed. A. Brusse (Leipzig: Teubner, 1887) and Boethius, In Isagogen Porphyrii Commenta, ed. George Schepss and Samuel Brandt, CSEL, 48.

See our account of the Donatus tradition (above, pp. 50, 55-56). Also see 1, 33, 5; 1, 37, 1; 1, 37, 24. Cf. Fontaine, Isidore, pp. 206-7.

Later in this section Isidore further distinguishes those names derived from other Greek or Latin words from those drawn from natural reality; see 1, 29, 3-5.

Compositae and etymologies from *categoriae* are infrequent in Isidore's work. But it is important to see even in his own theoretical statements the scope of Isidore's concept of *etymologia* as an epistemological and interpretive principle. Cf. Fontaine, *Isidore*, pp. 42-43.

See the citations in Thurot, pp. 244-46, 250-318 (passim).

Cf. 2, 30, 4: "A *nota est argumentum*, cum ex *vni nominis argumentum aliquod eligatur*, ut Cicero (Pis. 19): 'Consulem, inquam, quarebam, quem in isto maiali invenire non poteram.' Effecta argumenta sunt, quae quodammodo ex rebus aliis tracta noscuntur."

Cf. 5, 25, 37. As Brehaut points out, Isidore's section on *lex* is almost certainly original and represents a real contribution to the medieval organization of knowledge and the development of the medieval concept of the university; see *Encyclopedist*, pp. 164-66.

Thus Brehaut's translation (*Encyclopedist*, p. 99).

Cf. 1, 6, 1; also consult above, pp. 64, 74. See also Aristotle, *De Interp.*, 16ést10.

See 1, 29, 1 and Brehaut's translation of the phrase (*Encyclopedist*, p. 99).

For the latter, see 7, 4-5; 5, 22; 5, 25, 37 (on *redintegratio*): 15, 15.

Brehaut (*Encyclopedist*, p. 259n.) says that the material in Book XVIII on spectacles is taken from Tertullian's *De Spectaculis*. However, it is clear that the form which the material takes is specifically Isidore's.
Cf. 1, 6, 1-2, where Isidore repeats the Aristotelian principle that the parts of speech are derived from the noun and the verb (corresponding to the substance and the act). See above, p. 73 (and note).

Cf. the Stoic alternative to the homo-humus derivation: homo is from omon where the name of man alludes to the union of the body and soul. Also see the derivation meus-animus-anima in Cassiodorus, Anima, 1.


Cf. 1, 12, 4: "Rationales dicuntur a ratione, qua quisque utitur in faciendo, ut 'quomodo eum occidam, ne agnoscar? veneno an ferro?'

See e.g. Isidore's use of Jerome's etymological explanation of Eden (a principio); 14, 3, 2.

But see the implied composita etymology: "Elion, quod interpretatur in Latinum excelsus, quia supra caelos est" (7, 1, 9).

See Books VII (esp. section 1) and X. However, cf. on participia (1, 7, 26).

See 10, 1, 4: 16; 98; 115; 154; 201. Also see the derivation of carmen from carere mente (1, 39, 4); also note the Stoic source of this etymology in Varro, DLL, 7, 55. Also see 1, 11; 6, 2, 43 (evangelium/ ad notatio); 7, 14, 5 (orthodoxus), cited from Jerome.

Fontaine, Isidore, p. 257n.

See e.g. 1, 27, 1; 2, 24, 3; 5, 28, 1; 3, 1, 1. Cf. 1, 1, 2 (arete); 1, 41, 1; 3, 22, 2; 5, 38, 3-4; 6, 2, 43 (composita); 8, 6, 4-6; 8, 7, 5; 8, 11, 19 (from Jerome). For Isidore's use of Hebrew etymologies for Latin words, see 5, 30, 10.
See e.g. 1, 6, 2 (noun and verb); 1, 29, 5 (places). But also see 9, 2, 97 on the derivation of a people's character from the climate in which they live.

See e.g. 3, 15, 1 (Musa); 1, 29, 4-5; 2, 30, 5 (on the kinds of argumenta). But cf. 1, 7, 20-22, where the origins of words and the origins of things are equated, and 2, 30, 15, where derivatio is used in a nonetymological sense.

See Isidore's use of other etymological terminology: e.g. "Pronomen ex nomine nascitur, cuius officio fungitur, ut 'orator ille.' Adverbum de nomine nascitur, ut 'doctus, docte.' Participium de nomine et verbo, ut 'lego, legens'" (1, 6, 2).


See Charisius (KGL, 1, 154-55); Donatus (KGL, 4, 385; 370; 375); Ps-Probos (KGL, 4, 73; 222); Pompeius (KGL, 5, 144); Cledonius (KGL, 5, 33).


However, after Isidore some Carolingian grammarians began to use some extended etymological explanations or mythographic interpretations; see above, pp. 73 and n. 39, and Remigius' account of the name Roma (Fox, p. 2).


Cf. Isidore's definitions of the other parts of speech: pronomon (1, 8, 1); verbum (1, 9, 1); coniunctio (1, 12, 1-3); praepositio (1, 13, 1). Isidore transforms Donatus' incidental etymological explanations of the partes orationis and Priscian's more thoroughgoing concepts of nascitur and derivativa into quod/quia formulae, which represent an extension of the commentaries on Donatus while at the same time indicating a falling off of the depth of grammatical explanation. In Isidore, there are more autonomous fragments and a lessening of the sort of organic relationship among the parts which Priscian had perceived.
See 1, 9 (esp. 3-7).

Cf. "Extrinsecus enim venit agnomen ab aliqua ratione" (1, 7, 2).

Cf. 1, 17, 1 (pes) and 1, 22, 2 (nota).

See Brehaut, Encyclopedist, p. 33.

See below, pp. 208-10; also consult the discussion of the place of Adam and Moses in earlier Patristic theories of literature (above, pp. 109-12). For the origin of the problem in Patristic thought, see Jean Pépin, "Le 'challenge' Homere--Môise aux premiers siècles Chrétiens," RSR, 29 (1955), 105-22.

See 9, 1, 3: "Tres sunt autem linguae sacrae: Hebraea, Graeca, Latina, quae toto orbe maxime excel- lunt. His enim tribus linguis super crucem Domini a Pilato fuit causa eius scripta."

For the semantic orientation of vis, see above, pp. 180-81. For the most significant general discussions of "sign" and "index" as epistemological and logical terms, consult Aristotle, Prior Analytics, 2, 27 and Charles Sanders Peirce, Elements of Logic, 2, 3, 4-5; Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce, ed. Charles Hartshorne and Paul Weiss (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press, 1960), 1, 169-72. Peirce left his theory only partially developed; see Murray G. Murphey, The Development of Peirce's Philosophy (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1961), pp. 298-300. For the most significant extension of Peirce's notions of sign and index, see Umberto Eco, A Theory of Semiotics (Bloomington and London: Indiana Univ. Press, 1976), pp. 115-21, 217-60.

However, elsewhere Isidore employs the familiar explanation that the domestic nymph Carmena developed the Latin alphabet, although Isidore does not deny that she brought the Greek alphabet to the service of Rome; see 1, 4, 1.

On the medieval theories of genres, consult: Curtius, ELLMA, pp. 446-67; Thurot, pp. 67-68; Quadlbauer, Die Antike Theorie der Genera Dicendi (passim); Kelly, "The Scope of the Treatment of Composition," p. 264; Wilhelm Cloetla, Beitrage zur litteratur geschichte des mittel-alters und der renaissance (Halle: Niemeyer, 1890), 1, 1-54. For early medieval accounts of genres and literary history, see Diomedes (KGL, 1, 482-92), Marius Victorinus (KGL, 6, 56-58; 70-99), Donatus (KGL, 4, 375), and Servius (Vergilii Carmina Commentarii, ed. George Thilo and Hermann Hagen, 1, 4-5; 459; 2, 1; 124; 3, 1-4; 128-29). In addition, see the generic distinctions in Priscian's much-copied Praeexercitamina (KGL, 3, 430-40); see also Donald L. Clark, "Rhetoric and the Literature of the English Middle Ages," QJS, 45 (1959), 23-28, and Ensslin, "Priscianus," FW, 22: 2340-41.

Fontaine has shown clearly that the other etymology of prosa in this section (prosa a recte) is an interpolation by another hand; see Isidore, p. 159.

Cf. on versus: "Qui ne longius provolverentur quam iudicium posset sustinere, modum statuit ratio unde reverteretur; et ab eo ipsum versum vocatum, quod revertitur" (1, 39, 2).

Later, in Book VIII, Isidore accounts for the origin of the poet and poetry by citing Tranquillus' explanation that early men built temples to honor the gods and then invented sublime discourse to praise them (8, 7, 1). Isidore also adds Varro's composita etymology of vates (vi + mentis) which equates the poet with the prophet and theologian (8, 7, 3; 8, 7, 9-10). Using the id est and quod/quia formulae, Isidore gives etymological explanations of the genres (lyric, tragedy, comedy) in terms of their
context or the place of performance (8, 7, 4-6). He also cites three kinds of poetria which he distinguishes in terms of the manner of rhetorical address (narrative, dramatic, or mixed) (8, 7, 11).

53 Cf. on Colophonius, Sotades, and Simonidia (1, 39, 7).


55 Besides our discussion of the primacy of Moses in Patristic concepts of language and literature (above, pp. 111, 155-56), see Curtius, *ELLMA*, pp. 446, 451, 456 (on Jerome et al.).

56 Isidore refers to the "fabulas poetae" (1, 40, 1) and lists as fabulists Alcmeon of Croton (Aesop), Plautus, Terence, and Horace. He also cites Demosthenes' oration against Philippa (1, 40, 1-7). For historia, he mentions (besides Moses) Dares, Herodotus, Pherecydes, Esdras, Sallust, Livy, Eusebius, and Jerome; see 1, 42, 1-2; 1, 44, 4-5.

57 Isidore's probable source for the device of adtestio rei visae is Macrobius, *Saturnalia*, 4, 6, 13; cf. Quintilian, *Inst. Orat.*, 2, 4, 2. For the distinction between historia and annales, see Fontaine, Isidore, p. 181n., Verrius Flaccus, *De Verborum Significatu*, 4. On Macrobius' contribution to the medieval theories of genres, see Sandys, pp. 23-40.


“Deliberativum genus vocatur eo, quod de unaquaque re in eo deliberatur” (2, 4, 3); "Demonstrativum dictum, quod unamque remant laudando aut vituperando demonstrat" (2, 4, 5). On argumenta, see 2, 9, 1 ("quasi argutae mentis oratio"). Cf. Cassiodorus, Inst., 2, 2, 1; 2, 2, 11-12. See also Brehaut, Encyclopedist, pp. 106, 114-15.

Cf. "Dialectica est disciplina ad disserendas rerum causas inventa" (2, 22, 1) and Augustine's derivation of dialectica cited above, p. 128.

The Vulgate text reads: "Pariet autem filium: et vocalis nomen eius Iesum: ipse enim salvum faciet populum suum a peccatis eorum" (Matt. 1:21). The basis for the Latin derivation is the similarity in the original Aramaic version between Jesus and "he saves."

Cf. the explanation of the name Matusala: "Matusalam interpretatur mortuus est. Evidens etymologiae nominis. Quidam enim eum cum patre translatum fuisse, et diluvium praeterisse putaverunt. Ob hoc signanter transferitur: mortuus est, ut ostenderetur non vixisse eum post diluvium, sed in eodem cataclysmo fuisse defunctum" (7, 6, 13).

See Brehaut, Encyclopedist, pp. 38-45, 214. The most popular of such handbooks in the Middle Ages were Fulgentius' Expositio Sermonum Antiquorum (see above, pp. 79, 81-82) and Verrius Flaccus' De Verborum Significatu in Pompeius Festus' redaction. See also Nonius Marcellus' Compendiosa Doctrina ad Filium (esp. Book 5). For a thorough introduction to the subject of handlists of hard words, see Myra Uhlfelder, De Proprietate Sermonum vel Rerum: A Study and Critical Edition of a Set of Verbal Distinctions (Rome: American Academy in Rome, 1954).

Fontaine (Isidore, p. 829) cites Curtius' "Zur Literarästhetik des Mittelalters," ZRPh, 58 (1938), 1-50, 129-232, 433-79. In contrast to what he calls the "Cabalism" of Fulgentius, Martianus Capella, and Virgilius Maro, Curtius praises Isidore for maintaining the unity of language and reality in the face of the "precious hermetic heritage" of late paganism and the "monstrous fantasies of barbaric imagination ... [in] an age of decadent baroque and brutal primitivism" (pp. 465-73).
Contra Fontaine (Isidore, p. 178 n.) who says that
Isidore is unlike Augustine and the Stoics because his
mythography is "natural" and lacking in moral interpreta­
tion. However, while Hyginus represents the natural,
euhemeristic variety of mythography, Fontaine misrepre­
sents the moral and spiritual mythographic hermeneutic
practiced by Fulgentius in his Mythologiae (see above,
pp. 81-87), whose interpretive method and use of etymolog­
ical formulae closely parallel those of Isidore.

Cf. Isidore's mythographic definition of chorda:
"a corde, quia sicut pulsus est cordis in pectore, ita
pulsus chordae in cithara" (3, 22, 6).

Cf. 3, 22, 6-7; 3, 22, 10; 3, 22, 11.

"Initio autem quot gentes, tot linguae fuerunt,
deinde plures gentes quam linguae; quia ex una lingua
multae sunt gentes exorta" (9, 1, 1).
The exception to Isidore's etymologically-based
explanation of astronomia, which contains no analysis of
the areas of knowledge, is his definition and general
explanation of astronomia, which contains no etymological
definition of the term nor any account of the inventors
of the discipline (3, 24, 1; 3, 25).

See "Britones quidam Latine nominatos suspicantur,
eo quod bruti sint" (9, 2, 102) and "Germanicae gentes
dictae, quod sint immania corpora inmanesque rationes
saevissimis duratae frigoribus; qui mores ex piso caeli
venatuque viventes; . . . quorum inmanitas barbariae etiam
in ipsis vocabulis [Bruteri, Tubantes, etc.] honorem
quendam significat" (9, 2, 97).

See e.g. "Anthropophagi [sunt dicti] quia humanis
carnibus vescuntur" (9, 2, 132). See also those peoples
whose names are derived from the area where they live: Hebraei from Heber; Indi from Indus (9, 2, 38-39; 9, 2, 51). Cf. Varro's voluntaria declinatio and the derivation of Ephesi from Ephesus.

73 "Quinque autem non secundum naturam, sed secundum placitum voluntatis vocabulum acceperunt ab eo, qui numeris nomina indidit" (3, 3, 2).

74 "Quattuor vero a figura quadrata nomen sumpserunt" (3, 3, 2).

75 "Dicti autem decem a Graeca etymologia, eo quod ligent et coniungant infra iacentes numeros" (3, 3, 4).

76 Cf. Cassiodorus, Inst., 2, 4, 2; Boethius, Arith., 1, 3; Nichomachus, Arith., 1, 7, 1. See also Isidore's comments on centum and mille (3, 3, 5).

77 Fontaine calls this kind of investigation arithmology, as opposed to arithmetic. On the cultivation of various forms of analogic speculation in the early Middle Ages, see his Isidore, chapter 13 (pp. 369-91 (passim) and esp. pp. 370-72).

78 Later medieval scholars and Biblical exegetes sought out primarily his Etymologiae, but they also had recourse somewhat to his Differentiae and Synonyma. For a brief survey of later uses of Isidore's etymological scholarship, see McNally, The Bible in the Early Middle Ages, p. 49, and Manitius, 1, 67-68.

79 ELLMA, p. 455. Among those who have viewed Isidore's work as atomistic, see Brehaut, Encyclopedist, p. 34 and Fontaine, Isidore, pp. 829-30. Fontaine, however, subsumes (at least implicitly) the atomism within the larger categories of etymologia and origo as epistemological concepts, as well as offering a theory of Isidore's manner of composition which is keyed directly to the practices of the scriptorium; see Isidore, pp. 782-84.
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