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The Use of Sibyls and Sibylline Oracles in Early Christian Writers

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ABSTRACT

References to the Sibyl and citations of oracles attributed to the Sibyl appear in the works of a number of early Christian writers, typically as part of an apologetic strategy: the Sibyl was known as an authority figure in Greek and Roman traditional culture, and so Sibylline texts forged by Jews and Christians were a useful device for promoting Christianity. Prior investigations of these references and citations, however, have tended to exaggerate the enthusiasm of early Christians for the Sibyl and Sibylline oracles.

The present study first traces negative views of the Sibyl – the "default" position toward an oracular figure difficult to separate from Greco-Roman paganism. Christian writers who seem negatively inclined toward the Sibyl, however, did not generally attack her directly or question the texts' authenticity. Strong attacks on the Sibyl are seen in a cluster in the late 4th and early 5th centuries, reflecting increased hostility to paganism on the part of Christians.

Next, the general reputation of the Sibyl as a source amenable to Christians is established – a reputation eventually helped by a line referencing the cross. A rising enthusiasm for the view of the Sibyl as prophetess parallel to the Biblical prophets is observable through the later 2nd and early 3rd centuries, culminating in Clement of Alexandria's full assimilation of her as a "Hebrew prophetess." Such assimilation, however, conflicted with developing canon and apologetic use of Sibylline texts. Hence, early Christian writers of the later 3rd and early 4th centuries emphasized the Sibyl's identity within paganism, and also first used the Sibyl for specifically Christian teachings.

The use of the Sibyl by Lactantius and Augustine has also been overestimated. In fact, Lactantius cited the Sibyl with a calculated apologetic theory; he preserved a careful ambiguity regarding her status; and the Sibylline material did not drive his exposition. Augustine was very cautious about the usefulness of Sibylline appeals throughout his career, and only when confronted by a dramatic acrostic text did he come over enthusiastically to the view that the Sibyl was truly part of the City of God. This, however, became the standard medieval view.
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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Preliminaries

It is traditional to begin a study of the Sibyl's presence in Christianity with a reference to the medieval hymn by Thomas a Celano, *Dies irae*, which appeals prominently to the Sibyl in conjunction with Biblical sources as constituting a double authority for the account of the fearful Last Judgment:

*Dies irae, dies illa
solvet saeculum in favilla
teste David cum Sibylla...*

As an alternative, some refer instead to the Sibyls in Christian art: as the culmination of this tradition, Sibyls alternating with Biblical prophets, painted by Michelangelo, look down from the borders of the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel. The implication of both examples is the same: that for medieval Christendom, the Sibyl or Sibyls sometimes appear prominently as purveyors of true revelation side by side with the prophets of the Biblical tradition. Furthermore, both these examples represent very influential streams of cultural tradition: the Sistine Chapel's frescoes are among the most famous of European works of art; and the *Dies irae* became associated with the funeral liturgy, appearing as an element of the musical settings of the *Requiem* by Mozart and many others.¹

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¹ In fact, according to C. Alexandre, *Χρησμοὶ Σιβυλλιακοί/Oracula Sibyllina*, vol. 2 (Paris, 1856), p. 299, the "Sibylline acrostic" (in the translation appearing in Augustine, *De Civ. Dei* 18.23) was sung at funerals "nearly everywhere" until the 14th cen. Alexandre cites E. de Coussemaker, *Histoire de l'harmonie au moyen-âge* (Paris, 1852), for this information.

² A further, equally influential (but less frequently cited) medieval endorsement of the Sibyl is that of Thomas Aquinas, who (on the authority of Augustine) mentions that the Sibyl prophesied about Christ
Knowledge of such medieval depictions of the Sibyl has oriented scholars disproportionately toward the positive evaluations of the Sibyl in early Christianity, and has oversimplified their views such that the "natural" role of the Sibyl is assumed to be a strict parallel with the Biblical prophets; the study of early Christian attitudes toward her thus often becomes, whether consciously or unconsciously, an account of why the Sibyl appears so prominently in well-known medieval sources.3

Certainly it is true that before the medieval representations of the Sibyl, quite a number of early Christian sources either mention the Sibyl or even appeal to the Sibyl as a credible and apparently authoritative witness in the course of their pursuit of their own goals—beginning already in the 2nd cen. A.D. Such influential names as Justin Martyr and Augustine are connected with the Sibyl, as will become clear. The questions, however, to what degree and in what ways these Patristic writers anticipated the medieval representations—indeed, what her status was for them and why—need to be answered

(\textit{Summa Theologiae} SS. Q. 2 Art. 7 ad 3, in regard to the question whether specific faith in Christ was required for salvation—the Sibyl shows that such faith was in fact possible for pre-Christian Gentiles); he goes into more detail on \textit{prophetae daemonum} (such as Balaam and the Sibyl) who sometimes give true prophecies, because God uses them providentially to provide testimony to Christianity from its opponents (SS. Q. 172 Art. 6 ad 1).

3 This is most pronounced, of course, in works that focus on the Middle Ages and bring in the Patristic era only as background; such, for example, is a recent article by A. Waegeman, "The Medieval Sibyl," chap. 5 of L. J. R. Milis (ed.), \textit{The Pagan Middle Ages}, tr. by T. Guest (Woodbridge, 1998), who says that the "Sibylline Books exercised a very real influence on later religious attitudes" (p. 85), and, citing the \textit{Dies irae}, the Tiburtine Sibyl, and the artistic representations, asserts baldly: "One thing is certain. When Christianity evicted the gods from Olympus, it kept a place for the Sibyl. She was equated with the prophets of the Old Testament, and infiltrated religion, literature and art" (p. 86). Such evaluations are pronounced already in the much earlier essay of J. M. Neale, "The Sibyls," in \textit{Essays on Liturgiology and Church History}, 2nd ed. (London, 1867), pp. 311-31; his quotations from the Fathers show "how widely and deeply the belief in the Sibylline Oracles had permeated the Church" (p. 312) and he speaks in general of the "entire confidence" felt by the early Christians in these writings (p. 313); A. Holdenried, \textit{The Sibyl and Her Scribes: Manuscripts and Interpretation of the Latin Sibylla Tiburtina c. 1050-1500} (Aldershot, 2006), although quite subtle and instructive in assessing the medieval Sibylline tradition, falls into generic positive assessment of the Patristic attitude: "many early Christians regarded Sibylline prophecy as having a status akin to that of the Old Testament prophets" (p. 56). For more on the medieval Sibyls, see also B. McGinn, "Teste David cum Sibylla: The Significance of the Sibylline Tradition in the Middle Ages," in J. Kirshner and S. W. Wemple (eds.), \textit{Women of the Medieval World: Essays in Honor of John H. Mundy} (Oxford, 1985), pp. 7-35; P. Dronke, \textit{Hermes and the Sibyls: Continuations and Creations} (Cambridge, 1990); K. Prümm, "Das Prophetenamt der Sibyllen in kirchlicher Literatur mit besonderer Rücksicht auf die Deutung der 4. Ekloge Virgils," part 2, \textit{Scholastik} 4 (1929), pp. 221-46.
more carefully. Before a consideration of the early Christian references, however, it is necessary briefly to describe the Sibyl as she appeared in the surrounding culture.

The mantic figure of the Sibyl was known to early Christians primarily through the Greco-Roman tradition. It is not the place in this study to investigate the origins of the Sibylline tradition, whether it was inspired by a single seer in the archaic Greek period, whether it had roots in divinatory figures of the Near East, or how exactly it became attached to the Roman state in the course of time. What is relevant is to note certain ways in which the Sibyl was well-known in pagan contexts, both Greek-speaking and Latin-speaking, especially during the time when Christians are attested as having taken notice of her.

In the Greek world, the Sibyl had a varied past, probably going back to the archaic period in Asia Minor, possibly to a single historical person. The Sibyl became one of the prime examples of oracular personalities not primarily tied to a particular sanctuary, unlike the Pythia, who was a celebrant of the cult of Apollo at Delphi. It may have been the distribution and collection of oracles called Sibylline in different places that prompted the scholarly distinctions (attested beginning in the 4th cen. B.C.) between plural Sibyls associated with those places. Especially prominent into the Roman period was the Sibyl associated with Erythrae in north-western Asia Minor. The notoriety of the Sibyls in the Greek world was still strong in the first centuries A.D. At Erythrae, inscriptions, especially from the reign of Marcus Aurelius, have been found commemorating the Sibyl and her sacred grove; similarly, earlier coins depicting the

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5 H. Engelmann and R. Merkelbach, *Inschriften von Erythrai und Klyazomenai*, vol. 2 (Bonn, 1973), no. 207 (1st half of 2nd cen.), line 73, appears to prescribe sacrifice in honor of the Sibyl, although the inscription
Sibyl have been found, from Erythrae and the nearby site of Gergis. Literary sources of the imperial period also take notice of her. Plutarch, for example, mentions the Sibyl several times in his essay that attempts to explain the apparent decline of the literary style of the oracle of Delphi (De Pyth. orac.), including a fairly long discussion (§9-11, 398C-399E) in which the various interlocutors discuss Sibylline oracles, with one (Boethus) expressing skepticism, while the others quote oracles and cite the evidence of history, including the eruption of Vesuvius. The satirist Lucian also demonstrates—and mocks—the popular appeal to the Sibyl in a couple of his works. In his account of "Alexander the False Prophet," a supposed Sibylline oracle, which incidentally indicates numerically the first four letters of Alexander's name, parallelling a feature of OrSib, was promulgated by Alexander as propaganda for his new cult (Alex. 11)—thus, the ancient Sibyl was invoked as foretelling the new oracular cult. In connection to the controversial Peregrinus, Theagenes, a partisan of Peregrinus, is depicted as quoting an oracle, alleging it to have been given by the Sibyl (Pereg. 29); against this, Lucian, playing with the convention, quotes a supposed oracle of Bacis—the male counterpart to the female Sibyl (Pereg. 30). Pausanias also devotes a significant passage in his account

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8 On Lucian's attitude, see M. Caster, Lucien et la pensée religieuse de son temps (Paris, 1937), chap. 6, "Les oracles," pp. 225-67. Caster (p. 255) considers especially the Alexander to express "tout ce qu'il pensait au sujet des oracles"—a deep-rooted skepticism (or rather, Epicureanism) not simply confined to such sources as "Sibylline oracles."

9 Or even, with the codd. recentiores, "was discovered" (εἴρητο), preferred by the Loeb edition to the others' εὕρητο.

10 On this work see now the edition, translation and commentary by U. Victor, Lukian von Samosata: Alexandros oder der Lügenprophet (Leiden, 1997).
of Delphi (10.12) to the Sibyls, listing the different ones he can distinguish, going back to the first woman to deliver oracles (the daughter of Zeus and Lamia), and citing some oracles in passing; although "Sibyl" became a generic designation, as he says, he also mentions female seers who were not called Sibyl. Pausanias mentions the prophetess "Sabbe," supposedly the daughter of Berossus and Erymanthe. He lists her as the fourth Sibyl, who lived among the Hebrews "above/beyond Palestine" (παρ᾽ Ἐβραίοις τοῖς ἐπὶ τῆς Παλαιστίνης) but whom some call the Babylonian or Egyptian Sibyl. Finally, Aelian mentions a "Judaean" (or Jewish) Sibyl—τὴν Ἰουδαίαν—as one of the six "some" add to his list of four (Var. Hist. 12.35). It is possible to associate the identifications of Pausanias and Aelian with some knowledge of Sibylline oracles composed by (or about) Jews, but despite this possible knowledge of Jewish OrSib in the pagan world, it is important to keep in mind that such possibilities are almost never considered or mentioned by early Christian writers, who generally consider the Sibyl a Gentile prophetic phenomenon.

If anything, the Sibyl became a more important figure in the Latin-speaking Roman world, since she became associated with the destiny of the Roman people through the Libri Sibyllini—known also as the fata Romana. The story circulated widely that one of the early rulers of Rome, a Tarquin, bought prophetic books from the Sibyl of Cumae—after his first refusals prompted her to burn some of them. In any case, the Sibylline Books are attested as having been consulted at various times in the history of the Roman Republic, at times of crisis, in order to receive divine advice about how to propitiate the gods. As a Greek divinatory text, it is perhaps not surprising that the Books were instrumental in installing certain cults from the Eastern Mediterranean at Rome:

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11 He also cites Sibylline oracles at 2.7.1, 7.8.8 and 10.9.11.
12 It is not clear exactly what he means by this; perhaps simply inland as opposed to on the coast—in 1.14.7 he refers to Ashkelon as "in Palestine."
13 Parke, Sibyls, pp. 41-5, assumes that Pausanias' notice, at least, reflects the traveller's acquaintance with such material (a version of OrSib 3); cf. also Brenk's articles on Plutarch, cited supra n. 7.
those of Cybele (the Magna Mater) and of Asclepius. The *Libri Sibyllini* were also consulted in the time of Augustus, when they enjoined the celebration of the Secular Games (Horace, *Carm. saec.* 5); and Augustus moved the collection to the temple of Apollo on the Palatine. In keeping with this cultural importance, it is not surprising that the epic of Vergil managed to include the Sibyl in its presentation, despite the fact that it narrated events from the Heroic Age, much earlier than the reign of either Tarquin. It seems that the Sibyl's longevity was a characteristic developed early in her history. If it were not enough that the sixth book of the immediately admired and studied *Aeneid* portrayed the Sibyl of Cumae prominently, the Sibyl's literary persona was also furthered by the long treatment she received in the 14th book of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (14.132-53). Thus, for Romans, the Sibyl was not only important for the state and religious matters, but also endowed with fame through well-known, influential literary representations dating to the inauguration of the Empire.\(^{15}\)

The main Greek corpus of oracles known as *Oracula Sibyllina*, however, while stylistically based on hexameter pagan oracles, was in fact largely composed by Jews and Christians, incorporating some earlier pagan texts, and collected on a large scale only in the late 5th cen. A.D. at the earliest.\(^{16}\) By using the culturally influential voice of the revered Sibyl, Jewish and Christian "Sibyllists" were able to promulgate their messages—most often, one of religious pride coupled with denigration of the surrounding polytheistic practices, often also with a keen sense of eschatological fervor reinforced by

\(^{15}\) For later (more contemporary with the rise of Christian apologetic) but less culturally significant references to the Sibyl in Roman culture, see Juvenal, *Sat.* 3.3; 8.126; Statius, *Silv.* 1.2.177; 3.5.97; 4.3.24, 118; 5.3.172; Apuleius, *Met.* 2.11; *De Deo Socratis* 7.10, 15; Fronto, *Ep.* 1.3.9. For the consultation of the *Libri Sibyllini* after the great fire of Rome, A.D. 64, see Tac., *Ann.* 15.44.1

\(^{16}\) In fact, the published *OrSib* also contain a second collection (ms. group Ω), later still, which repeats some material from the first collection (*OrSib* 1-8, ms. groups Φ and Ψ), and adds further material (*OrSib* 11-14); see (e.g.) J. Geffcken, *Die Oracula sibyllina*, GCS 8 (Leipzig, 1902), xxi-xxv, for details. For dates and general accounts of the various parts of *OrSib*, see the introductions to the individual books in *OTP*; also, more recently, S. A. Redmond, "The Date of the Fourth Sibylline Oracle," *Second Century* 7 (1989-90), pp. 129-49; M. D. Usher, "The Sixth Sibylline Oracle as a Literary Hymn," *GRBS* 36 (1995), pp. 25-49; B. Rieuwerd, *Book III of the Sibylline Oracles and its Social Setting: With an Introduction, Translation, and Commentary*, Studia in Veteris Testamenti Pseudepigrapha 17 (Leiden, 2003).
political and moral criticism of the Roman régime; whereas with the Christian Sibyllists, of course, predictions of the life (and second coming) of Christ come into the picture as well.\textsuperscript{17} The \textit{Oracula Sibyllina} are far from uniform, comprised as they are of disparate elements composed at various times and in divergent circumstances—some, such as \textit{OrSib} 3, may well endorse the current ruling power (the Ptolemies); while others, such as \textit{OrSib} 6, have no critique of paganism; and others, such as \textit{OrSib} 7, apparently give instructions for aberrant Christian ritual; and still other sections present collages of prophecies of doom for various cities and islands, with little visible religious fervor—but the themes of monotheism, attack on polytheism, eschatology, and "prediction" of the events of history recur constantly. The fact that these themes are put into the mouth of the Sibyl shows that the general intention of such texts is either to present a positive and convincing picture of the relevant religion (Judaism or Christianity) before any readers, or to convict such readers of the falsehood of their own (pagan) traditions—and the doom that awaits them. The intention is thus very similar to that of Christian apologetic, which began with pleas for a sympathetic hearing for the Christian religion in the face of rumor and persecution, and also included attacks on traditional paganism and appeals for the addressees' conversion to Christianity\textsuperscript{18}—and therefore it is no surprise that when Christian authors quoted \textit{OrSib}, they did so especially in apologetic works.

The study of Christian citation of the \textit{Oracula Sibyllina} can contribute to different subjects, such as the textual criticism of \textit{OrSib} itself (and the history of the collection), although this is rendered more difficult by the fact that the texts themselves were likely


quite fluid for much of their history, as Potter points out, perhaps too forcefully;¹⁹ or the investigation of methods of citation in early Christianity or in antiquity in general.

Another crucial, yet sometimes misunderstood, aspect of Christian quotations of these texts remains a fruitful avenue of research, and will be the subject of the present study: the question of the status of the Sibyl, as implied by (or explicitly stated in conjunction with) such citation. In keeping with this subject, I will examine not only direct citations of *OrSib*, but also references to the Sibyl(s) that appear without citation. These are frequent enough in early Christian literature that they should certainly be taken as evidence for how Christians tended to view the Sibyl, whether or not they were familiar with specific texts. Since those Christians who actually cite *OrSib* invariably consider (or profess to consider) their texts authentic, there would have been no obvious difference in form between their texts and Sibylline texts bandied about by others.²⁰ As will be seen, furthermore, the existence of texts such as *OrSib* gave the Sibyl a general reputation which even those who had no direct knowledge of them can often be seen to have absorbed indirectly. Another possible area of attention would be the unacknowledged influence of Sibylline texts on the thought or expression of early Christian writings. Such

¹⁹ Potter, *Prophecy and History in the Crisis of the Roman Empire: A Historical Commentary on the Thirteenth Sibylline Oracle* (Oxford, 1990), p. 101: "Despite the presence of a great number of lines in books 1-8 that are also quoted in earlier Christian writers, there is no way to connect any one of these texts directly with any text that was cited by an earlier writer. Nor is it possible to assign a date to any of the oracles in this first collection. While it is clear that they contain many individual passages which can be dated quite closely, each text as a whole represents too complex a fusion of earlier material to be assigned to any period before the final compilation of the collection in which it was included."

²⁰ Another version of the Sibylline tradition came into being in the mid-to-late 4th century in the text attributed to the Tiburtine Sibyl, but no Christian writer within the time frame in view cites it; also, as a Sibylline text itself, it is excluded from consideration as are the books of *OrSib* of Christian authorship. For the standard Latin text, see E. Sackur, *Sibyllinische Texte und Forschungen* (Halle, 1898), part 3: "Die Tiburtinische Sibylle" (cf. A. Kurfiess (ed.), *Sibyllinische Weissagungen*, Tusculum Bücher [Munich, 1951], pp. 262-79; J.-D. Gauger, *Sibyllinische Weissagungen*, Sammlung Tusculum [Düsseldorf, 1998], pp. 310-29). P. J. Alexander published a Greek version, itself an early-6th-cen. adaptation of a putative Greek original from the Theodosian period: *The Oracle of Baalbek: The Tiburtine Sibyl in Greek Dress* (Washington, 1967); see pp. 48-66 and 136-7 for the language and date of the original. The Tiburtine Sibyl had a long and complex history of transmission in various other languages, including French, Arabic, and Ethiopic, for which see Potter, *Prophets and Emperors*, pp. 92-3. For the Latin medieval tradition, see now Holdenried's extensive investigation of the manuscripts and the use to which they were put; note especially pp. 60-64, where she points out the textual borrowings from the *OrSib* tradition, which amounts, however, to borrowing from Augustine (*De Civ. Dei* 18.23).
influence has been alleged especially in the realm of eschatology. Terms such as "echo" or "allusion" could be used to describe this kind of Sibylline influence—in distinction to the explicit attention that is drawn to the Sibyl and her texts in the case of citation or quotation.\(^{21}\) If such allusions could be determined to any degree of certainty over broad swaths of early Christianity, the endeavor to trace them would be worthwhile as a means of discovering how pervasive Sibylline influence was on the writers. Since, however, much of the contents of OrSib is very similar to Biblical texts, or other early Jewish and Christian works, such allusions are most difficult to trace conclusively to OrSib to the exclusion of other possible sources, and so only in a few selected cases will the present work attempt to deal with them.\(^{22}\)

The answers that have been offered to the question of the Sibyl's status, and the nature of her inspiration, in the views of early Christian writers, have been subject to distorting factors—one of which being, as already mentioned, a focus in scholarship on the medieval representations of the Sibyls and the concomitant too-neat assumption of parallelism with the Hebrew prophets; another, the neglect of critical voices about the Sibyl, which were not lacking in Christian antiquity.

For modern scholars, yet another distorting element is present. Because the present consensus, in contrast to the medieval Christian consensus, is that the corpus of Sibylline oracles that so impressed some ancient and medieval Christians was in fact largely the result of forgery on the part of anonymous Jews and Christians from the 2\(^{nd}\) cen. B.C. to late antiquity, OrSib now occupy a mental compartment different from the

\(^{21}\) The boundary between citation and allusion is not always clear; in recent treatments the concept of "markedness" has been applied to citation, a continuum of "unmarked," "implicitly marked" and "explicitly marked" intertextuality appearing in G. A. Müller, *Formen und Funktionen der Vergilzitate und anspielungen bei Augustinus von Hippo*, Studien zur Geschichte und Kultur des Altertums N.F. 1.18 (Paderborn, 2003), pp. 24-27; cf. S. Freund, *Vergil im frühen Christentum: Untersuchungen zu den Vergilzitaten bei Tertullian, Minucius Felix, Novatian, Cyprian und Arnobius*, Studien zur Geschichte und Kultur des Altertums N.F. 1.16 (Paderborn, 2000), pp. 25-26. For the purposes of this study, explicitly marked references to the Sibyl are the most useful for gauging the view of her status.

\(^{22}\) Note, e.g., the treatment of Theophilus (Chap. 3) and Lactantius (Chap. 5) for some consideration of possible unacknowledged Sibylline influence; see also Appendix C.
one in which they formerly resided. Books 3-5, the parts of the collection most deeply studied at present and also the sections most frequently quoted by early Christian writers, are among the earliest of the extant corpus, and furthermore, are largely of Jewish origin, with fairly liberal inclusion of "authentic" pagan Sibylline material and only a small number of Christian interpolations. This primarily Jewish provenance has meant that OrSib are normally classified among the documents of early Judaism, alongside other products of Hellenistic or Second Temple Judaism such as the Wisdom of Solomon, and numerous apocalyptic texts. By contrast, from the perspective of early Christians, the Sibyl was primarily a figure of Greco-Roman paganism, although that Greco-Roman tradition had endorsed the possibility of Sibyls that belonged to other cultural spheres: such recognition reflects the composition of Sibylline texts with apparent allegiance to locations and cultures other than the Greek. Jews seem not to have been the only ones to appropriate the figure and the style of text. The texts themselves, however, were originally in Greek, and from the available evidence, appeared similar in form to the obscure hexameters of the Delphic oracle. The task of forgery entailed imitation of the traditional forms of such Greek oracles. Thus, whereas modern scholars' tendency is to class OrSib with Jewish Pseudepigrapha, the tendency of early Christians was to see the Sibyl as a figure from the pagan (and usually Greek or Roman) world.

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23 Authenticity in regard to Sibylline material is impossible to define; presumably there was an original "Sibyl" in archaic Greek Asia Minor, but what exactly she spoke about is difficult to say. Forged, ex eventu, oracles were undoubtedly common in Sibylline texts that had no connection to Jewish or Christian writers and interpolators. Here, by the word "authentic" I mean oracles that were probably not composed by Jews or Christians, but rather were incorporated into Sibylline texts to impart the flavor of the originally pagan texts.


It appears, furthermore, that disdain for the forgery of the oracles (and the very audacity of the forgery) as well as the credulity or unscrupulousness of some Fathers in using them has often caused critics to exaggerate the evidence for favorable Christian use of these texts; with retrojected regret, they have felt it necessary to wonder how intelligent people were ever taken in by the patent forgery, and to see any use as full endorsement. David Blondel, in the 17th century, characterized the forgery and use in the most acidic tones:

...as if some Jew, having lately forged writings full of criminal accusations against the Saviour of the world, should maintain to the very faces of the Christians that he found them in the New Testament; that the Apostles were the authors thereof; and that the Church (having always had them in her custody) hath concealed them out of very shame for the imposture of him, whom she adores.26

Of course, against Blondel, in the absence of any evidence one way or the other, it is not a safe assumption that the forgers of Sibylline material were the same persons who used it in extant controversy, and so Blondel's amazement should be mitigated somewhat. Nevertheless, those Christians (and Jews) who forged Sibylline material presumably did also put it to use themselves. In any case, it cannot be seriously maintained that every Christian author who made use of OrSib was cognizant of the forgery. The great majority, in all probability, was simply delighted to have found such a strong (and possibly providential) confirmation of their own beliefs and such a potentially useful weapon in discussions with their non-Christian acquaintances.

Even so, many scholars since Blondel have overestimated and exaggerated the credence of early Christians in the Sibylline Oracles. Bousset, for example, said that "alle, auch die angesehensten Väter haben an den plumpen Schwindel geglaubt."27

26 Treatise of the Sibyls, tr. by J. Davies, Book 1, chap. 18 (London, 1661), p. 49 [punctuation and spelling modernized].
Harnack, with slightly less generality because he was focusing on the 2nd-cen. apologists, reported that "almost all the Apologists acknowledged that heathendom possessed prophets…in the Sibyl and the old poets." Such generalizations continue to be expressed. Bernard Teyssèdre, in a recent article on the fifth book of OrSib, ruminates:

"Pour un père de l'Église tel que Justin, au milieu du IIe s., quels étaient les livres sacrés, les Écritures inspirées par Dieu? …[Not the Gospels:] Ce n'est pas sur eux que Dieu avait répandu à profusion son Esprit-Souffle, mais sur les Prophètes et sur la Sibylle. L'affirmation est grave, qui place les Oracles Sibyllins sur le même niveau que la Bible, très au-dessus du Nouveau Testament."

Granted, Teyssèdre bases his assertion primarily on Justin's use of the Sibyl; but whatever the force of that use, it is certainly not the case that Justin makes use of OrSib with as much respect or frequency as he cites the Old Testament, such that it would be unproblematic to assert that he considers them to be "on the same level."

The general (and over-inflated) reputation of Christian writers with regard to OrSib seems to be distorting Teyssèdre's views. This becomes absolutely clear if, considering that Justin refers also to Hystaspes in a way exactly parallel to the Sibyl, one changes "Sibylline Oracles" in Teyssèdre's assertion to "Hystaspes," resulting in the allegation that "(2nd-century) Christian writers viewed Hystaspes as being on the same level as the Bible, well above the New Testament"—an allegation that would be patently absurd. J. J. Collins, in the introduction to his translation of OrSib, does not talk about the theological positions taken with respect to the Sibyl, but mentions that OrSib were "quoted hundreds of times in the Church Fathers," mentioning specifically only Constantine's Oratio ad sanctorum coetum, then quickly going on to the medieval period. To be fair, he also says that the

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30 *OTP* 1: 324.
"impact of the oracles on secular culture was not great"—but the reference to "secular" culture leaves the way open for a great (but unspecified) influence on Christian religious culture. R. H. Charles calls "allusions and quotations" to OrSib "[a]mong the early Fathers…very frequent." Christoph Riedweg, commenting on the Pseudo-Justinian Cohortatio ad Graecos, says: "Die Berufung auf die Sibylle als heidnische Zeugin für die wahre Religion ist in der christlichen Apologetik weitverbreitet." Apart from Ps.-Justin, he cites Justin, Athenagoras, Theophilus, Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria, Lactantius, Const. Ap.; and also Gregory of Nazianzus. While the exact meaning of "weitverbreitet" is debatable (and granted that Riedweg is focusing on apologists), his list is not exactly staggering, especially when one considers that Gregory brings up the Sibyl in order to reject her as a valid witness to the truth. The importance of Justin can certainly not be overestimated, nor that of Tertullian or Clement of Alexandria; yet it is striking how few great and widely influential names appear on the list. Furthermore, the weight of only a couple of mentions of the Sibyl in Justin and Tertullian is negligible beside the silence of the rest of their works; and the authors he lists did not all make their appeals to the Sibyl in exactly the same ways. The list of those who embrace the Sibyl as a prophetess of the truth and wholeheartedly make use of her would in fact be quite small: Theophilus, Clement of Alexandria, Lactantius, Constantine. Riedweg may still be right about the widespread appeal to the Sibyl, however, if one assumes that many of the appeals to the Sibyl are likely to have occurred elsewhere, not on the level of formal literary texts; but such appeals are by definition outside the evidence, except insofar as the very existence of forged Sibylline texts bespeaks some use. Nevertheless, early

31 Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha, 2: 370.
Christian writers rarely put much or any emphasis on the Sibyl; those who do, such as Clement and Lactantius, are often much more intensely interested in pagan culture than others, and are in this and other ways aberrant. In any case, the questions of how widespread the practice was, and how generous Christians were in their estimates of the Sibyl's status, remain open. Given the fragmentary nature of ancient evidence, the first question may always remain open.

Not all scholars, granted, have fallen prey to the tendency for exaggeration. Karl Prümm\(^{33}\) and Stéhanus Székely\(^{34}\) represent a salutary cautionary position: as they point out, most early Christian writers make absolutely no mention of the Sibyl, or only speak of her, as Prümm says, "beiläufig." Charles Alexandre too puts forward a fairly balanced picture, acknowledging both positive and negative evaluations of the Sibyl.\(^{35}\) Nevertheless, it is desirable to address the question of the Sibyl's status in early Christian sources in a more definitive and systematic way than has been done up until now.

Because the suppositious nature of the extant OrSib has been proved, there has been a corresponding tendency to associate rejection of Sibylline testimony with "critical acumen"—thus, for example, it is sometimes taken as highly significant that Origen and Jerome do not adduce Sibylline texts *sponte sua*. It is important to note, however, that Origen (half-heartedly, perhaps) in fact rejects the charge that Christians interpolated the Sibylline Oracles, and Jerome adduces the Sibyl as a pagan *exemplum* of chastity. In fact, no extant early Christian writer explicitly impugns *OrSib* as forged. Furthermore, rejection of some prophecies as "obvious forgeries" can be a tricky business, especially in

\(^{33}\)Prümm, p. 61.
\(^{34}\)Székely, *Bibliotheca apocrypha*, vol. 1 (Freiburg, 1913), p. 125.
\(^{35}\)Alexandre, 2: 280 (Gregory of Nazianzus); p. 282 (on Ambrose [Ambrosiaster]); pp. 285-6 (on Augustine's *Contra Faustum*); but he does not really see the negative side of Hermas' testimony (pp. 258-9) and Tatian's (p. 263).
an atmosphere of religious polemic. What traits distinguished the Sibylline texts from Biblical texts that could be presented as "clear" prophecies of Christ, such as Ps. 22 or deuter-Isaiah? For one thing, the Biblical sources generally enjoy earlier attestation and the guarantee afforded by the continuing use of the texts in Jewish circles—and yet, the specific Greek text favored by Christians (the LXX) was in the end generally abandoned by Jews, and Christian apologists (notably Justin) nevertheless sometimes alleged that Jews had tampered with the sacred texts to render them less susceptible of a Christian interpretation. In the second place, the Sibylline corpus contains some ultra-specific passages, such as the Sibylline acrostic (OrSib 8.217-50) which identifies Jesus by name—the sort of specificity that made Cicero claim that such oracles were obviously the work of a conscious poet, not a raving prophet (De Div. 2.54 [107-9]). Some Church Fathers attempted partially to fill in the gap of attestation on behalf of OrSib, by citing the attestations of the Sibyl by authors such as Plato and Cicero, although these arguments fail to impress modern critics. On the second point, some types of very specific information are also presented by Biblical prophets: in Apoc. 13.18, a number is used to identify the eschatological figure (the Beast), just as frequently also occurs in the

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36 Anti-religious polemic is also relevant to mention by the way: in a work designed to call into question traditional Christian views of supernatural revelation, G. F. Griesinger, Prüfung des gemeinen Begriffs von dem übernatürlichen Ursprunge der prophetischen Weissagungen (Stuttgart, 1818), pp. 52-55, cites the acceptance by many early Christians of "ridiculous" or "absurd" ideas—e.g., the stories about the translation of the LXX, and the consideration of the Sibyl and sometimes other pagans as somehow inspired—as vitiating their credibility in general, such that they should not be believed about Biblical inspiration either.

37 E.g., Justin, Dial. 71-73. Note that Charles, Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha, 2: 370, speculates that "the early appropriation of the Sibyl by Christian writers seems to have militated against extensive Jewish use."

38 Curiously, no early Christian writer ever makes much of the fact that lines from Book 3 were already cited by Alexander Polyhistor, FGrHist 275 F 79 (Eusebius and Clement of Alexandria knew of him, but neither one attempts to use this sort of argument to justify citing the Sibyl. Clement does cite pre-Christian scholarship (e.g., Heraclides Ponticus), and shows some slight interest in the Sibyl's date, but does not use these to confirm the authenticity of the texts he knows. His allegation that some pagan material was based on OrSib, as some was based on the Bible (see pp. 203-207), assumes the authenticity in order to prove the plagiarism.
Sibylline texts, primarily to "predict" emperors by the first letters of their names (e.g., *OrSib* 5.1-51)—and once as a reference to God (*OrSib* 1.141-146). In Is. 45.1, the prophet mentions Cyrus by name as "the anointed." The allegorical, allusive specificities of the Book of Daniel, which does not, however, supply names or even numbers to correspond with names, are details which parallel the difficult clarity of *OrSib*, and in general the Oracles frequently use language and imagery that depends on that of the Bible. Finally, these same "critical" Christians were not immune to the attraction of non-canonical forgeries: Jerome himself includes Seneca in his *De viris illustribus* (§12) for the reason that a correspondence (now judged to be an "obvious" forgery) between the philosopher and the apostle Paul existed. The problem is therefore not simply one of the Fathers' critical faculties (or those of popular disseminators of Sibylline materials); it is also a theological problem. Was it acceptable to imagine the existence of pagans who had truly prophesied the Incarnation of Christ or other details of the Christian message?

At first, this might seem simply to be an issue of openness to pagan culture, and in fact some scholars do treat positive early Christian attitudes toward the Sibyl primarily as

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39 This reference was missed by many early Christians, who followed the corrupted reading Κύριῳ instead of the true reading Κυρίῳ (see, e.g., Barn. 12.11; Iren., *Dem.* 49; Cypr., *Test.* 1.21); Origen (*Comm. in Gen.* 3.5 [= *Philocalia* 23.5]—and, following him, Eusebius: see M. J. Hollerich, *Eusebius of Caesarea's Commentary on Isaiah: Christian Exegesis in the Age of Constantine* [Oxford, 1999], pp. 137-40) and Jerome (*Comm. in Is. ad loc.*) knew from the Hebrew text that Cyrus was the intended reference; and of course, they saw the specific prediction of Cyrus by name not as a problem for the "authenticity" of (this part of) Isaiah but as a wonder of God's foreknowledge.

40 Note that Jerome does not go out of his way to indicate his own views, but only says: *quae leguntur a plurimis*; cf. Augustine, *Ep.* 153.14, worded as cagily; and the list of *testimonia* in C. W. Barlow's edition, *Epistolae Senecae ad Paulum et Pauli ad Senecam* <*quae vocantur*> (Horn, Austria, 1938), pp. 110-12. The most recent editor of the correspondence, L. Bocciolini Palagi, remarks in a related study (*Il carteggio apocrifo di Seneca e san Paolo* [Florence, 1978], p. 13): "Il fatto è che Girolamo non aveva alcun interesse né a passare sotto silenzio, né a bollare come apocrifa questa corrispondenza, dal momento che la notizia di un tale scambio di lettere tra Seneca, simbolo della tradizione culturale romana, e S. Paolo, l'apostolo di Cristo, non poteva che tornare a vantaggio della causa del Cristianesimo.” The same motivations were undoubtedly operating in some Christians with respect to *OrSib*. 

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expressions of general approbation for (at least some of) pagan culture. In support of this would be the fact that some of the most enthusiastic espousers of Sibylline oracles among early Christian writers, Clement of Alexandria and Lactantius, were also among those Fathers who were arguably the most attracted to pagan sources in general. A similar propensity to regard (some) pagan authorities positively can also be seen in other Sibylline users such as Justin Martyr and the Emperor Constantine. On the negative side, Tatian, who engages in a most extreme polemic against Greek culture, discounts the Sibyl entirely. Nevertheless, a Latin Father like Tertullian who also figures on the intransigent side with respect to pagan culture nevertheless avails himself of Sibylline evidence on a few occasions. Theophilus, too, is not generally well-disposed toward pagan culture, but he strongly espouses the Sibyl. Fathers like Origen and Eusebius, who concede a fair amount of truth to pagan philosophy, do not take clear positions on the Sibyl; their attitude is arguably negative. Perhaps a minimum of openness (as well as a certain level of education, and a certain range of experience) is required to be aware of the Sibyl and Sibylline texts, and yet the continuum of Christian appreciation for pagan culture (or lack thereof) does not coincide precisely with Christian appropriation of the Sibyl. Appropriation of the Sibyl by a particular writer only partially coincides with a high appreciation of pagan culture otherwise.

"Openness to pagan culture" is not a simple question, however; rather, one ought to ask, "openness" to what, for what purpose, and in what context? For the most part, references to the Sibyl in early Christian writers appear in apologetic contexts, and it is not the same thing to cite the Sibyl as a weapon against paganism as it would be to cite her in intra-ecclesial doctrinal discussions. It may well be that openness to pagan culture
in apologetic contexts acted in fact as a kind of "Trojan Horse," acculturating Christians to pagan culture at the same time as furthering the ostensible purpose of appealing for a favorable reception among pagans. Indeed, insofar as apologetic may reflect attempts at self-justification with an eye to educated and high-status members of the Christian community, the reputation of the Sibyl within that community may equally be an issue. Nevertheless, as an apologetic strategy, the citation of single authorities cannot serve to justify pagan culture in general, since the purpose of apology is to justify Christianity. Whatever one may speculate about the motives of a Clement of Alexandria or a Lactantius (namely, that they were trying to create a greater openness to pagan culture within the Christian community), the surface intention of their apologetic works is to present a case for Christianity against traditional paganism. Whatever Clement's attachment to Greek philosophy, whatever Lactantius' attachment to Cicero, the thrust of both their arguments is that "one greater than" Plato (or Socrates) and Cicero has come. Only rarely do we hear of authors whose express purpose in drawing parallels between pagan and Christian cultures was to ascribe equal validity to both—e.g., the late Tübingen Theosophy, in the view of some. There may well have been Christians for whom apparently valid prophecy from the mouth of the Sibyl would not have constituted a problem, but if they used Sibylline material in the obvious way promoted by the extant

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OrSib, they would have criticized pagan religion and morals in favor of Christianity, such that the Sibyl would still have constituted an exception in their general attitude toward pagan culture.

And to return to the question "openness to what?": the Sibyl was an oracular voice, not the voice of a philosopher or poet in the first instance, although her oracles were in verse, and they espoused a certain philosophical or theological point of view. The possibility that a philosopher might have arrived at some truth, in the view of a Christian thinker, is not necessarily to be transferred without difficulty to the supposed mouthpiece of a pagan deity.\(^{42}\) Some Christians, to be sure, made the appeals of ancient poets to the Muses and their claim to a type of inspiration into an admission of demon-possession (Theophilus, *Ad Autol.* 2.8.7),\(^{43}\) in which case they are assimilated to an oracular-style inspiration—and Theophilus does *not* impute value to such poets when in such an ecstatic state, only when they "sobered up" in soul. This sort of cleverness is rare, however; more often poets and philosophers are depicted in more naturalistic terms. One might qualify the Sibyl's oracular identity with the observation that according to some accounts, the Sibyl was naturally able to prophesy, not simply in dependence on Apollo.\(^{44}\) Nevertheless, some well-known literary references to the Sibyl do not portray

\(^{42}\) Some have even alleged that certain early Christians actually considered some Greek philosophers or poets to have received a kind of true divine inspiration (H. Wolfson, *The Philosophy of the Church Fathers* [Cambridge, MA, 1956], pp. 19-23), but the case is only convincing for Clement of Alexandria: see J. Daniélou, *Gospel Message and Hellenistic Culture*, tr. by J. A. Baker (London, Longman & Todd, 1973) pp. 48-68; Lilla, *Clement of Alexandria*, pp. 16-18.

\(^{43}\) Clement of Alexandria, *Protr.* II.31, on the other hand, reports the Euhemeristic explanation that the Muses were originally human women.

her as independent of a god (Virgil, *Aen.* 6; Tibullus 2.5). In any case, the standard view of oracles (including the Sibyl) by the early Christian period was one of ecstasy in which the deity used the prophet(ess) as a mouthpiece.

If the Sibyl falls into the oracular category, however, one must observe that extant early Christian views of pagan divination are almost uniformly negative. R. P. C. Hanson alleges that Christians were fascinated by pagan oracles despite the general condemnation thereof by the extant texts. Unfortunately, the only firm example of such fascination in his argument is the Sibylline texts. Even those who use *OrSib* quite extensively, such as Clement and Lactantius, have no lack of harsh words for pagan oracles in general. It may well be that the search for supernatural authority represents a point of contact between Christianity and the surrounding pagan culture of Late Antiquity—certainly there was an increased respect for supernatural sources of truth in the Greco-Roman world of the later Empire—and thus an indicator of similarity in mindset between groups which historically have often been portrayed as in conflict. Yet similarity in the manner does not mean similarity in matter: if both pagans and Christians resorted to holy men as sources of spiritual benefits, they did not necessarily choose the same men so to honor. In the same way, if both groups were increasingly prone to consult oracular sources, there is no reason to think *a priori* that both would respect the same sources. On

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45 Potter, "Sibyls," p. 481; cf. also Plato, *Phaedr.* 244b3, which includes the Sibyl among those (like the Pythia) who speak διὰ μανίας, θείᾳ μέντοι δόσει διδομένης.

46 Yet an author like Plutarch is able to suggest that the Pythia herself was to some extent responsible for the form of the oracles: so Theon in *De orac. Delph.* 397c.


48 Hanson, "Christian Attitude," p. 949, also cites the impression made on Christians by the Delphic oracle's claim about Socrates (Tert., *Ad Nat.* 1.4.5-7 and Orig., *Cels.* 7.6)—but admits that the second of these gives only "grudging" respect. Cf. *infra*, pp. 34-35 on Weiland's similar claims.

the other hand, there was a prophetic figure arguably analogous to the Sibyl in the very pages of the Bible: Balaam. The earliest Christian sources do not attempt to address the problem of a pagan diviner who was granted apparently true inspiration, although they use his supposedly Messianic prophecy in their works; significantly, Origen is the first Christian thinker to deal with the problem, and retains both traditional Christian rejection of pagan manticism while considering Balaam's inspiration on the occasion in question to have been true and divine. Although no early Christian writer explicitly compares the Sibyl to Balaam, especially after the time of Origen the solution that he applied to Balaam's case could have been available for the Sibyl.

Thus, the question of early Christian attitudes towards the Sibyl is narrower than that of attitudes toward pagan culture: it is specifically a subset of the evaluation of pagan religious practice. In this respect, positive evaluations of the Sibyl present a diametric opposite to standard views of pagan oracles. While early Christian writers generally assume that the Sibyl is a figure from the pagan world, the content of the Sibylline material known to some of them produced a tension, which different thinkers resolved in different ways. The simplest strategy was to assume that there was in fact no problem—to ignore the appearance of endorsing pagan religion; this may have been a conscious strategy on the part of some, who disdained to engage with a difficult theological conundrum as a distraction from the main enterprise of criticizing paganism or arguing for Christianity. For others, presumably, there was no problem, subjectively speaking: on the one hand, a lack of knowledge about the Sibyl's traditional identity could allow a Christian to cite her simply as a (supposedly) authoritative voice for pagans; on the other hand, in some late sources the Sibyl simply joins a chorus of pagan
authorities, some religious, some poetic, some philosophical, who all acknowledge the truth of Christianity. But in the first few centuries, it is noteworthy that only rarely do other oracular or "divine" pagan figures enjoy treatment similar to that bestowed on the Sibyl: for the most part, Christian voices were hostile to pagan oracles, but indulgent toward the Sibyl. Over time, many Christians adopted another explanation: the Sibyl was a real prophetess, inspired by God as were the Hebrew prophets—in this sense, the early fortunes of the Sibyl in Christianity contributed toward the eventual situation, in which not just the Sibyl but other oracular sources too could be cited without apparent conflict. The apogee of this explanation appeared in the near-complete assimilation of the Sibyl to the Hebrew prophets effected by Clement of Alexandria, but very few others were willing to divorce the Sibyl from her traditional cultural context in this way.

History of Scholarship

Modern critical scholarship on the *Oracula Sibyllina* began in the Renaissance, when scholars began to question the traditional Christian ascription of the texts to an ancient prophetess, accepted by the medieval world on the basis of no less an authority than St. Augustine himself. Two of the most important criticisms of the authenticity of *OrSib*, both of which intimately involved the attitudes of the Church Fathers toward them, came from the pens of Protestant scholars: Isaac Casaubon and David Blondel.

Casaubon was a particularly important philologist who was skeptical especially about
supposed Sibylline oracles that seemed to predict Christian truth more clearly than canonical Biblical texts. In his 1614 Exercitationes he was responding to the Catholic scholar Caesar Baronius, who had allegedly claimed that the Church Fathers in general espoused the idea that since salvation comes through Christ, those who were participants in salvation before the Incarnation could rightly be called Christians. While he did not dispute the truth of the idea itself, he denied that it had been recognized generally by Christian writers before Augustine. In fact, Casaubon was less severe towards OrSib than he was towards the Hermetic texts. Modern criticism would more likely reverse the severity; at least, the Hermetica are now acknowledged to have been composed by pagans, not forged by Jews or Christians, whereas the great majority of OrSib is now considered generally to be Jewish or Christian in character. Blondel, called by Prümm "der Hauptbekämpfer der Echtheit der sibyllinischen Schriften," published a strong attack on the authenticity of OrSib in 1649, which also touches on the use of the oracles by early Christian writers: his central allegation is that the influence of OrSib was pervasive in causing the acceptance of "errors" such as the ideas of chiliasm and

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51 I. Casaubon, De rebus sacrís et ecclesiasticis Exercitationes XVI ad Cardinalis Baronii Prolegomena in Annales… (London, 1614), pp. 1-2; I have not been able to consult the specific part of Baronius' text (the Apparatus) which would confirm this; but for Baronius, the consensus Patrum was important in controversy with Protestants—see E. Norelli, "L'Autorità della chiesa antica nelle Centurie di Magdeburgo e negli Annales del Baronio," in R. de Maio et al. (eds.), Baronio storico e la Controriforma: Atti del Convegno internazionale di studi, Sora 6-10 ottobre 1979 (Sora, 1982), especially pp. 269-70, 272-3; and I. Backus, "Images du paganisme dans les histoires ecclésiastiques du XVIe siècle," in M. Narcy and E. Rebillard (eds.), Hellénisme et christianisme (Villeneuve d'Ascq, 2004), pp. 186-90, explores Baronius' views of pagan culture as propaedeutic for Christianity. Baronius specifically presents Sibylline prophecy of Christ as credible, and endorsed by the Fathers, e.g., in connection with the Magi: Porro his quae diximus de excaantationibus daemonum ab iisdem fieri solitis, assentitur Basilii...atque adstipulatur Hieronymus et alii, qui eos suisse Chaldæos, eosdemque ab Erythraea Sibylla de Christo venturo edoctos esse testantur (Annus 1, §23); cf. also §10; and Annus 19, §2; Annus 34, §226; Annus 51, §68; Annus 52, §9.

52 Prümm, p. 503: "So fällt des Casaubonus Urteil über die Or. Sib. doch günstiger aus als das über die hermetischen Schriften, die restlos abgelehnt werden."

53 For the debates on the exact cultural contacts, see B. P. Copenhaver, Hermetica (Cambridge, 1992), pp. li-lviii and the works there referred to.

54 Prümm, p. 532-33.
purgatory. Prümm rightly characterizes his work as a "konfessionelle Kampfschrift"—this can be seen especially from the fact that his second book (the major part of the work) is a general critique of the idea of Purgatory. Besides overestimating Sibylline influence, Blondel oversimplified the question of the origins of OrSib: he implausibly attributed the first eight extant books to a single forger—Hermas.

Although the early modern assessment of OrSib remained connected to theological concerns, it was not the case that acceptance or rejection of the oracles' authenticity depended only on one's allegiance to the Catholic or Protestant Church—counter-examples to the pattern can easily be found: thus Huet (1714), a Catholic apologist, is skeptical about the extant corpus, as opposed to the "true" pagan Sibyl referred to by Cicero; T. Wagner (1664) and D. Clasen (1673), both Protestants, were inclined to treat OrSib as authentic, the result of true divine inspiration. Clasen, in particular, offers a compendious variorum of the opinions of his predecessors, but also adduces the statements of many of the Church Fathers on the Sibyl—arguing that if one rejected the authenticity of the oracles, one was calling into question the good faith of the seminal Christian thinkers. The Jesuit scholar Crasset (1678) challenged Blondel on a number of points, including his contention that OrSib significantly influenced the Fathers

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55 Prümm, p. 504.
56 Prümm, p. 505.
57 Blondel, Treatise of the Sibyls, Book II, chap. 7.
towards chiliasm,\textsuperscript{59} while a Protestant, Marck (1682), argued against Crasset, against Blondel's identification of Hermas, and in general tried to maintain a middle way.\textsuperscript{60}

By the mid-19\textsuperscript{th} century, there was general scholarly acceptance of the view that the corpus of OrSib is largely the result of forgery by Jews and Christians.\textsuperscript{61} Since then there has been an intermittent stream of publications on the subject of Christian use of OrSib, but nothing on a particularly large scale, or systematic, since the 19\textsuperscript{th} century.

**Charles Alexandre** attempted to deal with the Patristic use of OrSib fully and analytically in an excursus to his edition of OrSib, with an addendum on the medieval Sibylline texts, and his work remains the most comprehensive and thoughtful treatment of the subject. Some immediately obvious weaknesses of his excursus for present use are the facts that his references are to severely outdated editions and that he assumes some attributions that are now discredited. He provides a chronological review of early Christian use of the Sibyl, the order of which is only slightly distorted by his attempt to deal with Greek and Latin Fathers separately, for the most part. The separation between them is, however, important for his interpretation, since he observes that citation of OrSib

\textsuperscript{59} Prümm, p. 509 n. 1.
\textsuperscript{60} Prümm, pp. 513-15.
\textsuperscript{61} The desire to consider them possibly authentic, however, continued in some quarters. The notes in ANF (on Clement and 2\textsuperscript{nd} -cen. apologists), apparently by A. C. Coxe, still approve of the idea that the Sibyl (and other select pagans) were privy to true knowledge of God, by various means. E.g. *ad* Athenag., *Leg.* 5 (ANF vol. 2, p. 131 n. 2), adducing Le Maistre approvingly for "his citations showing the heathen consciousness of one Supreme Being"; *ad* Clem. Alex., *Protr.* VI (vol. 2, p. 192 n. 1), commenting on Clement's attribution of truth about God in Greek philosophy to borrowing from the Hebrews, he says, "This great truth comes forcibly from an Attic scholar [i.e. Clement?]}. Let me refer to a very fine passage in another Christian scholar, William Cowper (*Task*, book ii.): 'All truth is from the sempiternal source, etc.'; on the Sibyl, *Elucidation XIII* to Book 1 of Clem., *Strom.* (p. 346) compares the Sibyl's supposed inspiration to that of Balaam and certainly seems to consider it possibly legitimate, leaving "to the student an inquiry, how far we may credit to a divine motion, the oracles of the heathen, i.e., some of them." He is still more profuse in the Elucidations to Lactantius (vol. 7, pp. 256-8), asserting at least the good faith of the Fathers who cited Sibylline material; he also mentions the examples of Balaam and Caiaphas as perhaps comparable, and quotes as parallel Lactantius' reference to the "almost divine voice" (of Cicero) [an imperfect parallel, however, since Cicero was not an oracle—Lactantius does not express himself as clearly about the Sibyl, as I shall argue]; "I cannot think that the interpolations of early Christians were all fraud, by any means" (p. 256).
falls off in the Greek sources around the end of the second century, while it begins later
and continues longer in the Latin sources. His explanation is that the Greek world was
more critically astute (and was more cognizant of the skepticism of Celsus and Lucian
with regard to Sibylline material)—not to mention the fact that Latin writers held on to
the idea of chiliasm longer than the Greeks.\textsuperscript{62}

The correction of Alexandre's attribution of the \textit{Cohortatio ad Graecos} to Justin
Martyr (now usually dated to the late 3\textsuperscript{rd} cen.) would now present an important exception
to the supposed neglect of \textit{OrSib} in post-2\textsuperscript{nd}-cen. Greek Christendom, showing that at
least in more credulous representatives of the Greek world, a hearing might still be
possible for apologetic use of \textit{OrSib}. The traditional attribution of the \textit{Coh.} also
contributes to a too-high assessment of Justin's openness to Sibylline material (and a
faulty estimate of the contents of his Sibylline texts).\textsuperscript{63} Other less than critical attitudes
are not likely to appeal to present-day scholars: Alexandre takes seriously the possibility
that the apostle Paul might have endorsed the Sibyl (as the apocryphal quotation
transmitted by Clement asserts),\textsuperscript{64} and that Clement of Rome too might have really cited
\textit{OrSib} in a lost part of his letter to the Corinthians—although in this case, he concludes
that the evidence only warrants a \textit{non liquet}.\textsuperscript{65} Also in the case of Augustine, the
traditional ascription of certain works (now credited to Quodvultdeus)\textsuperscript{66} contributes to the
high view of the Sibyl he alleges to have been Augustine's continuing opinion,\textsuperscript{67} but the
order of his presentation (beginning with \textit{De Civ. Dei} 18.23) also slants his evaluation in

\textsuperscript{62} Alexandre, 2: 267.
\textsuperscript{63} Alexandre, 2: 260-61.
\textsuperscript{64} Alexandre, 2: 256-7.
\textsuperscript{65} Alexandre, 2: 259-60.
\textsuperscript{66} See Alexandre, 2: 283, 285. In the former passage, Alexandre mentions that the ascription is
contested.
\textsuperscript{67} Alexandre, 2: 286.
this direction. Alexandre is also inclined to dismiss Augustine's manner in dealing with
Faustus, in which controversy he downplayed the importance of the Sibyl, as that of a
"court-pleader."\textsuperscript{68}

Overall, Alexandre finds substantial uniformity between the views of Constantine
and those of Justin, Theophilus, and Lactantius on the Sibyl.\textsuperscript{69} Thus, while Alexandre's
presentation was full and adequate for his time, he is too inclined to see endorsement of
the Sibyl as a simple yes/no issue, like many other scholars. The present study will show
that there are significant differences, despite the fact that these authors all espoused
Sibylline testimony more or less enthusiastically.

Between the publication of the two volumes of Alexandre's treatment of the
Sibylline Oracles, Georges Besançon defended a thesis investigating exclusively the use
made of them by the Church Fathers.\textsuperscript{70} After criticizing the tendency of earlier
treatments of Sibylline influence to further sectarian polemic, and promising instead an
investigation "en dehors de toute préoccupation,"\textsuperscript{71} Besançon first outlines a list of
Patristic passages and the subject matters for which the Fathers cite the Sibyl:
monotheism (frequent), the Son of God (more frequent still), and eschatology (least
frequent).\textsuperscript{72} This chapter is in part an attempt to silence Blondel's allegation that the
Sibyl was behind the doctrine of Purgatory by demonstrating that the subjects actually in
view when the Fathers quoted \textit{OrSib} were completely different. Then Besançon moves
to an examination of the purpose of the Patristic Sibylline quotations, rightly showing

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{68} Alexandre, 2: 286.
\item \textsuperscript{69} Alexandre, 2: 277.
\item \textsuperscript{70} G. Besançon, \textit{De l'emploi que les Pères de l'Église ont fait des Oracles Sibyllins: thèse publiquement soutenue dans la faculté de théologie protestante de Montauban, le [12] févrieur 1851.} Montauban, 1851.
\item \textsuperscript{71} Besançon, pp. 7-9.
\item \textsuperscript{72} Besançon, pp. 10-26.
\end{itemize}
that the citations appeared in works directed toward pagans,\textsuperscript{73} and he also tries to establish contemporary paganism's respect for Sibylline texts as the requisite background.\textsuperscript{74} Thus, his implicit point runs, these texts were \textit{not} cited as theological authorities in intra-ecclesial discussion. Finally, he asks: "Quelle idée les Pères se faisaient-ils des Oracles Sibyllins"? That is, were they no more than apologetic devices, or rather, did the Fathers have positive respect for their authority?\textsuperscript{75} He concludes that on the whole, the Fathers adopted the prevailing respect for Sibylline prophecy, and furthermore considered the texts they quoted genuine, and a result of divine inspiration.\textsuperscript{76} This conclusion is not without nuance—he recognizes, for example, that Augustine's endorsement was hesitant,\textsuperscript{77} and he ends up with a more agnostic answer to the question whether the Fathers \textit{really} believed in the authenticity of \textit{OrSib} than is warranted by his own argument: "Maybe, maybe not."\textsuperscript{78} Besançon is especially puzzled by the Christian writers' failure to evince any doubt in the oracles' authenticity, ignoring (or dispatching \textit{via} weak argument) pagan challenges to that authenticity; the only answer, he says, is that they absorbed the widely prevalent credulity with respect to Sibylline texts.\textsuperscript{79}

Besançon's division of the question of Patristic use of \textit{OrSib} into logically separate parts is important, and his observations on the subjects for which the Sibyl is cited and on the purpose of such citations may be largely endorsed, although some exceptions should be noted.\textsuperscript{80} His last question, however, about the views Christians held

\textsuperscript{73}Besançon, pp. 26-7.
\textsuperscript{74}Besançon, pp. 28-31.
\textsuperscript{75}Besançon, pp. 32-33.
\textsuperscript{76}Besançon, pp. 43-44.
\textsuperscript{77}Besançon, pp. 35-6, 39-40.
\textsuperscript{78}Besançon, p. 45.
\textsuperscript{79}Besançon, pp. 33-35, 43-44.
\textsuperscript{80}He does say that those citations he does not include only "relate to certain historical details"—presumably this is a reference to the "historical" citations of Theophilus, Athenagoras, and Tertullian. In
of the Sibyl, ought to be further subdivided: the question of the authenticity of the texts to which the Fathers had access is not necessarily connected with their views of the Sibyl as prophetic figure. It is surely conceivable that an early Christian writer might have considered *OrSib* the authentic products of an ancient Sibyl without necessarily considering her inspiration truly divine (see *infra*, pp. 129-137)—the explanation of plagiarism from Biblical sources, for example, was available. His observation that the Fathers never challenge the texts' authenticity, however, remains valid and striking. Whether this is due simply to uncritical acceptance of pagan views is more questionable; in the present study, more complex possibilities will be advanced.

Between the ground-breaking work of Alexandre and Besançon and the next important discursive contributions to the understanding of early Christian use of the Sibyl, two significant editions of *OrSib* were published. The apparatus of Alois Rzach's 1891 edition lists some of the Patristic citations of *OrSib*. Rzach's edition also includes a table of parallel passages, which are especially useful for identifying Homeric phraseology, but also points out similarities with later epic material, contemporary with or later than *OrSib*. This offers a number of possible allusions, but no direct quotation. Rzach also published a number of articles on the textual criticism of *OrSib*, as well as an article of fundamental importance for the study of the Sibylline tradition in the *Realencyclopädie* of Pauly-Wissowa; some of this article deals with the transmission of the Sibylline texts, but contributes little to the study of early Christian attitudes towards

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any case, *some* Sibylline quotations do not fall into his subject categories; and there are also exceptions to the general practice of quoting *OrSib* for apologetics directed towards pagans: Clement of Alexandria's *Paed.* and *Strom.*, for example (addressed to Christians), and *Quodvultdeus* (works directed at heretics and Jews).

81 *Chresmoi Sibylliakoi/Oracula Sibyllina*. Prague, 1891.
them. In 1902, Johannes Geffcken published in the *Griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller* series the edition of *OrSib* which remains the standard for scholarly work—more conservative in the acceptance of conjectural readings than Rzach's edition, and justifiably so, given the perils of emendation in a text for which one cannot assume adherence to the norms of epic diction and meter—although it precedes the publication of some further fragmentary witnesses to the text that the later edition of Kurfess partly takes into account. For our purposes, the value of his edition lies in the copious references to parallels and quotations by early Christian (and other) writers cited in the apparatus, in which he is quite exhaustive, although there is little room for discussion of the significance of individual examples, considering the small space allotted.

In 1929, Karl Prümml published a three-part article investigating the reception of Virgil's 4th *Eclogue* and the Sibyl from the Patristic era to the 17th century. In the article, consideration of the Sibyl is meant to contribute to the understanding of the theological context of the use of Virgil. The author generally demonstrates good judgment in his observations, although as a contribution to the study of attitudes toward Sibylline oracles it is hampered by the fact that it treats such attitudes only as an auxiliary to the study of Virgil's *Nachleben*. Nevertheless, the focus on the *Eclogue* is also instructive, especially with regard to the later Latin Patristic sources on the Sibyl, even though on the whole it necessitates a quite brief treatment of the Patristic use of the Sibyl.

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82 “Sibyllinische Orakel,” cols. 2119-22, on transmission; cf. cols. 2167-8, with review of literature on textual criticism.
83 Textual witnesses discovered since Geffcken's edition: P. Flor. 389 (containing *OrSib* 5.498-505; 517-23); P. Osl. 2.14 (questionable); ms. Z, on which see Rzach, "Der Jerusalemer Handschrift der Oracula Sibyllina," *Hermes* 44 (1909), pp. 560-73; and a couple of parchment leaves with *OrSib* 8.217-50, on which see P. N. Papageorgiu, "Handschriftliches zu den Oracula Sibyllina," *BZ* 13 (1904), pp. 51-52.
84 Note, however, Prümml's restriction, p. 55 n. 1, that he will not deal with Sibylline references dealing with the second coming of Christ: "Auf Vollständigkeit wird verzichtet."
85 Prümml, p. 54.
86 E.g., in his preliminary observation that use of the Sibyl has been grossly exaggerated (pp. 60-61).
specifically. The Greek Fathers get short shrift, of course; in fact, only Lactantius, Constantine, and Augustine enjoy any kind of extended treatment. On the other hand, Prümm at least mentions a number of late or obscure sources infrequently brought into discussions of Christian use of OrSib. 87

By virtue of the broad chronological framework of the long article, Prümm is able to bring in a useful characterization of the scholastic (medieval) use of the Sibyl as a contrast to the Patristic use: only in the Middle Ages did the dogmatic aspect of the use of the Sibyl become more prominent than the apologetic aspect. 88 Prümm thus reinforces Besançon's observation that the primary use of the Sibyl for early Christian authors was apologetic. In keeping with their narrow purpose, as he points out, the (early) Greek Christian writers are not clear about the source of the Sibyl's inspiration (and thus, also the Sibyl's status); he specifically notes the contradictions inherent in the ideas of Clement of Alexandria and Ps.-Justin about the Sibyl. 89 More exploration of these kinds of contradiction, however would certainly be worthwhile—can it all be put down simply to confusion and apologetic aims?

As for development within the Patristic period, Prümm contents himself with quoting Alexandre's position: that Greek sources stopped using the Sibyl fairly early, whereas Latin Christian writers, who began to cite the Sibyl later, continued longer. 90 It was not, however, a simple matter of higher critical faculties and avoidance of chiliasm among the Greeks: Prümm refers to John Chrysostom's wrestling with the problem of the

87 Prümm, p. 63. Specifically, he cites the Martyrium S. Catharinae; Theodotus of Ancyra; and Coptic Christian monuments.
88 Prümm, p. 58.
89 Prümm, p. 62. Clement in particular indicates that the Sibyls were "ein Zeichen des Widerspruchs" (Strom. 1.108)—but it is not clear what exactly Prümm means; in this passage, Clement cites an oracle (non-OrSib) in which the Sibyl declares that she, angry with Apollo, reveals the mind of Zeus. By contradiction here, Prümm seems to mean the appeal to a higher power than the usual oracular god Apollo.
90 Prümm, p. 61, 63.
possible salvation of pagans, and his solution, which does not invoke "extraordinary" ways of revelation. For Prümm, this attitude sufficiently explains Chrysostom's silence about the Sibyl. On the other hand, he says, Gregory of Nazianzus' reference to the Sibyl's veneration of the cross, while it seems to denigrate the Sibyl's true utterances as due to plagiarism, nevertheless could have influenced Gregory's readers "in sibyllenfreundlichen Sinne." Thus, both theological sophistication and the fragmentariness of the evidence have probably contributed to the apparent absence of appeals to the Sibyl.

For most of Prümm's article, the chief drawback is the brevity of treatment of the Patristic sources. Compounding this problem is the focus on certain contentious (but peripheral) issues. Even in dealing with the important testimony of Lactantius, Prümm restricts himself to characterizing Lactantius as a powerful advocate of the Sibyl (citing Alexandre), mentioning the probable dependence of Constantine and Augustine on his presentation and Lactantius' superficial defence of the authenticity of OrSib; but he defends at greater length Lactantius' eschatological interpretation of the 4th Eclogue as reflecting "das richtige Gefühl" and his knowledge of Classical literature, against the criticisms of Pfättisch. When concluding his observations about Lactantius, he does make the useful observation that from then on (although Lactantius' interpretation of the Eclogue was "in dependance on the Sibyl"), the testimony of Virgil served to enhance the (otherwise dubious) authority of the Sibyl. Likewise, in his treatment of Constantine, Prümm spends most of his time considering the question of the original language of the Or. ad s. c. (and its authenticity), rightly concluding that Constantine should be classed with the Latin sources on the Sibyl.

Only the consideration of Augustine's position is truly explored in depth, since Augustine is more important than others for the development of medieval theology. Prümm's passage-by-passage reading of the Augustinian material is quite persuasive in its emphasis on the bishop of Hippo's diffidence. As he says, for example, the Contra Faustum is broadly directed against the use of authorities other than Scripture for the purpose of Christian apologetics. If anything, this section is too skeptical (unlike most

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91 This brings in the further theological issue of salvation, for which, as Prümm notes, the fundamental study is L. Capéran, Le problème du salut des infidèles, vol. 1: Essai historique (Paris, 1912).
92 Prümm, p. 63.
93 Prümm, pp. 64-66.
94 Prümm, p. 65.
95 Prümm, pp. 66-67.
96 Prümm, pp. 67-76.
97 Prümm, p. 72.
other treatments) about Augustine's attitude: even for *De Civ. Dei* 18.23, which he notes as a departure from Augustine's caution elsewhere, he emphasizes that the assertion is not absolutely confident, citing the words *ut...videatur*. Prümm also tries to vindicate Augustine's reading of *Romans*, against Alexandre's disparaging note. In general, he seems to be attempting to rescue Augustine's good sense in being wary of Sibylline material. His last Augustinian passage is in fact from the *Contra quinque haereses* now attributed to Quodvultdeus; Prümm explains this "wirkliche Verwertung" away as an *ad hominem* argument, and notes the similarity to the *Contra Judaeos, paganos et Arianos* which he considers inauthentic. Prümm's conclusion to the section on Augustine emphasizes that Augustine does not consider Virgil a prophet, that apart from *De Civ. Dei* 18.23 Augustine refers to the Sibyl only very restrictedly, and that, nevertheless, late in his career, in the thick of the Pelagian controversy, Augustine considers the Sibyl as an example of an extraordinary, yet possible, pattern of a pagan being brought to salvation.

Overall, Prümm's investigation of the Patristic period tends to "sharply curtail" the importance of the Sibyl—in the end, she was not necessary as a mediator of faith for the pagan world; her theological imporance was diminished long before her historical implausibility was established. Nevertheless, the Patristic use did serve to justify Medieval emphases, and despite Prümm's judgment that the earlier use of the Sibyl was less theological than apologetic, it raises at least, and implicitly answers, some of the dogmatic questions about the proper and true sources of revealed knowledge, and these answers may fruitfully be investigated more fully.

In the first two chapters of H. C. Weiland's "Proefschrift," published a few years after Prümm's articles, the Dutch scholar exhaustively documents, catalogs and classifies the various lines of reasoning, both those shared with pagan thinkers and those specific to Christianity (or shared with Judaism too), on the basis of which Christians rejected and

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98 Prümm, pp. 72-3. These words, however, are the framework of a result clause, which mitigates the apparent lack of confidence, although the use of "seems" remains as a minor show of reluctance: *...ita...contra eos [sc. deos]...loquitur...ut in eorum numero deputanda videatur, qui pertinent ad civitatem Dei.*

99 Prümm, pp. 69-70.

100 Prümm, p. 74.

101 Prümm, pp. 74-6.

102 Prümm, pp. 76-77.
Then, in a brief final chapter, Weiland turns to the opposite situation: the occasional "partial acceptance" of some oracles by Patristic writers.

The first part of this last chapter explores the ways in which ideas such as Justin's λόγος σπερματικός sometimes caused Christians to allow for a measure of truth in pagan sources including oracles. The second part considers the Sibyl. The first exploration fails to impress, however: Justin, whose concept is invoked, does not actually appear by way of demonstration; Weiland's primary examples are Clement, Origen, Augustine, and Lactantius, and even these examples raise serious problems. Origen's comparison of Apollo's presence in the Pythia to the Logos' actions in Jesus (C. Cels. 2.9), properly read, is not an endorsement of the truth or value of the Pythian oracle. The example of Augustine (De Trin. 4.17.22-23) does indeed concede that demons can sometimes reveal truth, but he is far from conceding value to oracles; rather, he points out that the demons' intention in such cases would be to deceive. Weiland further misinterprets the argument of Augustine, who delineates here a number of possible ways of knowing the future, including (separately) demonic inspiration and unwitting prophecy (such as that of Caiaphas)—and it is primarily the latter (not the former, as Weiland takes it) that seems to be intended by Augustine's reasoning that God used even nescientes to ensure that truth would sound forth fidelibus in adiutorium, impiis in testimonium. In a note, Weiland cites for comparison Eucherius' explanation (Instruct. 1.40 [CSEL 31.79-80] of true prophecy spoken by the pagan seer Balaam—God used him to provide a witness to the Gentiles: Ut multis innotesceret modis veritas, dum usquequaque prolata etiam per infideles adnuntiatur, et ut hoc ex gentibus prophetante signum hoc esset gentibus credituris. Even so, in both Eucherius and Augustine, the type of truth allowed to such figures is specifically providential, not the product of a universally accessible λόγος σπερματικός. At best, such an opinion could only justify purely apologetic use of such sources, not "respect."

Even Weiland's examples from Clement are mostly irrelevant. Weiland argues that at Strom. 6.28-30, oracles of the Pythia enjoining prayer for rain are an illustration of the principle that God "sends rain on the just and the unjust"; but the main intentions in this passage are to show pagan plagiarism from Scripture and to forestall objections to miracle stories in the Bible by citing pagan parallels—certainly not to assert that the Greeks who followed the oracles' instructions were righteous, or that the oracles were truly messages from God. Weiland is right, however, to point out that for Clement, Greek poets and philosophers were sometimes "inspired by deep wisdom" (and Clement's position does seem to be a development of Justin's λόγος σπερματικός)—and that Clement emphasizes the fact that ancient wisdom and theology was often couched in riddles and allegories, and that oracles of Apollo followed this  

103 H. C. Weiland, Het Oordeel der Kerkvaders over het Orakel (Amsterdam, 1935).
104 The categories of section 22 are taken up in parallel in section 23.
Nevertheless, it is significant that Clement's concessions are normally to "poets and philosophers," not to oracles, of which he is a sharp critic in Protr. (II.11); and as for the parallel in the matter of enigmatic expression, Clement is professedly drawing examples from the pagan sphere to illustrate and justify the use of obscurity and symbolism in the Bible, and therefore his own hermeneutical (allegorical) practice. Of course, Clement does think that many of the teachings of pagan poets and philosophers were praiseworthy, and depended on Biblical revelation, as he tries to demonstrate at great length in this book (Strom. 5.89-141).

Weiland is able to cite, finally, a few oracles on religion (including Judaism and the person of Christ) adduced by Christians such as Lactantius (and Artemius' speech before Julian in Philostorgius). Without more argument, however, such apologetic use does not demonstrate very well Weiland's opinion that Christians "were certainly attached to the statements of the oracles," considering that the use appears most frequently in apologetic contexts.

Evaluation of the first part of Weiland's third chapter is important because its general failure in fact sharpens further Weiland's introductory comment on Patristic use of the Sibyl, consideration of which takes up the larger second part of the brief chapter: with regard to the Sibyl, the Fathers' position "differs sharply from their judgment concerning other oracles," which is almost uncompromisingly negative. Yet Weiland does not let the surprising contrast allow him to overlook the negative comments of some Christians concerning the Sibyl—in fact, his marshalling of the negative voices in the last part of the chapter is more complete than that of the positive voices. Within his short treatment, Weiland usefully distinguishes between the following categories: traditional knowledge about the Sibyl evinced by Christians, their consideration (i.e., defence) of the...

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106 On Clement here, see J. Pépin, *Mythe et allégorie: Les origines grecques et les contestations judéo-chrétiennes*, 2nd ed. (Paris, 1976), pp. 265-75, who makes the case more fully than Weiland. The positive reference to Apollo's oracle is at Strom. 5.132.1-2 (cited by Weiland; note that this oracle tells of conflict between Athena and the supreme god Zeus—and, on the other hand, that even here Apollo is described as "constrained" to speak in this way: ἀναγκάζεται), but Clement endorses the designation Loxias—showing the enigmatic way in which oracles were expressed—earlier in the same book (5.21.4). As direct evidence that enigmatic style by itself does not guarantee the truth of anything, note 5.58.5, where Clement contrasts the purely "human opinions" (ἄνθρωπαι δόξαι) kept secret by pagan teachers with the "holy…vision of true realities" which it is also fitting to cloak in secrecy.


108 Weiland, pp. 73-4.
authenticity of *OrSib*, the placement of Sibylline quotations in Christian writings (i.e., in parallel to Biblical sources), and the "status" of the Sibyls according to Christian writers. The placement of Sibylline quotations, however, is inseparable from the question of status: for him, it shows that "some value" adhered to the Sibylline texts in the minds of (some) Christians.\(^{109}\) More detailed examination, however, would be necessary to confirm this idea—mere proximity does not show that an author values *OrSib* in any way like the Bible, or that her inspiration is considered comparable to that of Biblical writers. As Weiland himself points out, Lactantius claims to present citations that *pagans* will be compelled to believe.\(^{110}\) Other possibilities for citation in tandem would be the use of material such as *OrSib* for its illustrative qualities, or even to support an allegation of plagiarism of Biblical sources by pagans.\(^{111}\) When he comes to the discussion of status, Weiland properly points to Theophilus as providing an example of the view that the Sibyl was a parallel to the Hebrew prophets; the same view is attributed to Clement of Alexandria, with the aid of references to *Protr.*, yet the fact that Clement actually calls her "prophetess of the Hebrews" does not (but should) register as a problem for Weiland's assessment.\(^{112}\) After this, moreover, Weiland simply notes briefly the positive characterizations presented by some Christian writers, without attempting to make assertions about "parallelism": she is "the true prophetess of God" (Tertullian); her testimony is "divine" (Lactantius, who also shows his estimate of her value by his numerous citations); she predicted Christ under divine influence (Constantine); her gift

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\(^{109}\) Weiland, p. 69.
\(^{110}\) Weiland, p. 69.
\(^{111}\) For the use of Sibylline material in contexts that suggest the plagiarism theory, cf. Tatian's attitude (Chap. 2); the impression given by the first Sibylline citations in Ps.-Justin, *Cohortatio ad Graecos* (Chap. 4); the explanation of agreement with Scripture given by Gregory of Nazianzus in the context of his reference to the Sibyl's reverence for the cross (Chap. 2)—which reference Weiland, p. 69, cites as an example of Christians' respect for the Sibyl.
\(^{112}\) Weiland, p. 70-71.
was prophetic and apparently from God—and she probably belonged to the City of God (Augustine).\footnote{Weiland, pp. 71-3.} While some of these references are unambiguous, closer investigation would reveal less unanimity, not simple endorsement. In particular, Weiland's reading of Lactantius' characterization of the Sibyl's "divine testimony" is deceptively shallow; as will be seen, the phrase is most certainly not a clear personal endorsement of \textit{OrSib}. In fact, Augustine also appears in Weiland's enumeration of unfavorable attitudes toward the Sibyl, and yet Weiland does not attempt to resolve the apparent contradiction. The problem, however, is mainly that the very brief treatment—ten pages total on the Sibyl—does not allow for such nuances.

The value of Weiland's treatment is that it clearly brings out the uniqueness of early Christian treatment of Sibyline oracles—or rather, the treatment by \textit{a few} early Christian writers—when compared to their attitudes toward all other traditional Greco-Roman oracular sources. Furthermore, he is not blinded to the significant number of negative comments which serve as a counterbalance to the positive assessments, although he does not differentiate well among the different positive views. Finally, like Besançon, he tries (but does not quite succeed) to separate the various strands implicated in early Christian views of the Sibyl.

Besides a text and German translation, along with interpretive notes, \textbf{Alfons Kurfess'} mid-century edition\footnote{\textit{Sibyllinische Weissagungen}.} of \textit{OrSib} also supplies as an appendix a collection of the most important Patristic references to and citations of \textit{OrSib}, but includes little analysis of them.\footnote{Kurfess, \textit{Sibyllinische Weissagungen}, pp. 208-62.} The edition itself errs, like that of Rzach, on the side of emendation, although
he has justified many of his textual choices with dispersed notices in journals, a but he does take into account a fragmentary witness published more recently than Geffcken's edition, and which (e.g.) even the recent translation in OTP does not register. A new "edition" has recently appeared, which follows Kurfess' text but provides a new translation and adds much explanatory material—most of which pertains to the interpretation of OrSib, rather than to the treatment of them by early Christian writers. For the present purpose, both Kurfess' original and the revised version are important only as compilations of some of the relevant Patristic material.

At about the same time as Kurfess edited OrSib, Bard Thompson published an article that purports to be a general treatment of Patristic use of the Sibylline Oracles, and continues to be cited as convenient summary on the subject. Because he includes not only a catalogue of Patristic citations, however, but also brief treatment of the Sibyl and Sibylline prophecies in general in Greco-Roman culture (with some comments interspersed on Patristic use), he has little room left for straight analysis of the Patristic material—in fact, he offers only three pages under the heading "Use of the Sibyl and the Sibyllina by the Fathers." The chief virtue of his article is to lay out an index of citations of OrSib in Patristic texts, but this index is incomplete by his own admission, and the article and index are furthermore plagued by misprints or errors and rendered less

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118 Gauger, Sibyllinische Weissagungen.
120 So, e.g., E. Ferguson (ed.), Encyclopedia of Early Christianity, 2nd ed. (New York/London, 1998), 2: 1056; Potter, Prophecy and History in the Crisis of the Roman Empire, p. 97; Prophets and Emperors, p. 241 n. 79; furthermore, it is likely that Parke used it as a guide, since it is one of the only general works on the subject to appear in his bibliography, although it is not cited in the notes on the relevant chapter.
121 Thompson, pp. 128-30; granted, he also makes general comments at the beginning of the article (pp. 115-18) and occasional specific references passim.
useful by the fact that his references are often to now outdated editions.\textsuperscript{122} He also includes in his tabulation references to possible Sibylline allusions, which more often than not turn out to be unsustainable—much less persuasive than the allusions catalogued by Alexandre.

Inevitably, many of the details of Thompson's presentation are disputable. Among the more notable misrepresentations: first, his statement that Lactantius focused on the Erythraean Sibyl, whereas the other Sibyls were for him "second-class authorities"\textsuperscript{123}—but in fact, Lactantius makes no distinction between the authority of different Sibyls; secondly, that "living as he did in times of persecution, Lactantius readily grasped the bizarre Sibylline eschatology" and "adapted them into an exaggerated chiliasm"\textsuperscript{124}—in fact, as I will argue, whatever one might think about Lactantius' (and the Sibyl's) eschatology, it does not appear that the Sibyl was his primary source. Thompson's assertion that Josephus ascribes OrSib 3.97-104 to a "Hebrew prophetess" is simply false.\textsuperscript{125} Finally, to support the strange idea that Gregory of Nazianzus thought the "Sibyl purloined material from a few too many sources," Thompson cites the irrelevant Or. 26.19.\textsuperscript{126}

While tracing the development of the composition of Sibylline oracles, Thompson usefully distinguishes "two types of Christian Sibyl": one the one hand, the OrSib of Christian origin and, on the other, the Sibyl as quoted by Christians; furthermore, he rightly says that the latter is normally presented as a "pagan" for apologetic use—with an implicit theory of "Inspiration working in the past outside Israel."\textsuperscript{127} But then he muddies his own distinction by then claiming that for Christians the Sibyl was a "voice rather than a figure," "put forward as the authoress of the Christian oracles" [my emphasis], and cites

\textsuperscript{122} Thompson, pp. 130-36, contains the index; the admission of incompleteness is on p. 115. In the category of misprints or errors are the citation of Cyril of Jerusalem rather than Cyril of Alexandria (p. 130) and the references to the same passage of Hippolytus under two different titles: Philosophoumena and Refutation of All Heresies, with different numerations (pp. 115, 131, 134). Thompson's references are in fact primarily to English translations—see especially p. 133 n. 51. He also relies on discredited attributions—for example, he consistently (e.g., p. 117) refers to the Coh. ad Gr. as the work of Justin Martyr.

\textsuperscript{123} Thompson, p. 116.

\textsuperscript{124} Thompson, p. 117.

\textsuperscript{125} Thompson, p. 126.

\textsuperscript{126} Thompson, p. 130. This seems to be a mistaken reference, which should be to the passage from the Carmina (2.2.7.246) that may seem to allege that she plagiarized from Biblical sources, which is different from what Thompson says, but at least does contain a reference to plagiarism.

\textsuperscript{127} Thompson, p. 127.
OrSib 6 and 7 (of Christian composition) as well as Patristic quotations. His principle, however, is good, since the Sibylline material cited by Christians is most often not OrSib of Christian origin—a distinction to keep in mind when others refer to Christian use of OrSib as a kind of "Christianization" of the Sibyl.

When he finally turns explicitly to his account of Christian use of the Sibyl¹²⁸ his loose arrangement seems simply to contrast those who "use the Sibyl as verification of the truths of the Gospel" (brazenly, with no attempt to defend the "technique")¹²⁹ and those who "make little and guarded use of the oracles or no use at all"¹³⁰ (in the course of which exposition he also brings up the pagan allegations of forgery). It is not clear, however, that there is a neat correspondence between sparing or careful use of OrSib and a less enthusiastic endorsement of them—indeed, those who are definitely aware of pagan criticism (besides Origen) are among the most enthusiastic citers of OrSib (Lactantius, Constantine, and Ps.-Justin), and Augustine, who does evince reticence as well as knowledge of pagan challenges to Sibylline authenticity, nevertheless ends up with a very strong endorsement of her status. Furthermore, if the most significant aspect of Patristic use of OrSib is the frequency with which Christians cite the Sibyl, some of the authors Thompson mentions in the first category are misplaced: Justin Martyr's use of the Sibyl, for example, can certainly not be called copious, although his view of her inspiration seems to have been fairly high—and in fact, some such consideration must be a part of Thompson's organization. Thus, Thompson's distinction in the end seems not to distinguish copious and sparing use from endorsement and doubts about Sibylline texts, but boils down to a vague delineation of "enthusiastic" and "less enthusiastic" attitudes

¹²⁸ Thompson, pp. 128-30.
¹²⁹ Thompson, p. 128.
¹³⁰ Thompson, p. 129.
toward use of the Sibyl. There is no reference to the possibility that some early Christians might have been opposed to the use of OrSib to "verify" Christian teaching, and it does no good to mix up the considerations of the amount of Sibylline material quoted with the views of the Sibyl's status or inspiration.

In 1972, Nicole Zeegers-Vander Vorst published her investigation of the citations of (pagan) Greek poetry by the 2nd-cen. Christian apologists, in the course of which she offers important insights on the transmission of Sibylline and other poetic texts by Christian authors. Zeegers-Vander Vorst clarifies the issue of the commonly alleged use of florilegia and the appearance of sequences in the Patristic citations, demonstrating as most likely for many of these authors the use of earlier (philosophical) sources that cited poetic sources in similar fashion. Especially important in Zeegers-Vander Vorst's analysis is the distinction she makes between different ways in which citations are used in early Christian texts: she distinguishes illustrative, authoritative, and ornamental citation. Sibylline quotations tend to fall into the category of authoritative citation; nevertheless, Zeegers-Vander Vorst rightly notes that the poetic texts were viewed as authoritative primarily by the putative pagan audience, not by the Christian community.

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131 Les citations des poètes grecs chez les apologistes chrétiens du 1er siècle (Louvain, 1972).
132 Zeegers-Vander Vorst, Citations, pp. 286-302; on the classification of types of citation, she notes the earlier attempt by W. Krause, Die Stellung der frühchristlichen Autoren zur heidnischen Literatur (Vienna, 1958), pp. 50-58, but considers it lacking (cf. the similar judgment of M. Metschies, Zitat und Zitierkunst in Montaignes Essais [Geneva, 1966], p. 20). H. F. Plett, "The Poetics of Quotation," in J. S. Petöfi and T. Olivi (eds.), Von der verbalen Konstitution zur symbolischen Bedeutung—From verbal constitution to symbolic meaning, Papiere zur Textlinguistik 62 (Hamburg, 1988), pp. 313-334, similarly, but without knowledge of Zeegers-Vander Vorst's work, lays out a tripartite classification: authoritative, erudite and ornamental quotations—in descending order of "normative force"—and adds the "poetic quotation" (especially, poetry quoted within poetry; in any case, this is close to being a subset of the "ornamental quotation"). He draws on the work of S. Morawski, "The Basic Functions of Quotation," in A. J. Greimas et al. (eds.), Sign, Language, Culture, Janua Linguarum ser. mai. 1 (The Hague/Paris, 1970), pp. 690-705, who distinguishes the "appeal to authorities," the "erudite" function, the "stimulative-amplificatory" function (the quotation as jumping-off point), and the "ornamental" (distinguished from the erudite in the sense that ornament serves simply to display wide reading, without the intention of transmitting an author's views faithfully).
Finally, she notes the difficulty of assessing the effect of such quotation on the audience.\(^\text{133}\) Her work remains exemplary both in its source analysis and in its interpretation of method in early Christian citation of pagan sources, although the restricted time frame renders her study only sporadically useful for the present investigation. In terms of specific interpretations, Zeegers-Vander Vorst is the first to note (albeit tentatively) the strangeness of Clement's characterization of the Sibyl as a "prophetess of the Hebrews."\(^\text{134}\)

Since Zeegers-Vander Vorst's study, contributions have been relatively sparse, but have increased in the past decade and a half; yet these most recent studies add little. In a posthumously edited and published book on the Sibylline tradition in Greco-Roman antiquity generally, for example, H. W. Parke included one chapter considering the use of Sibylline material in Christian circles.\(^\text{135}\) Though fuller than Thompson and Bartelink's contributions, it is little more than an impressionistic survey, presumably because of the subordinate status of the chapter within a larger work, the unfinished nature of the treatment, and his incursion into early Christianity, a territory outside his field of specialty. As evidence of this latter point is the fact that he tends to quote older standard reference works such as Harnack's history of early Christian literature, with little reference to recent scholarship. His annotations in general are minimal.

Despite numerous problems in details,\(^\text{136}\) some of Parke's brushstrokes and general considerations are useful: he notes that the revival of oracles in the pagan world

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\(^\text{133}\) Zeegers-Vander Vorst, *Citations*, pp. 300-302  
\(^\text{134}\) Zeegers-Vander Vorst, *Citations*, pp. 203-5.  
\(^\text{136}\) For instance, he thinks that Celsus was probably correct about Christian interpolation and the existence of the "Sibyllistae" (p. 155)—this is at least questionable; that Theophilus "models his exposition on the Sibylline oracle known to him" (p. 161)—this could be based on Geffcken's observation *ad OrSib* 3.11-32: "vgl. Fragm. 3, 3-33; eine ganze ähnliche Disposition: Preis Gottes, Bewunderung der
of the 2nd century provides the context for the Christian use of Sibylline texts (as well as for the rise of Montanism). He does not attempt to show how this affects changing Christian evaluations of them, however, although he hints at the possibility.\(^{137}\) Parke also emphasizes the division between East and West, between the Greek and Latin spheres—he notes that the Greek text of \textit{OrSib} would have circulated less in the late imperial West because there were fewer and fewer people who could understand it\(^{138}\)—and he rightly judges that Lactantius could probably have found more Sibylline material in Nicomedia than in North Africa.\(^{139}\) Yet his distinction between East and West after Constantine does not prove fruitful; in the end, he seems to draw a parallel rather than a contrast, in that he shows that Sibylline sources seem to have become progressively less familiar in both parts of the Empire\(^{140}\)—this despite another comment that \textit{OrSib} had achieved "such general acceptance" that they almost defeated "their original purpose."\(^{141}\) Also interesting but not exploited are references to the fact that after Constantine, apologetic in the original sense (pleas by Christians against persecution) was no longer necessary;\(^{142}\) and characterization of the oracles as "popular literature circulating among the lower

\(^{137}\) Parke, \textit{Sibyls}, p. 160.
\(^{139}\) Parke, \textit{Sibyls}, p. 163.
\(^{141}\) Parke, \textit{Sibyls}, p. 166: the meaning of the last phrase seems to be that since, in Parke's view, the \textit{OrSib} and Christian forgeries of Apolline oracles were among the few oracular texts known at the time (of Julian?—this seems to be the context he intends), and that therefore, there was no longer a contrast with "real" pagan sources. As explanation, he cites the fact that Sozomenus feels the necessity of explaining how pagans could have resisted Christianity at all in view of the existence of Sibylline texts. Yet there were certainly other texts of purportedly divine origin, such as the \textit{Hermetica} or the \textit{Chaldaean Oracles}, that continued to be used by pagans. Parke's point might make sense if taken to mean, as I shall argue, that Christians were familiar with the Sibyl as a standard figure to be cited in apologetic contexts, even as available texts became rarer.
\(^{142}\) Parke, \textit{Sibyls}, p. 164.
reading public." Nevertheless, one must be alert to these considerations: that there may have been a difference in the reception of Or_Sib in West and East (as already Alexandre thought), that the Constantinian era may represent a turning point, and that the popular circulation of Sibylline material (beyond the confines of the literary sources at our disposal today) may have been quite significant.

Most often than not, his presentation is simply too vague and impressionistic. For example, at first he discusses the evidence of Hermas, the "Sibyllistae" mentioned by Celsus, and "Paul" (quoted by Clement of Alexandria) as the sole examples of the Sibyl being treated as a spiritually important source of "evangelical teaching"—i.e., that her prophecies are important for Christians. Does this include the fact that they are also useful apologetically, for the conversion of pagans? General "spiritual importance" is one of the themes of his treatment of Hermas and Celsus' Sibyllistae; on the other hand, he recognizes that "Paul's" words were probably directed towards pagans. Yet if the "spiritual importance" is to be taken more generally, it is not clear why he denies it to the Sibyl as presented by Theophilus and Clement of Alexandria, for example. The fact that in the case of "Paul," Parke considers the mention of the Sibyl and Hystaspes as demonstrating the preliminary (open) stage of the process of selection operated by

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143 Parke, Sibyls, p. 167. Parke brings this up in the context of commenting on Sozomenus' statement that most people (pagans) were not able to understand Or_Sib because they were too difficult; Parke is amazed at the "misconception" of the popular nature of this literature. One must beware of the stereotype of "popular" literature, since it is not clear that the uneducated could have understood Or_Sib, with their quasi-Homeric diction and sometimes obscure style. While this Sibylline material may have circulated in informal ways, and often as a kind of "protest" literature (see H. Fuchs, Der geistige Widerstand gegen Rom in der antiken Welt [Berlin, 1964], pp. 7-8, 21-22, 30-36, 66-83, for the classic exposition), a certain amount of education is presupposed by the literary form (hexameter poetry).

144 Parke, Sibyls, pp. 152-7.

145 Parke, Sibyls, pp. 154-5.

146 Parke, Sibyls, p. 155.
Christians with regard to pagan literature\textsuperscript{147}—paralleled by Clement of Rome's use of the phoenix and Greek myth\textsuperscript{148}—seems to indicate that the initial impression is correct: that "Paul's" reference to the Sibyl is not pure polemic, but rather an indication of an appreciation of "spiritual importance." Yet if "Paul's" use of the Sibyl in an apologetic context can be put down generally to his judgment of her importance for Christians, one might argue the same thing for Theophilus and Clement of Alexandria.

In fact, Parke does not seem to be strongly arguing for the uniqueness of the first sources he quotes, since afterward, when he brings up Theophilus, he suggests that this Father's placement of the Sibyl in parallel to the Hebrew prophets harks back to the "Paul" quoted by Clement of Alexandria.\textsuperscript{149} The problem is a lack of clarity about what views each of his sources really demonstrates, and a readiness to extrapolate (but only selectively) from the fact of use to positive assessment of perceived "spiritual importance."

There is a further egregious constellation of fuzziness that could have been cleared up in Parke's treatment of Tertullian, brought in as a "remarkable contrast" to Athenagoras,\textsuperscript{150} whom he seems to regard as having a high view of the Sibyl, although he introduces Athenagoras as an apologist who mentions the Sibyl only because she was familiar to his pagan audience.\textsuperscript{151} Parke argues that Tertullian is hostile to the Sibyl, that he "treats [her] with bitter sarcasm"; but in fact, contrary to this characterization, Tertullian quotes what he considers the prophecies of the "true Sibyl"—the \textit{Dei veri vera vates}.\textsuperscript{152} His scorn is reserved for the pagan extension of the Sibyl's name to other, demonically inspired prophetesses, not applying to the passage from \textit{OrSib} that he cites. Parke puts Tertullian's hostility down to "personal prejudice"—an instance of his "violent impulses"—although the only real hostility observable in this

\textsuperscript{147} Parke, \textit{Sibyls}, p. 157.
\textsuperscript{149} Parke, \textit{Sibyls}, p. 161.
\textsuperscript{150} Parke, \textit{Sibyls}, p. 158.
\textsuperscript{151} Parke, \textit{Sibyls}, p. 158.
\textsuperscript{152} Parke, \textit{Sibyls}, p. 159. Parke's text omits \textit{Dei} along with the mss., but this does not affect his misreading.
context, that directed at pagan divination, finds parallels in innumerable Christian sources. Tertullian does recognize an authentic Sibyl, whom he quotes, but discounts others as demonically inspired. In the next paragraph, as though for illustration, strangely, Parke notes that Tertullian was actually "particularly susceptible to the influence of prophecy." Thus, paradoxically, Montanism is brought in as a parallel to Sibylline prophecy—and yet also ostensibly to illuminate Tertullian’s supposed hostility to OrSib.

In general, then, Parke's treatment, while confused and misleading in some points, is not without useful emphases, and it provides a suitably wide scope.

A little more than a decade ago, G. J. M. Bartelink published a short article about the use of the Sibyl by Greek Christian authors "from Justin to Origen." The modesty of his goal—to offer "a few remarks" about Christian reception of OrSib in the chosen time frame—is not belied by the article, which contents itself with brevity and, sometimes as a result thereof, falls into some significant distortion.

Bartelink begins by showing that Christian composition of OrSib and Christian appeal to OrSib represent continuations of the Jewish practice of Sibylline composition (and presumable apologetic use—but among Jewish sources, only Josephus is attested as referring to the Sibyl). Bartelink structures his article chronologically, and a progression of enthusiasm is hinted at in his early references: Hermas shows familiarity with the Sibyl as figure; Justin alludes to the content of OrSib; Athenagoras presents the first direct citation; and Theophilus offers "much more material" while going further than

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153 As Parke (p. 159) says, "[t]his is the way in which Christians would have described the Delphic Pythia."
156 Bartelink, "Die Oracula Sibyllina," p. 23.
158 Bartelink's minimalist approach (and the self-imposed time-frame) is presumably responsible for the fact that the only conclusion he draws from Hermas' reference to the Sibyl is that contemporary Christian circles were familiar with the figure of the Sibyl; a broader conclusion, furthermore, might spoil the appearance of a progression.
Athenagoras, who treated the Sibyl as only being on the same level as pagan poets, by placing her on the level of the Hebrew prophets.\(^{159}\) At this point, however, the progression breaks down, as Bartelink moves on to Tatian, who suggests that the Sibyl (like other pagan sources) may have been dependent on Hebrew prophets.\(^{160}\)

Problems crop up in the details of Bartelink's presentation, among the most immediately striking being that he dates the Pseudo-Justinian *Coh. ad Gr.*, without reference or argument, to c. A.D. 200. More important misconceptions are also present.\(^{161}\) For example, after describing Athenagoras' treatment of *OrSib* as no different from other pagan poetry, Bartelink says that "mehrere andere Christlichen Autoren" take up this same attitude, whereas in the extant sources, such an approach is actually very rare. Bartelink also assumes that the view of Tatian (whom Eusebius quotes) that classes the Sibyl along with other post-Mosaic Greek sources is the reason for Eusebius' dating of the Erythraean Sibyl to the 8th century—and alleges that this forms a contrast to Lactantius, who ascribes to the Sibyl a "not secondary" value, and (therefore) dates her much earlier. He ignores the fact that Eusebius also cites Clement of Alexandria's quotation of the Sibyl that casts her (in direct opposition to Tatian's view) in the role of source for the sentiments expressed by some pagan sources, and thus in parallel to the usual role of Biblical material in the plagiarism hypothesis;\(^{162}\) and that the date he ascribes to Lactantius himself really appears as part of the list of Sibyls taken over from Varro, which incidentally seems to give a broad range of chronology for the various Sibyls, not a universally high chronology. Neither Eusebius' nor Lactantius' attitude toward the Sibyl demonstrably determined their respective chronologies.

Another element of confusion in Bartelink's article appears in his treatment of Clement of Alexandria. On the one hand, he alleges that Clement's Sibylline citation (in *Protr.*—apparently, judging by the progression of his treatment) forms part of his "goal" of showing that divine inspiration took place also "outside the Church" [my emphasis].\(^{163}\) On the other hand, he notes that the Sibyl is cited as a "prophetess"

\(^{159}\) Bartelink, "Die Oracula Sibyllina," pp. 25-7.


\(^{161}\) Besides the examples I discuss here, note that Bartelink also concludes from Ps.-Justin's references to the Sibyl that this author too considers the Sibyl to "stand out" from the pagan world, and "near" the Jewish prophets. I will argue rather that Ps.-Justin emphazises the pagan context. A further misconception: on p. 29 n. 18, Bartelink refers to Augustine, *Bapt.* 5.27.38 as a purported mention of the Cumaean Sibyl; although Augustine does bring up secret "insiders" who seem outside (the Church), and vice versa, he does not name anyone. It appears that Bartelink is thinking of *De Civ. Dei* 18.23 and 47, which specify more clearly such a category (with the names of the Sibyl and Job).

\(^{162}\) Furthermore, Eusebius' date agrees with that apparently supplied by Julius Africanus (H. Gelzer, *Sextus Julius Africanus und die byzantinische Chronographie* [New York, n.d.; reprinted from Leipzig ed., 1898], 1: 173).

\(^{163}\) Bartelink, "Die Oracula Sibyllina," p. 29; his allegation, however, that Clement's quotation of *OrSib* "unter dem Namen von Orpheus" (*Protr.* 7.74.6) led him to the remark that the Greeks had received some sparks of the divine Logos is not right: I shall argue that the quotation is hortatory, and in any case the remark about sparks (ἐναύσματα) is a comment on *all* the quotations he has been making in the previous pages.
in *Protr.* as part of Clement's attempt to show the *disjunction* between Hellenism and Christianity. He further refers to the "wechselnder Beleuchtung" observable in Clement's treatment of the Sibyl, but this appears to mean the differing attitudes or approaches in Clement's different works (he notes explicitly a different tone in the Sibylline citations in *Paed.*), rather than any shifting emphasis within the *Protr.* More positively, Bartelink rightly emphasizes the *hortatory* quality of the Sibylline quotations in *Protr.* and the fact that Clement avoids any reference to Sibylline prophecy of Rome's downfall.\(^{164}\) For Clement's Sibylline references in *Strom.*, Bartelink only deals with the explicit quotations, and indeed not all of those, since he only refers to those connected to the "plagiarism" theme, but he does not fully draw out the implications of these quotations.

In the end, Bartelink does not sufficiently explore the implications of the quotations he reports; his article is too brief and restricted in scope to be more than an annotated catalogue.

**Giulia Sfameni Gasparro**'s still more recent article\(^{165}\) is suggestive, but as was the case with Thompson's article, she tries to include too much in the space of a single article: the title, "La Sibilla voce del Dio per pagani, Ebrei e cristiani: un modulo profetico al crocevia delle fede," announces a large program, but the breadth of the canvas means that the specific attention paid to Christian use of Sibylline oracles is slight. It comprises only 14 pages,\(^{166}\) with some relevant remarks interspersed elsewhere in the article. In her general treatment, she identifies prophecy and divination as the "neuralgic center" around which pagans, Jews, and Christians formed their interrelations,\(^{167}\) and describes their importance for all three groups in the first centuries of the era, with confirmation drawn from Philo and Josephus in the Jewish sphere, from Lucian, the theological oracles of Didyma and Claros, and the Chaldaean Oracles in the

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\(^{164}\) He does not, however, bring up the fact that Clement refashions a quotation in *Paed.* (2.X.99.1), originally directed towards Rome in *OrSib.*, as a general moral exhortation, although this would support his point here. On the other hand, Clement may be thinking of his Sibylline quotations at *Protr.* IV.50.1-4 as eschatological.

\(^{165}\) "La Sibilla."

\(^{166}\) Sfameni Gasparro, "La Sibilla," pp. 539-52.

\(^{167}\) Sfameni Gasparro, "La Sibilla," p. 506.
Like Parke, then, she is associating Christian use of the Sibyl with the contemporary prominence of oracles in pagan society. While she recognizes that on the whole, Christianity rejected pagan divinatory practices, she identifies also a contrary tendency for "recuperation" of pagan cultural traditions, including in the sphere of prophecy and divination, apparently because of their similarities in this matter—which appear, unfortunately, in her account to consist primarily of the presupposition that direct communication between the divine and human is possible (and a willingness to exploit it). Then, to some degree following Momigliano, Sfameni Gasparro enumerates some qualities of the Sibylline tradition that made it attractive to appropriate: the harshness of the Sibyl's voice, the Sibyl's frequent autonomy from Apollo or from his institutions, her role as direct (ecstatic) mouthpiece of the divine, and also the apocalyptic content of her prophecy. Most of all, she is a figure at once single (in inspirational form) and multiple (in historical appearances—the multiplicity sometimes being explained as due to her mobility and longevity). Especially for this last reason, Sfameni Gasparro argues, the Sibyl is the closest to the "Jewish prophetic model characterized by the repetition in different times, situations and places of a single religious message." Sfameni Gasparro also mentions, as an afterthought, the

importance of the Sibylline tradition for Roman culture as already an influence for the composition of OrSib 3.176

In these general considerations, while there is much to applaud, it is also the case that she seems on the whole to overestimate the importance of the Sibyl in the interactions of early Christianity with pagan culture. The fact that both pagans and Christians in the 2nd century considered that direct communication with the divine was possible is in itself no great incentive to appropriate a voice such as the Sibyl's, as Sfameni Gasparro surely recognizes—and the fact that the Sibyl is an *exception* to the usual Christian treatment of oracles calls into question any general tendency to "recuperate" pagan divinatory sources; if the further characteristics she enumerates do indeed make it more likely that Christians would have used the Sibyl's voice in preference to that of some other oracle, they reveal little about how specific Christians used it in practice. Thus, the final part of the article, which goes into more detail about such specifics, is the most important for the present purpose.

Besides her opening remarks on the connection of Justin's use of the Sibyl (and Hystaspes) to his conception of the λόγος σπερματικός, and that of other early Christians similarly to the presumptive recognition of the possibility of true divine revelation through pagan figures,177 the structure of the section is primarily chronological, in the course of which she appears to emphasize the development in extent and richness of use, and even in esteem, although the example of Origen presents an exception in her depiction of the progression from the early apologetic usage of the Sibyl, through Clement, Lactantius, and culminating in Augustine. At the same time, however,
she also refers to the "popularity" and importance of the Sibyl at all stages. Generally, those Christians who snub the Sibyl are simply left out of the account. In my view, the movement from earlier to later Fathers' depictions of the Sibyl does not fit into a simple pattern, either of increasing use and esteem, or of constant enthusiasm, although, as Bartelink hinted, there is a palpable increase in use in the extant 2nd century writers, culminating in Clement of Alexandria.

Sfameni Gasparro's treatment is flawed in a number of details. She recognizes (unlike many) that Clement of Alexandria sometimes treats the Sibyl as a Hebrew prophetess, but does not capitalize on this recognition—to her, it seems perceptive and natural for Clement to do this, rather than a surprising turn for his apologetic technique, as I shall argue. Similarly, while she notes that elsewhere, Clement shows knowledge of the Sibyl's "pagan face," she sometimes misinterprets the references: of the passages she cites from Strom., far from simply presenting a pagan Sibyl as the purveyor of Christian truth, one classes a Sibylline quotation with other pagan sources, which are adduced for the error at the root of heretical ideas, and others (harking back to the use in Protr.) present Sibylline quotations as the ostensible source for philosophical ideas, in a way that makes them parallel to Biblical sources. She misconstrues Clement's citation of her at a critical point in Protr., as though Clement considers her the "first" inspired prophetess. Other examples of overestimation of the Sibyl's importance to early Christians appear when she takes the reference in "Paul" (cited by Clement) as

178 And notes this (and Tertullian's reference in Apol. 19.) as an exception to Thompson's observation that Christian authors normally refer to the Sibyl as an exponent of the pagan prophetic tradition, ignoring the Jewish connection.
179 Sfameni Gasparro, "La Sibilla," p. 545. Besides this, there is a misprint in her reference to books III and IV of Strom. (rather than III and V).
"confirmation" of the "popularity" enjoyed by the Sibyl;\textsuperscript{181} and in her references to Lactantius' "granite certainty" of the authority and authenticity of OrSib, although she (rightly) wavers between attributing his "preference" for them (over Biblical sources) to his "unshakeable faith in [their] divine origin" and to his recognition that as authorities of his pagan audience, the Sibyl is apologetically more useful.\textsuperscript{182} The Sibyl, she asserts, is Lactantius' prime confirmation that the Graeco-Roman world, "although fundamentally contaminated by the demonic deception primarily expressed in the cult of idols, has benefited from the divine word of truth"\textsuperscript{183} [my emphasis]—although, as Sfameni Gasparro herself notes,\textsuperscript{184} Lactantius says that the oracles were taken as deliramenta until the coming of Christ.

It is true, as Sfameni Gasparro says, that "the ancient prophetess could not have found a higher or more solemn recognition than" Augustine's in De Civ. Dei 18.23—or rather, that the Sibyl never did find a higher recognition than Augustine's inclusion of her in the City of God.\textsuperscript{185} Nevertheless, it is not clear that either this or any of the other evidence she cites justifies treating the Sibyl as a sort of primary point of contact between pagans, Jews, and Christians, in any way more than simply as a symbol appealing from the modern perspective.

In the same volume, Teresa Sardella discusses the early Christian use of OrSib in an article with the promising title "La Sibilla nella tradizione greca cristiana dalla scuola

\textsuperscript{181} Sfameni Gasparro, "La Sibilla," p. 546.
\textsuperscript{183} Sfameni Gasparro, "La Sibilla," p. 551.
\textsuperscript{184} Sfameni Gasparro, "La Sibilla," p. 548.
\textsuperscript{185} Sfameni Gasparro, "La Sibilla," p. 552. She reserves for a footnote (n. 159) some vague references to Augustine's less than enthusiastic espousal of the Sibyl elsewhere; notably, although she mentions that Augustine "refers to" Faustus' rejection of the OT prophets in favor of the Sibyl and others, she does not discuss Augustine's negative evaluation of Faustus' argument.
di Alessandria ad Eusebio di Cesarea.” The article attempts to trace the "complex cultural movements" involved in the development of early Christianity—and specifically the "recuperation" of the figure of the Sibyl from pagan tradition, in contrast to other oracular sources. In this, as in other respects, there are broad similarities between Sardella's and Sfameni Gasparro's approaches, although Sardella speaks even more strongly of the "Christianization" of the Sibyl. Like Sfameni Gasparro and others, she overestimates the importance of the Sibyl: she characterizes the Christian use of the Sibyl as "natural" (in contrast to the "difficult" process of Christianization undergone by other oracles) and generally accepted—although she does allow for some exceptions to this general acceptance, specifically in the Greek world. It may well also be true that the Sibyl was useful as an element of Christianity's "system of communication" with the conceptual world of "newly converted pagans," but her position and importance in such a system is not clear. Because Sardella sees the history of Christianity primarily in terms of progressive Christianization of selected pagan

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186 In Chirassi Colombo and Seppilli, pp. 581-602.
187 Sardella, p. 582.
188 I.e., the same contrast Weiland finds.
189 For example, Sardella (pp. 588-89), like Sfameni Gasparro, claims that Clement of Alexandria presents the (Hebrew) Sibyl as the "first" to have sung the "song of salvation"—and in fact, she makes more of this than does Sfameni Gasparro, although she apparently takes "first" in the sense of "first of the Sibyls" rather than, as Sfameni Gasparro does, "first of all prophets."
190 Sardella, pp. 581-2.
191 Sardella, p. 581.
192 Among which she mentions (p. 582) those of Apollo, but also Hystaspes and Hermes Trismegistus.
193 Sardella, p. 582. She does not elaborate about these exceptions, but the reference to "intellectuals" who "did not recognize [the Sibyl's] credentials" makes one think of pagan thinkers such as Porphyry rather than Christians, although she may have Tatian or Origen in mind. With no further elaboration, it is difficult to see whether or not she is making a point about Greek Christian writers like that made earlier by Alexandre, although the further reference on p. 582 to the "Greek world" not acquiescing in the Christian appropriation of the Sibyl weakens the possibility.
194 Sardella, p. 602.
sources, she inclines towards the view that acceptance of the Sibyl as a revelatory source simply increased over the course of Christian history.\footnote{Sardella, p. 582. Nevertheless, she thinks that Hermas already needs to combat an "excessive propensity" of his co-religionists to appeal to the Sibyl.}

The chief innovation in Sardella's article—and the primary aspect of her treatment that spoils this picture of a gradual increase of Sibylline appropriation—is that it treats Pythia and Sibyl as exact equivalents, such that Patristic references to the Pythia (or indeed to any oracular priestess of Apollo) are taken as "Sibylline" references, without any argument or discussion whatsoever. Hence Sardella places a great deal of emphasis on accounts of oracular consultations at the beginning of the Great Persecution, discussion of which takes up fully a third of her article.\footnote{Sardella, pp. 592-8}

Thus, in Sardella's account, the reason for the persecution as told by Constantine was a spontaneous pronouncement of the priestess of Apollo, i.e. of the Sibyl (VC 2.50);\footnote{Sardella, p. 593.} Lactantius' version of the same episode (DMP 10) is different in that the (Apolline, therefore Sibylline) oracle was a response to a question, not spontaneous, and this makes both the oracle and the Emperor Diocletian less culpable in the matter of the persecution.\footnote{Sardella, p. 594.} The further development of this difference causes Sardella to make a foray into the fantastic: the lesser responsibility of Diocletian in Lactantius' version "does not contradict the ideology of the work," because it is not Diocletian that preoccupies Lactantius so much as "the absolute authority of the Sibyl, which he insists on giving the greatest possible prominence"\footnote{Sardella, p. 596.—although such an attitude can only be justified from DI, if at all, not from DMP, which surely is concerned with the culpability of the persecuting emperors. Thus, from Sardella's presentation one
is left with the paradox that even when the "Sibyl" was hostile to Christianity, Lactantius valued the Sibyl as a "guide of humanity." I will argue that Lactantius was much less consistent in his espousal of the Sibyl. Sardella's treatment of Origen similarly suffers from the conflation of the Pythia and the Sibyl: for Origen, she alleges, the Sibyl is the "pagan equivalent of mediator between God and men" (C. Cels. 2.9, where the Pythia is in view); on the other hand, the Sibyl (i.e., Pythia) is the "negative exemplum of all pagan prophets" (C. Cels. 3.24-7; 7.3-6). This "complex and contradictory" attitude in Origen acts as the precursor to the contradictions Sardella discovers in Lactantius, and calls into question her judgment that acceptance of the Sibyl increased with time; but she can only offer the unhelpful explanation that "Christianization of the Sibyl does not entail attributing to the Greek prophetess an indisputable authority." More convincing would be the view that there is little or no Christianization at all in these accounts of the Pythia and other Apolline oracles.

This difficult position is the awkward result of the equivalence Sardella assumes without justifying, but which should probably be discarded. While some recognized

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200 Sardella, p. 596.
201 Sardella, p. 589.
202 Sardella, p. 590.
203 Sardella, p. 589.
204 Granted, there is evidence that some ancient writers considered that any woman who prophesied ecstatically could be called "Sibyl," although Sardella does not refer to it. Servius, for example, says that sibylla...dicitur omnis puella, cuius pectus numen recipit (ad Aen. 3.445); he appears to be depending on Varro, whose statement is paraphrased by Lactantius (DI 1.6.7): quod omnes feminae vates Sibyllae sint a veteribus nuncupatae. Similarly, Diodorus Siculus (4.66-67) tells a story about Manto/Daphne, who he says was called "Sibyl" because she was often inspired—he notes that the word οἰβύλλαινεν means ἐνθεάζειν κατὰ γλῶσσαν (cf. Arrian, Bith. fr. 32 [Roos]: διὰ τὴν ομοίαν θεοφορίαν). Nevertheless, these statements appear to be explanations after the fact, rather than living practical possibilities. No extant ancient author ever refers to a contemporary Delphic Pythia as a "Sibyl." Pausanias in fact lists a few female givers of oracles who were not called Sibyls (10.12.10). Only in the medieval tradition, presumably taking a cue from such statements of equivalence, is such a transfer attested: the story of the Tiburtine Sibyl and the Ara Coeli set up by Augustus (e.g., Cedrenus, Hist. Comp. 1: 320 Bekker [Bonn, 1838]) is based on a story told by John Malalas 10.5 (p. 232 Dindorf), in which the impetus was a response of the Pythia. See Alexandre, 2: 303-8. Another possible confusion (in the opposite direction) is visible in Ovid, Met., 15.637-40, where the Pythia (rather than the Libri Sibyllini, which appear in the other sources of the
the elasticity of the term Sibyl, in practice it was not used for any and all mantic women. Hence, it is ludicrous to present, for example, the oracular consultations that took place before the Great Persecutions as consultations of a Sibyl, when none of our sources refer to it as such, and still less to draw (or confirm) conclusions about Lactantius' or Constantine's views of Sibylline prophecy from them. In fact, the oracles in question fit perfectly well into the usual early Christian treatment of pagan oracles and religion (of which Sardella is, of course, aware): flat-out rejection as hostile to Christianity. To treat them as part of the story of Christian "recuperation" of the Sibyl as prophetess is wrong-headed.

If this extraneous material is eliminated, however, there is not much left of Sardella's article but a short review of early Christian use of the Sibyl that is flawed in a number of other details of fact and interpretation. She does mention the earliest use—in Hermas and the 2nd-cen. apologists—despite the title of the article.\footnote{Sardella, pp. 582-5.} In dealing with Justin, while she appeals unsurprisingly to the concept of the λόγος σπερματικός, she also (and justifiably) distinguishes between that concept as it applies to Socrates and as it applies to an "inspired" authority like the Sibyl; further exploration of this would have been interesting, but the elucidation she offers—that Socrates' ethics and rationality are comparable to an "oral tradition," whereas the textual nature of the Sibyl's prophecy is what makes it especially parallel to the Scriptural tradition for Justin—does not seem to be effective.\footnote{Sardella, pp. 583-4.} Less open to debate is the fact that she alleges that Tatian "never talks story) instructs the Romans to adopt the cult of Asclepius; but as F. Bömer, \textit{P. Ovidius Naso: Metamorphosen}, vol. 7: \textit{Buch XIV-XV} (Heidelberg, 1986), p. 418, notes, this is probably an "Erfindung" by Ovid rather than a case of confusion of the two figures.\footnote{205} Sardella, pp. 582-5.

Sardella also points to the fact that Sibylline eschatology is more akin to Jewish apocalyptic than to Stoic ideas of ekpyrosis (p. 584); yet Justin cites both the Sibyl \textit{and} the Stoics as parallels to the Christian picture of the eschaton.
about the Sibyl”—a plain error, although she rightly notes his denunciation of Greek
culture in general and oracles in particular.\textsuperscript{207} This oversight, however, perhaps helps to
explain the fact that later, when rehearsing Eusebius' mentions of the Sibyl,\textsuperscript{208} Sardella
does not mention that most of the references in \textit{PE} are derivative, carried over within
larger quotations (from Tatian and also Clement of Alexandria) on broader subjects
(chronology and the "plagiarism" theory), thus perhaps not really expressing Eusebius'
considered opinion. To Theophilus, Sardella ascribes a "full recognition and
maintenance of Greek culture," with no signs of "conflictualità"\textsuperscript{209}—this description,
however, does no justice to Theophilus' attempts to show chronological priority for
Hebrew sources and his allegation of demonic influence on Greek poets. In fact, it \textit{only}
seems plausible when the Sibyl alone is considered. Like Weiland, she argues that
Clement has a sometimes positive attitude towards Greek oracles.\textsuperscript{210} She misreads
Clement (with Sfameni Gasparro) such that she considers him to allege that the Sibyl was
the earliest Sibyl to proclaim salvation.\textsuperscript{211} She claims that Celsus' sect of \textit{Sibyllistae}
considered the Sibyl "divine",\textsuperscript{212} rather, this is \textit{Celsus'} suggestion—that Christians should
do so—whereas his allegation is simply that some Christians "use" the Sibyl. As a final
example, Sardella says that Constantine characterizes the Sibyl as "a lying old woman
who nevertheless pronounced" prophecies; the first part of this does not come from

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{207} Sardella, pp. 584-5.
\item \textsuperscript{208} Sardella, pp. 591-2.
\item \textsuperscript{209} Sardella, p. 585.
\item \textsuperscript{210} Citing \textit{Protr.} II.11, where, however, there is no discernible positive attitude towards Apollo, as well
as the endorsement of enigmatic and symbolic teaching in \textit{Strom.} 5.
\item \textsuperscript{211} Sardella, pp. 588-9.
\item \textsuperscript{212} Sardella, p. 590.
\end{itemize}
Constantine's speech, although he does present her as a priestess of Apollo, as Sardella also mentions.\textsuperscript{213}

In conclusion on Sardella:  her article works in tandem with that of Sfameni Gasparro—the characteristics of the Sibyl (Sfameni Gasparro) help to explain why the Sibyl was appropriated. The talk of "Christianization" is ambiguous: certainly some Christians used the OrSib or the figure of the Sibyl and indeed selected her as appropriate, or more so than other possibilities. But the impulse toward integrating her into Christian religious tradition—i.e., as a parallel to (or participant in) the Hebrew prophetic tradition—stopped with Clement of Alexandria and Tertullian; henceforth, there was increasing Christianization of Sibylline texts, but a re-asserted pagan persona, as I shall argue. Thus, there was a recognition that the Sibyl might be cited in favor of Christianity, but the figure of the Sibyl was not assimilated more and more into the categories of Christian revelation.

Thus, the scholarly treatments of Christian use of the Sibyl over the course of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century have represented only modest advances (if any at all) over the 19\textsuperscript{th}-century analyses, advances sporadic and restricted to circumscribed points.\textsuperscript{214} There has been no

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{213} Sardella, pp. 599-600.
\item \textsuperscript{214} Besides the attempted syntheses mentioned already, there are some few articles focused at least partly on the use of Sibylline (or related) material by one or another early Christian writer. A. Kurfess, in particular, wrote a number of brief articles especially on Constantine's \textit{Oratio ad sanctorum coetum} and Augustine, but they are usually fairly short and uninformative: "Die Sibylle in Augustins Gottesstaat," \textit{ThQ} 117 (1936), pp. 532-42; "Kaiser Konstantin und die Sibylle," \textit{ThQ} 117 (1936), pp. 11-26; "Augustinus und die Tiburtinische Sibylle," \textit{ThQ} 131 (1951), pp. 458-63; "Kaiser Konstantin und die Erythräische Sibylle," \textit{ZRGG} 4 (1952), pp. 42-57. Also of modest importance for the present investigation is A.-M. Guillaumin, "L'exploitation des 'oracles sibyllins' par Lactance et par le 'discours à l'assemblée des saints,'" in J. Fontaine & M. Perrin (eds.), \textit{Lactance et son temps} (Paris, 1978), pp. 189-200. Guillaumin is primarily concerned with possible contributions to understanding the textual history of the OrSib corpus (see the stemma she constructs, p. 199), and in fact says very little about the authors' attitudes toward the texts, except that the speech of Constantine has a positive view much like that of Lactantius (but adding "syncretistic" touches) and unlike the opposing view of Eusebius. Also to be noted are the following—on Hermas: D. P. O'Brien, "The Cumaean Sibyl as the Revelation-bearer in the \textit{Shepherd of Hermas}," \textit{JECS} 5
\end{itemize}
definitive treatment, and indeed the recent contributions are really little better than the older, and the most recent Italian articles muddy the waters unbelievably. Scholars in general have not probed deeply enough the statements of Christian writers about the Sibyl; they have moved to quickly to an effort of synthesis before digesting the details of the Sibylline portraits offered by the early Christians. It has in general been too tempting to say that the Sibyl was "assimilated" into the Christian tradition, or functioned as the equivalent of the Biblical prophets. The task at hand, then, will be carefully to weigh the presentations of the Sibyl by the various early Christian authors. Always to be kept in mind is the importance of distinguishing how Christian writers use the material they cite, as specifically as possible, in order to secure evidence of the writers' attitudes toward the Sibyl.
Plan of This Work

The use of Sibylline oracles by early Christian writers is not simply a matter of the "Christianization" of pagan figures. Apart from the frequent dismissal of the Sibyl as a pagan figure, early Christians went through a series of changes in attitudes with regard to the Sibyl. The next chapter of this study will be an attempt to give full weight to those voices in Christian literature that treat the Sibyl as no different from any other pagan source—and indeed, since the Sibyl was specifically viewed as an oracular figure, the most common incarnation of this view was to attack the Sibyl rather than espouse her. In the third chapter, the focus is on those who treated the Sibyl as a prophetess—that is, in some way comparable to the Biblical tradition of the Hebrew prophets—first, establishing the general and wide-ranging reputation of the Sibyl among early Christians as a prophetess sympathetic to Christianity; and then, tracing the beginnings of more specific views. The early, more specific strong endorsements do indeed place the Sibyl as a strong parallel with the Hebrew prophets, and in an increasing way: whereas Justin simply establishes the parallel, Theophilus is more enthusiastic (both in his high view of the Sibyl's inspiration and in his propensity for quoting her); and while Tertullian makes the Sibyl out to be a very true prophetess more ancient than Greek civilization, Clement (sometimes) assimilates the Sibyl entirely to the Biblical tradition, as a Hebrew prophetess. The following chapters examine the later development of more or less positive Christian views of the Sibyl up to the time of Augustine. The *Cohortatio ad Graecos* of Pseudo-Justin and the Emperor Constantine (chap. 4) both represent a partial withdrawal from the position of Clement: no less enthusiastic about her true inspiration, they nevertheless situate her firmly in a pagan context, in accordance with the traditional
picture of the Sibyl, and hence in a way more amenable to apologetic practice. They emphasize the Greco-Roman institutional context of the Sibyl, even while assuming that on particular instances, the Sibyl was invaded by a true inspiration (possibly like the pagan seer Balaam). Lactantius (chap. 5) assumes the same traditional context, but follows a strategy of calculated ambiguity: he refuses to take a clear position about the Sibyls' inspiration, at the same time as he uses their testimony for maximal effect.

Augustine, finally (chap. 6), takes a clear position (in the end) endorsing the Sibyl as truly inspired, and fits her into his grand scheme of the City of God—but only after many years of reluctance and tentative probing of the question of the status of the Sibyl for Christians. It was largely the authority of Augustine, however, that licensed the medieval depictions and recognitions of the Sibyl, as the long process of coming to terms with the pagan seer had largely been forgotten.
Chapter 2

NOT A PROPHETESS
THE SIBYL AS A PURELY PAGAN FIGURE

Although Sibylline texts were composed by Jews and Christians both before and during the Patristic period, the Sibyl was at the time normally seen as a mantic figure at home in Greco-Roman paganism. Because of the Sibyl's status in Greco-Roman pagan society, therefore, one persistent (yet frequently overlooked) approach to the Sibyl in Christian sources—even sometimes in those who elsewhere have a more positive view of the Sibyl—was simply to treat her as a figure from the world of Greek and Roman paganism. This option might lead to blanket dismissal or avoidance of the Sibyl, especially since she was not just a pagan but one of the figures of importance in pagan religion, to which Christians were more consistently hostile than they were toward pagan philosophy and literature in general. For oracular texts, the product of presumable demonic inspiration, explanations such as the "plagiarism hypothesis" would be more difficult to sustain. This categorization of the Sibyl certainly requires not treating her in any way like one of the texts that were apocryphal or disputed, yet undoubtedly belonging to the Jewish or Christian tradition, even those pseudepigraphically attributed to ancient sages like Enoch. It does not, however, always logically entail total avoidance or rejection, since it was common in apologetic writing to cite one's opponents, or their authority figures.¹ Those who reject the Sibyl's status as a prophetess, therefore, might cite OrSib or refer to the Sibyl in the same way as they might any pagan source, for apologetic purposes; they might use the Sibyl for non-apologetic (yet more or less

¹ See, e.g., Fiedrowicz, pp. 172-9; for an analysis of the use to which the 2nd-cen. apologists put Greek poetry, see N. Zeegers-Vander Vorst, Citations.
secular) purposes, as for example in historical accounts, although early Christian literature does not include many appropriate venues for such mentions. Finally, if they do entirely avoid the Sibyl, it seems that additional reasons would be needed: some may have been ignorant of the Sibyl, in which case they would have no occasion to allude to her at all; or, if unaware of material from \textit{OrSib} that might have been useful to cite, they would have no reason to consider her in any way different from the Pythian oracle; some, such as Ignatius of Antioch, did not write apologetic works (or such works of theirs have not survived), and hence the question does not come up; some, like Cyprian, felt that pagan sources should not be cited even for apologetic. Furthermore, some, even if they knew of potentially useful Sibylline material, might have considered the associations of the Sibyl with pagan cults and divinatory practice so strong that the citation of \textit{OrSib} might appear to endorse aspects of pagan cult implicitly; finally, some might have been sensitive to the possibly controversial nature of the Sibylline texts available to Christians, whether through the skepticism evinced by Celsus or by other means. The last two categories could easily be combined: the Sibyl's connections to paganism were strong and well-attested, while her monotheistic utterances were possibly suspect, and therefore rejection or avoidance would be safer. It is important to note that many of the Christian writers who reject the Sibyl must have been familiar with her and the use of her to some degree, often from the works of their Christian predecessors, so that their rejection is to that degree more meaningful, although they themselves may not say much. But it is also striking that no early Christian author ever explicitly denies the \textit{authenticity} of \textit{OrSib};

\footnote{For Celsus, see \textit{infra}, pp. 75-81. For others, see Lucian, \textit{Alex.} 11 and \textit{Pereg.} 29-30; "Boethus" in Plutarch, \textit{De Pyth. orac.} 9-11 (\textit{Moralia} 398C-399E). It is always possible that the strict monotheism proclaimed by the Sibyl, or the explicit mentions of Christ in \textit{OrSib} of later date, might have independently raised the critical hackles of some Christians, who hence consequently avoided mentioning her.}
even those who scorn the Sibyl do not assent to the anti-Christian allegation of forgery. This question is not the subject of extant inter-Christian polemic. Very rare, too, is the admission that any Sibyls originated outside the sphere of Greek and Roman culture, as has been mentioned; even for those few who report information about such non-Greco-Roman Sibyls, the scholarly notices do not seem to make a great deal of difference to their presentations.\(^3\) One notable exception is Clement of Alexandria.\(^4\) One reason for this gap—apart from the general point that the Sibyl without further specification was primarily known to them from Greek and Roman culture—is the fact that the Sibyl is most often used in apologetic, and admitting that there might have been a Persian, Babylonian, or (especially) a Hebrew Sibyl would seriously detract from her usefulness as an ostensible authority figure for the Greek or Roman audience.

In the present chapter, the opposite phenomenon is investigated: the assumption (or assertion) of a Greco-Roman pagan Sibyl as the basis for rejection of her as a possible special authority figure. The Christian writers at issue present the Sibyl simply as a pagan source, no different from other pagan sources in character or value. One must not forget, at the outset, that the great majority of early Christian writers simply do not mention the Sibyl at all, for one or another of the reasons mentioned above; these include some of the greatest names of both Greek and Latin Fathers—Athanasius, Basil the Great, Gregory of Nyssa, John Chrysostom; Cyprian, Ambrose—and a number of

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\(^3\) Hence, those Christian writers who simply transmit information about the Sibyl, which presumably derives from pagan sources, will not be the focus of this chapter. In fact, those who give significant information, and have thus investigated the Sibyl to some degree, tend to be the Christians who use her testimony positively—so, for example, Clement of Alexandria; Ps-Justin, Coh.; Constantine; Lactantius; and Augustine; all of these will be treated hereafter.

\(^4\) For Clement, see infra, pp. 184-214. NB also Ps.-Justin, Coh., 37, who identifies the Sibyl as Babylonian in origin, but then identifies this prophetess with the Sibyl of Cumae. In this, however, he may simply be making the connection apparent in the epilogue to OrSib 3, and so the admission of non-Greco-Roman origin in fact reinforces the identification of a Greek text.
apologetic works—such as the Octavius of Minucius Felix, the final version of Tertullian's Apologeticum; Firmicus Maternus' De errore profanarum religionum; Athanasius' Contra Gentes; and Theodoret's Graecarum affectionum curatio. Here, first the negative—or probably negative—attitudes of some early (pre-Constantinian or Constantinian) Christians writing in Greek will be examined: Hermas, Tatian, Origen, and Eusebius; then, the position of the only Latin source of comparable date and attitude, Arnobius. In the post-Constantinian era, first the cluster of negative expressions in Latin writers of the late 4th and early 5th centuries will be analyzed, and then the few contemporary Greek authors with similar positions. It will be observed that, apart from the fifty-year period after the reign of Julian, there is no strong opposition to the Sibyl; negative opinions that exist are normally muted or implicit. Finally, the chapter will conclude with a brief consideration of the scattered remains of Christian authors using the Sibyl as an "authentic pagan," but without a negative slant, for assorted purposes which do not commit them to a high view of the Sibyl's inspiration.

Early Greek Writers

The Shepherd of Hermas contains the earliest well-attested Christian reference to the Sibyl, which may well amount to a rebuke to other Christians who were willing to

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5 For the date of Hermas, a much-discussed question with little consensus, see the synthesis of C. Osiek, Shepherd of Hermas, Hermeneia (Minneapolis, 1999), pp. 18-20. The Shepherd is unlikely to have been composed later than A.D. 150 or much earlier than 100. Other possible early references to the Sibyl exist. Ps.-Justin, Quaest. et resp. ad orth., Resp. 74, cites Clement of Rome as having appealed to the Sibyl—but the reference has only a slim chance of being authentic; Clement of Alexandria cites an apocryphal statement of Paul as recommending the reading of the Sibylline oracles, but this cannot be dated securely; it belongs sometime in the 2nd cen. I assume that the mention of "Jezebel" in the letter to Thyatira in Apoc. 2.20 probably does not refer to the Sibyl, as argued by E. Schürer, "Die Prophetin Isabel," in A. Harnack et al., Theologische Abhandlungen Carl von Weizsäcker zu seinem siebzigsten Geburtstag, 11.
consider the Sibyl a valid recipient of revelation. As the narrator tells it, he sees a woman on a chair, wearing a shining robe, and carrying a book (Vis. 1.2.2); after encouraging him, and admonishing him, she reads from the book (1.3.3), but all he can remember (or understand) is the end (1.3.4), which describes the creation and administration of the world by God (and mentions the creation of the Church), and contains a final warning that "his chosen ones" must keep his commands. Osiek describes the quotation as "a harmonious medley of allusions and reflections in biblical style, perhaps from a liturgical context." A year later, the woman appears again, with a little book (apparently the same one), and when he says he cannot remember all of it, she gives it to him to copy (2.1.3), which he does ("letter by letter"—it is apparently still hard to understand), at which point it disappears (2.1.4). Later, as Hermas is sleeping, a man appears to him and asks who he thinks the lady was; when Hermas answers, "The Sibyl," the man corrects him, and tells him it was the Church, who appeared as an old woman because she was created before everything (2.4.1).
The setting of both visions has usually been thought to be near Cumae (1.1.3; 2.1.1), which would make Hermas' initial assumption plausible. It should be noted, however, that this is an emendation of the Greek text, an emendation that Osiek rejects on the grounds of the unlikelihood of such a long journey from Rome (1.1.1), and because the unanimous Greek mss. evidence is εἰς κώμας, which she interprets to mean "to the countryside" or "small villages." The Latin mss., however, do assume a Vorlage with a reference to Cumae, at least at 2.1.1; and the received Greek text is difficult to interpret. Furthermore, as Osiek admits, the thought that the woman was the Sibyl is harder to account for without the references to Cumae; she considers, however, that the notoriety of the Sibyl, and the elements of the picture offered, still make it a believable guess. Nevertheless, it seems more likely that the reference to Cumae is original.

What does the evocation of the Sibyl add to the work? Osiek notes that the structure of OrSib and Hermas are parallel: both present an "apocalyptic framework for paraenetic content"—in which case, the connection serves to point out Hermas' own text as something generically similar to OrSib. The "suggestion that Hermas' revealer was originally the Sybil [sic]" (i.e., that the correction is a revision of an earlier document

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9 E.g., M. Dibelius, Der Hirt des Hermas, (Tübingen, 1923), p. 430-1; K. Lake, The Apostolic Fathers, vol. 2, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA, 1913), p. 6 and 16, who considers the ms. spelling as a possible variant of Κούμας, although Lake also mentions the alternative, the meaning Osiek prefers.


11 In 2.1.1, the Latin mss. read ad regionem Cumanorum; at 1.1.3, the Latin mss. read cum his and Civitatem Ostiorum, which at least assumes something other than the extant Greek reading.

12 As R. Van Deemter, Der Hirt des Hermas: Apokalypse oder Allegorie? (Delft, 1929), p. 138 n. 2, notes, Mark 8.27 has the article: εἰς τὰς κώμας. There is also a dependent genitive: Κασσαφείας.

13 Osiek, p. 58.

14 Osiek, p. 58 n. 3.
that did appeal to the Sibyl as such)\(^{15}\) is not plausible, according to Osiek; rather, Hermas used the figure of the Sibyl as a pattern for the picture of the Church.\(^{16}\) Van Deemter, however, raises the question whether one should think of Hermas as alluding to a specific Sibylline oracle with the contents of the woman's words to Hermas;\(^{17}\) he dismisses this, though, especially because no such oracle is known, and her words are specifically geared to Hermas' situation.\(^{18}\) But perhaps a connection can be made with the reported content of the little book, as O'Brien tries to do. He attempts to argue that the intrusion of the Sibyl is related to the doctrine of creation \textit{ex nihilo}, but his position is difficult to prove: first, he argues that Hermas teaches this doctrine,\(^{19}\) then shows that it appears early in the \textit{Shepherd}, in the vision of Rhoda (\textit{Vis.} 1.1.6) and argues that the passage quoted from the woman's book (1.3.4) is meant to parallel Rhoda's statement\(^{20}\)—a necessary argument, since the doctrine does not appear in the passage explicitly. Finally, O'Brien says that he considers the doctrine "fully consonant" with \textit{OrSib}, although while he succeeds in showing that some Fathers who quoted \textit{OrSib} espoused creation \textit{ex nihilo}, and although it is certainly the case that \textit{OrSib} are often concerned with proclaiming God's creation and providential care, he cannot demonstrate the doctrine in question from \textit{OrSib} themselves—and does not pretend to.\(^{21}\) The significance of Hermas' use of the Sibyl, according to O'Brien, is the authentication of his message of the transcendence and

\(^{15}\) The view of Van Deemter, p. 144.

\(^{16}\) Osiek, p. 58, citing Dibelius, pp. 450-52, and Brox, \textit{Der Hirt des Hermas}, Kommentar zu den Apostolischen Vätern 7 (Göttingen, 1991), pp. 104-6, for further discussion. Dibelius, p. 452, considers the use of the Sibyl to be simply a pattern, and certainly not to represent acquaintance with specific Sibylline texts: "was sie übermittelt, hat mit Sibyllenversen nichts zu tun; nur ihr Äußeres ist sibyllenartig."

\(^{17}\) Van Deemter, p. 142; cf., e.g., H. Windisch, \textit{Die Orakel des Hystaspes} (Amsterdam, 1929), p. 5 n. 2, who argues that the expected tribulation and the warnings to repent (2.7; 3.3) are "durchaus Sibyllenmotive."

\(^{18}\) Van Deemter, p. 143.

\(^{19}\) D. P. O'Brien, "The Cumaean Sibyl as the Revelation-bearer in the \textit{Shepherd of Hermas}," \textit{JECS} 5 (1997), pp. 474-6, 480-84.

\(^{20}\) O'Brien, p. 484.

\(^{21}\) O'Brien, pp. 485-7, and note especially the careful expressions on pp. 487, 495-6.
providence of God.\textsuperscript{22} He might have argued this, however, without bringing in the idea of creation \textit{ex nihilo}. One prominent element of the passage quoted in 1.3.4, though, certainly has no parallel in extant \textit{OrSib}: the creation of the Church. This motif is particularly important for Hermas, and its absence in \textit{OrSib} calls into question his general argument that 1.3.4 represents the "Sibylline voice." Apart from this difficulty, it might be argued, without O'Brien's emphasis on the creation \textit{ex nihilo} motif, that the Sibylline-style content in the book really is meant to allude to texts like the extant \textit{OrSib}.

A more serious problem for a positive valuation, however, is the fact that Hermas is brought in the end to reject his initial identification of the woman as the Sibyl. O'Brien does not deal with this; but it vitiates his argument. The same problem applies to Alexandre's interpretation: that the Sibyl must have seemed "not entirely pagan" for Hermas to mention her.\textsuperscript{23} The "message" of such rejection—assuming that the content of the woman's book is meant to be Sibylline at all—can only be that teachings Hermas' \textit{audience} might have taken to be vouched for by the Sibyl are in fact not to be connected with her. One can imagine a context in which some of Hermas' contemporaries did in fact use the Sibyl to demonstrate such things as God's creation and providence—but in which Hermas' response must then be read as implicitly rejecting such appeals,\textsuperscript{24} in favor of the authority of the Church and Christian tradition, in opposition to the pagan figure of the Sibyl. This shunting aside of the Sibyl would be especially comprehensible in that Hermas is not writing an apologetic work, and thus has no use for pagan authority figures; the little book given to him by the woman is also not apologetic. This being the

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item \textsuperscript{22} O'Brien, pp. 487, 496.
\item \textsuperscript{23} Alexandre, 2: 258; his further contention that it shows that veneration of the Sibyl was "fairly general" is simply exaggeration.
\item \textsuperscript{24} So Sardella, p. 582; Parke, \textit{Sibyls} pp.155-6, after raising the possibility that the initial deception may be a novelistic device (p. 154).
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case, he seems perhaps to be specifically combating use of the Sibyl as a theological authority within the Christian community, use that may have reflected a vestigial value placed on the authority of the Sibyl among former pagans who had been converted to Christianity (partly) on the basis of Sibylline texts.

Even this may be going too far, however. It is not absolutely clear that the text of Hermas assumes a connection between the mention of the Sibyl and contemporary practice in some Christian circles, although this would make the most comprehensible sense of the Sibyl's appearance. Osiek, however, would take her appearance as less significant—simply as an evocation of an familiar figure of divine authority on which the figure of the Church is patterned.\(^{25}\) If the account of Hermas' vision is taken as the report of a genuine experience, one might argue that it could easily occur to him, as a young, inexperienced Christian, to think of the Sibyl when confronted with his vision. It might also make sense as the fictional depiction of a new Christian's experience, as he learns the necessity of breaking with the pagan tradition of revelation represented by the Sibyl in favor of the Christian visions of the book as a whole. In either case, the function would still be to reject the Sibyl as a valid authority for Christians—or, more generally, to reject the pagan mantic paradigm as a whole. In short, Osiek appears to make too little of the Sibyl's appearance, while O'Brien certainly makes too much of it. There is not enough detail, however, to draw grand conclusions, apart from the probability that the correction

\(^{25}\) Osiek, p. 58. Similarly, Potter, Prophets and Emperors, p. 87, thinks that the evidence of Hermas simply shows the "general importance" of the Sibyl; likewise, Bartelink, p. 25; Sfameni Gasparro, "La Sibilla," pp. 540-41, thinks it shows how strong a position the Sibylline prophetic pattern (including written form) held in the popular imagination—and reflects Hermas' interest in supernatural revelation. Thompson's interpretation is obscure: he considers (p. 128) Hermas to represent a "major exception to the theory...just outlined"—apparently the general practice of Christians of referring to the Sibyl as a pagan prophetess; if that is what he means (for Hermas, then, something like Alexandre's opinion), then the rejection would counter this view equally.
of Hermas' initial response can be taken as a negative statement about the use of the Sibyl, whether that was hypothetical or actual.

With Tatian, we find a clear, if not particularly verbose, rejection. A less accommodating disciple of Justin (who refers to the Sibyl positively) notorious for his virulently scornful attitude toward all Greek culture, Tatian wrote in the 170s an apology (Oratio ad Graecos) that is primarily an attack on Greek paganism; it quotes fairly frequently from pagan literature, but these citations are mostly short phrases and epithets ironically turned against their authors.26 Despite his hostility, of course, traces of a rhetorical education have been found in his apologetic work.27 In any case, when describing his own conversion to Christianity, Tatian attributes it entirely to his encounter

26 For Tatian's general view of Greek culture, see C. A. Contreras, "Christian Views of Paganism," ANRW II.23.2 (1980), pp. 988-992; I. Sevcenko, "A Shadow Outline of Virtue: The Classical Heritage of Greek Christian Literature (Second to Seventh Century)," in K. Weitzmann (ed.), Age of Spirituality: A Symposium (New York, 1980), p. 56; E. Norelli, "La critique du pluralisme grec dans le Discours aux Grecs de Tatien," in Les apologistes grecs chrétiens et la culture grecque, ed. by B. Pouderon and J. Doré (Paris, 1998), pp. 81-120, who develops the idea that by the "Greeks" to whom Tatian professes himself so rabidly opposed, he really means to refer to the Greek system of παιδεία (see especially pp. 109-13). K. J. Popma, "Patristic Evaluation of Culture," Philosophia Reformata 38 (1973), pp. 108-10, cites Tatian as exemplifying his category of "anti-solidaritarian synthesis" of culture. On the dating of the Oratio, R. M. Grant, Greek Apologists of the Second Century (Philadelphia, 1988), pp. 113-14, followed by A. J. Droge, Homer or Moses? (Tübingen, 1989), pp. 83-4, argues that Tatian's Oratio was probably published soon after the fall of 176, based especially on a supposed allusion to the salary of philosophical and rhetorical chairs in Athens endowed by Marcus Aurelius at that time (Or. 19.1). Marcovich, Tatiani Oratio, pp. 2-3, thinks it reflects a Roman context and so must have been written before Tatian's schism and departure from Rome for the Orient in 172 (Whittaker, p. x, agrees that it was probably written in Rome). Harnack, Geschichte der altchristlichen Litteratur bis Eusebius, II.1 (Leipzig, 1897), p. 287, concluded from the contrast between the addressees ("O Greeks," passim) and the third-person references to Rome and the Romans (35.1) that the Oratio was not composed in Rome. This could support the later date, although Harnack dated the work to ca. 155, during a putative temporary absence from Rome. For other considerations, see Norelli, p. 113 n. 67. Marcovich, Tatiani Oratio, pp. 1-2, in any case convincingly argues that Tatian knew Justin's writings and wrote his Oratio after Justin's death (ca. 165). On Tatian's citations from Greek literature, see Zeegers-Vander Vorst, Citations, pp. 24, 260-64. Cf. also G. F. Hawthorne, "Tatian's Discourse to the Greeks," HThR 57 (1964), p. 175.

27 Hawthorne, pp. 176-81, cites a number of respects in which he shows his acquaintance with learning and sympathy with aspects of contemporary pagan philosophy; cf. also Whittaker, pp. xii-xiv, mentioning his "Asiatic" style, and citing in particular Or. 35.1: τούτῳ μὲν σοφιστεύσας τὰ υμέτερα, τούτῳ δὲ τέχναις καὶ ἐπινοίαις ἐγκυρήσας πολλάς...(referring to himself).
with the Scriptures and concomitant divine illumination (29.1-3). As part of the same work, Tatian engages in an uncompromising attack on pagan oracles and divination, as servants of human greed and passion (19.5-9). Similarly, Orpheus, a revered figure in Greek culture, and one to whom some early Christians attribute a palinode repenting his involvement with polytheism, is brought in simply as a pagan teacher of religion, music, and poetry: he taught the Greeks poetry and song, as well as initiation (1.2), and Tatian calls him, along with Eleusis and the mystic serpent, as witness of the shameful story of Hades' rape of Kore (8.6).

One of Tatian's aims is to prove Moses' chronological priority to all Greek literature—indeed, he wishes to show incidentally that Moses was responsible for all barbarian culture, but the goal of his chronological arguments is to vindicate Moses' writings as specifically older than any Greek writings. Tatian mentions the Sibyl only once, in a paragraph designed to anticipate the objection that Homer was not the earliest Greek writer: he draws up a list of (possibly or certainly) pre-Homeric figures, many of which had religious as well as general cultural significance. In this list, he includes Orpheus and Musaeus along with the Sibyl, asserting that Moses predated all these too, not just Homer:

28 (1)...κατ' ἐμαυτὸν γενόμενος ἐξήτουν ὅτῳ τρώπῳ τάληθες ἐξευρεῖν δύνομαι. (2) Περινοοῦντι δὲ μοι τά σπουδαία συνέβη γραφής τισιν ἐντυχεῖν βαρβαρίσκας, προαντέχεις μὲν ὡς πρὸς τά Ἐλλήνων δόγματα, θειότερας δὲ ὡς πρὸς τήν ἐκείνων πλάνην· καὶ μοι πεισθῆναι ταύτας συνέβη διά τε τῶν λέξεων τό ἐπτυφον καί τῶν εἰπόντων τό ἀνεπιτήδευτον καί τής τοῦ παντός ποιήματος τὸ εὐκατάλημπτον καί τῶν μελλόντων τὸ προγνωστικόν καί τῶν παραγγελμάτων τό ἐξαίσιον καί τῶν ὅλων τῷ μοναρχικῷ. (3) Θεοδιδάκτου δὲ μου γενομένης τῆς ψυχῆς συνήρα...  
29 See Droge, p. 86. 
30 Droge, pp. 91-96, stressing the contrast with Justin, who merely asserted and assumed Moses' priority, whereas Tatian wished to demonstrate it "scientifically." It may well be, as Droge argues, pp. 97-101, that Tatian is responding to Celsus, who reversed Justin's views of cultural history and claimed rather that the Biblical versions of parallel stories or ideas were corrupted from the Greek.  
Afterwards, he takes up the first few names from the list (Linus to Phemius, but in a different order) to show more explicitly their place in chronology. Linus, for example, was the teacher of Heracles, who belonged to the generation before the Trojan war (41.2); Orpheus was contemporary with Heracles, and moreover, the poetry attributed to him was actually composed by Onomacritus during the rule of the Pisistratids, around the fiftieth Olympiad (41.3). Later he "fills up what is lacking" (41.6) by adding discussion of the chronology of Minos and lawgivers and sages, such as Lycurgus and Solon (41.7-10). But in the case of the Sibyl, there is only the bald assertion, none of the ἀκριβεία Tatian promises. It appears that he had no specific information on the Sibyl's date, only a general feeling that she was pre-Homeric. His treatment of her at least suggests the probability that her writings, like those of the Greeks in general, insofar as there is any truth in them, depend on Moses. Nevertheless, there is no suggestion that he did, in fact, concede that there was any truth in them. What he says has a purely negative orientation, dismissing the Sibyl along with all early Greek writers, legendary or otherwise. It is not clear whether Tatian was even aware that Sibyline texts containing

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32 Droge, p. 95, seems to overlook the chronological arguments made about some of the names on the list, when he says that Tatian does not address the problem directly. There is no basis for arguing, as he does, that Tatian dismisses them because insofar as they were supposed to date to before the Trojan war, they belonged to the realm of legend rather than that of history.

33 This would agree with the assertion attested elsewhere that the Erythraean Sibyl was contemporary with the Trojan War (Lact., D/I 1.6).

34 Bartelink, "Die Oracula Sibyllina," p. 28.
monotheistic arguments were being circulated, although it has been argued that he knew Justin's works, and therefore could have been familiar with the claim that the Sibyl had indeed hit upon some truth. He does not, however, develop a mechanism like that of Justin's λόγος σπερματικός by which to accommodate the achievement of truth by pagans—only the traditional plagiarism hypothesis, which would be hard to apply to a mantic figure like the Sibyl. His negative view of the Sibyl, however, is entirely in keeping with his generally antagonistic treatment of figures from Greek tradition.

Vehement opposition to the Sibyl is in fact very difficult to find in the Greek Patristic sources. Two other writers, however, up to the time of Constantine mention the Sibyl reluctantly, in a manner that probably implies that they personally considered the Sibyl not substantially different from other Greek oracles, and so not a proper object of respect for Christians. Thus, although the question is more complex in their cases, they seem to display the same assumptions as Tatian; they do not give much, if any, evidence of having consciously considered the possibility that the Sibyl was divinely inspired. Their diffidence is the more interesting in that they are successive followers of the Alexandrian tradition established by Clement of Alexandria, who often quotes the Sibyl positively. It must be assumed that they were aware of Clement's use of the Sibyl, at least. One of Clement's mentions of the Sibyl, in fact, can be classed with the negative expressions of this chapter: despite his usually positive view, Clement once cites a Sibylline verse in the midst of a series of quotations from Greek literature (Strom. 3.III.14.3), which exemplify the view against which Clement is arguing. Further consideration of this passage will appear later (infra, pp. 192-193); suffice it to say at this

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35 Marcovich, Tatiani Oratio, pp. 1-2.
point that Clement's usual view of the Sibyl is to treat her as a genuine recipient of divine inspiration.

**Origen** does not take a clear position vis-à-vis the Sibyl. Although he contests Celsus' allegation of Christian forgery of Sibylline oracles, his tone indicates that he would be one to disparage "those who consider the Sibyl a prophet." While Origen certainly had absorbed much from traditional education, and certainly was indebted to it for much of his outlook, as his critics alleged—and could accommodate the idea that some truth could be achieved within pagan Greek culture—it is in the realm of philosophy, not poetry or oracles, that he was most susceptible to finding truth in pagan sources; even there, however, he was far from uncritical.

The Sibyl first appears in fifth book of the *Contra Celsum* when Origen is dealing with Celsus' enumerations of various sects among the Christians, one of which is allegedly called "Sibyllistae":

...Εἶπε δὲ τινὰς εἶναι καὶ Σιβυλλιστάς, τάχα παρακούσας τινῶν ἐγκαλούντων τοῖς οἰομένοις προφῆτιν γεγονέναι τὴν Σίβυλλαν καὶ Σιβυλλιστᾶς τοὺς τοιοῦτος καλεσάντων. [C. Cels. 5.61]

This group is presumably the same as those Celsus mentions at 7.53 as "using" (and adulterating) the Sibyl:

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36 See H. Koch, *Pronoia und Paideusis: Studien über Origenes und sein Verhältnis zum Platonismus* (Berlin and Leipzig, 1932), pp. 49-62, for Origen's idea of the *Logos* as it was active before the Incarnation of Christ. Origen is one of the prime examples of Popma, pp. 102-4, for "synthesis in favour of cultural solidarity." On Origen's practice as teacher, see R. Williams, "Origenes/Origenismus," *TRE* 25 (1995), pp. 401-2 [and the ref. to Greg. Thaum. *infra*, n. 51].


38 The word appears otherwise only at Plutarch, *Marius* 42.7, in company with Χαλδαῖοι and θύται as responsible for Octavius' remaining in Rome and being killed; Marius, by contrast, benefited from (correct) divination (note 42.9). Plutarch has great respect for oracles and divination, but scorn for popular charlatanry (see Budé edition, p. 92, and *De Pyth. Orac.* 407c). The term is translated "interpreters of Sibylline oracles" (LSJ, Loeb, Budé); one might assume that for Celsus, they are meant to be purveyors and advocates of such oracles as well.
Origen replies to this charge as follows:

Origen denies any knowledge of a sect of Sibyllistae, but does not deny that some Christians had a fondness for Sibylline oracles. He suggests that Celsus got the term from someone who was censuring those who "consider the Sibyl a prophetess"—and presumably such critics would themselves be Christians. It is clear from the tone here, as well as from the fact that Origen never cites the Sibyl on his own initiative or otherwise indicates that he considers her a prophetess, that Origen's sympathies would be with such censure rather than with the "Sibyllists." Origen either knows of such criticism or at least assumes that it would be plausible that a high view of the Sibyl's inspiration would be subject to attack by other Christians. Certainly, Origen had no respect for traditional pagan oracles, whose mode of inspiration he contrasts with that of the Hebrew prophets at C. Cels. 7.3ff. Elsewhere, he illustrates the manner in which the Logos was in Jesus by reference to the god Apollo's presence in the Pythia—but this justifies Christian belief apologetically and in no way endorses the oracle itself.39 While he allows for some

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perception of truth by pagans (and considers Greek philosophy to have been a propaedeutic for Christianity),\(^{40}\) he still strongly contrasts this with the continuous guidance of Jews and Christians by the Spirit.\(^{41}\) Celsus' comments are important, however, insofar as they attest that among the various Christian groups contemporary with him, there were Christians who noticeably appealed to Sibylline oracles, presumably more frequently than Justin, who simply mentions them a couple of times;\(^{42}\) on the other hand, they speak against a wide-ranging general knowledge of the Sibylline oracles among Christians,\(^{43}\) since those who appeal to the Sibyl are not depicted as Christians in general, but as a sect of Christians. Conversely, Origen's response may indicate that Christians also combated such views.

Not just "noticeable" (or frequent?) appeals are alleged—such that Celsus was aware of them—but appeals by Christians who "considered the Sibyl a prophetess." By using this characterization, Origen reveals more than Celsus' allegations do: there were those who not only "used" the Sibyl, but who believed that she had a status above that of

\(^{40}\) C. Cels. 3.58.

\(^{41}\) C. Cels 6.78-79; 7.51.

\(^{42}\) Celsus' critique of Christianity most likely appeared between A.D. 177 and 180 (Marcovich, Origenes: Contra Celsum libri VIII [Leiden, 2001], p. xiv; Chadwick, Origen: Contra Celsum, pp. xxiv-xxix; M. Borret, in Origène: Contre Celse, vol. 5, SC 227 [1976], p. 129, after the most extended discussion, settles on 176-80, "sans nier la part de conjecture"). Celsus is often thought to be responding to Justin's apologetic (however, for a challenge to this view, see G. T. Burke, "Celsus and Justin: Carl Andresen Revisited," ZNW 76 [1985], pp. 107-116); but Justin's references, although they show respect for the Sibyl, would not warrant Celsus' allegations about a sect. Other extant apologists show varying degrees of respect for the Sibyl (see elsewhere in this chapter and the next). Hippolytus claims that the Peratae, a Gnostic group, used the Sibyl's words (fr. 2) to support their world view (Hippol., Ref. omn. haer. 5.16.1). Otherwise, the strongest evidence for a particular sect's use of Sibylline oracles is OrSib 7.76-91, which prescribes otherwise unattested rites connected with baptism and hospitality for the poor; although the scattered passages in the book having Gnostic parallels should not be taken to characterize the book as a whole (Collins in OTP 1: 408-9; J. G. Gager, "Some Attempts to Label the Oracula Sibyllina, Book 7," HThR 65 [1972], pp. 91-97), the presence of a distinctive ceremony with liturgical formulae makes it likely that the verses were composed for some distinct group. Also significant are the endorsements of the Sibyl in the quotation of "Paul" in Clem. Alex., Strom. 6.43.1, and the claim in Ps.-Justin, Quaest. et resp. ad orth., Resp. 74, that Clement of Rome mentioned the Sibyl as prophesying the end of the world. Hermas, Vis. 2.4.1, as we have seen, demonstrates a familiarity with the figure of the Sibyl, although it does not go as far as to show Christian attachment to Sibylline oracles. For these early endorsements, see also Chap. 3.

\(^{43}\) Cf. Prümm, p. 62.
other figures from the pagan world—namely, that she was comparable to the Hebrew prophets of the Biblical tradition. This can be instructively compared with the status of another problematic, but Biblical, figure: Balaam. Origen was the first Christian writer fully to treat the problem of the oracles uttered by the pagan diviner Balaam in the book of Numbers (23-24), and he did so in a way that consistently maintains the wickedness of pagan divination, while at the same time admitting that the prophecy pronounced by Balaam was true and divine.\textsuperscript{44} Balaam was a diviner, not a prophet, and thus was customarily associated with demons—but God intervened on the occasion of his true prophecy.\textsuperscript{45} Thus, although Balaam truly prophesied, he was not a prophet.\textsuperscript{46}

Furthermore, Origen argues that Balaam's prophecy can only be "received" because on this occasion it was God who spoke through him (not because of his general reputation)—and the proof of this is that his words were included in the Bible.\textsuperscript{47}

Christians who claimed that the Sibyl was a "prophetess," then, would be claiming for her the status that Origen explicitly denies to Balaam, and in Origen's view, must have considered her on a level with the Hebrew prophets. It is possible that even if Origen did


\textsuperscript{45} For Balaam's status, see Hom. in Num. 14.3.1 and 13.5.3-6.2; for the occasion, and Balaam's unworthiness, 13.6.3. In similar fashion, Origen argues that the Magi were only prompted to consult Balaam's prophecy because of the failure of their normal, demon-connected, procedures, and claims that the star they saw was new, and so unconnected to astrology (C. Cels. 1.58-60); on the other hand, a fragmentary comment on the gospel of Matthew is more generous to astrology (see Fédu, pp. 468-9, and cf. Clement's statement at Strom. 1.71.4, that the Magi foretold Christ's birth μαγείᾳ: Πρὸς ἐκαστὸν χρήται ὁ θεὸς τοῖς αὐτοὶ καθατετέθησαν, καθάπερ καὶ τοὺς μάγους ἀπὸ τῆς οἰκείας χώρας εἰπὶ τὴν προσκύνησιν τοῦ Χριστοῦ δι' ἀστρολογίας (fr. 27 in Matt. Klostermann [GCS 12.1]). The subsequent mention of Balaam's prophecy, however, may mean that by "astrology" here Origen simply means the activity of watching the heavens.

\textsuperscript{46} Ideo nemo extollatur, etiamsi prophetet (Hom. in Num. 14.4.4); at Comm. in Ioh. 28.98-105, Origen expounds the principle that not everyone who prophesies is a prophet.

\textsuperscript{47} Hom. in Num. 17.7.12: nisi enim verba Domini essent, non ea utique revelasset famulo suo Moysi.
not consider her "a prophetess," he might have allowed for the possibility of a transient inspiration, like that of Balaam, in the case of the Sibyl too, as an explanation for Sibylline material that seemed to agree with Christian truth. As Michel Fédou points out, the example of Balaam indicates that Origen at least considered revelation to Gentiles possible:  

Le caractère exceptionnel de l'événement n'en amoindrit pas la portée. Il confirme plutôt que l'éloignement même des peuples n'empêche pas Dieu de leur être présent. Il indique surtout que cette présence ne se réduit pas à la transmission de certaines vérités par le ministère des anges, mais qu'elle peut être—qu'elle a été dans l'histoire—communication aux païens du Logos et de l'Esprit.

Unfortunately, he does not say enough for it to become clear whether he considered this possibility seriously in the case of the Sibyl.

In the pair of passages quoted above from C. Cels. 7, Celsus criticizes the Christians for making Jesus their object of reverence, when they had so many worthy figures to choose from: Heracles and Asclepius, the ancient heroes; Orpheus, who was renowned for piety and suffered a violent death; Anaxarchus and Epictetus, comparatively recent philosophers who delivered apophthegmata under painful conditions; and the Sibyl. It is not clear why Celsus includes the Sibyl as one of the substitutes, unless it was simply because he knew (or thought he knew) of a sect of "Sibyllists"; Origen is puzzled too (οὐκ οἶδ' ὅπως). Celsus further alleges that the Christians who "use" the Sibyl have interpolated many blasphemous things "at random" into the oracles. Some have considered the charge to be justified, and certainly Christian Sibylline material was composed at some time; but scholars should distinguish between Jewish and Christian interpolation or composition. There is no secure and

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48 Fédou, p. 529.
49 E.g., Bartelink, "Die Oracula Sibyllina," p. 32.
early—contemporary with or earlier than Celsus—attestation of specifically Christian Sibylline oracles;\(^{50}\) the earlier Christian quotations of the oracles cite from books of Jewish provenance. For Celsus, however, Jewish interpolations condemning idolatry would be just as blasphemous and atheistic as if they were Christian in origin. Origen's response to the charge is to dismiss it as insufficiently specific; Celsus should have adduced earlier exemplars without the alleged interpolations. This is more or less avoiding the question, a common tactic of Origen in answering sweeping generalizations of Celsus. He dismisses the charge, but does not refute it. If Origen was familiar in any detail with Christian citation of Sibylline texts,\(^{51}\) of the sort attested in apologies such as those of Theophilus or Clement of Alexandria, there is no reason that his critical hackles should have been raised to the point of suspecting Christian interpolation. Even if he might privately have considered the possibility of Jewish interpolation, his purpose in C. Cels. would not be served by making such an admission; rather, he tries to evade the charge while investigating it as little as possible.

\(^{50}\) Ps.-Justin, Coh., 38.1, from the late 3rd cen., is the first to attest specifically Christian content, although somewhat earlier dates have been proposed for some of the Christian parts of OrSib: see Collins' introductions to OrSib 1-2, 6, 7, 8 in OTP for discussion and references.

\(^{51}\) Origen carefully does not reveal whether he does in fact know such material, but it seems likely. Apart from his presumable familiarity with the works of Clement of Alexandria, perhaps significant is the fact that Origen had his students at Caesarea become familiar with Greek philosophy and poetry, which might be thought to include such things as Orphic and Sibylline verse: \(φιλοσοφεῖν \ μὲν \ ἠξίου \ ἀναλεγομένους \ τῶν \ ἀρχαίων \ πάντα \ όσα \ καὶ \ φιλοσόφων \ καὶ \ ϝμνῳδῶν \ ἐστὶ \ γράμματα \ πάσῃ \ δυνάμει \ ...\) (Greg. Thaum., Thanksgiving Adress 13 [151])—excepting only the "atheists"—presumably Epicureans (and, to a lesser degree, Peripatetics), as H. Crouzel (in his edition, Grégoire le Thaumaturge: Remerciement à Origène, suivi de la lettre d'Origène à Grégoire, SC 148 [Paris, 1969], ad loc.) notes. M. Slusser, St. Gregory Thaumaturgus: Life and Works, FC 98 (Washington, D.C., 1998), ad loc. (p. 116 n. 73), argues that there is a reference to the Psalms, e.g., rather than to pagan poets, but the context of the passage requires that only pagan Greek sources are referred to here. Lampe (s.v. \(ὑμνῳδός\)) thinks actual pagan hymn-writers are envisioned; Bigg, Christian Platonists, pp. 143-44, considers that it is a question of "all the theological poets." Both of these, however, seem to make too much of the reference, which may simply be to poets in general, as Crouzel's translation assumes ("poètes"). It is possible, but not certain, that such familiarity with poetry may have extended to Sibylline texts.
Origen managed to find a way of explaining the inspiration of the classic Biblical example of a pagan seer granted true insight—Balaam—and thus could conceivably have fit the Sibyl into such a schema, allowing for true but temporary inspiration even while decrying the pagan traditions in which the Sibyl was normally pictured. His failure to do so may have various explanations: either he was keeping to the task of refuting Celsus while avoiding contentious issues; or he preferred not to work out a reasoned position on the Sibyl, whereas the Biblical status of Balaam required treatment of him; or, finally, his critical acumen was not satisfied that the Sibylline material cited by Christians was authentically ancient. If the first or third possibilities are true, the specific nature of the pagan attack he was refuting through the *Contra Celsum* has affected his presentation of the Sibyl, making of her a controversy that he may well have simply preferred not to touch; the absence of any mention of the Sibyl elsewhere in his works is less significant than it might appear, since they are not works of apologetic as is *C. Cels*. In any case, his position remains unclear, but probably to some degree reflects consciousness of the doubts surrounding Sibylline texts. In the end, showing that the question of the Sibyl was at best less than important for him, he contents himself with three simple, unassailable propositions: some Christians considered the Sibyl a prophetess; others criticized them for this; but Celsus' allegation of interpolation is unproven.

**Eusebius**, whose references to the Sibyl are almost all the result of transcribing sources such as Josephus, Clement, and Tatian, himself adds only a characterization of her as Greek and a placement of the Erythraean and Samian Sibyl in a chronological position in his *Chronicon*. His position about her value is unclear, but as with Origen, the question was of little importance for him, and he does not appear to have given it much
consideration in the midst of his compilatory efforts; certainly, the question of truths found in philosophical Greek literature such as that of Plato receives much more attention.\footnote{52}

In three places, Eusebius refers to the Sibyl only by virtue of his citing the earlier Christian writers Tatian (at \textit{PE} 10.11.27, citing Tatian, \textit{Or.} 41.1) and Clement of Alexandria (at \textit{PE} 13.13.35, citing Clement, \textit{Strom.} 5.108.6; and \textit{PE} 13.13.42, citing Clement, \textit{Strom.} 5.115.6) for the subjects of chronology and the dependence of Greeks on Hebrew sources respectively. Bartelink suggests that it is on the basis of the quotation from Tatian, who includes the Sibyl in a list of pre-Homeric Greeks whom Moses antedates, that Eusebius puts the Erythraean Sibyl quite late, 440 years after the Trojan War\footnote{53}—that therefore Tatian has affected Eusebius' view of the Sibyl. Conversely, one

\footnote{52} Eusebius certainly was well acquainted with a large number of pagan Greek texts. J. Moreau, "Eusebius von Caesarea," \textit{RAC} 6 (1966), cols. 1081-2, reports on his knowledge of Greek literature, but on his mainly apologetic use of it remarks (col. 1082): "Daß E. den Inhalt der philosophischen Schriften, ausschließlich nach dem Grad der wirklichen oder scheinbaren Übereinstimmung mit seinen christlichen Anschauungen verwirft bzw. annimmt, versteht sich von selbst." A. Kofsky, \textit{Eusebius of Caesarea against Paganism}, Jewish and Christian Perspective 3 (Leiden/Boston/Köln, 2000), pp. 282-6, reviews Eusebius' attitude toward Plato (in the \textit{Theophany}—primarily negative; contrasting somewhat with a greater emphasis on the positive in \textit{PE}—for this, he cites also E. Des Places, "Eusèbe de Césarée juge de Platon dans la \textit{Préparation Evangélique}," in \textit{Mélanges de philosophie grecque offerts à Mgr. Diès} [Paris, 1956], pp. 69-77). P. Allen, "Some Aspects of Hellenism in the Early Greek Church Historians," \textit{Traditio} 43 (1987), pp. 369-71, notes especially that Eusebius' accounts of his predecessors often highlight their learning, including philosophical; that of Origen, however, he presents with mixed pride and diffidence. She concludes (p. 371) that his references are "opportunistic"—"on the one hand, tacitly recognizing that it is indispensable for the Christian; on the other, impugning it freely in arguments against the pagans."

\footnote{53} Bartelink, "Die \textit{Oracula Sibyllina}," p. 29. According to the \textit{Chron.}, the Erythraean Sibyl became known in 1273 or 1275 A. Abr.—in the mid-8th cen. B.C. (see Helm's note (d), p. 89, for the slightly earlier date in the Armenian). The \textit{Chron.} also has a later reference to a Sibyl, Herophile, known in Samos, at (A. Abr.) 1353 (p. 86f Schoene) and 1305 (p. 84a Schoene: the reference is not in the Armenian, but Jerome's Latin version has it, as does Syncellus, who also mentions the Cumaean Sibyl as having lived before the Trojan War; his testimony is adduced p. 84a Schoene). In similar fashion as Bartelink, Guillaumin, pp. 193-4: Eusebius' chronological calculations are in accordance with the quotation he takes from Tatian which includes the Sibyl; as Tatian only mentions the Sibyl in company with a number of other Greeks who were later than Moses, so Eusebius dates the Erythraean Sibyl 440 years after the Trojan War, Moses much earlier than the Trojan War. Thus, she fits into the usual Christian schema whereby the presence of truth in pagan authors is explained as due to their borrowing from Moses. Against the contention that Tatian's mention determined Eusebius' dating of the Sibyls is the fact that Julius Africanus already dated the Erythraean Sibyl and the "Sibyl in Samos" at roughly the same periods (the synchronism with the
might argue that by quoting passages from Clement which make Greek philosophers dependent on the Sibyl, who thus appears as a representative of Hebrew wisdom in the dependence schema, Eusebius effectively endorses this positive interpretation of the Sibyl.\textsuperscript{54} Neither extreme seems right.

Three times Eusebius quotes the paraphrase of *OrSib* 3.97-104 on the Tower of Babel which also appears in Josephus' *Jewish Antiquities* (1.4.3 [118]). In Book 1 of his *Chronicon* (cols. 23-24 Schoene) he cites the paraphrase as being from Alexander Polyhistor, whom Josephus does not mention but is almost certainly following, as Eusebius' attribution itself reveals.\textsuperscript{55} At *PE* 9.15, he cites the Sibyl again for the story of the Tower of Babel, and Josephus may be the immediate source, since just before this (*PE* 9.14), he has quoted neighboring material from Josephus. Finally, at *Onom.* s.v. Βαβέλ (GCS 11.1 [1904]: 40 Klostermann), the "quotation" of the Sibyl is embedded in a citation from Josephus (which, together with Eusebius' remarks, elucidates the aetiology for the name Babel, left unclear by the Sibylline quotation), *AJ* 1.4.3, but

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\textsuperscript{54} Since *PE* 13.13.18-42 is a citation en bloc of Clem. Alex. *Strom.* 5.98-115.6, following which he skips quotations of Homer and Orpheus at *Strom.* 5.116.1-2, to pick up the citation at *Strom* 5.116.3 (*PE* 13.13.43), it would have been simple for Eusebius to omit either Sibylline quotation, and especially the second, which appears at the end of the *en bloc* citation; thus, their presence is a clearer endorsement than one might think, if one conceived of Eusebius as simply having transcribed his sources willy-nilly. Against Eusebius' conscious endorsement speaks the fact that Clement does not make clear the dependence of Xenophon on the Sibyl, as he does at *Protr.* 71.4. J. Coman, "Utilisation des Stromates de Clément d'Alexandrie par Eusèbe de Césarée dans la Préparation Evangélique," in *Überlieferungsgeschichtliche Untersuchungen*, ed. by F. Paschke, TU 125 (Berlin, 1981), pp. 115-134, enumerates the frequent quotations of Clement in Eusebius' *PE*, and treats the passages in question here on pp. 131-3; perhaps just as Eusebius has done, he simply lists the Sibyl among the Greek authorities quoted by Clement; he also suggests that the long quotations of Clement in this part of *PE* may constitute a florilegium or manual, which Eusebius quotes in its entirety—but apart from the nebulousness of the conception (a florilegium begun by Hellenistic Jews, perhaps Aristobulus, then augmented at the time of Philo and Josephus, then by Clement), it is unlikely that Eusebius is transcribing from something other than his text of Clement—as Coman's entire article serves to demonstrate—and thus, the demonstrable exclusions point to the possible significance of what Eusebius decided to include, such as the references to the Sibyl.

Eusebius himself introduces it thus: καὶ μάρτυρα δὲ ὁ αὐτὸς (sc. Josephus) τὴς κατὰ τὸν πύργον ἱστορίας τὴν Ἔλληνικὴν Σίβυλλαν παρατίθεται, γράφων οὕτως...

Here, then, is Eusebius' only extant personal comment on the Sibyl: that she was Greek. He reports, without explicit endorsement, that Josephus uses the Sibyl as corroborative (non-Jewish) testimony for the story of the Tower of Babel. The fact that he cites the Sibyl once from Alexander Polyhistor, and once identifies her as "Greek," shows that he does not consider her testimony substantially different in kind from any other Greek source when it comes to her evidence for history.56 In Book 9 of PE, in fact, the overall argument, following the lead of Josephus, is to put on display non-Jewish (and especially Greek) sources concerned with Jewish identity and history, so that the presumption exists that the Sibyl is envisaged as Greek there too.

If the Sibyl was no different from other Greek sources—or rather, no different from other Greek oracles—then Eusebius must surely have looked on her with little sympathy. Eusebius deals with oracles in general in Books 4 and 5 of his Praeparatio Evangelica, as part of the category of civic religion, after he has dealt with mythological and philosophical/allegorical religion in the previous books; thus, he focuses on oracular sites such as Delphi, and does not mention such "freelance" oracles as the Sibyl represents.57 Nevertheless, given this silence, since much of what he says is directed

56 One further angle to the identification of the Sibyl as "Greek" may possibly be as an implicit response to Porphyry's valorization of Greek wisdom (for which see J. M. Schott, "Porphyry on Christians and Others: 'Barbarian Wisdom,' Identity Politics, and Anti-Christian Polemics on the Eve of the Great Persecution," JECS 13 [2005], pp. 277-314); on the assumption that the various Greek and non-Greek origins of the various Sibyls might otherwise be judged to discredit her, Eusebius' identification serves to buttress the Sibyl's credibility. This is, however, fairly speculative.

57 At PE 10.4.7, however, he includes the category of χρησμῳδοί along with oracles of fixed location, in such a way that it is unlikely that he would have categorized the Sibyl differently: ναὶ μὴν καὶ μαντείων πλείστη τις ἦν καὶ ἄφθονος παρὰ τοῖς περιουσία...εἰτα δὲ Ἁμφιάρεως καὶ Ἁμφίλοχος καὶ ἐπὶ τούτους μυρίος ἄλλος ἐπιρρέων χρησμῳδῶν μᾶλλον ἢ ποιητῶν τε καὶ ὀχυρησών ὡς... ὃν μακροίς ποθ' ὑστερον χρόνον εἰς Ἐλληνας παρελθούσα ϕιλοσοφία...τὰ μὲν
against Porphyry, there is some reason to doubt whether Porphyry said anything about Sibylline oracles—but this is an argument from silence, and the evidence of other Christian writers may perhaps suggest otherwise.\(^5\) If Porphyry (like Celsus) did in fact explicitly dismiss (some) Sibylline texts as Christian forgeries, as the other evidence may lead one to believe, then perhaps Eusebius' reticence is explicable from a natural desire to avoid relying on questionable sources. In these books of *PE* the Christian apologist has no lack of oracular texts of unimpeachable pagan origin, quoted for him by Porphyry himself, among others; and he uses them to attack paganism. In his discussion of these oracles in general, Eusebius presents two possibilities: either they are nothing but fraud and quackery (4.1-2) or else, granted that they sometimes speak the truth, they are inspired by evil daemons, not gods (*passim*), as is shown by the facts that they enjoin animal sacrifice, they take delight in material things, and can be compelled by ritual (4.9-11; 5.9-11). As one argument against them, Eusebius—like other Christian writers—brings up the idea that oracles have ceased or declined (5.1, 16), and even that the demons responsible for them have died (5.17).\(^5\) Interesting also is the argument that the wise (Christian) man does not need divination and oracles: \(^6\) his pure soul will be free of the evil daemons, and Christ commands people to avoid the things such as material prosperity for the sake of which divination is practiced and to desire that which divination is powerless to indicate—the Word of God (4.21).\(^6\) Eusebius seems, in rhetorically

58 See infra, pp. 217-218.
59 Here he depends on Plutarch, *De def. orac.* 418e. For other Christians' use of the allegation that oracles are silent, see Weiland, pp. 14-15.
60 Cf. Book 6, against ideas of fate and astrology.
61 Cf. also *Theoph.* 2.79; *In laud. Const.* 9: the oracles could not and did not predict the coming of Christ: οἱ τ’ αὐτὸς αὐτῶν τιμώμενοι μαντείας μὲν καὶ χρησμοὺς καὶ μελλόντων προγνώσεις σὺν

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exaggerated fashion, to exclude even the possibility that a Sibyl might have truly enlightened Greeks in the past: at 4.4.1, he says that he wishes to show that all men had no knowledge of the true God\(^{62}\)—for the greater glory of the gospel of Christ:  

Ei γὰρ οἱ πρὸ τῆς τοῦ σωτῆρος ἢμῶν Ἰησοῦ τοῦ Χριστοῦ παρουσίας πανταχοῦ πάντες, Ἑλληνες καὶ βαβυλονικοὶ, δεισθεὶς μὴ τὸν ἄλληθρον ἕπεγνωκότες, ἀλλ' ἤτοι τὰ μὴ ὑπάρχον τὰ δοξάζοντες ἢ ὑπὸ τῶν μοχθηρῶν καὶ θεωμάχων πνευμάτων δαιμόνων τε πονηρῶν καὶ ἀκαθάρτων τυφλῶν δίκαιοι ἢ καὶ ἐκείναι περιγράμματα καὶ μυθικὰ πρὸς αὐτῶν καθελυνομένοι...πῶς οὐ μείξοντος ἢν ὁφθεῖ τὸ μέγα τῆς εὐαγγελικῆς οἰκονομίας μυστήριον πάντας πανταχόθεν ἐκ τῆς πατριαρχαίας πλάνης τῆς τῶν δαιμόνων καταδυναστείας διὰ τῆς τοῦ σωτῆρος ἢμῶν φωνῆς ἀνακεκλημένου καὶ τοὺς μέχρις ἐχθρικῶν γῆς οἰκονύμους αὐθαμάτους τῆς ἐξ αἰῶνος κατασχούσας τὸν πάντα βίον ἀπάτης λελυτρωμένον...  

Thus, whatever they may know, it is insignificant and insufficient. Aryeh Kofsky, however, argues that Eusebius' attitude toward oracles is ambivalent to some degree:  

"On the one hand, he was interested in the absolute refutation of their prophetic powers;  

| 62 The introduction to this section, in fact, leads Caster, p. 231 n. 27 (cited by O. Zink, ad loc. in Eusèbe de Césarée: La préparation évangélique, vol. 3: Livres IV-V, 1-17, SC 262 [Paris, 1979]), to consider that the refutation of oracles is what Eusebius considered the most important part of Christian thought—but, as Zink notes, Eusebius' language is broad enough to be referring to all aspects of paganism, not just to oracles. It is likely, however, that Eusebius is rhetorically overstating his case here; in HE 1.2.23, for example, he assumes that the Hebrew Scriptures did have a salutary (and propaedeutic) effect on the surrounding Gentile world: τῆς παρὰ τούτων νομοθεσίας χρημάτων καὶ πνεύμων προβληθῆς εἰς ἀπαντάς ἀνθρώπως διαδιδομένης... In PE too, of course, a large part of his argument is intended to prove the dependence of Greek thinkers on Hebrew wisdom—note especially 7.1.3 as an announcement of his ambitions; he finally treats the thought of Plato in detail in Books 11-13. Sirinelli, pp. 219-39, develops and tries to explain the differences in Eusebius' presentation of history in HE, PE and DE; in PE, Eusebius delineates two "waves" of influence on Greek civilization—the first deriving from Gentile barbarian polytheism, the second (producing the truth that sometimes appeared in Greek philosophy) from Hebrew wisdom; in DE, by contrast, Eusebius concedes almost no worth to pre-Christian culture—as a result of his intention there to portray the historical necessity of Christ's incarnation; D. Ridings, The Attic Moses: The Dependency Theme in Some Early Christian Writers, Studia Graeca et Latina Gothoburgensia 59 (Västervik, 1995), pp. 148-64, demonstrates the dependency argument in PE, without reference to Sirinelli. For more on Eusebius' views of the development of culture, see also Droge, pp. 168-93; G. F. Chesnut, The First Christian Histories: Eusebius, Socrates, Sozomen, Theodoret and Evagrius, Théologie Historique 46 (Paris, 1977), pp. 95-99. |
on the other, he recognized their oracular worth." Nevertheless, it is clear that this "oracular worth" does not extend to an acknowledgement of true value: at most, Eusebius recognizes the demonic power of oracles; and he even tries to minimize the value of that power in the history of the pagan world. Hence, as Kofsky notes, he concludes that the oracles did not in fact contribute any wisdom, either philosophical or legislative, or any significant truth. Eusebius accords some worth to philosophy, but little to oracles.

Given that Eusebius was a follower of Origen, it is perhaps significant to note too that unlike Origen, Eusebius does not attempt to treat the problem of Balaam's prophecies, generally either quoting the material as from Moses (DE 1.3.44, 1.6.52; 3.2.32, 43) or, when he does acknowledge Balaam as the prophet, avoiding any reference to Balaam's status as pagan seer (DE 9.1, 9.3; Ps. Comm. [PG 23: 817C5]; Ecl. Proph. 13-14). The explanation may be only that Eusebius was not writing commentaries or homilies on the book of Numbers as Origen was—although Origen also treated the problem in C.Cels. 1.59-60, in response to Celsus' references to the Magi, whom he called Chaldaeans. Eusebius discusses the Magi, whom he calls the "successors" of Balaam, in reference to the fulfillment of Balaam's star prophecy (DE 9.1.2; cf. 9.1.11-13), because it is important for proving his case, but he does not take a position for or against astrology per se, although like Origen he considers the star that appeared at Christ's birth to have been a completely new star. He does not feel the need to engage

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63 Kofsky, pp. 143-44.
64 Kofsky, p. 145.
65 A similar interpretation already in Ignatius, Eph. 19.2-3, who, like Origen, considers the star to be an indication of the dissolution of the power of μαγεία and wickedness. Kofsky, pp. 238-40, considers that the appearance of an astrological technical phrase referring to the star's position "vertically above" (κατὰ καθετὸν) Judaea in Eusebius's description of the fulfillment (DE 9.1.2) constitutes good evidence of "Eusebius' failure to detach himself totally from pagan beliefs and opinions"—but that is a great deal of
the tangential issue: whether any of these—the Sibyl's inspiration, Balaam's inspiration, the Magi's astrology—was to be rejected or accepted.

At most, one can say that Eusebius' attitude toward the Sibyl was ambivalent, or perhaps simply careful, but tending toward the negative. He does not avoid mentioning her when transcribing material from Clement; but perhaps he did not see the full significance of Clement's parallels, considering the material simply an example of the citation of pagan authorities for apologetic. There is no reason to think that he was familiar with much Sibylline material, although he must have come across some in his readings of his Christian predecessors, such as Clement of Alexandria or Theophilus. He considers the Sibyl to belong to the Greek realm; the Sibyls who appear in the Chronicle operated in that sphere. On the other hand, he does not include Sibylline material in his refutation of Greek oracles. If what a Sibyl said corroborates the Biblical account of the Tower of Babel, such historical evidence may be accepted, and its (pagan) Greek status makes it all the more valuable in the apologetic framework of the Praeparatio Evangelica, but there was no reason, in his view, to stress the Sibyl in one's apologetic. Given Eusebius' familiarity with anti-Christian works like that of Porphyry, and in view of extant references to challenges to their authenticity in learned pagan circles, it may well be that his ambivalence and carefulness are due to the controversial nature of Sibylline texts, more than to simple ignorance of the material.

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weight to put on a single piece of description, which certainly does not overtly endorse astrology wholesale.
Early Latin Writers

On the Latin side, Arnobius, well known (like Tatian) for his inveterate hostility to traditional culture, and writing in the first decade of the 4th century an apology that primarily constitutes an elaborate attack on pagan religion, cites the Sibyl as an example of pagan manticism—and also, apparently consciously, adapts a passage of Clement in such a way as to suppress mention and quotation of the Sibyl. 66

Arnobius refers to the Sibyl explicitly only once, for the purpose of illustrating to the pagan objector his conception of Christ's crucifixion. Only Christ's human body died, not Christ himself, just as one would not say that Apollo died if the Sibyl died while prophesying under his possession:

Si quo tempore Sibylla praesagia, oracula illa depromens, fundebat vi ut dicitis Apollinis plena, ab impiis esset caesa atque interempta latronibus: numquid Apollo diceretur in ea esse occisis? Si Bacis, si Helenus, Marcius aliique similiter vates hariolantes essent vita et luce privati: numquid aliquid dicere lege eos humanitatis extinctos qui illorum per ora loquentes vias rerum postulantibus explicabat? [Adv. Gentes 1.62]

Along with the Sibyl, Arnobius lists as further examples Bacis, Helenus, Marcius, "and others." Thus, the Sibyl is firmly entrenched in the pagan religious sphere; for the purpose of the argument he concedes, for the most part, the authenticity of these figures' manticism, although he casually inserts a phrase indicating that he might take issue with it in a different setting: Sibylla...vi ut dicitis Apollinis plena. This passage of Arnobius

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66 On Arnobius' attitude to pagan culture, see Contreras, pp. 1006-19; L. J. Swift, "Arnobius and Lactantius: Two Views of the Pagan Poets," TAPA 96 (1965), p. 439: "There is little effort to appreciate the merits of literary form in pagan literature, to find the truth hidden in error, or to assume good will on the part of his adversaries"; Krause, pp. 116-19; 175-8. On the dating: Arnobius' work (Adv. Gentes) was begun no earlier than last quarter of 302; and was finished before the end of the persecutions, probably in the first half of 305 (M. B. Simmons, Arnobius of Sicca: Religious Conflict and Competition in the Age of Diocletian, [Oxford, 1995], pp. 92-3, the conclusion of his discussion beginning on p. 47; A. Wlosok, in R. Herzog (ed.), Restauration und Erneuerung: Die lateinische Literatur von 284 bis 374 n. Chr., Handbuch der Altertumswissenschaft 5.8 [Munich, 1989], p. 366, more generally attributes it to the time of the Diocletianic persecution, c. 303-310).
does not imply anything about the content of any known Sibylline texts, but only uses the traditional figure as an elucidation of his exposition of a Christian doctrine.67

Quite possibly, Arnobius' collocation of names in this passage is due to his memory of Cicero, in whose De Divinatione Bacis and the Erythraean Sibyl appear at 1.34, Helenus and the brothers Marcii at 1.89.68 He had other sources, however, from which he might have gained more specific knowledge. On the one hand, he appears to have been responding to Porphyry's attacks on Christianity and his attempt to establish a system of oracle-based theology in the De phil. ex orac. haur.;69 in keeping with this interest, Arnobius knew Neo-Platonic, Orphic and Hermetic texts, as well as the Chaldaean Oracles.70 Other oracular sources such as the Sibyl might also have entered his field of vision in this way. On the other hand, he was also certainly familiar with a Christian source that prominently cited Sibylline material. He was indebted in his apologetic, namely, to Clement of Alexandria's Protrepticus.71 Not only did he potentially have access to Clement's use of Sibylline Oracles; in fact, at 6.23 he probably adapts a passage in which Clement cited the Sibyl, molding even the Sibyl's words into his own Latin sentences:

...ubinam fulminator tempore illo fuit, ut sceleratum illud arceret incendium...ubi Iuno regina, cum inclutum eius fanum sacerdotemque Chrysidem eadem vis

67 In a similar fashion, as mentioned supra, p. 76, Origen uses the figure of the Pythia to illustrate the manner in which he understands the existence of the Logos in Jesus (C. Cels. 2.9). Thompson, p. 129, is wrong, in his puzzlement, to cite Neale, p. 314, who suggests that "Arnobius...derides the heathen for affirming it to have been by the inspiration of Apollo that the Sibyl uttered so much truth." This may be a misinterpretation of the casual reservation here; Arnobius certainly does not give the impression of accepting that the Sibyl did speak truly, and his point is entirely different. The misinterpretation seems to arise from a predisposition to find early Christians espousing the Sibyl as prophetess.


69 Simmons, Arnobius of Sicca, passim.

70 Grant, Greek Apologists, pp. 193-4.

71 G. E. McCracken, Arnobius of Sicca: The Case against the Pagans, 1: 42-44, citing especially A. Röhricht, De Clemente Alexandrino Arnobii in irridendo gentilium cultu auctore, diss. Kiel (Hamburg, 1892); E. Rapisarda, Clemente fonte di Arnobio (Turin, 1939). The dependence appears to be restricted to Books 4-6.
flammae Argiva in civitate deleret?  ubi Serapis Aegyptius, cum consimili casu iacuit solutus in cinerem cum mysteriis omnibus atque Iside?  ubi Liber Eleutherius, cum Athenis?  ubi Diana, cum Ephesi?  ubi Dodonaeus Iuppiter, cum Dodonae?  ubi denique Apollo divinus, cum...

The boldface sentences appear to be based on Clement of Alexandria (Protr. 50.1-4), and specifically (for Serapis) on OrSib 5.487-8, which is quoted by Clement at Protr. 50.3: καὶ σὺ, Σάραπι λίθους ἀργοὺς ἐπικείμενε πολλοὺς, κεῖσαι πτῶμα μέγιστον ἐν Αἰγύπτῳ τριταλαίνῃ.72 Given Clement's frequent mention and citation of the Sibyl, and Arnobius' patent use of a passage in which Clement cites her, while suppressing Clement's quotation, there seems here to be intentional avoidance of Sibylline testimony.

Now, if Arnobius took the trouble to excise mention of the Sibyl in his adaptation of a passage from Clement, and if he never includes a positive word about the Sibyl's prophecies despite his dependence on the Alexandrian writer who cites her frequently and even calls her a "prophetess of the Hebrews," it seems likely that Arnobius was conscientiously rejecting Clement's position on the Sibyl—and specifically rejecting her elevation to a position of functional equality with the Hebrew tradition. Pace Clement, he seems to be saying, the Sibyl was only the pagan mantic figure familiar from his reading of Vergil—and was thus to be rejected by Christians, along with all other aspects of pagan foolishness. The excision reveals a position more clearly hostile than that contained in his explicit mention of the Sibyl, but a position in harmony with his otherwise attested hostility to pagan authorities in general; and even the implicitness of his rejection may be similar to his manner of dealing with other oracles.73 It is just

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72 For the passage and its connection to Clement, see Röhricht, p. 32; cf. Rapisarda, p. 37, who argues that Clement is not Arnobius' sole source.
73 Simmons, "The Function of Oracles in the Pagan-Christian Conflict during the Age of Diocletian: The Case of Arnobius and Porphyry," St. Patr. 31 (1997), pp. 349-56, argues that Arnobius makes pointed but tacit refutations of the anti-Christian oracles cited by Porphyry; see also Simmons, Arnobius of Sicca,
possible, however, that in removing the reference to the Sibyl, he was merely exercising a stylistic choice. It was frequent practice to avoid direct quotations of poetry in the context of rhetorical prose, and Arnobius has only three direct citations of Latin literature in his entire work. Yet avoiding direct citation would not require the excision of all reference to the Sibyl. If style were the issue, there would of course be no implicit polemic against Clement's views of the Sibyl. Nevertheless, the fact that Arnobius' only explicit reference to the Sibyl has an effect similar to the veiled point advanced as likely here—it keeps her clearly within the bounds of traditional paganism—should tilt the scale toward the probability that Arnobius removed the reference to the Sibyl for non-stylistic reasons, that it was unacceptable (or at least impractical in his primarily destructive apologetic) to refer like Clement to the Sibyl as one who criticized pagan gods and prophesied their destruction. Rather, apparently unimpressed with Clement's claim that she was a "Hebrew" prophetess, Arnobius simply retained for the Sibyl the status of a pagan oracular source, and thus dismissed her out of hand.

It is interesting to note that the rejection of the Sibyl visible in the pre-Constantinian sources is rarely explicit: only Tatian lists the Sibyl in a group of pagan authorities, all of whom he is dismissing equally as post-Mosaic. The others' rejection is

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pp. 229-42. Of course, at least in those cases, Arnobius is arguing against an acknowledged (though unnamed) opponent, whereas here, he suppresses Clement's use of the Sibyl without a reference of any kind.

74 Hagendahl, "Methods of Citation," pp. 123-4; Arnobius certainly does not cite poetry freely: note his paraphrase of Lucretius (Musa Lucretia) at Adv. Gent. 3.10 to avoid the original meter—yet cf. the single poetic quotation at Adv. Gent. 5.26, citing Orpheus in Latin hexameters (albeit rather free, as the note in ANF says; and which differ somewhat from the Greek lines as cited by Clement, Protr. II.21.10, as McCracken ad loc. points out).

75 Krause, p. 176, who suggests that the reason is his superficial knowledge and lack of texts—many things he knew only in summary. Krause is not completely reliable here, however, since he considers (p. 177) Arnobius never to have mentioned Lucretius, and does not observe the citation of Orpheus (see previous note). The general point about the paucity of direct quotations, though, can be accepted.
not immediately visible on the surface, only accessible by drawing out the implications of the casual references they make, such as Eusebius' insertion of the word "Greek" in describing the Sibyl. None of these authors, in fact, rails against the Sibyl or those who use her, although Origen seems to position himself as one who might criticize them; although most of them must have been aware of such use, and in some cases their own mentions of the Sibyl are in reaction to such use, they are for the most part willing to leave it in peace (as does Eusebius, in his quotations from Clement) or suppress it without comment (as does Arnobius). In the common apologetic enterprise, there was little point in condemning others' efforts, even if they appeared to allow too much to a questionable source like the Sibyl.

**Latin Writers of the Late 4th/Early 5th Cen.**

Rejection of the Sibyl by a Latin Christian author such as Arnobius is especially understandable, given the great importance of the Sibyl in pagan Latin literature and that of the Sibylline Books in Roman history and religion: any concessions to her could seem a dangerous precedent. The Sibyl was not an obscure figure about whom little was known, or (like Heraclitus, for example) a teacher well-known but notorious for criticism of traditional religion. On the contrary, what Roman with a modicum of education could fail to place the Sibyl in a clear and intimate relationship with the traditional paganism of the Roman Empire? Thus, paradoxically, the very prominence of the Sibyl in Roman culture must have been a strong disincentive to use or believe in Jewish or Christian Sibylline oracles, for fear of appearing to endorse that familiar connection—even while
(of course) the very fact that she was an authority of some kind was the motive behind forgery and use of Sibylline material in the first place, and while, incidentally, her close connection to the destiny of Rome would also attract those who wished to see more continuity and commonality between pagan and Christian Rome than others.76

Despite the fact that the potential danger of the Sibyl meant that resistance to the idea that she spoke some truth could be expected at all times, it is notable on the one hand that such views do not appear in Christian Latin writers until the early 4th cen. (and then only implicitly, in Arnobius)77 and, on the other hand, that there seems to have been a flurry of anti-Sibylline feeling in the late 4th and early 5th centuries. In this section, the various negative views expressed at this later time will be investigated, from implicit dismissal to fuller characterizations of the Sibyl as deceitful or even explicitly the recipient of demonic influence. The late 4th and early 5th centuries were a period in which conflict between Christianity and paganism was particularly heated, the rhetoric often highly charged, and thus a suitable time for attacks on the Sibyl.78 Although the half-century between Julian and the sack of Rome is no longer considered to consist primarily of religious conflict,79 the Christian Latin references to the Sibyl clustered in this period fit into the paradigm of conflict. Episodes of conflict and motivation for more of the same are easy to point out. After the reign of the pagan revivalist Julian, who attempted

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76 See, perhaps, the treatment of Constantine infra, especially pp. 240 and 265.
77 Cf., however, Tertullian's positive attitude toward the "true" Sibyl, contrasted with the pagans who have usurped her name, as well as the progressively decreasing emphasis Tertullian places on her (infra, pp. 175-184).
78 For the conflict, see, e.g., B. Croke and J. Harries, Religious Conflict in Fourth-Century Rome: A Documentary Study (Sydney, 1982). On the role of oracles and prophecy in this conflict in general, see Doignon, especially, pp. 123-7.
79 For example, F. E. Consolino, "Pagani, cristiani e produzione letteraria latina da Giuliano l'Apostata al sacco di Roma," in F. E. Consolino (ed.), Pagani e cristiani da Giuliano l'Apostata al sacco di Roma (Soveria Mannelli, 1995), pp. 311-28, argues that the confrontational pieces such as the anonymous Carmen contra paganos and the contra paganos and de facto contained as numbers 114 and 115 of Ambrosiaster's Quaestiones are less important than the commonalities visible in the same period. Cf. also P. Brown, "Christianization and Religious Conflict," Chap. 21 of CAH XIII: 632-664.
to strike at Christianity's intellectual underpinnings and social status by writing his
*Contra Galilaeos* and by forbidding Christians to teach pagan literature, but was killed before long while on campaign against Persia—against the advice of omens and oracles including the *Libri Sibyllini*—the spiritual conflict did not cease, despite a few years of imperial policy showing some tolerance toward pagans.\(^8^0\) In A.D. 384, the Roman senator Symmachus famously argued (*Rel.* 3) for the restoration of the altar of Victoria to the Senate-house, whence it had been removed by Gratian not long before—and more broadly, for tolerance of the ancestral religion—but his plea was unsuccessful.\(^8^1\) Not many years afterward, in 392, there was an attempted rebellion against Theodosius, with Eugenius, a nominal Christian and teacher of rhetoric, at its head; this pretender was supported by the senatorial pagan Flavius Nicomachus and promoted by the pagan *magister militum* Arbogast, in what has been termed a "pagan revival."\(^8^2\) Slightly before this rebellion, Theodosius had taken more severe measures against pagan religion than


Gratian, tutored as he had been by Ausonius, showed a similar promise of tolerance, but in 379 renounced the title of *pontifex maximus*, signalling a more intransigent policy (H. Bloch, "The Pagan Revival in the West at the End of the Fourth Century," in Momigliano [ed.], *The Conflict between Paganism and Christianity in the Fourth Century* [Oxford, 1963], p. 196). At the beginning of his reign, Theodosius too showed promise of tolerance—see J. Curran, "From Jovian to Theodosius," Chap. 3 of *CAH* XIII: 106.

\(^{8^1}\) For this episode, see Bloch, pp. 196-7; S. Williams and G. Friell, *Theodosius: The Empire at Bay* (London, 1994), pp. 59-60; J. F. Matthews, *Western Aristocracies and the Imperial Court*, *AD* 364-425 (Oxford, 1975), pp. 203-11, convincingly argues that the exchange between Symmachus and Ambrose was not in itself tremendously influential, but was "an uncharacteristically lucid episode in the untidy and unplanned process" of the Christianization of the Roman elite (pp. 210-11).

\(^{8^2}\) Bloch, p. 199; see Williams and Friell, pp. 129-35, for an account of the usurpation of Eugenius and its end; also, Matthews, *Western Aristocracies*, pp. 238-47. For the Christian perception (of Rufinus) of this conflict as between paganism and Christianity, see J. Ernesti, *Prinzipen christianus und Kaiser aller Römer: Theodosius der Große im Lichte zeitgenössischer Quellen* (Paderborn, 1998), pp. 302-8.
had been carried out until that date—such as the outlawing of all pagan cults and divination in November 392 (CTh 16.10.12)—and connected to this was the violent closure of the temple of Sarapis in Alexandria, an incident that invited questions about the power of pagan divination, since it was alleged that the destruction had been foreseen. Augustine later wrote his *De Divinatione Daemonum* to combat the idea that such divination, even if it sometimes resulted in true predictions, could be tolerated by Christians. Other aspects of the struggle in these years also involved oracles. Augustine reports a prediction that allotted to Christianity a life-span of 365 years; such an oracle is likely to have been composed at the time of Julian (counting the 365 years from Jesus' birth), as an attempt to embarrass the "Galilaeans," but could easily have been reinterpreted (or, as usually assumed, composed for the first time) to coincide with the usurpation of Eugenius, killed in 394, 365 years after A.D. 29. There are allegations that in response to the Gothic incursion under Radagaisus (A.D. 405/6), some at Rome wished to protect the city by reviving pagan customs; perhaps it was even suggested that the *Libri Sibyllini* be consulted, which had not happened since the reign of Julian. Not

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83 See Ernesti, pp. 63-88, especially pp. 82-7 on the question whether Theodosius' measures represented a "Verschärfung" (answered positively); also, Williams and Friell, pp. 119-25, who present these as a motivation for the "pagan revival" and Eugenius' usurpation.


86 *De Civ. Dei* 18.53; cf. 20.24. Date under Julian: J. Hubaux, "L'enfant d'un an," in *Hommages à Joseph Bidez et à Franz Cumont*, Collection Latomus 2 (Brussels, 1949), p. 158. Hubaux also compares such oracles to the extant Sibylline texts dealing with the end of Rome (rather than Christianity); considering that Julian is likely to have known of such oracles, the anti-Christian text could be seen as an "anti-Sibylline" oracle (pp. 146-8). Date under Eugenius: Bloch, p. 201; Chadwick, "Oracles of the End," p. 126, is surprised that Augustine does not make anything of this connection; this seems to be because his calculation wrongly yields 398 as the expected time of fulfillment. For a similar oracle predicting pagan revival, see Quodvultdeus, *Lib. Prom.* 3.38 (44)
long after the incursion, stronger anti-pagan measures were enacted, one of which was probably the burning of the Sibylline Books—a crime for which, besides treachery and collusion with Alaric, the poet Rutilius Namatianus vilifies Stilicho (De Reditu Suo 2.41-66). In 410, of course, Alaric the Goth did in fact sack the city, and pagans blamed Christianity for the disaster; Augustine wrote his City of God to refute such attacks. Thus, although Peter Brown may be right to characterize the "pagan revival" as exaggerated by Christian sources opposed to it, that one should speak rather of the "Catholic Reaction," there is ample evidence of a perception of conflict, at least or especially on the Christian side; and that is the side whose attacks on Sibylline oracles are now to be considered.

In presenting the evidence from this period of the attitudes of Christians writing in Latin, from the more nebulous and general to the more concrete, the first piece of evidence to deal with is a pagan source that may give some impression of contemporary Christian thought about Sibylline oracles. In the life of Aurelian in the Historia Augusta, a letter of the emperor to the Senate seems to indicate pagan consciousness that there was a negative attitude toward the Sibyl among (some?) Christians. The emperor, urging the Senators to consult the Sibylline books in the midst of a crisis that combined revolt at

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87 A. Lippold, "Der Einfall des Radagais im Jahre 405/06 und die Vita Aureliani der Historia Augusta," Bonner Historia-Augusta Colloquium 1970 (Bonn, 1972), pp. 159-62. Demougeot's contention, "Saint Jérôme, les Oracles Sibyllins et Stilicon," REA 54 (1952), pp. 89-91, that Christian Sibylline material on the fall of Rome provoked Stilicho's action is based on an interpolated phrase in Palladius' Hist. Laus. §54. 88 P. Brown, Religion and Society in the Age of Saint Augustine (London, 1972), p. 150. 89 So Weiland, p. 74, interprets the passage, citing P. De Labriolle, La réaction païenne: Étude sur la polémique antichrétienne du Ier au VIe siècle (Paris, 1934), pp. 338-9, who quotes it, but only as one of the mentions of Christianity in the Historia Augusta—granted, he introduces it ("également") in connection with an allusion to the letter of Hadrian which "Flavius Vopiscus" also cites (for which, see De Labriolle, pp. 50-51) and which shows that the author viewed Christianity negatively; nevertheless, this does not show what Weiland hopes, only, as Labriolle is actually arguing, that by this time (Diocletianic or later, in his view) pagans were necessarily taking note of Christianity. I have not been able to consult the article of J. Burian, "Quasi in christianorum ecclesia (HA Aur. 20.5)," Zprávy Jednoty Klasických Filologů 26 (1986), pp. 14-20.
Rome with pressure from barbarians, evinces amazement that they are hesitating, as though they were in a "church of the Christians" rather than in the "temple of all the gods":

Miror vos, patres sancti, tamdiu de aperiendis Sibyllinis dubitasse Libris, proinde quasi in Christianorum ecclesia, non in templo deorum omnium tractaretis. [V. Aurel. 20.5]

The reference might allude to Christian uncomfortableness with the Libri Sibyllini specifically, or with Sibylline texts in general (that is, if it is not simply a characterization of Christian assemblies as indecisive)—which might make especially good sense in a late 4th-century context, as shall become apparent. It is more likely, however, that the letter's reference is based on a broader knowledge that the standard attitude of Christians toward pagan religion and oracles was rejection or avoidance. Whether the passage is a reflection of specific or general information, however, the implied context of conflict fits well in the late 4th century, when the biography of Aurelian was likely written. In any case, the covert meaning of the reference seems to be to encourage pagans to continue or revive traditional practices, including the consultation of oracular sources such as the Sibylline Books, in an environment in which the rise to power of Christianity threatened them. Covert, however, is perhaps an overstatement; the author certainly does not disguise his high esteem for the Libri, which are noti beneficiis publicis (18.5), since he accords significant space to the episode; the consultation of them is presented as exceptional, however, and resisted by some in this instance (19.4). In any case, the author's aim seems to be to chide Romans for neglecting the Libri, for whatever reason.

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90 There is now general agreement on a date c. 400 for the Historia Augusta (K.-P. Johne, "Historia Augusta," Der Neue Pauly 5 [1998]: 637-8); at the latest, the terminus ante quem is 525, the year of death of Q. Aurelius Memmius Symmachus, who used it (see Iordanes, Get. 15.83-88), but most scholars would date the biographies significantly earlier.

91 For the exceptional nature of such consultation, note etiam in 18.5.
(the opposing influence of Christianity, or simple desuetude), and to encourage the reverse. It should be noted further, against the temptation to make too much of this passage, that Ronald Syme, for one, considered it "innocuous" or "humorous" rather than serious. Confirming the more serious apologetic intentions of the *Historia Augusta*, on the other hand, are the investigations of Johannes Straub, who does not, however, deny a frivolous veneer to the work. The letter of Aurelian, then, is likely to present a kind of gentle chiding of pagans, and either a sharp or a muted observation about Christians. As a window into Christian attitudes to the Sibyl contemporary with either Aurelian or the author of the life, however, the passage is not specific enough to be of much worth.

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92 R. Syme, *Historia Augusta Papers* (Oxford, 1983), p. 221; cf. p. 154. Momigliano, "An Unsolved Problem of Historical Forger: The *Scriptores Historiae Augustae*," in Secondo contributo alla storia degli studi classici (Rome, 1960), pp. 105-43—makes a point (pp. 130-31) close to Syme's: that "Christianity was not the main concern of the author or authors"; although he notes the enthusiasm of the *Vita Aureliani* for Sibylline oracles, he does not interpret the passage at issue here; Syme, *Historia Augusta Papers*, p. 155, points to the "gentle admonition" which they had forgotten, of H. Dessau, "Über die *Scriptores historiae Augustae*," *Hermes* 27 (1892), p. 587 (n. 1): there is in this episode "keine Geringschätzung des Christenthums," since the Senate is being criticized not for being like a Christian church, but for not yet having consulted the Sibylline Books; he suggests that all the passages that relate to Christianity are understandable as the result of the author's affectation of a period not his own. Cf. also Syme, *Emperors and Biography* (Oxford, 1971), p. 201, where the passage is cited as an example of the "frankly pagan" attitude of this life, although he calls Aurelian's admonishment "mild enough."

93 J. Straub, *Heidnische Geschichtsapologetik in der christlichen Spätantike*, Antiquitas 4, vol. 1 (Bonn, 1963), especially pp. 183-93. See also R. L. Rike, *Apex Omnium: Religion in the Res Gestae of Ammianus* (Berkeley, 1987), pp. 117-27, who thinks the warning of the present passage is that "Christians would ignore those prophecies and cripple Rome at her worst moment" (p. 123); in any case, he considers the *HA* to present (like Ammianus) the "ideal of heroic paganism" (p. 117). T. Honoré, "Scriptor Historiae Augustae," *JRS* 77 (1987), pp. 156-76, after arguing that the *HA* were written in 394-5, over the transition between the usurpation of Eugenius, the triumph of Theodosius, and the power of Stilicho (pp. 156-63), considers that the vagaries of this period explain the differences in treatment of themes in the various lives—in the field of religion, while recognizing that the biographies are not religious tracts, Honoré finds the present passage to represent a reassertion of pagan values, under which "[a] meeting of the senate should not be treated as a Christian assembly" (p. 164); Aurelian is presented as a "pagan counterweight" to the memory of Theodosius, and thus succeeds in battle after consulting the *Libri Sibyllini* and performing sacrifice (p. 165).

To turn to the Christian documents: the very first line of an anonymous *Carmen contra paganos* (written in the late 4th cen.) mentions the Sibyl as one of the standard objects of reverence for Roman pagans:

*Dicite, qui colitis lucos antrumque Sibyllae Idaeumque nemus, Capitolia celsa Tonantis* etc.

The author considers the Sibyl simply part of the trappings of paganism, which he opposes, and while she is placed in a position of prominence at the beginning, she is not otherwise singled out for blame or praise. Many scholars identify the addressee of the poem as Virius Nicomachus Flavianus, the partisan of the usurper Eugenius in the early 390s— for them, the opening of the poem with the Sibyl would be understandable as a reflection of his experience in divination. Notably, the Sibyl is not connected with texts here, but with places, in terms (*antrum*) which recall the famous literary depictions of the

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95 For the text, see Shackleton Bailey (ed.), *Anthologia Latina* 1.1. no. 3 (= Riese, no. 4); see also A. Bartalucci (ed.), *<Contro i pagani> Carmen cod. Paris. lat. 8084* (Pisa, 1998). Cod. Paris. 8084 is a ms. of Prudentius from the 6th century. For the date (in the 380s or 390s) and attribution/milieu, J.-M. Poinsotte, "Le consul de 382 Fl. Claudius Antonius fut-il un auteur antipaien?" *REL* 60 (1982), p. 299, argues that the poem belongs in the same "milieu" as the pseudo-Cyprianic *Carmen ad quendam senatorem ex Christiana religione ad idolorum servitutem conversum* (CSEL 3.3: 302-5 and 23: 227-30) and the *carmen ultimum* (no. 32) falsely attributed to Paulinus of Nola (CSEL 30.2: 329-38), both of which he attributes to the *consul prior* of 382, Fl. Claudius Antonius; D. Shanzer, "The Anonymous *Carmen contra paganos* and the Date and Identity of the Centonist Proba," *REAug* 32 (1986), p. 237, noting that most scholars, following Mommsen, put the *Carmen contra paganos* after 394 A.D., then (p. 238, 247) endorses the argument of L. Cracco-Ruggini, *Il paganesimo romano tra religione e politica (384-394 d. C.): per una reinterpretazione del Carmen contra paganos*, Atti dell Acc. Naz. dei Linc. Memorie, Classe di Scienze mor., stor., e filol., ser. 8, vol. 23 (Rome, 1979), who contends that the *terminus post quem* is January 385, and concludes that Proba was the author of the *Carmen*, between 385 and c. 388 A.D.

96 For whom, see *PLRE* 1: 347-9, s.v. "Virius Nicomachus Flavianus 15." This is now the traditional view; Nicomachus Flavianus was identified initially as the addressee by Mommsen, "Carmen codicis Parisini 8084," *Hermes* 4 (1870), pp. 350-64 = *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 7 (Berlin, 1909), pp. 485-98—specifically, p. 360/495; it is assumed, for example, by Geffcken, *Last Days*, p. 176; this view has been defended more recently by J. F. Matthews, "The Historical Setting of the 'Carmen contra paganos'" (Cod. Par. Lat. 8084)," *Historia* 19 (1970), pp. 464-79.

97 Bartalucci, p. 88, referring to Démougeot, "Flavius Vopiscus," p. 374, who does not, however, connect the Sibylline reference to Nicomachus' *scientia auguralis*, for which see Macrob., *Sat.* 1.24.17. Rather, he claims that Nicomachus "fortifia la propagande païenne par des promesses tirées des livres sibyllins," then cites the opening of the *carmen* as "une allusion caractéristique." De Labriolle, *Réaction païenne*, p. 353, identifies the addressee as Virius Nicomachus Flavianus, but does not say anything about the Sibylline reference.
Sibyl's domain. In any case, those who pay respect to the Sibyl's sacred areas are presented as simply equivalent to those Romans who support traditional religion and resist Christianity.

Two other poets, writing most likely in the early years of the 5th century, position the Sibyl similarly, but present her rejection as already a fait accompli. First, Prudentius includes the Sibyl in his list of oracles rendered silent by the triumph of Christ. Prudentius' Apotheosis is a doctrinal, didactic work directed against heretics, concerning the divinity of Christ. In this poem, in the middle of a section directed against the Jews (321-551), proclaiming that Christianity has conquered the world, appear lines about the cessation of oracles, including the Sibylline Books:

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\begin{align*}
Delfica damnatis tacuerunt sortibus antra. \\
Non tripodas cortina regit, non spumat anhelus \\
fata sibyllinis fanaticus edita libris. \\
Perdidit insanos mendax Dodona vapore, \\
mortua iam mutae lugent oracula Cumae, \\
nec responsa refert Libycis in Syrtibus Hammon. [Apotheosis 438-43]
\end{align*}
\]

Again, the Sibyl is simply included among the details of pagan religion. Prudentius is outlining the general consequences of Christ's incarnation, which include the silencing of pagan oracles—he mentions Delphi (438-9), the Sibylline Books (439-40), Dodona (441), the oracula Cumae (442), and Ammon (443). In fact, Prudentius does not seem

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98 Verg., Aen. 6.11, 99; Ovid, Met. 14.104.
99 Of course, in this poem more (or less) "exotic" cults also appear quite prominently: thus, the poet mentions the taurubolium of Mithraism (lines 47-48), as well as the longer-established cults of Cybele (65), Sarapis (91), and Isis and Osiris (98-99).
100 It was composed in the late 4th or early 5th century—see infra, pp. 110-111. For a recent study, see C. Fabian, Dogma und Dichtung: Untersuchungen zu Prudentius' Apotheosis (Frankfurt am Main, 1988).
101 See Fabian, pp. 35-39 on the course of the argument as a whole; pp. 106-7 for the specific argument here against Judaism: that the rise of Christianity implies the obsolescence of older religions.
103 For this traditional apologetic motif (usually used against pagans, rather than Jews), see the other references in Weiland, pp. 14-15.
particularly concerned with precise details any more than with any one specific oracular site: for example, he separates the Sibylline Books from the "oracles of Cumae"); he appears to transfer the Sibyl's frenzy to the priests who consulted the Sibylline Books: *spumat anhelus...fanaticus*. In general, the details of the pagan oracles are often mixed together: e.g., there is no attestation of "vapors" at Dodona. The poem simply lumps the Sibyl along with all the other oracles; there is no distinction between them.

Similarly, Paulinus of Nola mentions the Sibyl among the figures of paganism now scorned by Christian Rome. Paulinus of Nola's 19th poem, one of the natalicia for the feast of St. Felix, can be dated precisely to January 405. In triumphalist tones, he paints a picture of the victory of the Christian faith:

> crebrescente fide victus dilabitur error,  
> et prope iam nullis sceleri mortique relictis  
> tota pio Christi censetur nomine Roma,  
> inridens figmenta Numae vel *fata Sibyllae*. [Carm. 19.61-4]

Again, the Sibylline Books (here called *fata*) appear as one of the appurtenances of traditional Roman paganism, scoffed at by the present enlightened citizens of Christian Rome. The position of the Sibyl's prophecies next to the reference to Numa, makes it clear that indeed it is the state-preserved *Libri* that are envisioned here, not just Sibylline texts in general. The progress of the conversion of Rome is, of course, exaggerated, and the scoffing takes on a particular point at a time when some pagans at Rome had been advocating the consultation of the *Libri*—but at least the continued existence of the *Libri*

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104 Cf. the Sibyl's *pectus anhelum* (*Aen. 6.48*); *spumea rabies* (*Lucan, Phars. 5.190*); J. Fontaine, "Démons et sibylles," p. 207 n. 1 mentions these parallels. For a serious, rather than raving, picture of Sibylline interpreters see Aul. Gell., *NA* 4.1.1: *...disserens cum arduis superciliis vocisque et vultus gravitate composita tamquam interpres et arbiter Sibyllae oraculorum.*


106 For Paulinus' espression, besides the lines of Prudentius just cited, cf. also the slightly later pagan poet Rutilius Namat., *De red. suo* 2.52 (*Sibyllinae fata...opis*) and 55 (*fatalia pignora*), although the designation is traditional.
seems to be assumed, and also their status as one of the important aspects of traditional Roman paganism.

Historical works that discussed the Roman Republic would have ample occasion to mention the Sibyl (or at least the Sibylline Books) in the context of traditional paganism—although in the 4th century there was little enough of that sort of writing in the Christian sphere. Nevertheless, slightly later in the 5th cen., and so no longer quite within the rough period between Julian and Alaric's sack of Rome, the Historia adversus Paganos of Orosius not only makes such mentions, but also highlights the pagan context by derogatory references. This, of course, is fully in harmony with his conscious aim of presenting pagan history in a negative light. One frequent result of consultation of the Libri was the institution of new cults; Orosius mentions the institution of the cult of Asclepius in 3.22.5: after Papirius defeated the Samnites in a great battle, against the urging of the augurs, such a pestilence arose that the Romans thought it necessary to consult the Sibylline books and as a result brought to Rome "that horrible Epidaurian snake along with the very stone of Aesculapius." Orosius similarly emphasizes the pagan nature of the Sibylline Books in 4.5.7-8, when he relates that after a plague, consultation of the Books revealed that it was due to divine anger, then specifies:

Sed, ne quemquam quasi temptatio cavillationis offendat, quod, cum Sibylla iratos deos dixerit, nos iram caelestem dixisse videamur, audiat et intellegat, quia haec,


108 Books 1-10 of the Historia were completed by 416; the work as a whole in 417/18 (A. Lippold, "Orosius," TRE 25 [1995], p. 421). Although slightly later than the sack of Rome, the composition of the history can be seen as a reaction to the aristocratic Roman enthusiasms of the pre-410 period (as well as its sequel)—Markus, "Paganism, Christianity and the Latin Classics," p. 11, opines that it would perhaps be more proper to call it a history "contra livianos."


The Sibyl herself interpreted the events in a polytheistic, pagan manner, but the historian claims the liberty of interpreting them from his monotheistic perspective: whereas the Sibylline Books mentioned the wrath of "gods," the true explanation was the wrath of the omnipotent God. Finally, in a third reference to the Sibyl, Orosius enlarges on the negative aspects of pagan oracles, among which he unhesitatingly includes the Sibyl. Within a long digression (6.15.12-17) following Appius Claudius Censorinus' consultation of the Delphic oracle during the conflict between Pompey and Caesar, in which the historian criticizes oracles in general, especially that of Delphi, for their falsity and untrustworthiness, Orosius also (6.15.13) includes the Sibyl by means of a line of Vergil (Aen. 3.452):

\[ prudenter poeta praemonuit: \]

\[ Inconsulti abeunt sedemque odere Sibyllae. \]

Thus he transforms the Vergilian context, in which Helenus is describing what some do when the Sibyl's leaves are scattered by the wind. Helenus' counsel to Aeneas is of course to pay heed to the Sibyl—and to get a response \textit{viva voce} rather than by the leaf-method—but not, as Orosius would suggest, to avoid consulting her at all. Although Orosius does not say explicitly what fault he finds in the Sibyl, the context implies that she shares in the deceptiveness characteristic of all pagan oracles, and the references already dealt with show that he considered her Books simply an aspect of traditional Roman polytheism.

\[ \textsuperscript{112} \] For this motif in Christian criticism of oracles, see Weiland, pp. 26-33.
Not only Orosius, but even Lactantius and Augustine, who both at other times grant much more value to the Sibyl, include this undeniable aspect of the use of the Sibylline Books in the historical sections of their respective works. Lactantius refers to the institution of rites in honor of Ceres (DI 2.4.29) and the Magna Mater (DI 2.7.12), but without explicitly criticizing the Sibyl.\textsuperscript{113} He also makes reference to a more recent use of the Libri (DMP 44.8), which, while it emphasizes the ambiguity of the Sibylline oracle discovered by Maxentius, also underscores its truth.\textsuperscript{114} Augustine, who would agree with Orosius that it was not the traditional Roman gods but the Christian God who was responsible for the successes and failures of the Roman Republic,\textsuperscript{115} also mentions some episodes in which the consultation of the Sibylline Books led to religious remedies within the pagan system (De Civ. Dei 3.17-18).\textsuperscript{116} He does not except the Libri from his general criticism of oracles, but rather, like Orosius, harps on the untrustworthiness of them all. More specifically, he alleges (following Cicero) that the Libri were liable to fall prey to the ingenuity of their interpreters; this does not seem, however, to mitigate his criticism of the Sibylline Books themselves as being part of the pagan system, but is only a further point to their discredit. Thus, even those who sometimes showed themselves friendly to the use of Sibylline texts found it impossible to deny that one way in which such texts had functioned in the Roman past was as catalysts for traditional pagan cult. As such, although Lactantius treads lightly and does not criticize them aloud—which tact is perhaps due to his intention and practice of presenting other Sibylline material in a positive light—a Christian apologist, bishop or historian could not very well ever endorse

\textsuperscript{113} Interestingly, in a case where he fails to make the Sibylline connection, the institution of the cult of Asclepius (DI 2.16.9-11), he does criticize the demonic origins of the cult.

\textsuperscript{114} Cf. infra, Chap. 5, for further consideration of Lactantius.

\textsuperscript{115} See De Civ. Dei 5.21-22.

\textsuperscript{116} Cf. infra, Chap. 6, for further consideration of Augustine.
them. It may be possible, for some of the more informed Latin Fathers, such as Lactantius and Augustine, to maintain that while the *Libri Sibyllini* were certainly considered a part of paganism, the Sibyl as a figure could be considered differently, perhaps positively. Both Lactantius and Augustine mention the Sibylline Books' historical importance, but do not say anything about the problem this creates for their views of the Sibyl's true prophecies. The others considered here, being perhaps less aware of or interested in such distinctions, simply class the Sibyl as a pagan and have done with her.

While those Christians who treated Roman Republican history were in some measure forced to say something about cults instituted on Sibylline instructions, others voiced their negative opinions under no such compulsion. Sometime around the year A.D. 400, another reference to the untrustworthy "leaves of the Sibyl" appeared in a letter now attributed to **Eutropius**, an Aquitainian priest associated with both Jerome and Paulinus of Nola.\(^\text{117}\) Eutropius, like Paulinus, appears to be well educated in the traditional manner—he is familiar with Vergil and Juvenal, whom he cites, and with philosophers and figures from mythology.\(^\text{118}\) While commenting on a passage from *Revelation* (6.9-11), he marvels at the true nature of Biblical prophecy, then introduces the Sibyl as a single contrasting source from paganism:

\begin{quote}
Non ergo errandum est, per folia sibyllarum, quarum ut pagninae incertis mundi malis spiritibus luctabuntur: ita loca ventis hujus aeris turbabuntur. [Ps.-Jerome, *Ep.* 6.15]\(^\text{119}\)
\end{quote}


\(^{118}\) Courcelle, "Un nouveau traité," p. 383.

\(^{119}\) Migne, PL 30: 100C [= Ps.-Maximus of Turin, *Ep.* 2.12 (Migne, PL 57: 951D)].
For Eutropius, the Sibyl is not only unambiguously a representative of pagan oracles in general, she is the prime example of them, and her prophecies are impugned as confusing, unstable and erroneous authorities, in terms that recall the Vergilian passage (Aen. 3.452) cited by Orosius to the same end, but using the reference to "wind" as a means to introject an association with evil spirits. The contrast with the "Christian oracles" of John is heightened by the terms in which he refers to the latter earlier in the same section, recalling the terminology of pagan oracular consultation:

Reddit...responsa de Patmos [PL 30: 100B].

Whereas Eutropius only alludes to a connection with evil spirits, Ambrosiaster in the mid-to-late 4th cen. explicitly says that the Sibyl was demonically inspired; like Eutropius, he treats her as the most salient example of pagan oracular prophecy. In his commentary on 1 Cor. 2.12, he identifies the "Spirit of the World" (i.e., the devil) with "Python" (i.e., Apollo?) and asserts that this evil spirit spoke through the Sibyl:

spiritus tamen mundi hic est, per quem arripiuntur fanatici, qui sine deo sunt. est enim inter mundanos spiritus potior, unde solet coniecturis quae mundi sunt divinare; quem pythonem appellant. hic est qui per versimilia fallitur et fallit, hic est qui per Sibyllam locutus est, sensum nostrorum secutus, locum volens inter caelestes habere. [ed. Vogels (CSEL 81.2), p. 28]

Ambrosiaster, unlike any of his contemporaries with negative opinions of the Sibyl considered so far, reveals his awareness that the Sibyl was thought to have

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120 For Ambrosiaster, see especially A. Stuiber, "Ambrosiaster," TRE 2 (1978): 356-62; and Courcelle, "Critiques exégétiques et arguments antichrétiens rapportés par Ambrosiaster," VChr 13 (1959), pp. 133-69, who argues that in his Quaestiones Ambrosiaster is responding to criticism based on Porphyry's anti-Christian work. The only certainty about his dates is that he was writing while Damasus was Bishop of Rome (A.D. 366-84), as the reference ad I Tim. 3.14-15 makes clear; other chronological indications in the Quaestiones cohere with this (Stuiber, p. 358).

121 In the imperial period, as W. Foerster, "πύθων," TDNT 6: 918-19, points out, πύθων is often used as a synonym for ἐγγαστρίμυθος, but Acts 16.16 refers to a girl with a πνεῦμα πύθων (the two nouns being in an appositional relation), and likewise later Christian writers use it for the spirit rather than the "ventriloquist" (Ps.-Clem. Hom. 9.16.3; Orig., Princ. 3.3.5; Jerome, In Is. 8.20); Paulinus of Nola, Carm. 19.95-7, uses Pytho as a synonym for Apollo, alluding to the episode in Acts: fugit... Diana... / germanum comitata suum, quem nomine Christi / inperitans Paulus pulso Pythone fugavit.
promulgated doctrines similar to Christian (or Biblical) teaching (*sensum nostrorum*), but he explains this as due to fraud and deception on the devil's part.\(^{122}\) He alleges the same deceptive imitation of the truth on the part of the "unclean spirits" (or possibly the "Spirit of the World") in his comments on the admonition in *1 Thess.* 5.19-22 not to scorn but rather to test prophecy:

> *solent enim spiritus inmundi*\(^{123}\) *fallaciter quasi per imitationem dicere bona, et inter haec subintroducere (subinducere) prava, ut per haec quae bona sunt accepto ferantur et mala, ut, quia unius spiritus dicta putantur, non discernantur ab invicem, sed per id quod licitum est, commendetur illicitum auctoritate nominis, non ratione virtutis.* [CSEL 81.3: 232]

In this context, however, the only examples of the results of such demonic inspiration are the prophecies of the Montanists—attributed to *spiritus mundi* later in the comments on the Pauline passage—not pagan oracles. While Ambrosiaster makes much of the idea of a "natural law" for the Gentiles,\(^{124}\) he is most unwilling to admit that true prophets arose among them.\(^{125}\) In the case of Balaam, the Biblical example of a pagan seer experiencing apparently divine inspiration, Ambrosiaster is either entirely negative (*Quaest.* 46.3) or at least denies the seer the status of true prophet, arguing that God was willing to use Balaam in order to secure testimony from a hostile witness: *inde testimonium accepit unde solet inprobari* (*Quaest.* 63). The Sibyl, however, does not have the sanction of the Biblical text for her inspiration, and, presumably because of her clear association with Roman pagan culture, Ambrosiaster is not willing to entertain the hypothesis that the

\(^{122}\) Cf., e.g., Justin Martyr's explanations of elements of pagan mythology and cult as due to the wishes of demons to counterfeit the Christian doctrine and practice predicted by the Hebrew prophets (*1 Apol.* 54-6, 62, 64, 66).

\(^{123}\) *solent enim spiritus inmundi* is the reading of some mss.

\(^{124}\) *ad Rom.* 3.9 and *passim*; in *Quaest.* 44.9, *lex naturalis* is used for those parts of the Law that were not meant to cease—e.g., the laws prohibiting murder and adultery (cf. Stüber, p. 359).

\(^{125}\) For Ambrosiaster's sharp hostility to paganism and philosophy, see Stüber, pp. 358-9. In the case of Epimenides, called a prophet in *Tit.* 1.12, Ambrosiaster does not seem to realize the source of the quotation, identifying it as a Christian Cretan prophet: *quidam ex Cretensibus melioratus per disciplinam Dominicam.*
same thing might have been happening to her. In her case, the wiles of the devil are exclusively to blame.

Similarly, Prudentius, already mentioned as assuming that the Sibyl belonged to the complex of pagan manticism, explicitly points to the devil as the instigator of Sibylline prophecy, among other features of paganism. This appears in his polemical poem against Symmachus, who was prominent in the request to have the Altar to Victory restored to the Senate-house in A.D. 384; Prudentius' poem attempts a critique of paganism and a response to Symmachus' arguments for toleration. In response to Symmachus' claim (poetically paraphrased, *Contra Symm.* 2.843-6) that *tam grande secretum* must be investigated in a multiplicity of ways, and that therefore paganism should be tolerated, Prudentius argues that in fact there are only two ways set before mankind—one simple, which follows God; the other complex, involving all the variations of paganism (2.889-91). Thus, the Sibyl and her obscure ravings are, along with divination, astrology and magic, merely tools of the devil, called simply daemon (2.889); he is the subject also of lines 2.892-5—of which the direct object, not expressed here, is the wretched pagans who fall for his deception:

> Inlicit et volucrum linguis et aruspice fallit,
> Instigat bacchantis anus ambage sibyllae,
> Involvit mathesi, magicas inpellit in artes,
> Omine sollicitat, capit augure, territat extis.  [Contra Symm. 2.892-5]

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127 For this response to the pagan call for pluralism, cf. Lact., *DI* 6.3-4. Prudentius was familiar with Lactantius, and shows it especially in the *Contra Symmachum* (and *Hamartigenia*), as S. Brandt, "De Lactantii apud Prudentium vestigiis," in *Festschrift zur Einweihung des neuen Gebäudes für das grossherzogliche Gymnasium in Heidelberg* (Leipzig, 1894), pp. 5-14 (esp. pp. 6-8, 10, 14), argues. This makes his hostile attitude toward the Sibyl more striking—he must have known of Christian use of Sibylline material to some degree at least.
Besides the attribution of her inspiration to the devil, Prudentius describes the Sibyl as an "old woman" who prophesies in a Bacchic frenzy; and he alludes to her obscurity with the word *ambage*—all conventional representations of the Sibyl which also draw on Vergilian vocabulary to emphasize her place in the traditional framework of pagan divination.

As for the precise dates of the two poems of Prudentius that refer to the Sibyl, Fontaine suggests that they may actually be later than, and thus reflect, Stilicho's destruction of the *Libri Sibyllini*—he especially so judges the mention of the Sibylline Books in the *Apotheosis*: Fontaine thinks it improbable to interpret it as simply "une inconséquence de poète." But there is in fact no inconsistency, since the Sibyl is not the only oracle alleged to have fallen silent; Fontaine's interpretation is unlikely, given the fact that the silence of the oracles is depicted as a result of the incarnation—and not connected with the Sibyl more than other oracles. There is no reference to current events in the mention of the Sibylline Books, any more than in the report of the obsolescence of the oracle of Ammon or Dodona. The *Contra Symmachum* mentions the Sibyl without other oracular figures, but along with other aspects of pagan divination, and so while the point is slightly different, there is nothing here either to suggest that the *Libri* were recently made unavailable. Indeed, on a literal reading of the passage, they must still be in existence. Neither poem of Prudentius, then, should be taken closely as a topical

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130 Fontaine, "Démon et sibylles," p. 209. Fontaine dates the destruction generally between 402 and 408, and calls Demougeot's attempt to specify late 407 (for which he cites *De l'unité à la division de l'Empire romain 395-410: Essai sur le gouvernement impérial* [Paris, 1951], p. 400-401) just a guess—but in that work, Demougeot is not attempting to justify his dating. Parke, *Sibyls*, p. 211, also dates the *Apotheosis* soon after the destruction of the *Libri*. N. E. Lemaire in Wernsdorf (ed.), *Poetae Latini Minores*, vol. 4 (Paris, 1825), p. 198, on the contrary, takes the lines as evidence that the *Libri* were still in existence, just not consulted any more—cited by Schissel-Fleschenberg, p. 60.
reference to the burning of the *Libri Sibyllini*. Furthermore, if a date of 407 for that event can be accepted, these poems most likely antedate it, if both are in fact mentioned in Prudentius' *Praefatio*, which was published in 404 or 405.\[131\] The mentions of the Sibyl and Sibylline Books are not the sort of pointed references one might expect after a dramatic event like the destruction of the *Libri*. This corroborates the dating of the poems on the basis of the *Praefatio*, and puts them therefore in the midst of debates about the use of the *Libri* in the context of the barbarian invasion of Radagaisus. Thus, the poems represent part of the intellectual ferment that resulted in the destruction of the Books.

The years roughly between the reign of Julian the Apostate and the sack of Rome in 410 were a noteworthy time of conflict between Christianity, which had already enjoyed imperial patronage and freedom from persecution for fifty years, and paganism, which was increasingly, if sporadically, under assault, and periodically enjoyed the hope that Christianity would not in the end present such a challenge to traditional practices as it customarily threatened. In this context, the vituperations of Christians, with varying degrees of precision, against pagan oracular figures such as the Sibyl, are understandable as the expression of the doctrinaire opposition to paganism—an struggle that was much more keenly felt by the Christian establishment and hierarchy than by the "pagan opposition" to Christianity. Especially at this period, prominent Christian intellectuals

called for rupture with the pagan practices of the earlier Empire; the possibility of
paganism's resurgence, evoked by Julian's reign and the usurpation of Eugenius, *inter
alia*, impressed upon Christians the necessity of rooting out entirely any continuing pagan
influence in the apparatus of government. Thus, opposition to the figure of the Sibyl was
voiced, not only by apologists writing in verse, but also by historians and Biblical
commentators; the Sibyl operated for them as one (or even the primary) example of
deplorable paganism. Thus, the altar of Victory could not be kept in the Senate-house;
the emperor could not continue as *pontifex maximus*; and every effort must be made to
extirpate pagan religious practices—as part of which process of extirpation and as the
culmination of a half-century of vitriol directed against the Sibyl, the *Libri Sibyllini* that
had guided the Roman state in its religious development for centuries were destroyed,
scant years before the city of Rome itself was sacked—an event that led to Augustine's
exhaustive re-evaluation of the relationship between the secular and sacred, the temporal
and spiritual, and, indeed, the place of the Sibyl in that history.

Later Greek Writers

As with the earlier Greek writers, it is difficult to find explicit rejections of the use
of the Sibyl in Greek Christian writers contemporary with the Latin writers just
mentioned, but some exist—yet it is notable that not as many seem to worry about the
Sibyl. ¹³² This perhaps shows that concern about the *Libri Sibyllini* and their associations

¹³² *Didymus the Blind* cannot be classed with those who use the Sibyl's testimony, but rather with
those who make no reference to the Sibyl whatsoever. In his treatise on the Trinity (not in an apology,
with Roman paganism was naturally more intense among those in the Latin cultural
sphere, and those whose early schooling familiarized them with the mantic Sibyl of
Vergil's *Aeneid*. In any case, it appears that many Greek Christian writers of the later
Empire tended simply to ignore the Sibyl in their writings.

**Gregory of Nazianzus** lumps the Sibyl in with pagan authors and oracles; he
mentions, then dismisses the importance of, agreements between pagan sources like the
Sibyl and Hermes Trismegistus, on the one hand, and Christian teaching on the other,
although his phraseology could possibly be taken to imply that she was subject to a
temporary divine incursion, like Balaam, when she showed reverence for the cross.

Gregory is celebrated as one of the most erudite of the Greek Fathers, having
travelled for his education to Athens, where he began his association with Basil of
Caesarea. After the Emperor Julian, who had also been a student at Athens contemporary with Gregory, forbade Christians to hold teaching positions in the traditional education system, Gregory was one of those Christians who counter-attacked strenuously; he wrote two orations in which he denied that only pagans had the requisite connection with classical literature (Or. 4 and 5). Later in life, especially after a brief elevation to the patriarchate of Constantinople and suffering from intense ecclesiastical politics, Gregory consoled himself with the writing of poetry, thereby availing himself of his deep knowledge of pagan Greek literature in order to serve both his own reputation and the literary heritage of Christianity. One might expect that such a figure would be inclined to embrace the testimony to Christianity popularly attributed to the Sibyl, but in fact he roundly dismisses her.

The work in which he does so is a poem addressed to Nemesius, a pagan who appears to have been the governor of Cappadocia Secunda (Carm. 2.2.7). Through this


135 For the poem, see McGuckin, p. 395 n. 143; A. Benoît, Saint Grégoire de Nazianze: Sa vie, ses oeuvres, et son époque (Marseilles, 1876 [reprinted Hildesheim, 1973]), pp. 698-702, who calls the poem "un de ses plus beaux ouvrages" (p. 698) and speculates that a Christian treatise attributed to a Nemesius may perhaps indicate that Gregory's influence bore fruit (p. 702); the suggested identification of the addressee (of the poem, as well as of four of Gregory's letters, Ep. 198-201), is with the Nemesius (bishop) of Emesa who composed a work "On the nature of man" c. A.D. 400. This identification has been called "plausible," but cannot be proven (F. M. Young, "Nemesius von Emesa" in TRE 24 [1994], pp. 257; cf. L.
poem Gregory presents a case for Nemesius to abandon paganism and adopt Christianity—thus, it is a text fully within the apologetic tradition, despite its poetic form. By the time he refers to the Sibyl, he has already finished his main case against the pagan gods and in favor of Christian teaching. At line 231 he closes the preceding section with the words Οὗτος ἐμὸς λόγος ἔστι, makes a further appeal for Nemesius to be persuaded, then addresses the bards and the demons who inspire them, bidding them to be silent (239-40). He dismisses a host of famous poets. "Let Orpheus lead wild beasts," he says (sc., "I do not care"); and he deals similarly with Hesiod, Homer, Musaeus, and Linus (241-3). Then he mentions Hermes Trismegistus and his unwilling agreement with Christian teaching (245-6), and the Sibyl's recognition of the cross (246-7):

Λήξατ', ἄοιδοπόλοι, καὶ λήξατε, μαινόμενοι τε Δαίμονες, ἐμπνείοντες ἄθεσμοτάτοις ἀοιδάις.
'Ορφεὺς θῆρας ἄγω, Πέρσῃ δ' Ἀσκραῖος ἄειδοι
'Ησίοδος, Τροίην δὲ καὶ ἄλγεα ἀθεσμῷ Ὀμήρῳ.
Μουσαίοις τε Λίνος τε θεῶν ἄπο μέτρα φέροιεν,
Οἳ ὃς παλαιοτάτους ἐπικλέες εἰσὶν ἀοιδαίς.
'Εχθρῇ οἱ τρισάριστος ἐμοῖς ἐπέεσσιν ἀρήγοι,
Οὐδ' ἔθέλων, σταυρῶν δὲ σέβοι μέτροισι Σίβυλλα,
Τῆς μεγάλης θεότητος ἐλαυνόμενοι βελέεσσιν.
Οὐδὲν ἐπιστρέφομαι, καὶ ἐν τοις ἄσσοις ἐφεξουτο,
Οὐ Θεόθεν, Βίβλοιν δὲ παρακλέψαντες ἐμεῖο.
Οἳ μὲν γὰρ καὶ πάμπαν ἀλαμπέες, οἳ δ' ὀλίγον τι
'Αστεροπήν πάλλουσαν ἐσέδρακον, ὥςα δ' ἀμερθεν. [Carm. 2.2.7.239-51]

As Gregory sums up the case, however, this agreement with Christianity does not matter, since any truth they expressed was not the result of divine inspiration (οὐ θεόθεν, 249), but was taken from the Bible (βίβλοιν δὲ παρακλέψαντες ἐμεῖο, 249). The pagan

Brisson in Der Neue Pauly s.v. "Nemesios"); W. Telfer, Cyril of Jerusalem and Nemesius of Emesa, LCC 4 (Philadelphia, 1955), pp. 208-10, lays out the case for it, concluding with a non liquet. In any case, the poem and letters may date to c. 385-88 (Telfer, p. 208); PLRE 1: 622, s.v. "Nemesius 2," dates the letters to c. 386-7, but does not mention the possible identification with Nemesius of Emesa. P. Gallay, Gregor von Nazianz: Briefe, GCS 53 (Berlin, 1969), points to Ep. 201 as possible evidence that Gregory's exhortation was unsuccessful; in La vie de Saint Grégoire de Nazianze, p. 253, he dates the poem to 384-90; cf. p. 239 for discussion.
authorities were either wholly in the dark, or, if they saw some light, quickly lost it (250-51). After this, he turns in similar fashion to the oracles, gods of the mysteries, and so on.\(^{136}\) In short, although (significantly) he does not class the Sibyl with other oracles, but rather with the ancient poets and theologoi, he includes her in a blanket dismissal of all pagan poetry and religion—indeed, in the first lines quoted (239-40), these authorities are explicitly associated with raving demons who inspire them.

It should be noted that the figures are characterized by actions typical of them: Orpheus is depicted as 'leading the beasts'; Hesiod as 'singing to Perses'; Homer as 'singing of Troy.' Thus, it is likely that the actions attributed to the Sibyl (and Hermes) reflect the received opinion—i.e., well-known claims—rather than any particularly erudite knowledge of Gregory's. Gregory refers to the Sibyl's "worship" of the cross; this presumably bespeaks knowledge of OrSib 6.26, a macarism of the cross which was well known and frequently quoted as a single line.\(^{137}\) Again, this does not make him better disposed toward her in a general way. In the text as transmitted, both Hermes and the Sibyl are alleged to have been impelled by God to make their admissions of truth: τῆς μεγάλης θεότητος ἐλαυνόμενοι βελέεσσιν (247). This description fits well the traditional pagan oracular persona of the Sibyl,\(^{138}\) despite the non-oracular categorization Gregory offers for the Sibyl, but less well the ancient sage Hermes Trismegistus. This, combined with the fact that the description of Hermes' action ("helping our words") is followed by the qualification "unwillingly" (Οὐδ’ ἔθελων), so that a further qualification

\(^{136}\) The reference to "Phoebus" (lines 253-5) cites words from an extant oracle of Apollo (quoted by Lact., DI 1.7.1); on this, see A. Cameron, "Gregory of Nazianzus and Apollo," JThS n.s. 20 (1969), pp. 240-41. Wyß, col. 855, queries whether Gregory might have known the passage of Prudentius cited above (Apotheosis 438-43).

\(^{137}\) See, e.g., Sozomenus, HE 2.1.10, and my speculation about the "Macarism of the Cross" in Chap. 3.

\(^{138}\) Such compulsion could be found in the Sibylline corpus: note, e.g., OrSib 3.295-8; cf. also Constantine, Or. ad sanct. coet. 21.2.
on Hermes' help seems superfluous, may indicate that the text originally read ἐλαυνομένη (rather than ἐλαυνόμενοι), restricting the application of the divine goads to the Sibyl.\(^{139}\) The reference to Hermes' "unwilling" admissions, while it might suggest supernatural compulsion, need not, since it is in line with other Patristic references to the compulsive force of the truth,\(^ {140}\) and is in any case less overtly forceful than the tormenting force used on the Sibyl. The parallelism between the two, however, should indicate that the θεότης μεγάλη Gregory speaks of is God, not Apollo. The concluding reference to plagiarism from the Bible seems to refer primarily to the poets mentioned earlier (and possibly to Hermes?), while for the Sibyl, a forcible inspiration is invoked. Insofar as the Sibyl spoke truly, then, she was authentically (and forcibly) inspired by God, if only for the single oracle concerning the cross. Her position is something like that of Balaam, who was summoned to curse the Israelites but, under the force of divine inspiration, blessed them instead. Thus, in fact, the language of compulsion reinforces the Sibyl's position as a part of the pagan system. Gregory is different, however, from most other rejectionists, insofar as he actually recognizes a "true" oracle pronounced by the Sibyl—and thus, although he does not reject the Sibyl on the basis of an *a priori* negative view of all pagan literature, his intention here is to denigrate all possible pagan authorities in favor of Christian tradition and authority.

The Sibyl is not, in the view of Gregory, a worthy recipient of divine inspiration outside the mainstream of the Biblical tradition, despite his concession to her of one divine oracle. Yet for him, that is not the end of the story, although he has no further explicit references to her in his extant works. As far back as Alexandre's work on the

\(^{139}\) Alexandre, 2: 280, is compelled by the text as it stands to say both that Hermes and the Sibyl were compelled by God, and that they plagiarized from Scripture.

\(^{140}\) Cf., e.g., Ps.-Justin, *Coh.* 14.2; Tert., *De Anim.* 2.1.
Patristic use of Sibylline oracles, it was clear that OrSib had some impact on Gregory's verse, from a poetic or stylistic point of view.\textsuperscript{141} While on the whole the present study does not investigate allegations of allusions to Sibylline material, since for the most part they are slippery and difficult to prove, in the case of Gregory, there are very clear instances of poetic imitation of the Sibyl,\textsuperscript{142} most convincingly in the apologetic poem addressed to Nemesius.

Some of the possible Sibylline allusions in Gregory's poetry are insignificant and perhaps only coincidence. Such, for example, should be judged the similar descriptions of Jesus' feeding of the multitudes in poems 1.1.20-22, and some other passages.\textsuperscript{143} Slightly more convincing, and palpably more significant, is the opening of Carm. 1.1.1, the first in a series of didactic poems on the basic elements of theology. After an invocation of the Holy Spirit, Gregory writes:

\begin{verbatim}
εἷς Θεός ἐστιν ἀναρχὸς, ἀναίτιος, οὐ περίγραπτος
...
...καὶ ἀπείριτος [lines 25-27]
\end{verbatim}

This is very similar to OrSib 3.11-12,\textsuperscript{144} which reads:

\textsuperscript{141} Alexandre, 2: 280-81.
\textsuperscript{142} Rzach, Oracula Sibyllina, p. xvi. There is also the possibility that Gregory alludes to the Sibyl as a figure in Or. 4.108—at least, the pseudo-Nonnian Commentary identifies the woman who was the inventor of verse referred to anonymously by Gregory as either the Sibyl, Phemonoe, or Philyra (ad Or. 4, §64)—see J. Nimmo Smith, A Christian's Guide to Greek Culture: The Pseudo-Nonnus Commentaries on Sermons 4, 5, 39 and 43 by Gregory of Nazianzus (Liverpool, 2001), p. 44; S. Brock, The Syriac Version of the Pseudo-Nonnus Mythological Scholia (Cambridge, 1971), p. 112. While Nimmo Smith comments that pseudo-Nonnus "correctly adds the name of the Sibyl Phemonoi as two names."
\textsuperscript{143} Cf. also E. Peterson, Heis Theos: Epigraphische, formgeschichtliche und religionsgeschichtliche Untersuchungen (Göttingen, 1926).
\textsuperscript{144} Cited by Sykes and Moreschini ad loc. Cf. also E. Peterson, Heis Theos: Epigraphische, formgeschichtliche und religionsgeschichtliche Untersuchungen (Göttingen, 1926).
εἷς θεός ἐστι μόναρχος ἀθέσφατος αὐτόμονος
αὐτοφυής ἀθέσφατος ὁρώμενος αὐτός ἅπαντα...

Other Sibylline passages too are similar, but unfortunately for the identification of this passage as an allusion to OrSib, so are many other theological expressions—the striking beginning εἷς θεός going back as far back as Xenophanes (fr. 23), and generally similar expressions being found in pseudo-Orphic texts as well as the pseudo-Sophoclean passage quoted by a number of early Christians. The listing of attributes of God, especially using negative compounds, is characteristic of such Sibylline and Orphic texts, and is also found in genuine pagan oracles. A warning to the profane to begone appears in lines 8-10, which, although Gregory repeats two words exactly from Callimachus, is also (inter alia) a feature of the pseudo-Orphic Palinode. Most likely, then, Gregory seems to be alluding to a type of theological poetry, not to the Sibyl specifically, although OrSib provide the closest parallel to the lines. This type of allusion to generically similar texts serves to put Gregory's work into the proper context as a theological didactic poem, and of course does not imply endorsement of the Palinode or any other specific theological poetry.

145 Especially OrSib fr. 1.7 (Εἷς θεός ὃς μόνος ἄρχει, ὑπερμεγέθης ἀγένητος), which Ps.-Justin, Coh. 16, and Lact., DI 1.6.15, cite.
146 Xenophanes is cited by Sykes and Moreschini ad loc. For Orphica, cf. e.g., the tenth line of C. Holladay's "Recension A" (Fragmenta Hellenistica, vol. II: Orphica [Atlanta, 1996], p. 152); the text is quoted by early Christian authors such as Ps.-Justin, De Mon. 2.4; Coh. 15. Cf. also the line cited by Didymus, De Trin. 2.5: εἷς θεός αὐτοπάτωρ, εἷς οὗ τάδε πάντα γένοντο. Ps.-Sophocles: TrGF Adesp. 618 (Kammich-Nell), cited by Ps.-Justin, De Mon. 2.2; Coh. 18; Clem. Alex., Protr. 74.2; Strom. 5.113.2.
147 See Wyß, col. 855; note the oracle cited by Porphyry, Phil. ex. orac. fr. 325 Smith (= Tüb. Theos. §27), and the oracles attributed to Hermes and Apollo by Tüb. Theos. §31 (Εἷς θεός υφάσματος γενετής, γαῖαν διατάσσων) and 38 (the latter is from the Clarian Apollo, also quoted in part by Lact., DI 1.7, and is epigraphically attested, the inscription having been published by L. Robert, "Un oracle gravé à Oenoanda," Académie des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres, Comptes Rendus 1971: 597-619, cf. Lane Fox, pp. 169-71).
148 ὅστις ἀλτρός, line 9, are also found in Callimachus, Hymn 2.2. Sykes and Moreschini ad loc. note that "the banishing of the 'profane' was a commonplace."
In the poem to Nemesius, however, the allusions are both convincing and highly significant. Somewhat earlier than the passage that mentions the Sibyl by name, Gregory's poem addresses the human race in harsh terms:

Ἄνθρωποι θνητοὶ, καὶ τέκτονες οὐδὲν ἐόντων, 
Μέχρι τίνος ψευστής καὶ ηματίουν ὀνείρως 
Παιζόμενοι, παίζοντες, ἐπὶ χθονὶ μᾶψ ἄλαλοθε; 
Λάτρεις εἰδώλων κενεὸφροι, οἶ παθέσσιν 
Ἠλκαρ ἐοὶς μήσωσθε θεοὺς στήμασθαι ἁλτροὺς, 
Ψεύστας, ἀνδροφόνους, σκολιοὺς, ἐπίορκοιν ὄμοιντας, 
Ἀρσάγες, ἀνδρογύνους, μοιχοὺς, ἑπιβήτορας ἁνδρῶν...[2.2.7.88-94]

At OrSib fr. 1.1, the Sibyl addresses mankind: Ἀνθρωποι θνητοὶ καὶ ώρακινοι, οὐδὲν ἐόντες...; line 25 of the fragment has ἐπλανᾶσθε (τί πλανᾶσθε in Clement of Alexandria's version), which Alexandre cites as a parallel to ἄλαλησθε in Gregory's poem. Furthermore, the list of wicked types has parallels in other Sibylline passages. For example, OrSib 1.176-8 [Geffcken] reads:

ἀστασίησι τύραννοι ἁμαρτωλοὶ τε βίαιοι 
ψευσται ἀπιστοχόροι κακοπράγμονες οὐδὲν ἄληθεις 
λεκτροκλόποι θ' εὐφεσίλιγοι δύσφημα χέοντες...

In this connection, however, textual criticism must also be invoked, since the first word of the passage just cited is dubious: Geffcken inserts ἀστασίησι on the basis of 8.185, but the mss. read ἀρσάγει. Alexandre suggests reading ἀρσάγες ἤδη τύραννοι, Kurfess ἀρσακταί τε τύραννοι, both of which are obviously closer to the ms. reading. If either of these suggestions is correct, which is probably the case, and Geffcken has

149 Geffcken (ad OrSib fr. 1.1) adds another Gregorian passage (Carm. 2.1.32.8-13), which is very similar to 2.2.7.86-90, and includes (line 10) the address: Ἀνθρωποι θνητοὶ...οὐδὲν ἐόντες. See infra, n. 151.

150 Closely paralleled by OrSib 8.183-7, which reads ἀπιστόφιλοι for 1.177 ἀπιστοκόροι, πιστολέται for 1.178 λεκτροκλότοι; the mss. read ἑυφεσιλίγοι rather than εὐφεσίλιγοι, but Geffcken restores the latter from 1.178. Other examples of such lists appear at OrSib 2.255ff.; 3.36-40; and often in early Christian literature (see Geffcken ad OrSib 2.255-83 for references)—also see Greg. Naz., Carm. 2.1.13.75-89 (cited by Wyß, col. 855).
therefore wrongly corrected this passage to conform with the imprecisely parallel list, then Gregory's poem addressed to Nemesius could be alluding more closely to the Sibylline passage, since the initial words of two successive lines, Ψεύστας and Ἅρπαγας, would closely recall the beginnings of two successive Sibylline lines. In this passage, then, Gregory alludes to the manner in which the Sibyl traditionally addresses her audience—imperiously, emphasizing their insignificance before the contraries implied by his references to "mortal men" and "things that are nothing"—before, that is, the truly existent, immortal entity who is God—as well as their moral turpitude, laid out in detail by the list of shameful characteristics.

These verbal echoes are not all. For the address is in fact explicitly not in Gregory's normal voice. Rather, before he assimilates the Sibylline manner in the address already quoted, he has prepared for the transition with a wish:

\[ \text{Ἐθέλον ἡμεῖς σκοπής καθύπερθεν ἄρμοσθείς,} \\
\text{Βρονταῖον πάντεσσιν ἐπιχθονίοισιν ἀῒσαι·} \quad [\text{Carm. 2.2.7.86-7}]^{151} \]

The voice he assumes is then the fulfillment of the wish.\(^{152}\) Certainly the wish to find oneself far above human concerns is not specifically Sibylline; but why does Gregory wish to utter a "thundering" voice from on high? According to one of the few extant pagan oracles of the Sibyl, not transmitted in OrSib, but known to Plutarch, the Sibyl herself predicted that her prophetic voice would not die along with her, but that after a

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\(^{151}\) These lines are nearly identical to Carm. 2.1.32.8-9, followed by an address to the human race in similar terms to that in Carm. 2.2.7; in 2.1.32, however, the lines are preceded by a longer description, in which Gregory expresses the wish to fly away from human life, like a dove or a nightingale—but to have this difference from the life of beasts: a mind knowing the deity and heaven-treading (θεότητος ἰδον νόον, οὐρανοφοίτην). The poem as a whole is on the "vanity of human life"—and so a similar Sibylline voice is quite appropriate.

\(^{152}\) It is not clear exactly where this "voice" stops—possibly at line 251, where he announces: Οὗτος ἐμὸς λόγος ἐστι—appropriately enough, a few lines before this he refers to the actual Sibyl in line 246.
long life of foreseeing human troubles, her soul would fly into the air and continue its existence in the moon, even as it would keep sending messages to the human race:

\[
\text{ἔνθ' ἄρα μοι ψυχή μὲν ἐς ἥρα πωτηθείσα, πνεύματι συγκραθείσα βροτῶν εἰς οὕτα πέμψει κληδόνας ἐν πυκνοῖς αἰνίγμασι συμπλεχθείσας.}
\]

[Phlegon of Tralles, \textit{FGrHist} 257 F 37.5, lines 11-14]^{153}

Plutarch also refers to this tradition, when, in \textit{De sera num. vind.}, the character Thespesius, passing by the moon, hears the Sibyl's voice announcing the time of his death:

\[
\text{ἤκουε παριὼν φωνὴν ὀξεῖαν γυναικὸς ἐν μέτρῳ φράζουσαν ἀλλὰ τίνα καὶ χρόνον, ὡς ἔοικε, τῆς ἐκείνου τελευτῆς. ἔλεγε δ' ὦ δαίμων τὴν φωνὴν εἶναι Σιβύλλης· ἥδειν γὰρ αὐτὴν περὶ τῶν μελλόντων ἐν τῷ προσώπῳ τῆς σελήνης περιφερομένην. [De sera num. vind. 29 (Mor. 566 D-E)]}

It was also speaking about other disasters such as the eruption of Vesuvius and the death of the Emperor Titus^{154}—thus, in the characteristically harsh voice of the Sibyl. In the context, in which Gregory's wish introduces a passage that clearly alludes to passages from the extant \textit{OrSib}, the wish itself arguably also situates the voice as pseudo-Sibylline.

After listing the human sources which culminate in the Sibyl and Hermes, Gregory caps the section by suggesting that he himself, as a Christian pseudo-Sibyl, is greater than they, with this line:

\[
\text{Τοῦνεκεν εἰξατ' ἐμοιγε, καὶ ὤψε περ ἐν φρονέοντες. [252]}
\]

The late, reluctant admissions of the pagan authorities cannot compete with the mind of the "seer" fully cognizant of his truly divine inspiration.^{155}

\begin{itemize}
    \itemfootnote[153]{Cf. Plut., \textit{De Pyth. orac.} 9 (Mor. 398D): τῷ δ' ἀέρι τὸ πνεῦμα συγκραθέν ἐν φήμαις ἀεὶ φορήσεται καὶ κληδόνιν—this passage appears in slightly garbled form in Clem. Alex., \textit{Strom.} 1.70.4.}
    \itemfootnote[154]{Cf. Brenk, "The Sibyl Sing of Vesuvius," for the view that Plutarch may have known Jewish Sibylline material on this subject.}
    \itemfootnote[155]{Cf. lines 111-119.}
\end{itemize}
Thus, while Gregory does not consider it appropriate to use the Sibyl's specific testimony for apologetic purposes, dismissing as irrelevant the fact that she is reputed to have honored the cross along with any other value that might be placed on the testimony of any other figure from Greek paganism, the poet has all the while been adopting the voice and manner of the Sibyl in his rebuke of pagan Greek culture. The Sibyl is rejected on the surface, even while her persona is adopted and specific suitable passages of the Sibylline tradition are evoked. Perhaps, as Alexandre argues, this is simply Gregory the poet using the poetic Sibyl as a model. And yet, Sibylline oracles are not an appropriate model except in order to further a specific purpose: the allusions must signify that Gregory's poem (or this section thereof) is the same sort of thing as an oracle of the Sibyl. Gregory is positioning himself as an authoritative oracular voice as he conducts his attack on paganism. Thus, he attempts to accomplish a subtler kind of persuasion than the crude citation of Sibylline material to prove a point—a kind of knowing appeal to an assumed cultural authority, but an appeal that does not depend on a particular stance toward specific Sibylline texts or, to be sure, on a positive attitude toward the kind of inspiration that operated in the Sibyl. Your mantic authorities, he seems to be saying, have been your teachers—but my message must supplant those faulty ones, inasmuch as it is truly divine and therefore truly authoritative.

Cyril of Alexandria, in the mid-5th century, wrote his Contra Julianum in response to the apostate emperor's anti-Christian treatise. Like Eusebius, he does not...
mention the Sibyl on his own initiative, but takes some historical material from Eusebius; his response to Julian's mention of Sibyline oracles (*inter alia*), however, has the effect of dismissing the Sibyl along with pagan religion in general.

In the first book appears Cyril's treatment of chronology from the flood to the birth of Christ, which is an attempt to demonstrate the antiquity of Moses, as part of the familiar Christian strategy of claiming greater antiquity than that of the pagan tradition. As often occurs, it is paired by Cyril with the explanation of similarities between pagan Greek and Christian teaching by recourse to the dependency theory.¹⁵⁸ In the midst of this chronological demonstration, it is evident that he has made use of Eusebius' *Chronicon*, since he cites (1.9 [PG 76: 516C]) Alexander Polyhistor's paraphrase of the Sibyl's lines on the Tower of Babel—as from Alexander.¹⁵⁹ From the same source, apparently, since the dates agree, he also mentions the appearance of the Erythraean Sibyl in the 9th Olympiad, that of the Sibyl called Herophile in the 17th (1.14 [PG 76: 520D])

Later in the *Contra Julianum*, on the other hand, in the sixth book, Cyril quotes the appeal that Julian made to the Sibylline oracles (i.e., the *Libri Sibyllini*) as one of the divinely inspired sources of Roman religion, which therefore constitutes a gift of the gods:

```greek
ταῦτα μὲν οὖν ἐκ κατοχῆς καὶ ἐπιπνοίας θείας ἐκ τῶν τῆς Σιβύλλης καὶ τῶν άλλων, οἱ γεγόνασι κατὰ τὴν πάτριον φωνὴν χρησιμολόγοι, φαίνεται δοὺς ὁ Ζεὺς τῇ πόλει. [PG 76: 796D]
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He goes on to mention the shield of Zeus that fell from heaven and the head found in the hill (the Capitoline). Cyril introduces the quotation of Julian as *ψυχρὰ καὶ γραοπρεπῆ*

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¹⁵⁸ Malley, pp. 247-8; Burguière and Évieux, pp. 59-60.
¹⁵⁹ Cf. Euseb., *Chron.* Book 1 (pp. 23-4 Schoene), and, on Cyril's use of Eusebius in general, see Malley, p. 253; Burguière and Évieux, p. 64. This quotation appears to be the origin of Thompson's puzzling and erroneous statement (p. 130) that "Cyril of Jerusalem [sic] opposes one Sibyline passage to Julian (Contr. Julian, I.32), likely taken from Constantine's *Oratio* as reported by Eusebius."
καὶ λήμου μεστὰ μυθάρια (796C), and responds with the ad hominem suggestion that
the apostate emperor, at least, certainly was τῷ πονηρῷ καὶ θεομάχῳ πνεύματι
κάτοχος, and repeats the characterization of his examples (mentioning specifically the
shield and the head) as τερθρεία...καὶ μειρακιώδη τερετίσματα, καὶ έτερον οὐδὲν.

The charge of being worthless stories seems to be attached to the objects only, not to the
Sibyl and χρησμολόγοι; to Julian's assertions about these, Cyril says nothing
immediately. Later, however, in response to Julian's statements (801D-804A) that the
divine afflatus which comes to some humans at intervals has left the Hebrews and the
Egyptians, and "natural" oracles are yielding to the changes of the times, and that
therefore Zeus has left humans with ἱεραὶ τέχναι for regular use (i.e., the "artificial," as
opposed to the "natural" divination already mentioned), Cyril presents a critique, arguing
first that the afflatus was really an act put on by false manteis:

πνεύμα μὲν οὖν ἐκ θεῶν ἐνθάδε τὸ τῶν ψευδομάντεων φησιν· ἐδοξε γὰρ ἣν
αὐτοῖς ὑποπλάττεσθαι τὸ ἐνθουσιάζω, καὶ οἶν ἐν κατοχῇ μαντικοῦ
γεγονότας ὀράοθαι πνεύματος, ἐν' ἔχοι τὸ ψεῦδος τὸ εὐπαράδε[ι]χτον.
[804A]

He also lists varieties of divination, apparently confusing Julian's point, since the
categories he lists are of all sorts of diviners, not just those prone to enthusiasm, and he
finally agrees that the (Greek) oracles are silent—since the tyranny of the demons was
shaken at Christ's coming—and that prophecy has ceased among the Jews: he thus
eagerly turns Julian's admission (or explanation) to apologetic usage, arguing that now
the "spirit" is living in "holy" (i.e. Christian) souls, ἐνηχεῖ δὲ καὶ νῦν τοῖς ἁγίοις Θεὸς
κατὰ τὸ αὐτῷ δοκοῦν τὰ ἐπόμενα (805A). Certainly this line of argument should not
be taken as an admission by Cyril that it was always the same spirit that inspired pagans,
Jews and Christians, any more than it implies that Hebrew prophets were inspired by
demons; rather, it is an opportunistic twisting of Julian's attempted explanation to his own ends. In any case, the result of Cyril's response for the purposes of the present enquiry is the fact that he does not contest Julian's reference to the Sibylline Oracles as important to Roman religion; he leaves them unaddressed, and suggests (though he does not state it explicitly) that they, like the other instances of pagan inspiration, were the work of demons and therefore have fallen silent like them. Whatever Christ himself had accomplished on this score, certainly Stilicho's actions at the beginning of the century could be seen as completing the job of silencing the Sibylline Books.

Cyril does not seem to consider use of the Sibyl improper for a Christian, since he cites the paraphrase in his chronological treatment. After this, however, he does not make any appeals to the Sibyl. One consideration must be that Julian's reference to the Sibylline Books could have situated such appeals as endorsements of the pagan *fata Romana*.

One final point: although Cyril does not appeal to the Sibyl, he *does* make frequent reference to Hermetic material. Could this indicate the type of authority that in his view was more useful than *OrSib* for convincing contemporaries in the Greek sphere—or specifically in Alexandria? If this were his view, meaning that there was some justifiable reticence about using the Sibyl, a further indication could be the fact that when Cyril includes a Sibylline quotation, it has the backing of Alexander Polyhistor. Thus, while it is not the case that the Sibyl was utterly discredited, whereas sources like

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160 Inspired by references in Ps.-Justin's *Coh. ad Gr.* and Didymus' *De Trin.*, he procured texts for himself, according to Malley, p. 259. See also Grant, "Greek Literature in the Treatise *De Trinitate* and Cyril's *Contra Julianum*," p. 275; on p. 272, Grant says that "following leads is characteristic of Cyril's work as a whole." See A. D. Nock and A. J. Festugière, *Corpus Hermeticum*, vol. 4 (Paris, 1954), pp. 125-43, for Cyril's citations.
Hermes Trismegistus could still be used with impunity, there is a palpable disinclination to press Sibylline arguments.

Another roughly contemporary Greek apologist, Theodoret, does not mention the Sibyl at all. In his study of Theodoret's *Graecarum affectionum curatio*, Canivet, after briefly mentioning some earlier uses of the Sibyl (by Lactantius, Constantine, and Eusebius; Cyril, he notes, only uses them once), wonders: "Théodoret avait-il donc des raisons pour être encore plus réservé, puisqu'il ne cite même pas le nom de la Sibylle dans la *Thérapeutique*?" The context of this question is Canivet's observation that Theodoret avoids mentioning Jewish sources apart from the Bible: he mentions Philo only once (*Ther.* 2.94), merely to distinguish him from Philo of Byblos, and does not mention the Jewish writers Eusebius quotes in *PE* 11. He seems to be suggesting that Theodoret was aware of the Jewish origin of (much of) *OrSib*; more likely, perhaps, that he was aware of controversy surrounding this material. Theodoret, however, also fails to cite Hermetic material.

No strong conclusion can be drawn, therefore, about the greater credibility of Hermetic, as opposed to Sibylline sources for Greek Christian apologetic in the mid-5th century, except that both seem to have been well known as sometimes useful sources, and that on the other hand, as the rejection by Gregory of Nazianzus, the reticence and implied rejection by Cyril, and the silence of Theodoret and others, show that in the 4th-

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162 Canivet, p. 78.
163 Canivet, p. 125, with no speculation as to the reason. It may be that his general dependence on Eusebius, who gives no prominence to the Sibyl, and in particular makes no mention of her in his discussion of oracles, rather than, e.g., Clement of Alexandria (Canivet, pp. 257-64; cf. also p. 166), may be the reason that he fails to mention the Sibyl.
and 5th-century Greek-speaking world, appeals to the Sibyl were not self-evidently an effective apologetic tactic.

Those who completely reject the Sibyl include some figures famously intransigent toward pagan culture, such as Tatian, Orosius, and Arnobius—but not all those who are so negatively inclined do so, as the examples of Theophilus and Tertullian will show. Outright rejection of the Sibyl is prominent (and outspoken) only after Constantine, when the appeal to such sources could be viewed as less important in apologetic; yet the evidence of Origen shows both that some did (or might) decry such appeals, and that a polemicist against paganism might be loath to condemn something that could well have influenced conversions, whatever one's personal views of the authenticity of the Sibylline material. Christians writing in Greek appear notably silent on the subject of the Sibyl—perhaps, as Alexandre argues, because they had more "critical sense"—yet they still do not "blow the whistle" on the forgery. At most, like Tatian or Gregory, they are dismissive, but more silence, or at best discomfort, is visible than hearty rejection. For some, like Ambrosiaster and Gregory, the negative associations of the Sibyl are enough to provoke explicit dismissal of the Sibyl even despite their knowledge that Sibylline material was potentially useful for Christians—nevertheless, not only they, but many of the others, such as Origen, Eusebius, Arnobius, and Prudentius, were clearly aware of the use of Sibylline material by other Christians, yet display varying degrees of rhetorical distance from it.
"Neutral" Uses of the Sibyl

Finally, a few Fathers refer to the Sibyl in a more or less positive light, not as a purveyor of inspired oracles, but simply as an authentic pagan figure or source.

The 2nd-cen. apologist\(^{164}\) Athenagoras quotes the Sibyl simply as a credible source for early history, and does not differentiate her from other pagan sources as having been "truly inspired." The quotation of the Sibyl comes as part of Athenagoras' defense against the charge of atheism, which, after positive exposition of Christian doctrine, really becomes an attack on pagan cult, at the end of which he presents Euhemeristic arguments to account for the names of the supposed gods.\(^{165}\) He cites evidence first for the gods of Egypt having once been humans (28), then for those of Greece: `Αλλὰ καὶ ἔλληνον οἱ περὶ ποίησιν καὶ ιστορίαν σοφοὶ κτλ. (29.1).\(^{166}\) He cites Homer on Heracles, Hesiod and Pindar on Asclepius, for details showing that they were not divine: they died; they were violent or greedy (29.1). Somewhat similarly, he quotes Callimachus' lines on the Cretans in order to argue with the poet: if Callimachus believed in Zeus' birth he should be consistent and also believe in his tomb (30.2). He cites otherwise unknown tragic lines for the deification of Ino and her son Palaemon (29.2).

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\(^{164}\) His *Legatio* was written c. A. D. 177—so Grant, "The Chronology of the Greek Apologists," *VChr* 9 (1955), pp. 28-29. Marcovich (p. 1) agrees, and lists some supporters of the dating; he notes that T. D. Barnes, "The Embassy of Athenagoras," *JThS* n.s. 26 (1975), pp. 111-114, advanced the suggestion that the *Plea* was (intended to be) delivered on the occasion of the emperor's visit to Athens in September 176; against Barnes, he prefers to take literally the inscription of the work which includes Commodus in the address to "the emperors"—and Commodus was not proclaimed *imperator* until 27 Nov. 176. Similarly, Pouderon, *Athénagore d'Athènes: Philosophe chrétien*, Théologie Historique 82 (Paris, 1989), pp. 38-40.


\(^{166}\) Although he has cited Greeks in the previous chapter—especially Herodotus and "Alexander the Great"—their information is treated as authentically Egyptian, since they got it from Egyptian priests (28.1).
For some, like Castor and Polydeuces, he adduces no authority (29.2). In the midst of all these complicated appeals, he also cites the Sibyl:

(1) Εἰ γὰρ καὶ ὃς ἡ τῆς Δερκετοῦ Σεμίραμας, λάγνος γυνὴ καὶ μιαιφόνος, ἐδοξεῖ Συρία θεός, καὶ διὰ τὴν Δερκετῶν <τοὺς ἰζθὺς> καὶ τὰς περιστερὰς διὰ τὴν Σεμίραμειν σέβοντο Ἱσραήλ (το γὰρ ἀδύνατον, εἰς περιστερὰν μετέβαλεν ἡ γυνὴ: ὁ μῆνος παρὰ Κτησία), τί θαυμάστων τοὺς μὲν ἐπὶ ἄρχη καὶ τυραννίδι ὑπὸ τῶν κατ' αὐτούς χληθῇ θεούς—Σίβυλλα (μέμνηται δ' αὐτῆς καὶ Πλάτων).

Καὶ τότε δὴ δεκάτῃ γενεᾷ μερότων ἄνθρωπον,
ἐξ οὗ δὴ κατακλυσμός ἐπὶ προτέρους γένετ' ἄνδρας:
καὶ βασίλευς<> Κρόνος καὶ Τιτάν Ἱαπετός τε,
Γαίης τέκνα φέριστα καὶ Οὐρανοῦ, οὕς ἐκάλεσαν ἄνθρωποι Γαῖαν τε καὶ Οὐρανόν, οὕνεκα οἱ πρώτοι ἔσαν μερότων ἄνθρωπον— [OrSib 3.108-113]

(2) τοὺς δ' ἐπὶ ἵσεσθαι, ὃς Ἡρακλέα καὶ Περσέα,
τοὺς δ' ἐπὶ τέχνην, ὃς Ἀσκληπιόν; [Leg. 30.1-2]

The Sibylline quotation functions much like those of Homer and Hesiod; Athenagoras uses it for the details showing that the supposed gods were actually human beings, beyond the fact that they fit into his category of rulers. Thus, Cronus, Titan, and Japetus were kings on earth, the sons of the first humans; the recurrence of the words ἄνηρ and ἄνθρωπος in the passage must have made it especially attractive for Athenagoras' thesis.

There is no reason to suggest that Athenagoras considered the Sibyl unique among the Greeks; in fact there is no characterization of her or of her testimony at all. The only thing that can be said is that she must fall into the category of "those of the Greeks who were wise in poetry or history" (29.1), as simply one among the rest. Her

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167 Similarly, other pagan authorities sometimes treated specially by Christian writers receive no such consideration from Athenagoras: thus, he refers to Orpheus, but only in his role as theologian of the Greeks (18.3; cf. Pouderon, Athénagore: Supplique, pp. 325-8); he never refers to the change of heart and palinode attributed to him by some. Hermes Trismegistus appears (28.3), but only as one who claimed descent from the gods.

168 Geffcken, Zwei Griechische Apologeten, p. 227, considers that the Sibylline passage was in a pagan source; however, in this he is primarily depending on his theory that the relevant section of OrSib is of pagan origin (cf. Komposition und Entstehungszeit der Oracula Sibyllina [Leipzig, 1902], pp. 1-7; for strong arguments against this widespread idea, however, see Nikiprowetzky, La troisième Sibylle [Paris,
testimony is not emphasized by its position.\textsuperscript{169} Rather, it appears between a μὲν and its corresponding δὲ;\textsuperscript{170} and the argument continues afterwards with more examples, such as Antinous, and quotation of Callimachus. Furthermore, may Athenagoras betray some defensiveness about using the quotation: he seems to buttress the authority of the lines by appealing to Plato, who thus vouches for the Sibyl. Apparently, the use of her testimony might be questioned by some, as the skepticism evinced by the likes of Athenagoras' rough contemporary Lucian attests.

Theophilus of Antioch cites Sibylline material for a similarly ancient piece of history at Ad Autol. 2.31.6—on the Tower of Babel—and this is superficially similar to the use made by Athenagoras. Theophilus' view of the Sibyl overall, however, is much more generous, and will be dealt with hereafter. Also in a historical context, Tertullian quotes nearly the same lines from the Sibyl as does Athenagoras (Ad Nat. 2.12.35-36), and seems to accept her testimony partly because of her antiquity: \textit{Ante enim Sibylla quam omnis litteratura <vestr>a...} Like Athenagoras, he makes the citation to demonstrate his Euhemeristic views of early human history. As with Theophilus,

\textsuperscript{169} Contra G. J. M. Bartelink, "Die Oracula Sibyllina," p. 27.
\textsuperscript{170} As Geffcken, \textit{Zwei griechische Apologeten}, p. 227, points out.
however, Tertullian does not really treat the Sibyl as equivalent to other pagan sources, and so consideration of his views must be addressed later. **Eusebius’** quotation of the Sibyl (in Alexander Polyhistor’s paraphrase taken up by Josephus) for the story of the Tower of Babel seems to fall into this category of usage, if it were not for the fact that, despite a number of Sibylline references that appear in his works, he seems to be reluctant to refer to her in general, and for this reason I have treated him above as evincing a negative (or at best, ambivalent) attitude toward Sibylline testimony. **Lactantius**, uniquely, cites the Sibyl also for a detail of **linguistic** usage, namely the ancient term *Galatae* for the Gauls—but again, Lactantius’ extensive use of *OrSib* must be treated later.

Toward the end of the 4th century, **Jerome** mentions the Sibyl as one pagan example of virginity among others, without disparaging her overtly. This appears, however, in the context of his attack on Jovinian (A.D. 393),171 in which Jerome is combating Jovinian’s challenge to the usual high value placed on celibacy: against the latter’s contention that celibacy was a new and unnatural requirement, Jerome argues for its importance both in the Biblical tradition and in pagan history. Thus, he provides a list of pagan women—Greek, Roman, and barbarian—praised for their virginity.172 Among these appears the Sibyl:173

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173 For this traditional element of the Sibyl’s characterization, see the inscription quoted by Pausanias, *10.12.2*, and Engelmann and Merkelbach, no. 224, line 19 (10); and from literature, see especially Lycophron, *Alex.* 1278-9; Verg., *Aen.* 3.445, 6.45; more details are provided in Ovid, *Met.* 14.129-43 (literary sources cited by E. Fehrle, *Die kultische Keuschheit im Altertum* [Gießen, 1910], pp. 9, 77-78). The virginity motif is not visible in the *OrSib* collection—see *OrSib* 3.827; 1.289; especially 7.153-4, and possibly 160-61.
Quid referam Sibyllas Erythraeam atque Cumanam, et octo reliquas? nam Varro decem fuisse autumat, quaram insigne virginitas est, et virginitatis praemium divinatio. Quod si Aeolici genere sermonis Sibylla Θεοβούλη appellatur, recte concilium Dei sola scribitur nosse virginitas. [C. Jovin. 1.41 (PL 23: 283A)]

Immediately after the Sibyl, he also mentions the seers Cassandra and Chryseis. In this passage, not surprisingly, Jerome does not disparage the Sibyl, and even comes close to conceding to her some insight into truth. Nevertheless, the compliment to the Sibyl—his acknowledgement that she "knew the counsel of God"—is presumably only valid for the rhetorical purpose, as well as (possibly) to connect (even in the pagan tradition) virginity and the will of God. There is no likelihood that Jerome is to be seen as endorsing the content or use of texts alleged to be Sibylline—at least, nowhere in his works does he quote such material. An apologetic work of the early 5th century, the anonymous Consultationes Zacchaei christiani et Apollonii philosophi, presents a final citation of the Sibyl in a manner that does not distinguish her from other pagan sources, but only uses her testimony opportunistically to apologetic ends. In fact, only the first book is strictly

174 This passage is not adduced in B. Cardauns' edition of Varro's Antiquitates Rerum Divinarum (Mainz, 1976), but probably should be: the number ten (including the Erythraean and Cumaean Sibyls) agrees with Varro's list as known from other sources, as does the etymology, but the complementary details that the Sibyls were virgins, and that the power of prophecy was the "reward of their virginity" are perhaps too closely bound up with Jerome's polemic for there to be much likelihood of them having appeared in Varro. Bickel, p. 236, simply considers Jerome to have taken the Varronian material from Lactantius, DI 1.6, as is quite probable. The difficulty, that Lactantius does not mention the Sibyl's virginity, is obviated by appeal to this as a common motif in secular lore about the Sibyl, presumably derived by Jerome from his early education.

175 Of course, in his translation of Eusebius' Chronicon, Jerome includes Eusebius' references to the Sibyls (see supra, n. 53); but this does not include the quotation of Alexander Polyhistor's paraphrase from OrSib 3. Kurfess, "Vergils vierte Ekloge bei Hieronymus und Augustinus," SEJG 6 (1954), pp. 5-13, argues that Jerome, Ep. 53 (to Paulinus), is especially concerned with Augustine's position (on Vergil's 4th Ecl.), for which see infra, pp. 358-374, 378-381.

176 This work dates to c. 408-410 or soon thereafter, acc. to J. L. Feiertag and W. Steinmann, Questions d'un païen à un chrétien/Consultationes Zacchaei christiani et Apollonii philosophi, SC 401 and 402 (Paris, 1994), 1: 22. According to their analysis, 1: 22-31, the author was in the circle (taken in a very broad sense) of Sulpicius Severus. Similarly, Feiertag, Les Consultationes Zacchaei et Apollonii: Étude d'histoire et de sotériologie, Paradosis 30 (Fribourg Suisse, 1990), pp. 144-45, with detailed discussion of chronological and geographical localization of the author, pp. 14-142. G. Morin wished to attribute the
speaking any kind of apology. The work takes the form a series of questions posed by
the originally pagan Apollonius, along with the answers proposed by his Christian
interlocutor. At the end of the first book, Apollonius is converted to Christianity and
makes a profession of faith (1.38). In the second book, he is warned against Jewish and
heretical views, and in the third, he considers monastic discipline and chastity, and is
further instructed on eschatology. The author characterizes the work as a corpus
cre dulitatis; that is, a "traité d'ensemble de ce que nous croyons," as the recent editors of
the text, Feiertag and Steinmann, translate the phrase. In the passage in question,
Zacchaeus professes wonder that his interlocutor has any doubts about Christ's divinity
(the first questions of the book concern Christology), since he is not unaware that his own
authorities (vestrorum auctorum volumina) bear witness to the divinity and cross of
Christ. As examples, Zacchaeus adduces first Plato, and then the Sibyl:

(6) Sibyllae perinde praedivina, ut adseritis, carmina, proprietatem sancti nominis
personarunt cum dignitate naturae. Haec eadem deum postea uno versus
crucemque signavit, quam vos multis disputationibus refutatis, praedictum poema
ita ponens:
Felix ille deus, ligno qui pendet ab alto [OrSib 6.26/?/8.329?]
(7) Vide distantibus quidem verbis [sc. of Plato and the Sibyl] expressam tamen
utriusque confessionem. Ille178 "futurum" designat, quia manifestandum in
hominе sentiebat. (8) Haec "felicem" vocat, quia divinam praedivit in hominis
fragilitate virtutem et in eiusdem hominis morte victoriam. (9) Quos tamen non
idecirco sequi convenit quia his velut per somnium veram sapientiam loqui

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work to Firmicus Maternus in the mid-4th cen. on the basis of questionable correspondences in phraseology
1-2, with list of parallel phrases, pp. 129-34; see Feiertag and Steinmann's discussion, 1: 9-10). M. A.
Claussen, "Pagan Rebellion and Christian Apologetics in Fourth-Century Rome: The Consultationes
Zacchaei et Apollonii," JEH 46 (1995), pp. 602-10, however, recently attempts to date the work to the late
4th century, specifically during the revolt of Eugenius, on the basis of the primitive monasticism portrayed
and some alleged verbal parallels with Jerome and Augustine.

177 Cf. also their discussion, 1: 11-13.
178 Feiertag and Steinmann print quotation marks around ille, but I disagree with their interpretation of
the sentence; it is rather futurum that should have quotation marks (cf. futurum...deum, 1.4.5). As the
author has just referred to both (utriusque) in a summary statement, and given the parallelism in the two
sentences which follow it—haec (1.4.8) is pointless if there is no contrast with ille—ille must refer to
Plato, as haec to the Sibyl.
 aliquando permissum est, neque ut gentilitas meruisse ex deo praescientiam videretur, sed ut deum Christum ac dei Filium etiam vestri loquerentur auctores, qui, cum pene in omnibus falsi sint, in hoc probabiliter erraverunt. [CZA 1.4.6-9]

From Plato, he cites the passage from the Timaeus (36b8-9) where the Demiurge makes the form of the letter chi in constructing the circles of movement out of the World-Soul-material, with an eye also to 34a8-b1, whence Plato's τὸν ποτὲ ἐσόμενον θεὸν (contrasted with the "always existing god") appears as futurum...deum.179 As for the Sibyl, he first makes a general statement, that her verses proclaim the "special character of his holy name, along with the dignity of his nature."180 Then, as from a different passage of his Sibylline oracles,181 he quotes a line which seems to be an adaptation of OrSib 6.26: ὦ ξύλον ὦ μακάριστον, ἐφ' οὗ θεὸς ἔξετανύσθη.182 Originally a macarism of the cross, in the hands of a translator it has become a proclamation of the divinity of the one who hung thereon.183 Before further explanations, the author of the Consultationes sums up the case: both authors confess (sc. Christ's deity), although in different words. He explains Plato's designation futurum to mean that the philosopher perceived that this deity would appear to mankind in the future. The Sibyl's felix, he says, refers to his "divine virtue" and ultimate victory, the phrase ligno qui pendet ab alto being for him a clear allusion to crucifixion and death, and thus supplying the negative

179 The passages are also used by Justin, I Apol. 60.1; Justin's interpretation of Plato's τὸν ποτὲ ἐσόμενον θεὸν is "the son of God."
180 The meaning and reference are not entirely clear. Feiertag and Steinman translate "l'identité de son saint nom avec la dignité de sa nature" and refer to OrSib 8.329: Ἀὐτὸν σου γίνωσκε θεὸν θεοῦ νιόν ἐόντα. Could proprietatem sancti nominis be a variation for proprium sanctum nomen, with proprietatem meaning "special designation" (OLD s.v., 2b) and the genitive (nominis) appositional? Cf. Lact., DI 1.6.4, on the supreme God, according to Hermes Trismegistus: ἄνωνυμον esse dixit, eo quod nominis proprietate non egeat, ob ipsam scilicet unicitatem. In that case, the reference might rather be to the acrostic, OrSib 8.317ff., which gives Jesus' name and titles explicitly.
181 Eadem and postea show that he is not simply now quoting what he had been summarizing.
182 The line is often quoted by others, always by itself: see the discussion in Chap. 3, under "The Macarism of the Cross."
183 Also, perhaps only in the interests of forming a Latin hexameter, the adjective alto has been added, and he who in Greek "was stretched out" now in Latin simply "hangs."
conditions with which felix contrasts: human frailty and death. If she can call him felix despite the second half of the line, in other words, she must have in mind a good that outweighs that evil.

The Sibyl is presented in CZA as fully within the pagan sphere, and as a recognized authority for the pagans. It is "you," says Zacchaeus, who consider her verses praedivina; he himself does not endorse the claim. Her work is simply classed as poetry: note the descriptive terms carmina, versu, and poema. It is notable that the author chose the Sibyl alongside Plato as sole pagan witness; however, the succinctness of each example and their appropriateness (in each case, mention of divinity and cross within a short compass) raises the possibility that they were chosen primarily for their brevity. The author does not give the impression that he chose them because of any greater wisdom to be found in Plato and the Sibyl than in their fellow pagans.\textsuperscript{184} Although Zacchaeus admits (1.4.9) that pagans may sometimes, imperfectly, have hit upon some truth (\textit{his velut per somnium sapientiam loqui aliquando permissum est}), they did not get the knowledge from God (\textit{neque ut gentilitas meruisse ex deo praescientiam videretur}); rather, they stumbled upon it (\textit{probabiliter erraverunt}).\textsuperscript{185} His only concern is to show

\textsuperscript{184} His attitude thus provokes Apollonius to respond that perhaps Plato and the Sibyl were mistaken here too.

\textsuperscript{185} Similarly, he admits that astrology may sometimes give a true prediction, but still considers it useless (1.30.7) and not from God (1.30.4); he alleges demonic involvement in magic and divination (1.30.12-14). Further clues as to the appearance of truth sometimes in pagan thought may be found in 1.31.19, which says that the devil mixed some good things into pagan religion, such as the value placed on virginity in certain cults; at 1.33.6, he hypothesizes that the devil and the demons might have been restored to favor, had they repented ante augmenta consequentium flagitorum et secretorum caelestium, quae ex parte sciebant, proditionem—an account such as that of 1 Enoch 6-8.
that even pagan authorities speak about Christ as God. In the rest of the work, in fact, the author names no pagan authors.\footnote{186}

It is not surprising that an early Christian writer who considered the Sibyl to be a true prophetess would also have the confidence to quote her as a source for ancient history, if the opportunity presented itself; thus, Theophilus' and Lactantius' non-theological uses are not problematic. Conversely, if the commonly held conviction that the Sibyl belonged to the sphere of traditional paganism habitually extended to all those texts that circulated under her name, it would be reasonable to see Christians citing Sibylline texts for non-apologetic purposes. What is striking is that very few ever do either: those who value her testimony tend to use it purely for apologetic purposes, and those who do not tend not to cite or allude recognizably to the contents of OrSib. What does this mean? Those who were apologetically attracted to the Sibylline texts were attracted almost exclusively for the purpose of apologetics; and those who criticize the Sibyl are either unfamiliar with many texts associated with her, or consider the Sibyl too closely associated with traditional pagan religion to endorse positively, or consider the authenticity of texts attributed to her as too contestable for them to be worth citing, even in apologetic. In any case, the "negative" or "neutral" attitude toward the Sibyl was long-lived, and constantly available to Christians as a coherent position to take; and the most notable eruption of this attitude, as opposed to the slow smolder of uneasiness with regard to Sibylline texts observable in Greek texts and some Latin texts throughout the Patristic period, was in the late 4\textsuperscript{th} and early 5\textsuperscript{th} centuries in the Latin-speaking Christian

\footnote{186 He quotes Cicero twice, referring once to him as \textit{ille} (1.praef.3), once to the quotation itself as \textit{dicti veteris sententiam} (3.1.1). Feiertag (p. 19) points out also the negative reference to the mythological figures Deucalion and Pyrrha in 1.17.}
sphere, when strong voices were raised attacking the Sibyl as yet one more piece of
paganism to be subdued to secure the final triumph of Christianity.
Chapter 3

THE SIBYL AS PROPHETESS

This chapter will examine the general and early evidence for Christians treating the Sibyl as a prophetess—from the Christian perspective, one who received inspiration from God, rather than being the mouthpiece of demons (= pagan gods) or being endowed with superior intelligence. First, there will be some exploration of general endorsements of the Sibyl, along with an investigation of a specific famous line (the "macarism of the cross," OrSib 6.26) that seems to have reinforced this general reputation; in the second half of the chapter, I will examine the positions of some early Christian writers whose views become progressively more complex, and in a way, more positive. Whereas Justin Martyr, as will be seen, is content to refer to the Sibyl as a prophetic voice parallel to the Hebrew tradition, Theophilus (and, perhaps tentatively, following him, Tertullian) proclaims clearly the parallelism, and cites long passages to demonstrate it; and Clement takes the process one step further, suggesting that the Sibyl was not simply parallel to the Biblical prophets, but was a Hebrew prophetess. Despite this view, however, Clement still retains (in another, more scholarly persona?) the traditional view of the Sibyl as a seer associated with pagan religion. For later chapters I will leave the still more complex or debatable views of some later Christian writers, some of whom may well be judged to have considered the Sibyl a true prophetess, but whose views require more extended treatment.

There is some evidence, much of it second-hand, dating back perhaps to the early 2nd century, that the Sibyl enjoyed a general reputation as a witness friendly or allied to
Christianity—evidence that some Christians, at least, were willing to appeal to the authority of the Sibyl in a way that distinguished her from most or all other "pagan" authorities. This reputation is general in two different ways, however. On the one hand, a number of Christian writers appeal to the Sibyl (or report such appeals) in a "general way"—that is, without much detail about her purported status or the content of her prophecies, yet in a way that differentiates her from run-of-the-mill pagan authorities. On the other hand, the Sibyl appears in ancient Christian sources generally—that is, in a number of different places and at many different times; furthermore, some of the Christian writers who mention her depict her as a "standard" or well-known figure to whom Christians could or did appeal in apologetic circumstances, a figure whose name did not require much (or any) further explanation. The first type could be called "non-specific" appeal to or endorsement of the Sibyl; the second, common or wide-spread endorsement.

A further problem for the interpretation of some endorsements comes from the fact that often, the use of the Sibyl made or recommended by certain groups or persons is only known at second- or third-hand; in such cases, since our information is incomplete, the notices may appear non-specific, whereas if the information were preserved first-hand, more specifics of the views of the Sibyl and her status might well be forthcoming.

In the previous chapter, for example, Hermas' (presumably negative) stance toward the Sibyl has been examined, but if, as seems likely, the initial identification of the female figure seen by the narrator as the Sibyl, coupled with the subsequent rejection of that interpretation, imply that some Christians known to Hermas (at Rome?) did habitually use the Sibyl as a figure of religious authority, then Hermas' opponents
endorsed the Sibyl or Sibylline texts. But because Hermas does not supply any particulars of their endorsement, in the state of our evidence it can only be called non-specific. On one reading of Hermas, however, and especially if the contents of the old woman's book (Vis. 1.3.4) are meant to recall the contents of OrSib, it is possible to imagine that they appealed to the Sibyl as a valid (thus, divinely inspired) source for theological instruction (possibly equal in status to the Hebrew prophets), and that the texts they associated with her were similar to the extant OrSib. With more information (rather than just Hermas' implicit rejection of the Sibyl), their use of the Sibyl may well have been very specific and positive indeed.

Similarly, the "Sibyllistae" attested by Origen's Contra Celsum give evidence of the appeal some Christians made to the Sibyl, whether or not these Christians formed a recognizable sect. ¹ Again, and only because of the lack of specific information about these Christians, the notice constitutes a non-specific endorsement. If Origen's statement that Celsus misconstrued a label used by opponents of the idea that the Sibyl was "a prophetess" includes genuine information, such users of the Sibyl (according to hostile Christians) granted her a status like that of the Old Testament prophets (while Celsus' allegations do not quite prove that his Sibyllists asserted such a status)—at least, the statement shows that Origen considered such views to exist. On the other hand, though, Origen would have been familiar with the characterizations of the Sibyl in the works of Clement of Alexandria (and possibly also Theophilus of Antioch), and his statement may simply reflect this knowledge. If Origen is right that there was no sect of Sibyllists, his arguments indicate that use of the Sibyl was widespread enough to provoke opponents,

¹ For more on the references of Origen and Celsus to the Sibyl, see supra, pp. 75-81.
and on this supposition the *Contra Celsum* would point toward the other kind of "general" endorsement.

**Early General Reputation**

A few reports of the use or recommendation of the Sibyl are equally at a remove from first-hand knowledge, but include somewhat more information—yet there is still not enough to be very specific about the Sibyl's status.

A particular Gnostic-related (but not well known) sect, the Peratae,\(^2\) appealed to specific lines akin to *OrSib* (but not part of the corpus transmitted together, and hence they are treated as a "fragment" of *OrSib*) to prove a philosophical or theological point: human beings are strongly dependent on their γένεσις. As Hippolytus (*Refutatio omnium haeresium* 5.16.1) says:

\[
\text{Καλοῦσι δὲ αὐτοὺς Περάτας, μηδὲν<α> δύνασθαι νομίζοντες τῶν ἐν γενέσει καθεστηκότων διαφυγεῖν τὴν ἀπὸ τῆς γενέσεως τοῖς γεγενημένοις ὤφισσεν μοῖρα—ἐι γὰρ τι, φησί, γενητὸν, ὅλως καὶ φθείρεται, καθάπερ καὶ Σιβύλλῃ δοξεί.}^{3}\text{—μόνοι δὲ, φησίν, ἵμεῖς οἱ τὴν ἀνάγκην τῆς γενέσεως ἔγνωκότες, καὶ τὰς ὁδοὺς δὲ ἑιςελήλυθεν ὁ ἄνθρωπος εἰς τὸν κόσμον ἀκριβῶς δεδιδαγμένοι, διελθεῖν καὶ περάσαι τὴν φθορὰν μόνοι δυνάμεθα.}
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The Sibyl's testimony, invoked as additional (καὶ), functions similarly to many quotations of pagan authorities in Christian apologies which are included alongside Biblical quotations, showing that pagan philosophers or poets were in agreement with Biblical truth. Hippolytus alleges the system propounded by the Peratae to be simply astrology with the names changed (*Refutatio* 5.12-18 passim)—and, in fact, the Peratic

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\(^2\) Hippolytus, *Refutatio* 5.12-18 Marcovich. Some of their views bear resemblances to those of the Naasseni (compare 5.17.11-13 to 5.9.15).

\(^3\) Cf. *OrSib* fr. 3.1: εἰ δὲ γενητὸν ὅλως καὶ φθείρεται.
sources he cites often mention obviously non-Greek names, and then claim that "ignorance" calls them by a different (familiar, Greek) name (e.g., 5.16.15). What is the status of the Sibyl in this framework? There is nothing explicit in what Hippolytus cites to differentiate the Sibyl from other pagan authorities, and indeed the Peratae appeal equally to poets and philosophers to buttress or illustrate their views; in the same section in which the Sibyl appears, Hesiod and Heraclitus are adduced for the first function, Aratus for the second. It is thus possible that the Sibyl was no more than useful in a kind of "apologetic" sense, no more than other pagan authorities, and their views that Greek gods and heroes are the equivalents of the elements of their system might support this; but they do seem to enlist a smaller number of privileged pagans for special treatment: notably, Heraclitus is one of the other two pagans cited for their demonstration, and he is one of those Justin endorses as living according to logos; Hesiod may be specifically important for the Peratae because of their special interest in Kronos, Aratus obviously because of their interest in astronomy. The most that can be said with certainty is that they appealed to the Sibyl as an authority figure. As for Hippolytus, his view of the appeal to the Sibyl cannot be determined at all. 4

Somewhat more can be gleaned from another second-hand report. An apocryphal statement of the Apostle Paul was circulated (known to us through Clement of Alexandria's quotation of it), probably beginning sometime in the second century, that

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4 According to McGinn, p. 13, depending on Thompson (especially, he says, the tabulations on pp. 130-36), "Justin, Athenagoras, Hippolytus and Tertullian all mention the Sibyl with respect"—he cites Hippolytus, *De Christo et Antichristo* 52 (from Thompson), which does not mention the Sibyl. Points of contact have been found between Hippolytus' eschatology and the Sibylline Oracles, but there are certainly no direct mentions; see Appendix C for other possibilities.
endorsed the Sibyl and mentioned very general subjects of her prophecies. Ps.-Paul pairs the Sibyl with Hystaspes as "Greek books" as examples of Greek "prophets" corresponding exactly to those among the Jews:

(Clem. Alex., Strom. 6.V.42.3:) ἐπεὶ, ὅτι καθάπερ Ἰουδαίους σῴζεσθαι ἤβούλετο ὁ θεὸς τοὺς προφήτας διδοὺς, οὕτως καὶ Ἑλληνίδων τοὺς δοξιμαστάτους οἰκείους αὐτῶν τῇ διαλέκτῳ προφήτας ἀναστήσας, ὡς οἶδοι τε ἦσαν δέχεσθαι τὴν παρὰ τοῦ θεοῦ εὐεργεσίαν, τὸν χυδαίων ἀνθρώπων διέκρινεν, δηλώσει πρὸς τῷ Πέτρου Κηρύγματι ὁ ἀπόστολος λέγων Παῦλος: (43.1) "λάβετε καὶ τὰς Ἑλληνικὰς βίβλους, ἐπίγνωτε Σίβυλλαν, ὡς δηλοῖ ἕνα θεὸν καὶ τὰ μέλλοντα ἔσεσθαι, καὶ τὸν Ἡστάσπην λαβόντες ἀνάγνωτε, καὶ εὑρήσετε πολλῷ τηλαυγέστερον καὶ σαφέστερον γεγραμμένον τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ θεοῦ, καὶ καθὼς ποιήσουσι τῷ Ἰουδαίῳ θεῷ τὴν ὑπομονὴν καὶ τὴν παρουσίαν αὐτοῦ." (43.2) εἶτα ἐν λόγῳ πυνθάνεται ἡμῶν: "ὅλος δὲ ὁ κόσμος καὶ τὰ ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ τίνος; οὐχὶ τοῦ θεοῦ;«

The themes treated by both figures are described as prophetic, and for the Sibyl additionally monotheism is a view alleged. Clement of Alexandria includes the citation of "Paul" in the middle of other quotations from a "Preaching of Peter" that serve to establish the Greek tradition as a parallel to the Jewish Scriptures, both leading up to Christianity. The Sibyl and Hystaspes are especially useful as parallels to the prophets of

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5 This was probably once part of the Acts of Paul (so Stählin ad loc.), the text of which has not been transmitted complete. Some have thought that it must be part of the Κήρυγμα Πέτρου and interpret πρὸς as meaning "in" (A. Hilgenfeld, "Das Κήρυγμα Πέτρου (καὶ Παύλου)," Zeitschrift für wissenschaftliche Theologie 36.2 (1893), pp. 525-31; contra, E. von Dobschütz, Das Kerygma Petri, TU 11.1 (Leipzig, 1893), pp. 14-15; Harnack, Geschichte der altchristlichen Litteratur bis Eusebius, vol. 1 (Leipzig, 1897), p. 129; Schürerrev 3.1: 655). That is difficult to justify, and it is perfectly characteristic of Clement to insert material from a second source while he is giving excerpts of a primary source (A. Méhat, Étude sur les "Stromates" de Clément d'Alexandrie, Patristica Sorbonensia 7 [Paris, 1966], pp. 235-9, who also [p. 237 n. 114] thinks the words of "Paul" came from the Acta Pauli). The passage does not match any known part of the Acta Pauli, but there are large enough gaps in the transmitted text for it to have been there once. Alternatively, some other lost apocryphal work may be in view, such as a κήρυγμα Παύλου (von Dobschütz, p. 126). C. Schmidt, Acta Pauli aus der Heidelberger koptischen Papyrusschriften Nr. 1 (Leipzig, 1904), p. 114, prints the passage from Clement, but does not directly address the question of its source. In Schneemelcher, there is no mention of the possible fragment, either in 2: 35-41 ("The Kerygma Petri") or 2: 213-70 ("Acts of Paul"), nor in Mara's presentation of the fragments of the Κήρυγμα Πέτρου, "Il Kerygma Petrou," Studi e materiali di storia delle religioni 38 (67), pp. 314-42.

6 This, of course, would be quite strange in the case of Hystaspes, who is normally identified as a Persian king, to whom pseudopigrapha were attributed. See Lactantius, DI 7.15.19 and further, Schürerrev 3.1: 654-6. Justin (I Apol. 20) also appeals to the Sibyl and Hystaspes together.
the Hebrew Bible—in effect, to intensify the point he is making, which is unlike his usual practice in emphasizing the presence of "prophets" in the Hellenic tradition. If Clement's reading of the Pauline apocryphon is sound—if it did make the selected authorities a strong parallel to Hebrew prophecy—its author espoused the Sibyl specifically as a prophetess. The lack of complete information, however, makes this only probable, not certain.

The tone and wording of Ps.-Paul's words suggest an apologetic context. Von Dobschütz observes that the adverbial καὶ at the beginning of the citation implies a previous appeal to Biblical material (Hebrew prophecy). Thus, in a way similar to Justin (I Apol 20), supposedly pagan prophets are adduced as witnesses for Christianity, as a supplement to the proof from Hebrew scriptures. It is not clear exactly what kind of audience "Paul" was addressing in this text. The word Ἑλληνικὰς would be odd if he were addressing Greeks; one might expect rather ὑμετέρως or παρ' ὑμῖν. The audience might have been Jewish, then, except that such an audience would have no need of the Sibyl's demonstration of "one God." The phrase introducing the second quotation, πυνθάνειν ἡμῶν, is probably generalizing: "we" equals "anyone who reads this." In any case, an apologetic context might mean that "Paul" simply considers the Sibyl and Hystaspes apologetically useful, not necessarily assuming them to have a higher status than other pagan authorities. As with a number of these early, fragmentary sources, it is difficult to determine its view with certainty, although on a generous reading of Clement, Ps.-Paul certainly seems to have considered the Sibyl a "prophetess." In terms of the

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7 P. 124.
8 Note also that von Dobschütz, pp. 126-27, suggests tentatively that one should find a polemic vs. the Jewish distinction between clean and unclean in the second quotation from "Paul."
9 For more discussion, see infra (p. 195) on Clement of Alexandria.
assumed content of her prophecy, one should probably presume, on the basis of the contrast Ps.-Paul sketches between the Sibyl and Hystaspes, that it included theology ("one God") and eschatology ("things to come"), but no clear reference to Christ.

An apologetic work probably written in the early 3rd century, the Apology of Ps.-Melito, has a similarly general endorsement of the Sibyl, citing the Sibyl to support the view that pagan gods were simply dead kings:10

But I affirm that also the Sybil [sic] has said respecting them, that it is the images of kings, who are dead, they worship. And this is easy to understand; for lo! Even now they worship and honour the images of those belonging to the Caesars, more than those former Gods.11

[Ps.-Melito, Apol. 4]12

This could derive simply from Athenagoras (Leg. 30.1), who quotes the Sibyl for the same point, but only as a historically credible authority. A passage like OrSib 8.392-813 would be especially appropriate as a specific reference, although given the difficulty of dating OrSib 8, it is perhaps safer to assume the influence of Athenagoras. It is just

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11 So Cureton, p. 43, translates; the translation in ANF 8: 752 agrees substantially with Cureton. On pp. 86-87, he criticizes previous translations, which either mistake the word *swl*’ as being from the root *sl*’ (thus "B. C. H." translates the clause "Now I say that rejection is denounced against those") or ignore the word (so Renan); because of the frequency of reference to the Sibyl in early Christian writers, he interprets the word as equivalent to "Sibyl." For a specific reference to the Sibylline texts, he suggests OrSib 3.721-3 (quoted in Ps.-Justin, Coh. ad Gr. 16.1) and 3.278-9.

12 A standard text and translation in Otto, Corpus Apol. Chr. Saec. Sec., 9: 501-11 (text), 423-32 (trans.). See also J. B. Pitra, Spicilegium Solesmense (Paris, 1855), 2: xxxviii-lii; but at the relevant point (p. xii), the translation (by E. Renan) reads "Ego vero dico quod jam dixi, eos imagines regum mortuorum adorare," with no reference to the Sibyl; similarly, the Latin translation printed by Migne (PG 5: 1227B) has no reference to the Sibyl: "Ego vero rursus dicere non vereor quod jam dixi, ab eis imagines regum mortuorum adorari." See, however, Cureton's strictures mentioned in the previous note.

13 Note especially 8.392-5:

Ταύτα γὰρ ἐξ μυθήματι βασιλέων ἢδε τυφάνων δαίμονας ποιήσουσι νεκροίς, ὡς σύρμανίσιν, θρησκεύμα ἕθεος καὶ ὄλθριον ἐκπέλεοντες.
Καὶ καλέουσιν θεοὺς ἕθεοι τὰς εἰκόνας αὐτῶν...

Geffcken (ad loc.) cites Ps.-Melito as presumably referring to these lines.
possible, however, that Sibylline texts had a more pervasive influence on this Apology; some have seen the influence of Theophilus, and specifically the Sibyl as quoted by Theophilus, which could imply a more exalted view of the Sibyl (like Theophilus'), as might the reference to her simply by name, with no explanation. The probability of such pervasive influence, however, is not high, since the parallels could easily be explained as commonplaces. The reference to the Sibyl by name alone might then be explained as an inability on the apologist's part to say anything more.

An unexpected place to find references to the Sibyl is the corpus of directions for ecclesiastical life found in the Constitutiones Apostolicae. A Sibylline citation does appear, however, in an apologetic context; namely, when the text is addressing the problem of the idea of resurrection for pagans (Const. Ap. 5.7.13). Another method, besides appeal to Scripture, is needed:

(13) Ἐὰν δὲ χλευάζουσιν Ἠλληνες ἀπιστοῦντες ταῖς ἰμητέραις γραφαῖς, πιστοσάτω αὐτοῖς κἂν ἢ αὐτῶν προφητίς Σίβυλλα, ότω πως αὐτοῖς λέγουσα κατὰ λέξιν·

'Αλλ' ὅπτ' ἣδη πάντα τέφρα σποδόεσσα γένηται,
Καὶ πῦρ κοιμίσῃ θεὸς ἀφθιτος, ὡσεὶ ἀνήρειν,
'Οστέα καὶ σποδιὴ ἑαυτὸς θεὸς ἐμπάλιν ἀνήρειν
Μορφώει, στῆσε δὲ βροτοὺς πάλιν, ὡς πάρος ἱσαν.
Καὶ τότε δὴ χρῖσαι ἔσται, ἐφ' ἣ δικάσαι θεὸς αὐτός,
'Οσσοὶ δὲ εὑσεβέουσι, πάλιν ἡμών· ὡσεὶ' ὡσεὶ

15 T. Ulbrich, Die pseudo-melitonsiche Apologie (Breslau, 1906), pp. 116-17. He also cites (pp. 115-16) parallels with Theophilus in general, few of which are convincing; the best is perhaps that between Theoph. Ad Autol. 1.10.5 and Ps.-Melito §4 (soon after the sentence mentioning the Sibyl), on taxes and contributions paid by the gods to the emperors for which the only other apologetic parallel is in Tertullian.
16 Redacted probably c. 380 in Syria (see M. Metzger, Les constitutions apostoliques, vol. 1, SC 320 [Paris, 1985], pp. 55-59). The allegation that Ps.-Justin, Quaest. et resp. ad orth., Resp. 74 (5th cen.?), makes, that Clement (of Rome) said the Sibyl spoke the end of the world as a "judgment by fire," may reflect this citation, since the Const. Ap. sometimes are considered Clementine (Metzger, pp. 33-34).
17 Two groups of mss. (and the marginal note in α) add θνητοὶ here.
Immediately thereafter (Const. Ap. 5.7.15-16), the text appeals to the further pagan example of the Phoenix. Although it describes the Sibyl as "prophetess," this seems to be mainly an apologetic concession to ensure greater credibility. An earlier version of the ecclesiastical tradition, however, the Syriac Didascalia, presents exactly the same quotation but with different comments about it. The introductory remarks indicate that the text is addressing former pagans:

Nam vos, qui ex gentibus vocati estis, scitis, quoniam et gentiles de resurrectione futura legent et audiant a Sibylla illis dictum et praedicatum sic… [Didascalia 5.7.12 Funk]20

The conclusion, moreover, allows for a divine providential intention of securing testimony directed at both Jews and Gentiles:21

Non solum ergo, carissimi, a Sibylla dictum est et manifestatum de resurrectione, sed et per sacras scripturas; nam Dominus Iudaeis et gentilibus simul etiam Christianis in unum praednuntiavit praedicans eum, quae a mortuis futura est hominum resurrectio. [5.7.14 Funk]22

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18 The omission of line 186 may be due to the mention of "Tartara"; on the other hand, both 186 and 188 are only found in Sib. Ω mss., absent from ΦΨ and (in the case of line 188) from Lactantius' quotation (DI 7.23). Thus, this may well be simply the full text of these lines as the writer of the Const. Ap. (or rather, the Didascalia) knew them; Geffcken only considers 188 "inauthentic."

19 From the first half of the 3rd century, as Metzger, pp. 15-16, argues. Note also Metzger's stemma of "écrits constitutionnels" making up the Const. Ap. on p. 41.

20 Cf. also the German translation of H. Achelis and J. Flemming, Die syrische Didaskalia, TU 25.2 (Leipzig, 1904), p. 100.

21 Similarly, after the Sibylline quotation, the Didascalia makes more of God's role in creating the Phoenix as a demonstration of the resurrection (5.7.15).

22 Note also the German translation of Achelis and Flemming (p. 100): "Doch nicht allein durch die Sibylle, Geliebte, ist den Heidenvölkern die Auferstehung gepredigt worden, sondern auch durch die heiligen Schriften hat unser Herr zuvor den Juden Heiden und Christen zusammen gepredigt und verkündigt von der Auferstehung der Toten, die den Menschen künftig zu teil werden soll."
Thus, both stages in the constitutional tradition are familiar with the Sibyl as the one crucial pagan source that may be quoted to further apologetic goals, and at least the earlier stage is willing to grant a certain legitimacy to such a Gentile prophet, making the Sibyl equally a recipient of God's revelation.

Some further late sources also demonstrate the general knowledge that the Sibyl was a prophetic figure who could be invoked in discussion with pagans. The Manichaean teacher and controversialist Faustus, in the late 4th century, mentioned a small number of pagan figures, texts associated with whom were reputed to be useful for converting pagans. These figures are Orpheus, Hermes Trismegistus, and the Sibyl. It is significant that these are all oracular or semi-divine figures, who could thus function as some sort of analogue to the prophets of the Hebrew tradition. In fact, Faustus does have a category of "pagan prophets" appropriate to be cited before pagans—distinguished, however, like the Hebrew prophets, from the "prophets of the truth." Unfortunately, it does not seem that Faustus had a great deal of information about these sources, despite their theoretical usefulness. The importance of Faustus' testimony is that it shows these sources as having a general reputation for Christianity-favoring statements, although concrete information and texts may have been less generally available.

The Biblical introduction adapted into Latin form by Junillus (or Iunilius) Africanus in the mid-6th century (written not much earlier by a Paulus active at Nisibis;

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23 Augustine, C. Faustum 13.1; 19.2.
24 For further discussion, see Chap. 6.
mentioned in Junillus' prefatory letter) refers to the Sibyl as a standard reference in convincing pagans of the truth of the Christian Scriptures:\footnote{25}

[Student:] Unde probamus libros religionis nostrae divina esse inspiratione conscriptos?
[Teacher:] Ex multis, quorum prima est ipsius scriptucae veritas; deinde ordo rerum, consonantia praeceptorum, modus locutionis sine ambitu puritasque verborum. Additur conscribentium et praedicantium qualitas: quod divina homines, excelsa viles, infacundi subtilia non nisi divino repleti Spiritu tradissent; tum praedicationis virtus, quae mundum, licet a paucis despectis praedicaretur, obtinuit. Accedunt his testificatio\footnote{26} contrariorum ut sibyllarum vel philosophorum, expulsio adversariorum, utilitas consequentium, exitus eorum quae per perceptiones et figuras praedictionesque praedicta sunt; ad postremum miracula iugiter facta, donec Scriptura ipsa suscipetur a gentibus, de qua hoc nunc ad maximum miraculum sufficit, quod ab omnibus suscepta cognoscitur.

[Instituta regularia divinae legis 2.29]

The primary importance of this reference is simply that it confirms the idea that the Sibyl functioned as one of a small number of standard pagan references used by Christians to confirm the truth of Christianity, the prophetic (?) Sibyl here paired with another major category, that of philosophers. It further confirms (as Ps.-Melito's Apology had suggested) that knowledge of the Sibyl's name, at least, was known not only in the Greek and Roman worlds, but also in the Syriac-speaking world. Also, this introduction to Scripture fed back into the Latin world through Junillus' translation; the work was endorsed by Cassiodorus and was widely distributed in Western Europe thereafter.\footnote{27}


\footnotetext{26}{Kihn (p. 329 n. 1) restores the ms. reading testificatio against the mistaken rectificatio that had crept unexplained into other editions, including that in PL 68.}

\footnotetext{27}{See Maas, pp. 32-34.}
The Macarism of the Cross

In the fourth and fifth centuries, some Christian writers show knowledge of the Sibyl as a standard reference point for apologists, but specifically in connection with a line from a Christian portion of OrSib concerning the crucifixion (6.26):

ὦ ξύλον ὦ μακαριστόν, ἐφ᾽ οὗ θεὸς ἔξετανύσθη.

As described in the previous chapter, Gregory of Nazianzen mentions this macarism of the cross as the utterance of the Sibyl with which he was familiar. The early 5th-cen. apologetic Consultationes Zacchaei et Apollonii cite this line in a Latin version with the key nouns reversed, so as to make a Latin hexameter:

Felix ille deus, ligno qui pendet ab alto. [CZA 1.4.6]

Despite the obvious change which actually makes this a macarism of Christ rather than of the cross, the Greek line cited above (OrSib 6.26) is clearly in view; the author makes the line out to be part of "Sibyllae perinde praedivina, ut adseritis, carmina." The parenthesis "ut adseritis" makes it clear that in fact the anonymous author does not consider the Sibyl to have a higher personal status than other pagans, but only that she (like Plato, whom he also quotes in this connection) is a useful tool for converting a pagan audience.

However, as the only one of two pagan sources quoted, the Sibyl seems to be a standard, well-known authority to appeal to in an apologetic context. Although the anonymous author does not grant her higher status, his use shows that appeal to the Sibyl as a prophetess of Christ was known to him.
The Sibylline verse appears by itself, or at least with no hint of a context like that in *OrSib*, also in a number of later sources. What is clear from these citations of *OrSib* 6.26 by itself is that the line must have enjoyed substantial independent transmission and publicity. Where did it get such notoriety? One further citation suggests the origin of its wide dissemination. Sozomenus, an ecclesiastical historian writing in the second quarter of the 5th century, adds to his account of the Empress Helena's finding of the True Cross the idea that the event was foretold long ago—and foretold by an acknowledged Greek authority, the Sibyl (*HE* 2.1.10):

> Ταῦτα [i.e. the finding of the cross] πάλαι μὲν ἐγνωστὸ καὶ προείρητο τοῖς ἱεροῖς προφήταις, εἰς ὑστερον δὲ διὰ θαυμασμοῦ τῶν ἑργῶν, ὅτε ἐν καιρῷ δοκοῦν εἶναι τῷ θεῷ κατεφαίνετο. Καὶ θαυμαστὸν οὕτω τοιούτων, ὅπου γε καὶ πρὸς αὐτῶν τῶν Ἑλλήνων συνομολόγηται Σιβύλλης εἶναι τούτῳ—

> ὦ ξύλον μακαριστὸν ἐφ' οὗ θεὸς ἐξετανύσθη

> Τοῦτο γὰρ καὶ σπουδάζων τις ἐναντίος εἶναι οὐκ ἄν ἀρνηθείη.

> Προοιμίανεν οὖν τὸ τοῦ σταυροῦ ξύλον καὶ τὸ περὶ αὐτοῦ σέβας.

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28 Note especially John Lydus (*De Mensibus* 4.47 [p. 104, lines 19-21 Wuensch]), and the Tübingen Theosophy (§80; cf. Erbse, *Theosophorum Graecorum Fragmenta* [Stuttgart, 1995], p. 79). The line was also incorporated or adapted in later oracular-style texts, such as the longer version of the oracle in *Tüb. Theos.* § 16 printed by Beatrice, *Anonymi Monophysitae Theosophia*, p. 12 (line 81): "Χριστὸς ἐμὸς θεός ἐστιν, ὃς ἐν ξύλῳ ἐξετανύσθη;" and in a version of the *Tiburtine Sibyl*—lines 71-2 of the text edited by P. J. Alexander in *The Oracle of Baalbek: The Tiburtine Sibyl in Greek Dress* (Washington, DC, 1989).

29 On the date, H. Leppin, *Von Constantin dem Großen zu Theodosius II. Das christliche Kaisertum bei den Kirchenhistorikern Socrates, Sozomenus und Theodoret*, Hypomnemata 110 (Göttingen, 1996), pp. 279-81, notes the general termini, 439 and 450—but in any case, Sozomenus used Socrates' history so must post-date the latter's work. Historians have varied in their skepticism about the story of the True Cross, and especially about Helena's supposed role in it. The main objection to its authenticity is Eusebius' silence; Cyril of Jerusalem, however, writes to Constantius in the mid-4th cen., mentioning that the cross was found in Jerusalem under Constantine (*Ep. ad Const.* 3); at around the same time, pieces of the cross seem to have been proliferating in Christian circles (note Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catech.* 4.10; 10.19; 13.4; Julian the Apostate *ap. Cyril of Alexandria*, *C. Jul. 6* [PG 76: 796-7]). Ambrose is the first extant source to associate Helena with the discovery (*De Ob. Theod.* 41-48). H. A. Pohlsander, *Helena: Empress and Saint* (Chicago, 1995), p. 115, and H. Drijvers, *Helena Augusta: The Mother of Constantine the Great and Her Finding of the True Cross* (Leiden, 1992), p. 93, agree that the discovery did indeed take place in Constantine's reign, but that Helena was not involved. S. Borgehammar, *How the Holy Cross Was Found: From Event to Medieval Legend* (Stockholm, 1991), pp. 123-42, believes that Helena was involved. Borgehammar, pp. 93-122, and Drijvers, pp. 86-88, attempt to explain away Eusebius' silence.

30 Cassiodorus includes a Latin version, translated from Sozomenus, in his *Historia Ecclesiastica Tripertita* 2.18 [PL 69: 937]: "De hoc ligno sibylla dixit apud paganos: O ter beatum lignum in quo Deus extensus est!"
It is true that already at the very beginning of his history, Sozomenus adverts to the existence of prophecies of Christ in the pagan sphere, in what amounts to a general endorsement of the Sibyl (and unspecified others) as prophetic sources raised up for the providential purpose of having Gentile witnesses to Christ.\(^{31}\) Yet comparison with other versions of the story of the finding of the cross suggest a common source—and thus (possibly) that Sozomenus' reference to the Sibyl and "some other oracles" at the outset of his work was determined primarily by his knowledge of the specific account of the cross, not by detailed knowledge of Sibylline and other such oracles.

Socrates Scholasticus, another ecclesiastical historian, and roughly contemporaneous with Sozomenus, has the following passage in his account of the finding of the cross (**HE** 1.17.3):\(^{32}\)

\[
καθελοῦσα οὖν τὸ ἔξοαν καὶ τὸν τόπον ἐκχώσασα καὶ καθαρὸν ἐργασαμένη τρεῖς εὑρίσκει σταυροὺς ἐν τῷ μνήματι, ἕνα μὲν τὸν μακαριστόν, ἐν ὧν θεὸς ἐξεστάνυσθη, τοὺς δὲ ἑτέρους, ἐν οἷς οἱ συσταυρωθέντες δύο λῃθναι ἐτεθνήκεσαν.
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\(^{31}\) **HE** 1.1.7: Εἰ γὰρ καὶ Σίβυλλα καὶ χρησμοί τινες ἐπὶ τῷ Χριστῷ συμβεβηκότων τὸ μέλλον προεμήνυσαν, οὐ παρὰ τούτῳ δήτοι πάσιν Ἔλληνων δυσπιστίαν ἐγκαλεῖν ἔστιν. Ὁλίγοι γὰρ, οἳ παιδείᾳ διαφέρειν ἐδόκουν, τὰς τοιαύτας ἐπὶ τὴν εἰς αὐτὸν πίστιν ἀπόχρη ἐπεῖπεν. Ἐβραῖοι πλείσι καὶ σαφεστέραις προφητείαις χρησάμενοι περὶ τὴν παρουσίαν Χριστοῦ κατόπιν Ἐλλήνων ἐγένοντο περὶ τὴν εἰς αὐτὸν πίστιν, ἀπόχρη τοιούτου εὐπείν. (Cf. Leppin, p. 213.) In fact, this assertion that there were Gentiles who predicted Christ ends up with an exculpation of Gentiles: such prophets were not understood by many, because of their meter and lofty style—by contrast with the Hebrew prophets (see Leppin, pp. 170, 245-6, for this and other anti-Jewish motifs in Sozomenus' history). Note also that according to Sozomenus, the prophecies among the Gentiles were less complete than the Biblical ones: ἢς μὲν οὖν Ἐβραίοι πλείσι καὶ σαφεστέραις προφητείαις χρησάμενοι περὶ τὴν παρουσίαν Χριστοῦ κατόπιν Ἐλλήνων ἐγένοντο περὶ τὴν εἰς αὐτὸν πίστιν, ἀπόχρη τοιούτου εὐπείν. (Cf. Leppin, p. 213.)

\(^{32}\) T. Urbainczyk, *Socrates of Constantinople: Historian of Church and State* (Ann Arbor, 1997), pp. 19-21, dates the work between 439 and 443; Leppin, pp. 274-9, argues for the years 444-6, although the firm *termini* are 439 and 448. On the fact that Socrates' history is actually a revision of his original work, see M. Wallraff, *Der Kirchenhistoriker Sokrates: Untersuchungen zu Geschichtsdarstellung, Methode und Person*, Forschungen zur Kirchen- und Dogmengeschichte 68 (Göttingen, 1997), pp. 163-72.
It is clear that Socrates too reflects *OrSib* 6.26—in particular the rare, poetic form ἐξετανύσθη is unthinkable without some dependence on the Sibylline verse.\(^{33}\) Indeed, the allusion may well be intentional, since the slight changes evident in Socrates' version still leave nearly a complete hexameter line (beginning with τοῦ).\(^{34}\) Socrates is one of Sozomenus' sources,\(^{35}\) but obviously not in this instance—rather, it appears that they had a common source that cited *OrSib* 6.26 as Sibylline in the context of this story. Glanville Downey remarks that Sozomenus tends to summarize documents Socrates includes and include those Socrates omits.\(^{36}\) Also, Sozomenus' history is more secular, presented in more human (and "classical") terms, whereas Socrates' pays more attention to theological matters.\(^{37}\) These considerations seem to explain why the Sibyl is explicitly cited by Sozomenus but not Socrates: the latter was more reticent to use a Sibylline tag. The common source is not likely to have been Gelasius of Caesarea.\(^{38}\) Indeed, Borgehammar argues that Sozomenus did not use Gelasius.\(^{39}\) Rufinus, moreover, following Gelasius of Caesarea, does not have a discernible allusion at the moment of discovery, as Socrates does, although there is a possible, but much less striking, parallel at a later point in the story, in the prayer of the bishop Macarius: *lignum beatum, in quo salus nostra pependit* (*HE* 10.8). It may be that Gelasius included the Sibylline-derived expression but without

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\(^{33}\) It appears in Homer, *Il.* 7.271; *Hymn. Bacch.* 38; *Theocr., Id.* 22.10; etc.\(^{34}\) It must be remarked, however, that θεὸς is the reading of only one ms. (and *OrSib*), chosen here by G. C. Hansen at least partly because of the apparent Sibylline allusion; others have "Christ" (*vel sim.*).\(^{35}\) See, e.g., Quasten, 3: 536: the dependence is sometimes *verbatim.*\(^{36}\) Downey, "The Perspective of the Early Church Historians," *GRBS* 6 (1985), p. 65.\(^{37}\) G. Sabbah, in Bidez et al., *Sozomène: Histoire ecclésiastique*, vol. 1: *Livres I-II*, SC 306 (Paris, 1983), pp. 65-67; cf. Wallraff, pp. 92-6: he especially avoids, or down-plays discussion of oracles, or brings them up only to criticize them (e.g., *HE* 3.23.50-60; 4.19—cf. Wallraff, p. 95 n. 321). Although Sozomenus does have passages critical of oracles, he also includes some that turned out to be true (*HE* 1.7.2; 6.35—cf. Leppin, p. 246 n. 24)—although with enough negative comment to show that he is not simply endorsing them as he does the Sibyl.\(^{38}\) This despite Socrates' clear dependence on Gelasius (as well as Rufinus) in this section—see Wallraff, pp. 170-71, 186.\(^{39}\) Furthermore, Borgehammar, pp. 23-24, thinks Sozomenus did not use Gelasius of Caesarea.
attributing it to the Sibyl, whereas Sozomenus may have used some other source to make the connection. Drijvers, not noticing the fact that Socrates seems to allude to the Sibylline verse as well as Sozomenus, suggests that Sozomenus "derived the reference to the Sibylline prophecy from Constantine's oration [ad sanctorum coetum]."\textsuperscript{40} This cannot be right, since that speech does not cite the line in question; however, it does bring out the fact that Constantine was interested in the Sibyl (the primary evidence for which interest being the speech in question), and that therefore Constantine may be responsible for the Sibylline association after all. That is, it would fit what is otherwise known about Constantine if the emperor sponsored or promulgated an announcement regarding the finding of the True Cross in which the Sibyl's testimony was adduced. Thus, the notoriety of the Sibyl as a witness to Christ in general—and, in particular, the knowledge, specific or vague, of the Sibyl's address to the cross (and sometimes nothing else)—was tremendously boosted by Constantinian propaganda, of which fragmentary evidence can be gleaned from historians' reports about the incident. As for the status such propaganda would have ascribed to the Sibyl, it may well have been (as in the \textit{Or. ad s. c.}) that Constantine treated her as an authentically inspired prophetess.

More Specific Stances

\textbf{JUSTIN MARTYR}

Justin Martyr is the earliest Christian writer whose views of the Sibyl's status can be probed to a deeper extent than is possible with the texts already mentioned in this

\textsuperscript{40} Drijvers, p. 105 n. 47. On this speech, see \textit{infra}, pp. 242-260.
chapter. Only twice in his extant works does he mention the Sibyl, however—and both references are in his "first" apology.\footnote{41} This work can be dated to between 151 and 155 A.D.\footnote{42}

At the end of his defense of Christian views of the "last things,"\footnote{43} Justin adduces the Sibyl and Hystaspes,\footnote{44} as well as the Stoics, as parallels in the pagan sphere for the idea of Gehenna:

\begin{quote}
Καὶ Σίβυλλ τάς τῶν φθαρτῶν ἀνάλωσιν διὰ πυρὸς ἐφισον. [1 Apol. 20.1]\footnote{45}
\end{quote}

\footnote{41}The further allusions found by some are not particularly convincing. Thompson, p. 134, for example, considers there to be an allusion to \textit{OrSib} 1.399 at \textit{1 Apol.} 61.12 (a reference to "illumination" in baptism, a widespread idea); Alexandre, 2: 262, finds further echoes: at \textit{1 Apol.} 9 an echo of \textit{OrSib} 8.378-80 (Geffcken too cites Justin \textit{ad loc.}; the subject, man-made images that are wrongly considered divine, is also standard); and at \textit{2 Apol.} 12.6, possibly taken (he thinks) from \textit{OrSib} fr. 1.4, although the epithet of God used (Justin: ὁ πάντων ἐπόπτης; \textit{OrSib}: πανεπόπτης) appears in exactly the Sibylline form at \textit{I Clem.} 58 (see Lightfoot \textit{ad loc.}), and similar forms are not rare in the tragedians, while Justin’s version appears exactly in \textit{Esth.} 5.1 (and see further references in Marcovich \textit{ad 2 Apol.} 12.6). Alexandre suggests further, p. 263, that Justin’s phrasing at \textit{Dial.} 11.1 is perhaps from Scripture, or perhaps from the Sibyl’s μούνος γὰρ θεός ἐστι, καὶ σύν ἐστι θεός ἄλλος (\textit{OrSib} 8.377); again, the passage of Justin is unremarkable among Jewish or Christian texts.

\footnote{42}L. W. Barnard, p. 11; Von Harnack, \textit{Geschichte}, 2.1: 278, makes it "ein paar Jahre nach 150"—and this is confirmed by (\textit{inter alia}) the mention of L. Munatius Felix (\textit{PIR}² M 723, cited by Marcovich, p. 11) as Prefect of Egypt, which he was 150-154.

\footnote{43}For an analysis of the literary structure of Justin’s apology (which treats the 1\textsuperscript{st} and 2\textsuperscript{nd} Apologies as a single work) see C. Munier, \textit{L’Apologie de Saint Justin: Philosophe et martyr} (Fribourg Suisse, 1994), pp. 32-40; Marcovich, pp. 8-11, succinctly lays out the arguments for considering them in some sense a unity, arguing that \textit{2 Apol.} is simply a postscript or appendix to \textit{1 Apol.}

\footnote{44}For Hystaspes, a Persian sage, see M. Goodman in Schürer, \textit{The Further allusions found by some are not particularly convincing. Thompson, p. 134, for example, considers there to be an allusion to \textit{OrSib} 1.399 at \textit{1 Apol.} 61.12 (a reference to "illumination" in baptism, a widespread idea); Alexandre, 2: 262, finds further echoes: at \textit{1 Apol.} 9 an echo of \textit{OrSib} 8.378-80 (Geffcken too cites Justin \textit{ad loc.}; the subject, man-made images that are wrongly considered divine, is also standard); and at \textit{2 Apol.} 12.6, possibly taken (he thinks) from \textit{OrSib} fr. 1.4, although the epithet of God used (Justin: ὁ πάντων ἐπόπτης; \textit{OrSib}: πανεπόπτης) appears in exactly the Sibylline form at \textit{I Clem.} 58 (see Lightfoot \textit{ad loc.}), and similar forms are not rare in the tragedians, while Justin’s version appears exactly in \textit{Esth.} 5.1 (and see further references in Marcovich \textit{ad 2 Apol.} 12.6). Alexandre suggests further, p. 263, that Justin’s phrasing at \textit{Dial.} 11.1 is perhaps from Scripture, or perhaps from the Sibyl’s μούνος γὰρ θεός ἐστι, καὶ σύν ἐστι θεός ἄλλος (\textit{OrSib} 8.377); again, the passage of Justin is unremarkable among Jewish or Christian texts.

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\footnote{44}For Hystaspes, a Persian sage, see M. Goodman in Schürer, \textit{Irano-Judaica: Studies Relating to Jewish Contact with Persian Culture throughout the Ages} (Jerusalem, 1982), especially pp. 15-16 [reprinted in Flusser, \textit{Judaica: Studies Relating to Jewish Contact with Persian Culture throughout the Ages} (Jerusalem, 1982), pp. 390-453, retaining also the original pagination]. The two appear together also in the recommendation of "Paul" \textit{ap. Clem. Alex.}, \textit{Strom.} 6.43.1; Lactantius, who cites the Sibyl extensively, also uses Hystaspes (see especially \textit{Dial.} 7.15 and 18).

\footnote{45}The word καὶ before Σίβυλλα signals the turn to pagan sources. There is some confusion here as to the precise parallel intended: Justin has just mentioned and explained Gehenna as the place of punishment for the unjust (19.7-8), without referring to fire, although earlier fire figured in quotations from the gospels touching on the subject (15.2; 16.12-13; cf., in his own right, 44.5-7). The Sibyl and Hystaspes, however, tell of a destruction by fire of all corruptible things, the Stoics of a dissolution of everything into fire. When Justin takes up the subject in the review of agreements between Christian doctrine and the "poets and philosophers," he says that like the Stoics, Christians believe in an \textit{ekpyrosis}: τὸ δὲ [sc. λέγειν ἴματα] ἐκπύρωσιν γενώθηκα Στοιχέων [sc. δοξάμενοι λέγειν δόγμα] (20.4). It seems unlikely that Justin is bringing in a different parallel here than before; rather, he appears to be conflating the world-conflagration and the flames of Gehenna (cf. 44.5-9; 60.8; 2 \textit{Apol.} 7.3). For Sibylline passages in view for the conflagration, \textit{Wartelle ad loc.} suggests 2.196-97 (as does Geffcken \textit{ad loc.} along with other Sibylline parallels); 4.172 [the reference should rather be to 173]; Marcovich adds 2.286ff.; 3.672ff., 689ff.; 7.120ff.; 8.243ff.; Alexandre, 2: 262, also points to 4.179ff. Obviously, the general characterization does not allow any specific information to be gleaned about Justin’s text; yet it should be noted that \textit{OrSib} 3, the portion of...
Afterwards, he asks indignantly why Christians unjustly incur opprobrium, if they have the same ideas as the "poets and philosophers" honored by pagans in this matter, as well as in the views that everything was formed by God, that there will be punishments and rewards after death, and that the works of human hands should not be worshipped (20.3-5). Thus, the Sibyl is identified as a non-Christian authority, and is subsumed, along with Hystaspes, into the general category of "poets and philosophers," of which Justin here mentions specifically the Stoics, Plato, and Menander. It is not surprising that Justin would show appreciation for texts evincing precise parallels to the Judaeo-Christian tradition, such as OrSib, given that he is notorious for his idea that Socrates and Heraclitus could be considered Christians before the term existed, insofar as they had lived "in accordance with the logos." Given that this logos is universally available to human beings, however, classifying the Sibyl in this way does not imply that she had any higher status in Justin's eyes than was possible for philosophers to achieve—or indeed, any different type of illumination.

A second passage, however, tips the scale and allows one to draw out the implications of the fact that both the Sibyl and Hystaspes are said to have made predictions about the future conflagration. In this second passage, Justin associates the

the corpus directly quoted by Christians the earliest (Athenag., Leg. 30.1-2), does contain passages espousing a fiery conflagration, so that it is not necessary to assume any knowledge of further (and/or later) Sibylline texts than this.

This concept--the λόγος σπερματικός--is one of the recurring themes in scholarly research on Justin; see the fundamental articles of C. Andresen, "Justin und der mittlere Platonismus," ZNW 44 (1952-53), pp. 157-95, and R. Holte, "Logos Spermatikos: Christianity and Ancient Philosophy according to St. Justin's Apologies," Stud. Theol. 12 (1958) 109-68; also, the review of scholarship by C. Nahm, "The Debate on the 'Platonism' of Justin Martyr," S. Cent. 9 (1992), pp. 129-51. More recently, note C. Munier, L'Apologie de Saint Justin, pp. 58-62; while M. J. Edwards, "Justin's Logos and the Word of God," JECS 3 (1995), pp. 261-80, has questioned the extent of the influence of Platonic or Stoic ideas on Justin's thought in this matter. On Justin's openness to seeing some truth in pagan philosophy, see also Contreras, pp. 977-80. Contreras (p. 977) also mentions his use of the Sibyl.
Sibyl and Hystaspes with the other (i.e. Biblical) prophets, rather than with pagan sages, as he alleges that by the machinations of the demons, death has been decreed as the penalty for reading the books of any of these prophets.\footnote{This passage appears in a digression (42-44) responding to a possible objection to Justin's argument from prophecy, namely that if all has been predicted, humans are not responsible for their choices (Munier, p.35); the digression concludes with the assurance that prophecy shows God's concern and foresight for humans (44.11)—and the quoted passage appears next, in order to show how the demons try to tamper with God's plans. The train of thought and function of Hystaspes and the Sibyl in explicit parallel to the Biblical prophets surely justifies the interpretive expansion of Justin's specific wording (τῶν προφητῶν), in such a way as not to exclude them from the rubric: "the (other) prophets." As to the alleged death penalty, the Libri Sibyllini, at any rate, were not supposed to be in the hands of the general public; they could only be consulted by the quindecimviri (see, e.g., Wartelle, p. 278; Potter, Prophets and Emperors, pp. 149-51; Parke, Sibyls, p. 140; Alexandre, 2: 263). Wartelle, p. 278, further suggests a possible reference to Jewish writings: "Quant aux prophètes juifs, leurs écrits ont pu être interdits après la guerre juive de 70 ou après la révolte de Bar Kokheba de 132-135." Barnard, p. 271, on the other hand, sees a reference here to the law against divination concerning politics by private persons (cf. J. B. Rives, Religion and Authority in Roman Carthage from Augustus to Constantine [Oxford, 1995], pp. 239-40; Potter, Prophets and Emperors, pp. 174-77; Bartelink, p. 26 n. 7), and to the periodic restrictions on Jewish proselytism. Note especially the examination of prophetic books undertaken by both Augustus and Tiberius, whereby those judged spurious were burned, while those approved were presumably taken into the official Sibylline collection, and thus made inaccessible to the masses (see Parke, Sibyls, pp. 142-3; Rives, Religion and Authority, pp. 236-7). Note also the harsh wording of a later circular letter of the prefect of Egypt (dated to 198/9), directed against proclamations of knowledge of the future on the part of purveyors of oracles and magicians, with the threat of "the extreme penalty," lines 11-12 (editio princeps published by G. M. Parássoglou, "Circular from a Prefect: Sileat omnibus perpetuo divinandi curiositas," in A. E. Hanson (ed.), Collectanea Papyrologica: Texts Published in Honor of H. C. Youtie, Papyrologische Texte und Abhandlungen 19, vol. 1 (Bonn, 1976), pp. 261-74; some revisions by J. Rea, "A New Version of P. Yale Inv. 299," ZPE 27 (1977), pp. 151-56). This blanket condemnation—with no reference to private consultation, or consultation about an emperor's future in the measure—is unique and later than Justin. Still, actions of this type might well have provoked a general confused statement such as Justin's. See now L. Desanti, Sileat omnibus perpetuo divinandi curiositas: Indovini e sanzioni nel diritto romano (Milan, 1990), pp. 99-101, 126, who thinks that no new (post-Augustan) legislation is envisioned, and that the mention of the death penalty may reflect maiestas charges connected to oracles prophesying woe for the Roman empire.}

Justin here puts the Sibyl and Hystaspes on a level with the prophets, and does not simply say that their teachings were similar to Biblical sources; they apparently share equally in the plan of God mentioned just earlier (44.11)—to tell mankind διὰ τοῦ προφητικοῦ
πνεύματος about the judgment of God and the eternal rewards and punishments he would stipulate—and are therefore (like the other prophets) threatening to the demons, who try to combat their influence just as they do that of the Biblical prophets. It is at least clear that Justin is here, in the specific case of the Sibyl and Hystaspes, contradicting the usual Christian interpretation of oracles as owing their inspiration to demons. It would certainly be nonsensical if Justin assumed such demonic inspiration at the same time as alleging that the demons worked to restrict access to the texts produced by them.\(^{48}\) Justin's attitude toward the Delphic oracle, on the other hand, can be assumed to be negative. While Justin does not offer the sort of diatribe against oracles that some other apologists engage in, tarring all pagan oracles explicitly with a demonic brush, he is intensely aware of demonic activity, especially in the development of pagan religion.\(^{49}\) He does explicitly consider the pagan gods to be in fact demons—an unsurprising position for an early Christian—and speaks of "their" temples where the reference is clearly to demons.\(^{50}\) He also considers demons to have been directly involved in the promulgation of mythical stories about the gods, the institution of details of pagan cult, as well as the persecution of Christians and the rise of heretical leaders.\(^{51}\) All this is simply to show that oracular cult, tied as it normally was to gods such as Apollo and Zeus, would

\(^{48}\) That is the implication of E. Fascher's suggestion, Προφήτης: Eine sprach- und religionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung (Gießen, 1927), p. 213, that Justin categorizes Hystaspes and the Sibyl as "false prophets," and therefore as being in the service of the demons.

\(^{49}\) His only specific mention of oracles is at 1 Apol. 18, where he uses them (along with other aspects of pagan culture, such as necromancy and Homer's story of Odysseus) to make the argument that souls are immortal more convincing to his audience.

\(^{50}\) 1 Apol. 5.2; 62.1-2; 2 Apol. 5.4-5.

\(^{51}\) Regarding myth, not only did many of the scandalous stories about the gods take their origin from the real activity of the demons (1 Apol. 5.2; 2 Apol. 5.3-6), but they also spoke through poets and ensured the spread of the stories (1 Apol. 23; 54; cf. also λέγοντας [64.2]...ἐφασαν [64.4]...ἐφασαν [64.5]—the demons are described as "speaking" the stories/descriptions of Kore and Athena). For pagan cult, note: lustrations/purifications (1 Apol. 62.1); removal of shoes (62.2); Mithras-cult (66.4). On persecution and heresy: Simon Magus and Menander (1 Apol. 56); Marcion (58); persecution (2 Apol. 7-8).
not likely escape Justin's condemnation on general grounds, even though he does not explicitly lambast them.

The contrast between Justin's endorsement of the Sibyl and Hystaspes and his usual views on pagan religion, and his association of them with the Biblical prophets, make it tempting to arrive at the conclusion that Justin is attributing to these non-Biblical prophets a measure of direct divine inspiration, although this is less clear. Jean Daniélou takes the example of the Sibyl as decisive for the argument that Justin, like Philo, recognized the possibility of special inspiration to select Gentiles as one of the sources of truth in Greek philosophy, alongside the exercise of reason and the dependence on the Jewish Scriptures. 52

Hence, it is striking that the Sibyl and Hystaspes are here included along with the Biblical prophets, rather than mentioned simply as helpful or useful pagan sources. It is possible that the reason he thinks the demons are opposed to the promulgation of knowledge of Sibylline and Hystaspian oracles is that because these texts are oracles, they have the potential to sway a pagan audience more authoritatively than other, more human authorities, such as the Stoics (or, for that matter, Socrates and Heraclitus)—yet

52 Daniélou, *Gospel Message and Hellenistic Culture*, pp. 48; he depends (p. 40) on Wolfson, *Philosophy of the Church Fathers*, 1: 21 (Daniélou mistakenly refers to Wolfson's p. 41) for the idea that Justin acknowledges all three Philonic possibilities, which Wolfson outlines in *Philo: Foundations of Religious Philosophy in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam* (Cambridge, MA, 1947), 1: 141-3. Both Wolfson and Daniélou appeal to *Dial* 2.1, where Justin says that philosophy was sent down (κατεπέμφθη) to humans. Note, however, the interpretation of Holte (p. 164-5), who considers *Dial*. 2.1 to refer to "the Old Testament revelation" and thinks that the idea of special revelation to non-Jews is foreign to Justin's thought; N. Hyldahl does not consider Holte's claim convincing (*Philosophie und Christentum: Eine Interpretation der Einleitung zum Dialog Justins*, Acta Theologica Danica IX [Copenhagen, 1966], p. 119), and rather introduces the idea that Justin depends on Posidonius' *Protrepticus* to suggest that an "Ur-Philosophy" was indeed sent to the human race (not to the Greeks per se) by God, but the history of philosophy has been one of perverting that original truth in various ways—and only now has it been restored, in Christianity (pp. 121-40); this view complements (rather than contradicts) the λόγος σπερματικός theory of the *Apologies* (p. 293), but would not involve special revelation to pagans in the historical period. Most recently but less plausibly, C. D. Allert, *Revelation, Truth, Canon and Interpretation: Studies in Justin Martyr's Dialogue with Trypho* (Leiden, 2002), p. 146, argues that the "sending down" of philosophy is simply a reference to the Incarnation of the Logos.
unless these oracles had nothing to do with the demons in the first place, it remains
difficult to imagine that the demons considered them dangerous. In a somewhat similar
fashion, A. Guerra argues that the mention of Hystaspes and the Sibyl at 1 Apol. 44 is
part of a broader strategy, that of associating the Biblical prophets with pagan oracles in
the audience's mind:

Justin knows that the real effectiveness of this lengthy section of 'proofs' depends
on his hearers' transferring the traditional Roman deference to pagan prophetic
authority to his witnesses. 53

Although this is true in a sense, Guerra's reading does not reflect Justin's practice in
ensuring such a transfer of deference. The almost complete absence of any mention of
pagan oracles in Justin's work is incompatible with that reading. If Justin were trying to
associate Biblical prophets with the Greco-Roman oracular tradition, almost subliminally,
he must be judged to have failed. If alternative explanations fail, only the idea that the
inspiration of Hystaspes and the Sibyl were exactly parallel would seem to remain.

In the final analysis, there is still a measure of speculation involved in evaluating
Justin's attitude toward the Sibyl. At the very least, the Sibyl (and Hystaspes) equally
with some of the philosophers demonstrate that truth could be found in some special
pagan sources. If the parallelism he establishes between the Sibyl and the Hebrew
prophets can be pressed, it is possible that he envisioned a kind of direct inspiration
accorded to the former as to the latter; but the parallelism can possibly be explained
otherwise, in which case we would be left with a "non-specific" endorsement of the
Sibyl, although for Justin the oracles of the Sibyl and Hystaspes would still be
functionally parallel to the Hebrew Scriptures. Nevertheless, it is not clear exactly how

53 A. J. Guerra, "The Conversion of Marcus Aurelius and Justin Martyr: The Purpose, Genre, and
much knowledge Justin himself has of such oracles, since he contents himself with
general descriptions of their contents: the future conflagration, presumably as moral
punishment for evildoers. Although he offers to lay his prophetic texts before the
emperor—or rather, states that he is doing so (1 Apol. 44.13), this is only true in a
concrete sense with respect to the Biblical prophets. He is not confident enough, or
knowledgeable enough, about Hystaspes and the Sibyl, to cite texts belonging to them.

THEOPHILUS

About a generation after Justin's apologetic work (c. A.D. 180), Theophilus of
Antioch shows knowledge of specific Sibylline passages, which he quotes in extenso, and
also presents a strong and specific endorsement of the Sibyl as the parallel to the Hebrew
prophets among the Greeks. Thus, for Theophilus the Sibyl is unique, not simply one of
a number of manifestations of the divine logos among pagans. Theophilus presents a
stronger, more explicit, and more knowledgeable picture of the Sibyl than Justin.

Nearly all Theophilus' citations of the Sibyl, however, consist of material not
extant in the corpus of OrSib compiled later, although all the material is akin to it. The
long quotations he provides have often been judged to have come from a lost portion of
the OrSib 3, so that the difference in material drawn from may be more apparent than

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54 Grant, *Theophilus of Antioch*, notes that the only firm reference point is the mention of the death (17 March 180) of Marcus Aurelius (Ad Autol. 3.28) [p. ix]; according to Euseb., *Chronicon*, Theophilus became bishop of Antioch in 169 [p. x]. Marcovich further notes that the three books seem only loosely
connected; Books 1-2 are separated by "a few days" (Ad Autol. 2.1.1), but there seems to be a longer lapse before Book 3, since he "now addresses Autolycus in a different way" (Ad Autol. 3.1.1: Θεόφιλος Αὐτολύκῳ χαίρειν) (p. 3). J.-M. Vermander, "Théophile d'Antioche contre Celse: A Autolycos III," REAug 17 (1971), pp. 203-25, in fact argues that Books 1-2 were written before Theophilus' (or Autolycus')
acquaintance with Celsus' Alethes Logos, Book 3 afterwards; but note the trenchant critique of Vermander
by K. Pichler, *Streit um das Christentum: Der Angriff des Kelsos und die Antwort des Origenes* (Frankfurt
am Main/Bern, 1980), esp. pp. 74-5.
real, and the Sibylline material at his disposal will then have been largely a more original form of that book.

Theophilus' consciousness of the Sibyl may be present very early in his apologetic work to Autolycus, if a possible allusion has been correctly identified. In a section intended to defend God's existence despite his invisibility, Theophilus inserts a slightly different argument: man cannot even stare at the sun; how much more is it the case that he can't view the glory of God! (Ad Autol. 1.5.3) The same a fortiori reasoning also appears at OrSib fr. 1.9-13.55 The other analogies used in the chapter—the invisible soul perceived through the movement of the body, the existence of a pilot deduced from a boat's coming in to harbor—contribute to the main point at issue, while the passage that parallels the Sibylline fragment shows rather that humans couldn't see God in any case. Thus, it is possible that the analogy comes to Theophilus from the Sibyl. He certainly knew the Sibylline passage, at least at the time of composition of the second book Ad Autolycum, since he quotes it there in full. If the specific turn of this argument comes to Theophilus from the Sibyl, this would indicate that Theophilus' familiarity with his Sibylline texts was more ingrained than appears from the citations in Book 2: he had assimilated them to a certain degree, rather than simply transcribing appropriate quotations superficially from a sourcebook. It is only the slight oddity of the reference within the train of thought, however, that can be taken to indicate that Theophilus was moved to make it because of an important source (such as OrSib) he had in mind or at hand. Moreover, the point is fairly common in the philosophical tradition, as well as the Jewish and Christian traditions. The sun as analogous to God/the Good appears in Plato

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55 Note that the Sibylline passage is cited by Clement of Alexandria, Protr. 71.4 and Strom 5.108.6 as source for "Xenophon," who makes the same point.
assumes the argument of the Sibylline lines quoted here.\(^\text{56}\) Hence, it is possible or even likely, but not certain, that Sibylline texts influenced Theophilus more than appears from Book 2 of the *Ad Autolycum*.\(^\text{57}\)

From early in the second book, however, the Sibylline presence is strong and pervasive. Critiquing polytheism, Theophilus asks his pagan audience why more gods aren't being born all the time, if (as the myths say) they used to do so. To support his development of the argument that if the gods were generated and immortal (and did not cease from generation), they would be more numerous than men, he cites the Sibyl:\(^\text{58}\)

\[
...\text{μάλλον δὲ καὶ πλείονες θεοὶ ὁφείλον εἶναι τῶν ἀνθρώπων, ὡς φησιν Σίβυλλα:}
\text{Εἰ δὲ θεοὶ γεννῶσι καὶ ἄθάνατοι γε μένουσι, πλείονες ἀνθρώπων γεγενημένοι ἄν θεοὶ ἦσαν, οὐδὲ τόπος ζηναι θνητοῖς οὐκ ἂν ποθ' ὑπῆρξεν. [Ad Autol. 2.3.2, citing OrSib fr. 2]}
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The reference to the Sibyl is simple and direct, with no characterization of the authority he is citing, even though this is her first explicit appearance in Theophilus' work; this could indicate that he and his addressee were quite familiar with the Sibyl as a figure, perhaps, indeed, with *OrSib* as a source. The previous sentence, introducing the specific argument, is a close paraphrase of the second line of the Sibylline fragment. The following section (2.3.3) amplifies the argument: humans—who are short-lived—keep

\(^{56}\) For further references, including Rabbinic sources, see Geffcken *ad OrSib* fr. 1.10-13; Marcovich *ad Theophilus, Ad Autol. 1.5.3.  
\(^{57}\) Cf. also *infra*, n. 76. Other alleged allusions, however, are less convincing: For *Ad Autol. 1.9*, where Theophilus claims that the names of "your gods" are those of dead men, Alexandre, 2: 265, adduces *OrSib 8.46*; for 2.18, describing the consultation of God the Father with the Son, and 2.22, where the Son is called σύμβουλον of the Father, Alexandre points to *OrSib 8.264*.  
\(^{58}\) Theophilus is the only author to cite this passage explicitly, but cf. Const., *Or. ad coet. sanct.* 4 (possibly simply depending on Theophilus); Min. Fel., *Oct.* 21.12 is also very similar to the Sibylline passage; Arnob., *Adv. Nat.* 3.9. For the general jibe, however—the question why the gods are no longer giving birth—note Seneca fr. 119 Haase (*ap. Lact., DJ* 1.16.10); Juvenal 6.59; Tatian, *Or. ad Gr.* 21.4; Cypr., *Idol.* 3.
on being born and so fill cities, towns, and countryside; all the more so would the gods. The emphasis on place seems to reflect the third line of the quotation. Thus, Theophilus' first direct reference to the Sibyl serves to further his argument by an appeal to an acknowledged authority; and the specifics of his train of thought appear to be influenced in turn by his citation—an indication (on a smaller scale than the possible allusion in Book 1) that he has devoted some thought to his Sibylline sources.

Not much later, Theophilus makes it clearer how he views the Sibyl and her role in culture. After the review in the opening chapters of Book 2 of various contradictory views of the gods and providence held by pagan (mostly Greek) philosophers and poets, Theophilus turns to the prophets and their teaching.\textsuperscript{59} The Sibyl appears as one of these, distinguished from the Biblical prophets only by the fact that she was active among the Greeks rather than the Hebrews.\textsuperscript{60}

\begin{enumerate}
\item Οἱ δὲ τοῦ θεοῦ ἄνθρωποι, πνευματοφόροι πνεύματος ἁγίου καὶ προφῆται γεγόμενοι, ὡσ' αὐτοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ ἐμπνευσθέντες καὶ σοφισθέντες, ἐγένοντο θεοδίδακτοι καὶ ὡσοὶ καὶ δίκαιοι. Διὸ καὶ κατηξιώθησαν τὴν ἀντιμισθίαν ταύτην λαβεῖν, ὡργανά θεοῦ γεγόμενοι καὶ χωρήσαντες σοφίαν τὴν παρ' αὐτοῦ, δι' ἣς σοφίας εἶπον καὶ τὰ περὶ τῆς κτίσεως τοῦ κόσμου, καὶ τῶν λοιπῶν ἀπάντων (καὶ γὰρ περὶ λοιμῶν καὶ λιμῶν καὶ πολέμων προεῖπον).
\item Καὶ οὐκ εἷς ἢ δύο, ἀλλὰ πλείονες κατὰ χρόνους καὶ καιροὺς ἐγενήθησαν παρὰ Ἕβραιοις (ἀλλὰ καὶ παρὰ Ἕλλησιν Σίβυλλα), καὶ πάντες φίλα ἀλλήλοις καὶ σύμφωνα εἰρήκασιν, τὰ τε πρὸ αὐτῶν γεγενημένα καὶ τὰ κατ' αὐτοὺς γεγονότα καὶ τὰ καθ' ἡμᾶς νῦν τελειοῦμενα· διὸ καὶ πεπείσμεθα καὶ περὶ τῶν μελλόντων οὕτως ἐσεσθαι, καθὼς καὶ τὰ πρώτα ἀπήρισται. [Ad Autol. 2.9.1-2]
\end{enumerate}

\textsuperscript{59} The term προφῆτης in Theophilus' usage is applied to writers of Old Testament books in general (see Grant, Greek Apologists, pp. 162-3). Sometimes "the prophets" are set over against "the law" (2.35.3, 37.16; 3.11.1). Theophilus, like Clement of Alexandria, also mentions "the prophets among the Egyptians" (2.33.2); the term was used for members of a certain level of the Egyptian priestly hierarchy—for this sense, see Fascher, pp. 76-101.

\textsuperscript{60} Cf. 2.36.1, where Theophilus says she was active among the Greeks "and other nations." The appearance of "Greeks" alone is presumably to be attributed to his focus here on Greek philosophers and poets, whereas the addition at 2.36.1 betrays some cognizance of the traditions of Sibyls among other peoples (perhaps derived from OrSib 3.809-10, since he shows no knowledge of scholarly discussion of different Sibyls).
Apart from her cultural context among the Greeks, the Sibyl must be seen as partaking of all the characteristics of the prophets enumerated here. It appears that they were pious to begin with, since they are "men/women of God" (although the syntax of the sentence does not allow a clear progression to be discerned) and their prophetic role is described as a reward. They apparently became prophets by being πνευματοφόροι πνεύματος ἁγίου; inspired and made wise by God himself, they became "God-taught, holy and just."

In a later passage (2.35.15), Theophilus characterizes those who were prophets among the Hebrews as illiterate, uneducated shepherds, which simply emphasizes that all their education came from God. Because of this divine inspiration, they spoke in complete harmony with each other (2.9.1). Theophilus seems to waver between viewing the prophets as passive mouthpieces of God and considering them to have gained wisdom from God, whereby they spoke. In any case, he never mentions ecstasy, either with regard to the Sibyl or the Hebrew prophets.

The description of the Greek philosophers and poets in the section preceding 2.9 represents a contrast at every point: their opinions are contradictory, they erred εἰκασμῷ...καὶ ἄνθρωπινή ἐννοίᾳ (2.8.2) or else by demonic inspiration (ὑπὸ...
δαίμόνων... ἐμπνευσθέντες, 2.8.7)—the poets while claiming the inspiration of the Muses (2.8.7; cf. 3.17.2). When they spoke in harmony with the prophets, as they sometimes did, it was because they had "sobered up in soul" (τῇ ψυχῇ ἐκνήψαντες, 2.8.9), and so that they might be a witness for themselves and to all men on the subjects of God's monarchy, judgement, etc. Theophilus elsewhere makes the familiar allegation that the Greeks stole the truth they knew from the Hebrew Scriptures. These explanations do not entirely cohere logically: how, exactly, did the Greeks "sober up"? This sounds like an internal process, rather than the recourse to external aids implied by the "plagiarism" hypothesis; but extent to which the "sobering up" is supposed to have depended on the poets' volition is unclear. Like non-metaphorical "sobering up," it may well have been unintentional. The teleological explanation, that they confessed the truth

65 Confirmed by empirical test: demons exorcized by Christians have confessed themselves to have been the spirits at work in the philosophers and poets: δαίμονες, οἱ καὶ τότε εἰς ἑκείνους ἐνεργήσαντες, 2.8.8.

66 Note that apart from several NT texts including this verb, or the unprefixed form of it (e.g. 1 Cor. 15.34; 1 Thess. 5.6; 1 Pet. 5.8), ἐκνήφω also appears in one of the very Sibylline passages Theophilus cites (OrSib fr. 3.41-2)—talking about the wicked: κοῦ θέλετ' ἐννήσαι καὶ σώφρονα πρὸς νόον ἔλθειν | καὶ γνῶναι βασιλῆα θεόν, τὸν πάντ' ἐφορῶντα). All these uses are hortatory—the "sobering up" or "being sober" does not happen automatically. Cf. also O. Bauernfeind, "νήφω, νηφάλιος, ἐκνήφω," TDNT 4: 936-41; the figurative sense rests on "the unequivocal and immediately self-evident antithesis to all kinds of mental fuzziness" (937); he cites Philo, De somniis 2.292, a passage very similar to Theophilus' statement, in which Philo allows for the possibility of arrogant philosophers becoming sober after intoxication: ἐὰν μὲν ὡσπερ ἐκ μέθης νήσαντες ἐν ἐσυναγώγοις καὶ τῆς παροινίας...εἰς αἰθήμον ἑλλόντες αἰδευθῶσι—presumably, since this involves repentance, intentionality is assumed.

67 The view of Thraede, col. 358, is that Theophilus considers the philosophers and poets in their lucid moments to have functioned no differently from the Sibyl—but the sporadic nature of their "sobering up" stands in stark contrast to the Sibyl's role as the only figure specifically called a "prophetess" among the Greeks; furthermore, Theophilus is careful to qualify his characterizations of the poets' true statements about the judgment to come in 2.37.1 and 16, as he goes furthest in describing such statements as something like prophecy: ...καὶ τῶν ποιητῶν τινὲς ὅσπερ εἶναι ἐκαυτοῖς ἐξεύθεν...καὶ αὐτοὶ ὅσπερ συγκεκρίσαι. Similarly, whereas Thraede notes Theophilus' mention of "Egyptian prophets" (Ad Autol. 2.33—along with "Chaldaeans," whom Thraede does not mention), the true significance of his mention of them is that unlike the Biblical writers, they did not give true accounts of creation and the beginning of history, which they would have done if they were speaking by divine inspiration.

68 Rogers, p. 134, considers the reference to "sobering up" a "touch of sarcasm" on Theophilus' part rather than a concession—not important in his view except as an introduction to discussion of the true inspiration of the prophets.
so as to be witnesses—that is, so that no one would have the excuse of ignorance—and the fact that they confessed it in certain cases *nolentes volentes* reveals a providential, unrecognized inspiration operating at times—the implication being that for prophets, on the other hand, inspiration did not occur without their knowledge.\(^70\) In any case, Theophilus strongly differentiates pagan philosophers and poets from Biblical prophets and the Sibyl.\(^71\)

Some subjects of the prophets' words are given: the creation, and plagues, famines, and wars.\(^72\) The Sibyl could well be adduced on all these subjects, with material from the passages Theophilus does in fact quote later. At *OrSib* fr. 1.5 and 3.17-18 God is characterized as the creator, and at fr. 1.33 the words \(\lambdaίμοι\) and \(\lambdaοίμοι\) appear; in the tower of Babel story (*OrSib* 3.103) the winds stir up strife in mortals against each other. Many more examples could be found in the rest of the corpus of *OrSib*, but these passages suffice to show that the texts he certainly knew are harmonious with his description of the prophets' proclamations in general. This makes it seem all the more natural that Theophilus concluded that the Sibyl formed a strong parallel to the Biblical prophets.

Somewhat later in Book 2, as part of Theophilus' review of history beginning from creation (which consists largely of quotations of Scripture), when he is dealing with

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\(^{70}\) The prevention of the excuse of ignorance appears at 1.14.2. For forced confession, note \(\thetaέλοντες καὶ μὴ \thetaέλοντες\), 2.37.16; cf. 2.38.4: \(\θήλεγχοντο γὰρ ὑπὸ τῆς ἀληθείας\).

\(^{71}\) As Zeegers, "Les trois cultures de Théophile d'Antioche," in Pouderon and Doré, pp. 137-8, notes, although Theophilus includes many quotations of pagan material, his value judgments on them are uniformly negative.

\(^{72}\) On the creation, O'Brien, pp. 485-6, thinks that Theophilus, *Ad Autol*. 2.10.1 (\(πρὸτον μὲν συμφώνον ἔδιδαξαν ἡμᾶς ὅτι ἐξ ἐννὶ ὄντων τὰ πάντα ἐποίησαν <ὁ θεὸς>\)) means specifically that he thought the Sibyl espoused *creatio ex nihilo*; for Theophilus' views on this subject, see G. May, *Creatio ex nihilo: The Doctrine of 'Creation out of Nothing' in Early Christian Thought*, tr. by A. S. Worrall (Edinburgh, 1994), pp. 156-63.
The most immediately striking thing about the quotation is its divergence from the Sibylline manuscript tradition, not so much in the readings, but in the verses quoted as though they formed an unbroken series. In the OrSib as extant, the last line of this passage appears in Book 8, the rest in Book 3. Theophilus' source must have presented the lines in the sequence in which he quotes them, because he ends the quotation καὶ τὰ ἔξης, which implies that he is not consciously combining different texts, apart from the implausibility of assuming that Theophilus took a single line (8.5) from a book he is not otherwise attested to have used in order to substitute it for one very similar in meaning (3.108). There is in fact a literary relationship between OrSib 3.97ff. and the beginning of book 8, as extant. 3.105 and 8.4 are nearly identical, only the beginnings being different: αὐτὰρ ἔπει in the former, ἔξοτε δὴ in the latter. Furthermore, the list of kingdoms at 3.159-61 reappears with some modifications at 8.6-9. Normally, the opening of Book 8 is taken as dependent on the passage from OrSib 3.73 In Theophilus'

73 See, e.g., Collins in OTP, 1: 415.
source, however, there may have appeared the story of the tower, as in the present book 3, in a context of eschatological foreboding as at the beginning of book 8. Elsewhere, Theophilus does not display any knowledge of *OrSib* 8. Marcovich thinks that Theophilus is alluding to *OrSib* 8.1 (ἐρχομένης μεγάλης ὀργῆς ἐπὶ κόσμον ἀπελθή) in his introductory remarks, and so adds μεγάλην, which is unnecessary, since surely Theophilus can be alluding to the line without including the word μεγάλην. The probable allusion, however, suggests that perhaps something like that line was present in Theophilus' source too.

Apart from this obscure glimpse at the state of Theophilus' Sibylline text, the passage also demonstrates that Theophilus considers the text worth explicating and interpreting: he glosses the Sibyl's mention of the region where the tower was built, χώρῃ ἐν Ἀσσυρίᾳ with the equivalent ἐν γῇ Χαλδαίων. He has not cited (but possibly knows) line 104, which identifies the site as that of Babylon.

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74 There are indications that the Sibylline account of the tower may have existed in a version different in another respect from that preserved in *OrSib* 3: in the extant book, the mention of the origin of the name Babylon (line 104, not quoted by Theophilus) comes after the tower has been cast down and strife provoked, but before any mention of the language change; the witnesses to Alexander Polyhistor's quotation place the mention of the confusion of languages before that of the name Babylon (Josephus *AJ* 1.4.3; Eus., *Chron.* 1.23-24; Cyril, *Adv. Jul.* 1.9; Syncellus, *Ecl. Chron.* 81 [p. 46 Mosshammer]); only Abydenus shows the order of *OrSib*.

75 See Marcovich, *Patristic Textual Criticism* 1 (Atlanta, GA, 1994): 53. Alexandre, 2: 265, already sees the same allusion, and further thinks that the words τὰς διαλέκτους μερισθῆναι (*Ad Autol.* 2.31.3; and also a similar phrase at 2.32.1) reflect *OrSib* 8.4-5.

76 The importance of the Sibylline text for Theophilus' account may be still greater, if in fact there is a further allusion to the Sibyl in 2.31.11 (Ἀὕτη ἀρχὴ ἐγένετο πρώτη τοῦ γίνεσθαι πολέμους ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς), as seems likely and as Geffcken implies in citing it ad *OrSib* 3.154: ἀὔτη δ᾿ ἐστὶ ἀρχή πολέμου πάντεσσι βροτοῖσιν (Alexandre, 2: 265, also notes this as a probable allusion). The Sibylline line in context refers to the conflict between Kronos and his children. Theophilus, by contrast, is talking about the rebellion of kings of Canaan against Chedorlaomer narrated in *Gen.* 14, but this may be related in Theophilus' mind: he mentions the defeat of "giants" (cf. *Gen.* 14.5). In any case, it is a conflict soon after the narration of the Tower of Babel story, so not, as Geffcken calls it, "in ganz anderem Zusammenhang." In fact, the story of the rebellion against Chedorlaomer is the first description of armed conflict in the Bible, so that in fact Theophilus seems to be interpreting the conflict described in *OrSib* as somehow the same as that in Genesis, and thus describing the latter with a sentence derived from the former—just as for the story of the Tower of Babel, he gives largely the Sibylline version, adding a comment (about the location) that connects
Theophilus thus considers the Sibyl not only a credible witness for more "theological" subjects, as the later quotations will show, but also for primeval human history—exactly as he uses the Bible; and again, in strong contrast to his assessment of pagan sources in general, which he criticizes for not getting the story of early human history correct, because of their lack of true inspiration (2.33). Even the Egyptian "prophets" are shown not to be true prophets by their failure to provide accurate details about early human history (2.33.2). The Sibyl's credibility in these matters does not, therefore, come from her antiquity primarily, but from her inspiration.

After his treatment of primeval history, Theophilus cites the Hebrew prophets for their condemnation of idolatry and general ethical teaching. Parallel to them (but separate) appears the Sibyl, ἐν Ἕλλησιν καὶ ἐν τοῖς Λοιποῖς ἑθνοῖς γενομένη προφήτης (2.36.1), who thus has the same characterization as before, only with the additional information that she prophesied also among non-Greek peoples. She remains the sole Gentile parallel to the Hebrew prophets. In all, Theophilus quotes 83 Sibylline lines in this section: first (Ad Autol. 2.36.1-6), OrSib fr. 1.1-35, then immediately afterward (Ad Autol. 2.36.7-16), OrSib fr. 3.1-48.

Theophilus professes to be quoting from the beginning of her prophecy (ἐν ἀρχῇ τῆς προφητείας αὐτῆς, 36.1). This phrase, with the corresponding one in Lactantius, DI 4.6.5 (Sibylla Erythraea in carminis sui principio), similarly introducing a quotation of fr. 1.5-6, has been instrumental in convincing some that fr. 1 and 3 constitute the lost opening of book 3 of the Sibylline mss. In any case, the impression Theophilus gives of the text is that of a unity, a single text, of which he only cites a small part. Thus, either

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it with the Biblically-derived material that follows ("Chaldaeans" in 2.31.6 is picked up in 2.31.8 to introduce the rebellion against Chedorlaomer).

77 See esp. Guillaumin, pp. 188-9.
fragments 1 and 3 actually were originally at the beginning of what is now book 3 of the
OrSib corpus, or, if he was working at second hand from a florilegium, his source
contained a fairly substantial collection of Sibylline material, which he took to be a
unity. As already mentioned, Lactantius also characterizes material from OrSib fr. 1 as
coming from "the beginning" of his text of the Erythraean Sibyl—which designation he
only uses for OrSib 3 and fragments 1 and 3. The very different use that Lactantius
makes of the passage (OrSib fr. 1.5-7) he quotes at DI 4.6.5 (he sees a reference to the
Son of God), supported by a different reading (θεὸν in line 6 instead of βροτῶν), makes
it probable that he is not simply copying Theophilus when he mentions the "beginning"
of the oracle, and so his evidence generally confirms Theophilus' description of the text.
In that case, Theophilus' Sibylline source (which included the Tower of Babel story) may
well have been something like the extant book 3, with fr. 1 and 3 at the head; and
Lactantius' text of the "Erythraean Sibyl" was probably similar in substance.79

Before each of the quotations, Theophilus characterizes it:

Σίβυλλα...όνειδίζει τὸ τῶν ἄνθρωπων γένος λέγουσα... (2.36.1)
Καὶ πρὸς τοὺς γενητοὺς λεγομένονις <θεοὺς> ἐφή... (2.36.7)

His practice here as elsewhere, however, is to transcribe long sections of his source,
without adapting them or breaking them up into smaller units; thus, his introductory
comments apply only to parts of the quotations—e.g., in fr. 1, only lines 1-3 and 19-29
correspond with his description of the Sibyl's "reproach" of humanity;80 similarly, only
the opening couple of lines of fr. 3 correspond well with his emphasis on "generation,"

78 See Zeegers-Vander Vorst, "Les citations poétiques chez Théophile d'Antioche," St. Patr. 10.1
(1970), pp. 170-71, and Citations, pp. 111-42, for Theophilus' propensity to cite from florilegia.
79 Geffcken's literary arguments against the "authenticity" of the fragments, Komposition und
Entstehungszeit, pp. 69-75, seem to me still to have some force. Theophilus' source need not have been
exactly like the extant book 3 (plus fragments); as seen above, the Tower episode was probably different in
some ways.
80 Zeegers-Vander Vorst, Citations, p. 142.
the following lines turning to the one God and his creation. Both fr. 1 and 3 are largely concerned with exaltation of the One God, denigration of the many and man-made gods of paganism; also broached are the subjects of creation—one of the acts of the one God—and the reward awaiting those who worship him; these subjects, however, although they do not exactly fit Theophilus' specific introductions to the quotations, do in fact cohere with the general description of the contents of the Hebrew prophetic books in 2.35: monotheism, creation, and criticism of idolatry. After the second long quotation, Theophilus characterizes them again, this time as "obviously" true and useful:

Ὅτι μὲν οὖν ταῦτα ἀληθῆ καὶ ὑφέλιμα καὶ δίκαια καὶ προοφιλή πᾶσιν ἄνθρωποις τυγχάνει, δῆλον ἐστίν... [2.36.16]

Marcovich sees an allusion to Phil. 4.8 in these descriptive terms; if so, the already strong endorsement and positive characterization would be emphasized still further by putting OrSib into the class of things recommended by the Apostle Paul.81

After the Sibylline quotations, Theophilus goes on to cite pagan poets concerning divine judgment on evil, so that at the end he is able to point to the agreement of Sibyl, prophets, and even the poets and philosophers. The pagans were much later than the prophets, and stole their doctrine (2.37.16). Important here is simply the fact that the Sibyl is mentioned again as one among the prophets—who must here be the Hebrew prophets, contra Thraede.82 The pagan poets and philosophers are introduced by the strong adversative ἀλλὰ μὴν, and thus Theophilus is self-consistent: the Sibyl is in fact

81 Phil. 4.8:...ὅσα ἐστὶν ἀληθῆ, ὅσα σεμνά, ὅσα δίκαια, ὅσα ἁγνά, ὅσα προοφιλή, ὅσα εὐφημα...ταῦτα λογίζεσθε.
82 Col. 358—arguing that Theophilus has in mind various figures from the pagan world. Similarly (and wrongly), Rogers, p. 84, considers that the divine sophia "appears to be involved with the truth wherever it is found, and thus even in certain prophecies of the Greeks"—but he cites only the Sibyl as evidence for this supposed openness on Theophilus' part, whereas Theophilus' real views on pagan philosophers and poets have been seen to be much less accommodating.
the only figure from Greek culture who can rightly be called an analogue of the Hebrew prophets, despite the fact that Greek philosophers and poets did sometimes express truth.

Τοίνυν Σίβυλλα καὶ οἱ λοιποὶ προφήται, ἀλλὰ μήν καὶ οἱ ποιηταὶ καὶ φιλόσοφοι καὶ αὐτοὶ δεδηλώκασιν περὶ δικαιοσύνης καὶ κρίσεως καὶ κολάσεως· ἔτι μήν καὶ περὶ προνοίας, <ὅτι> φροντίζει ὁ θεός οὐ μόνον περὶ τῶν ζώντων [ἡμῶν], ἀλλὰ καὶ τῶν τεθνεώτων, καὶ τερ <όυχ> ἵπταντες, ἔφασαν· ἠλέγχοντο γὰρ ὑπὸ τῆς ἀληθείας. [Ad Autol. 2.38.3]

In Theophilus' apologetic work, then, the Sibyl consistently appears as the precise counterpart of the Hebrew prophets in the Greek/pagan sphere. Rogers notes that Theophilus stands out from other contemporary apologists in this matter: "While the inclusion of the Sibyl among the authentic prophets has become apologetic convention in the second century, Theophilus' is more vigorous than most."\(^\text{83}\) While this may be making too much of his contemporaries' esteem for the Sibyl, it is certainly striking that he unapologetically and clearly makes the Sibyl a prophetess with a validity and inspiration equal to that of the Biblical prophets.

While it is also striking that after such profuse quotation of the Sibyl in Book 2, there is no mention at all of her in Book 3, the explanation for this silence may simply be the different subjects Theophilus is treating.\(^\text{84}\) Especially important is the establishment of the chronological priority of the Hebrew sages, and since Theophilus never seems to envisage the Sibyl as an intermediary between the Hebrew and Greek worlds, but rather only as a prophetic figure in her own right, establishing a date for the Sibyl is not particularly important to him. Celsus, on the other hand, criticized Christians for interpolating OrSib with impieties, and this challenge to the authenticity of the texts Theophilus had trumpeted may have induced the apologist to keep silent about them in

\(^{83}\) Rogers, p. 136.
\(^{84}\) The lack of quotations of OrSib in Book 3 is not difficult to explain: as Zeegers-Vander Vorst, Citations, p. 26, points out, most of Theophilus' quotations generally are in the second book.
the last book. By itself, the omission of the Sibyl from Book 3 is easily explicable—yet
the parallel with Tertullian's apparent growing reticence raises the possibility that Celsus'
criticisms hit home in this case.

TERTULLIAN

In the immense corpus of the writings of Tertullian, mentions of the Sibyl are few,
but significant, especially considering that his attitude toward pagan literature is (at least
on the surface) harsh.\(^85\) In regard to the Sibyl, Tertullian begins with an attitude
comparable to that of Theophilus, but appears over the course of time to revise his view
of her downward—at least in the context of Christian apology; but in the end he remains
open to mentioning her ornamentally.

Two of Tertullian's apologetic works, the *Ad Nationes* and the *Apologeticum,*
come into the discussion of his use of Sibylline oracles. They are both to be dated quite
early in his literary career, probably early and late respectively in the same year, 197.\(^86\)
With regard to *Apol.,* it is not the vulgate text which is in view, but a substantial section
(somewhat more than a page, in Dekkers' edition) appearing only in the *Codex Fuldensis*
(F, now lost); this section is called the *fragmentum Fuldense.*\(^87\) There has been

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\(^85\) On Tertullian's views of pagan literature and philosophy, usually considered harsh, see now H.
Steiner, *Das Verhältnis Tertullians zur antiken Paideia* (St. Ottilien, 1989), who emphasizes also what
Tertullian shares with pagan culture. See also Conteras, pp. 992-1006, who considers Tertullian "[a]s
vehement as Tatian in his denunciation of paganism, but broader in scope and much more sophisticated" (p.
992); furthermore, he admits "an innate disposition of the human mind, including that of the gentiles, to
exercise moral judgment" (p. 1005).

chronological scheme; on pp. 33-34 he discusses historical allusions in these works.

\(^87\) The *fragmentum* appears between *Apol.* 19.1 and 2, and is generally referred to by asterisked
numbers: *Apol.* 19.1*-10*. On ms. F and its much-debated relationship to the rest of the textual tradition,
see Barnes, pp. 239-40 (and 324); C. Becker, *Tertullians Apologeticum: Werden und Leistung* (Munich,
1954), pp. 107-175; E. Dekkers in *Tertulliani Opera,* CCSL 1 (Turnhout, 1954), pp. 78-84; H. Hoppe,
*Tertulliani Apologeticum,* CSEL 69 (Vienna, 1939), xxxii-xlvi; W. Bühler, "Gibt es einen gemeinsamen
considerable disagreement about the relationship between the Fuldensian text and the
vulgate tradition; yet some consensus that F reflected a preliminary recension of Apol.,
and thus could be dated between Ad Nat. and the vulgate Apol., has obtained, especially
in the mid-20th cen.\textsuperscript{88} Becker argues at length and convincingly for this view: that the
fragmentum is Tertullian's preliminary sketch, taken largely from Theophilus, on the
antiquity and authority of the scriptures, a subject later worked into the final (i.e. vulgate)
version of Apol. 19-20.\textsuperscript{89} Thus, the Ad Nat., the fragmentum Fuldense, and the vulgate
Apol. demonstrate three stages of Tertullian's apologetic—three stages close to each other
chronologically, but distinct in their treatment of the Sibyl: in Ad Nat., he discusses and
quotes her; in the fragmentum Fuldense, he only discusses her; in the vulgate Apol., he
makes no reference to her whatsoever.

Both Ad Nationes and the Fragmentum Fuldense present a positive picture of a
Sibyl. In Ad Nat. 2.12, after recounting the story of Saturn at some length as an example
of his category of gods who were originally humans, Tertullian resorts (like Lactantius at
a later period, but equally as a rhetorical tactic) to the "more powerful testimony of divine
literature, which warrants faith because of its greater antiquity".\textsuperscript{90}

\textsuperscript{88} The position maintained by Hoppe, pp. xxxvii-xlvi, and Dekkers, pp. 81-4 (his edition is of the
Fuldensian version, with variants from the vulgate judged as authentically Tertullian's printed in small type
above the line), and others; Bühler questions the consensus, on the basis of corrupt readings shared between
the two branches of the tradition; cf. Barnes, pp. 239-40. For an interpretation of the Ad Nationes which
attempts to evaluate it as a serious composition, not just a preliminary for the Apologeticum, see J. C.

\textsuperscript{90} The category of such gods is introduced at Ad Nat. 2.9.10, as a subset of the gods proper to the
Romans (as opposed to those adopted from other nations); this is the system Tertullian propounds in
(34) Adhuc de Saturno immorabor quo et ceteris compendium praestruam, satiata primordiorum disputatione, nec praetermit<ta>m potiora testimonia divinarum litterarum, quibus fides pro antiquitate superiore debetur. (35) Ante enim Sibylla quam omnis litteratura <vestr>a, <i>lla scilicet Sibylla veri <Dei> vera vates, de cuius vocabula daemo<nio>rum vatibus induistis. (36) Ea senario versu <probate>um est homines fuisse. [Ad Nationes 2.12.34-7]

The sources Tertullian had been using for the foregoing account were Latin and Greek historians and annalists, as well as the testimony of place names; now he cites the Sibyl, as his sole example here of "divine literature." The term divinae litterae may be significant: it appears a few times in Tertullian's work as a designation of Scripture, in particular in the apologetic works, although his favorite term when addressing Christians seems to have been scriptura. Unlike Lactantius, who uses a similar designation later, appealing to multiple figures of authority within pagan culture (the Sibyl, Hermes, Apollo), Tertullian only makes reference to the antiquity of the "divine literature" as the reason why his citation should carry weight. That is, he does not assert that the Sibyl in some sense "belongs" to his pagan audience. After the quotation, moreover, he more

answer to Varro's division of Roman gods into certi, incerti, and electi (2.9.3). Cf. Lactantius, DI 1.6.1: nunc ad divina testimonia transeamus; also De Ira 22.2, and the model in Cicero, Tusc. Disp. 1.112ff.

91 OrSib 3.108-111:
Καὶ τότε ἐγενεῖ τε καὶ τεκνών ἀνθρώπων
καὶ βασίλευσε Κρόνος καὶ Τιτάν ἔξω τε

92 For the historians, see the names listed at Ad Nat. 2.12.26; in 2.12.27-29 he develops the argument from place names.

93 For litterae with the adjective divinae (as well as sanctae, nostrae, christianae, and the genitive fidei), see R. Braun, Deus Christianorum: Recherches sur la vocabulaire doctrinale de Tertullien, 2nd ed. (Paris, 1977), p. 459; Braun notes that Tertullian avoids sacrae litterae in this sense, that in the one place it appears (De An. 2.3) it refers to the sacred books of pagan θεόλογοι. For scriptura, see Braun, pp. 455-8. Thus, for Tertullian, one may take the designation "divine" more at face value, in a Christian sense, than the use of the same term by Lactantius, who includes oracles of Apollo, the Sibyl, and Hystaspes in his parallel classification.
clearly makes the distinction between "your authorities" and "literature older than yours"—the latter indicating the Sibyl. If Tertullian is not explicitly putting the Sibyl on a par with the Hebrew prophets, he is at least giving her words more antiquity and status than any pagan literature. The reference to greater antiquity echoes the usual Christian argument for the higher age of the Hebrew Scriptures in comparison with Greek literature, although Tertullian also uses it to reinforce the credibility of the Sibyl as an authority on the primeval events he is writing about. This could conceivably be read in a purely human sense, rather than an assertion of her prophetic status. As in Theophilus, however, the Sibyl is further distinguished from (and more highly valued than) pagan literature, specifically as being "divine."

Whereas in the Ad Nat., Tertullian does not mention where the Sibyl was active, in the fragmentum Fuldense, he specifies that some Sibyls operated in the pagan sphere, but that these were not the Sibyl he is primarily concerned with; rather, the Sibyls known to pagans were using the name without having the true inspiration of their predecessor:

Habetis, quod sciam, et vos Sibyllam, quatenus appellatio ista verae vatis Dei veri passim super ceteros, qui vaticinari videbantur, usurpata est, sicut vestrae Sibyllae nomen de veritate mentitae, quemadmodum et dei vestri. [Apol. 19.10*]

In both the Ad Nat. and the Fragmentum, Tertullian makes it clear that he considers there to have been just one true Sibyl, a true prophetess of the true God, although her appellation vates was used for others (including other Sibyls) in the pagan world who did not derive their inspiration from God—in Ad Nat., he specifies that these others were

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94 <Dei> is supplied in Ad Nat. 2.12.35 on the basis of the precise parallel in Apol. 1.10*.
95 In Ad Nat. 2.12.35, cuius is an elliptic genitive: "from her (designation), you applied the term also to prophets of demons." M. Haidenthaller, Tertullians zweites Buch "Ad Nationes" und "De Testimonio Animae," Studien zur Geschichte und Kultur des Altertums 23.1-2 (Paderborn, 1942), p. 170, cites Hartel's paraphrase: cuius vocabulum vatibus dedistis. Cf. Ad Nat. 1.4.1, on the naming of adherents of schools by the name of the founder: sectam de auctoris appellatio<e> mut<us>ari utique probum usitatumque est, and Dekkers' notes on both passages. On the use of the genitive, cf. also A. Blaise, Handbook of Christian
"prophets of demons" whereas in *Apol.*, he only implies that their vaticination was not authentic, by saying that they "seemed" to prophesy. The *Fragmentum* follows Theophilus closely; in particular, the sentence *habetis...et vos Sibyllam* should be compared with Theoph. *Ad Autol.* 2.9: ἀλλὰ καὶ παρὰ Ἑλλησίν Σίβυλλα. For Theophilus, this extends the category of prophet to one figure outside the Hebrew sphere, but Tertullian's different context results in the implication that one Sibyl is "ours"—the true prophetess of the true god—whereas one, or rather many, as he goes on to specify (*vestrae Sibyllae*), are "yours"—and they are false. The phrase *quod sciam*, "as far as I know," further contributes to the disparaging quality of the sentence. Of course, Tertullian is also establishing the parallel to justify Christian trust in prophetic texts to a pagan audience. Thus, while generally in agreement with Theophilus that the Sibyl was a significant prophetess, Tertullian seems to contradict Theophilus in saying that the

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*Latin*, tr. by G. C. Roti (Washington, D.C., 1994), § 120, and E. Löfstedt, *Late Latin* (Oslo, 1959), pp. 133-5, although neither of these adduce exact parallels to Tertullian's usage here. It is not absolutely clear that the term *vates* is in view in *Ad Nat.*; possibly Tertullian means that others were given the name Sibyl on the pattern of the first (a possibility Varro, *ap. Lact.* DI 1.6.7, considers: *quod omnes feminae vates Sibyllae sint a veteribus nuncupatae, vel ab unius Delphidis nomine vel...* the alternative, based on an etymology for the name). *Vocabulum*, however, can have the force of "common noun" as opposed to *nomen*, "proper noun" (*OLD* s.v., 2b). In *Apol.*, the use of the masculine *ceteros* (but cf. Haverkamp's emendation: *ceteras, quae*) and the verb *vaticinor* (derived from *vates*), as well as the fact that Tertullian goes on to compare this transference to the false use of the name Sibyl by others (*vestrae Sibyllae*), imply that in the first place he is dealing with the extension of the term *vates*. Cf. also *Apol.* 19.6*, where the poetic mimicry of prophecy is called *vaticinatio*: *De prophetia affectatio eius poeticam vaticinationem deputavit.* Also in the *fragmentum Fuldense*, Moses is said to have told the events from the beginning until his own time *per vaticinationem* (*Apol.* 19.1*—cf. also *OrSib* 3.820-23, although there is no evidence that Tertullian was familiar with this passage). Tertullian does not use the word *vates* or related words very often. Elsewhere, *vates* occurs once (restored) with reference to Homer (*Ad Nat.* 1.10.37); once of pagan poets in general (*Apol.* 23.14); and once in connection with prediction of the future, parallel with *augur* and *prospex* (*De Test. An.* 5.2). At *De An.* 6.3, Tertullian uses the verb (*vaticinor*) as an instance (parallel with *furo*) of the soul's being moved from outside it.

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96 Heinze, p. 387, who gives a series of parallels; cf. also Becker, p. 155. The mss. reading is actually *nos*, on the basis of which Haverkamp emended *habetis to habemus*, but the sense, as well as the phrase *quod sciam*, requires the second person; Oehler corrected it to *vos*.

97 See Kühner-Stegmann 2.2: 307 (§ 194.9).
significant Sibyl was in fact not part of the pagan sphere. That is, so far from being Greek or Roman, she pre-dated those cultures. It is not clear where Tertullian imagines the Sibyl as having been active, although the content of the quotation perhaps contains a clue.

Tertullian announces the subject of the Sibylline quotation in Ad Nat. 2.12.36 to be de Saturni prosapia et rebus eius, and that the Sibyl discussed Saturn in hunc sensum. The latter expression, one assumes, simply looks forward to the quotation, since the Sibyl disagrees in some details with the "sensus" of Tertullian's previous account, in which Saturn and Ops are the only children of Earth and Heaven. For the quotation itself, Tertullian probably depends on Athenagoras, although Harnack disputed this. The effect of the quotation, for Tertullian as for Athenagoras, is to reinforce the author's Euhemeristic argument that the supposed gods were once just humans. As with Tertullian's dependence on Theophilus, however, so here too he has not left things exactly as they were in his source: Athenagoras gives no special prominence to the Sibyl in citing this passage, implying that she was only one of a number of Greek authorities, whereas Tertullian explicitly brings out the difference between the Sibyl and other "pagan" sources, raising the Sibyl to a higher level. Tertullian's reference to the great

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98 Reconciliation would be possible if one assumes that by vos Tertullian means "Romans" specifically, rather than pagans in general—then, Theophilus' reference to the Sibyl active among the "Greeks" would, for Tertullian, mean, e.g., the Erythraean Sibyl, as opposed to the Cumaean Sibyl, whose books were incorporated into the Roman religious system.

99 Becker, p. 80 n. 14; Haidenthaller, p. 173; Lortz, p. 8 n. 8; Schneider, pp. 35-6. Becker tries to confirm the dependence by citing in addition the similarity of treatment of poets (Athenag. Leg. 21; Apol. 14), and the passage from Hercules to Aesculapius (Athenag. Leg. 29; Ad nat. 2.14.9). Von Harnack, "Tertullians Bibliothek christlicher Schriften," Sitzungsberichte der Deutschen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin (1914), p. 320, calls most of the correspondences between Tertullian and Athenagoras commonplaces, and does not specifically mention the Sibyl in this context; note, however, that he also contests Tertullian's acquaintance with Theophilus, although he concedes that "manches für diese Annahme spricht." On p. 313 Harnack notes the Sibylline quotation in Ad Nat., and remarks that "Tertullian, der sonst keine Kenntnis der jüdischen Sibyllenrorakel verrät, wird es aus indirekter Überlieferung erhalten haben."
antiquity of the Sibyl is certainly calculated to increase the credibility of his source, but his view of the Sibyl's status here goes well beyond mere antiquity. Nevertheless, he says that sources "older than yours" are more worthy of credit than "yours" because of their closeness to the events in question—namely, the reign of Saturn. This places the Sibyl chronologically, at least roughly: she speaks of Saturn in the perfect tense, but is ancient enough (according to Tertullian) to be naturally more credible than Greek sources. It is tempting to imagine that Tertullian was familiar with (or had seen a notice based on) the end of the extant OrSib 3, which makes the Sibyl Noah's daughter-in-law (3.827), and this would therefore justify his placement of her before all "your literature"; however, the fact that he depends on Athenagoras for the quotation itself makes this pure speculation.

Although David Potter claims that Tertullian gives the Sibyl a "prominent place" right before the "climactic exposition of Christian doctrine" in the Apol., the pattern of the three works together shows that by the finished version of the Apol., Tertullian was downplaying rather than emphasizing the presence of the Sibyl. In the first stage, he quotes and lays a fair amount of stress on the Sibyl in his argument; in the second, he retains the claim that there was a Sibyl who really belonged to the Judaeo-Christian tradition; and in the third, he makes no such claim: at the very least, he must not consider it particularly helpful in his apologetic endeavor. It is tempting to think that his increasing reticence reflects contact with anti-Christian texts such as Celsus Alethes.

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100 Prophets and Emperors, p. 87. This is not really the case even in the Fuldensian version he is referring to: Tertullian continues talking about prophecy and its fulfillment in Apol. 20, briefly treats the Jews in 21, and turns to the doctrine of God (and Logos) at 21.10, giving an account of the incarnation in 21.17-26. Whether this is "right before" or not, each must judge for him/herself, but in any case, the brief section on the Sibyl is more like an afterthought in the middle of Tertullian's panegyric on the Hebrew prophecies.
Logos, or with similar pagan incredulity with regard to Sibylline texts, especially as appropriated by Christians.

Tertullian's final mention of the Sibyl comes in the elaborate set piece De Pallio, in which Tertullian justifies his decision to abandon the toga in favor of the pallium, indicating an allegiance to "philosophy" (i.e., some form of Christianity). 101 This involves him in a discussion of change in fashions, and as one of the variations he rings on the theme of change, Tertullian discusses geological change, in the course of which discussion he mentions the islands Delos and Samos, saying that the former is no more and that the latter is only sand, 103 and (therefore) the Sibyl is no liar. 104

Mutat et nunc localiter habitus, cum situs laeditur, cum inter insulas nulla iam Delos, harenae Samos, et Sibylla non mendax, cum <terra> in Atlantico Libyam aut Asiam adaequans iam quaeritur...[De Pallio 2.3]

This ornamental reference alludes to the punning lines OrSib 3.363 or 8.165-6 (cf. also 4.91-2), to both of which there is attached a reference to Rome becoming a ὑπήμη—which Tertullian of course does not quote. The order of places mentioned is the same as Tertullian's in 8.165-6, whereas they are reversed in 3.363; however, the order of words

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101 For discussion of the meaning of the work, see especially Fredouille, Tertullien, pp. 443-78.

102 Of course the island still existed; but its failure to recover its commercial importance after the Mithradatic War and deprivations of pirates in the 1st cen. B.C. became a topos (R. W. V. Catling in OCD s.v. "Delos"); W. A. Laidlaw, A History of Delos [Oxford, 1933], pp. 268-71); see Paus. 8.33.2, who says it was deserted; Antipater of Thessalonica (late 1st cen. B.C./early 1st cen. A.D.), AP 9.408 (line 5 refers to Delos as Δῆλος ἐρημαίη, and in response to that, Alpheus of Mitylene, AP 9.100, who reverences Delos for its gods (Apollo and Artemis). Note that OrSib 4.91-92, a more elaborate treatment of Samos and Delos, based on the same puns as appear at 3.363 and 8.165-6, places the devastation of both places in the Hellenistic period. H. Kaley, "Delos," Neue Pauly 3 (1997): 397, does mention a small amount of settlement in the early Christian era evidenced by some churches, but only rare traces again by the 7th cen. See also Von Schoeffer, PRE s.v. "Delos" (esp. cols. 2499-500).

103 Samos also still existed; but its status of civitas libera was removed by Vespasian (Suetonius, Vesp. 8); alternatively, Tertullian may have in mind the recent severe earthquake there, 177 A.D. (see Bürchner, PRE s.v. "Samos 4"). col. 2218; but cf. 2167: "sehr zahlreiche Erdbeben") If so, this would be an interesting example of Tertullian interpreting the Sibyline oracles in light of current events. Further, it may be that there is a confusion with the earthquake in 178 at Smyrna, for which see CAH XI: 182; E. Guidoboni, I terremoti prima del Mille in Italia e nell'area mediterranea (Bologna, 1989), p. 670 no. 115.

104 For this kind of reference, cf. Pausanias 2.7.1, on an earthquake at Rhodes that seemed to confirm a Sibylline prophecy.
within the phrases is not preserved, and Tertullian seems to be freely paraphrasing, so there is no particular reason to favor one passage over the other. His use of nulla as equivalent for the Sibyl's ἄδηλος shows that he is thinking of total devastation, which is literarily attested, but perhaps an exaggeration nonetheless. The main information to be gathered from this passage for the purposes of this study, however, is that at another point in his career, as toward the beginning, he can refer to the Sibyl as a true prophetess, although here there is not the contrast with pagan vates or Sibyls.

Unfortunately, the date of the De Pallio is far from a settled question. Various dates have been proposed, from 193 to 223; yet there is some consensus that it is late in his career. Nevertheless, Costanza points out the shakiness of such dating, and prefers to see it as the work of a neophyte Christian—a set piece using his traditional rhetorical training and erudition to the full, which might be less comprehensible in a new schismatic. Different views of the genre or aims of the work may also affect the way to read the Sibylline reference: specifically, if it is primarily satirical, one should not read the reference as a serious claim for the Sibyl's veracity. While it is true that the De Pallio is a rhetorical display, and that it is not to be taken too seriously in general, there is a serious intent: self-justification. Furthermore, when there is a question of comparing traditional pagan sources with the Biblical tradition, Tertullian certainly privileges the Biblical. So, at 2.5, Tertullian refers to the earliest king in history according to pagan sources, Ninus, but then brings up the superior knowledge of Christians: "Qui vero divinas lectitamus, ab ipsius mundi natalibus compotes sumus."

105 See the list in S. Costanza, Tertulliano: De Pallio (Naples, 1968), p. 23.  
106 Fredouille, Tertullien, p. 444.  
107 Costanza, pp. 32-35.  
108 For the different views of the work overall, see Costanza, pp. 16-19.
Thus, when he uses the Sibyl's testimony, it seems to be perfectly legitimate to conclude that he does indeed believe that the Sibyl was a prophetess, in agreement with his high view of her status in the *Ad Nat.* and *Fragmentum Fuldense.*

Tertullian begins his apologetic attempts with a high view of the Sibyl, eminently comparable to that of Theophilus, except that he does not even consider her to have been active in the Greek world; rather, she was earlier than Greco-Roman culture, much like the Hebrew prophets. Nevertheless, he did not continue to insist on the Sibyl's role in apologetic, and she quickly faded from his works. It is impossible to say whether he continued privately to believe that there had been a truly inspired Sibyl; if the *De Pallio* is late, it seems likely, at least. Still, only in *Ad Nat.* does Tertullian actually use the Sibyl as a positive authority to confirm his argument; in the *Fragmentum,* the reference is more geared toward establishing the legitimacy of Biblical prophets; and in the *De Pallio,* the reference is primarily ornamental, although it perhaps bespeaks respect for the Sibyl as Tertullian's assumption. Tertullian's enthusiasm for the Sibyl's testimony is very much muted.

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA

Clement of Alexandria is, of the Greek Church Fathers of the first three centuries A.D., perhaps the most given to the display of learning through citation of pagan Greek philosophy, poetry, and scholarship.\(^{109}\) The number of his citations of Greek literature

\(^{109}\) See Contreras, pp. 980-88, for Clement's generous views of Greek philosophy; he describes Clement's view that philosophy was a preparation for Christianity, and notes (p. 988) that Clement "distinguishes between pagan philosophy and pagan religious practices"; and also Sevcenko, pp. 55-56, who mentions the use of Sibylline oracles by 2nd-cen. apologists in general in this context.
approaches that of his citations of the Old Testament.\textsuperscript{110} Within the sphere of citation of (ostensibly) pagan Greek sources, the Sibylline Oracles take a prominent place: he is the most extensive Christian user of Sibylline texts before Lactantius. In Nicole Zeegers-Vander Vorst's tabulation of his poetic citations in the *Protrepticus*, Sibylline quotations form 9.3\% of the total 107, a higher percentage than for any other Greek poet except Homer (45\%), and comparable with his citations of Euripides (9\%).\textsuperscript{111} In all Clement's works, by my count, there are 14 passages in which the Sibyl is quoted,\textsuperscript{112} for a total of 17 quoted texts. There is also one passage in which Clement simply mentions the Sibyl and briefly paraphrases the contents of her oracles. In many of these passages in which Clement uses Sibylline texts, it is clear that she enjoys a high status in his eyes, and in many ways represents a parallel to the Hebrew prophets.

Clement also provides three learned notices on the Sibyl, all in his extended, later work the *Stromateis*,\textsuperscript{113} demonstrating that he is not only interested in using the Sibyl's testimony, but has also taken the trouble to seek out information from traditional sources about this ancient prophetic figure. These passages thus sketch out some of the scholarly material relating to Sibyls that was available to Clement, and for this reason, they are worth examining as a preliminary to treatment of his citations of *OrSib*. They show Clement to be much better informed about traditional views of the Sibyls than almost any other early Christian writer, Lactantius being the chief exception. Strangely, however, the information he presents in these passages is not entirely coherent—either between the

\textsuperscript{110} According to the count of Krause, p. 126, he has 1002 direct citations of the Old Testament, 966 of (pagan) Greek literature.

\textsuperscript{111} Zeegers-Vander Vorst, *Citations*, p. 32.

\textsuperscript{112} Including *Strom*. 1.108.2, which quotes lines not from the Jewish-Christian corpus of *OrSib*.

\textsuperscript{113} Including the material surrounding the quotation at *Strom*. 1.108.2.
notices themselves or with the assumptions displayed in the quotations he makes, especially in the *Protrepticus*.

Clement's first learned notice depends on an extant passage of Plutarch (*Strom 1.XV.70.3-4*, depending on Plut., *Mor. 398c-d*). Its effect is partly to separate the Sibyl from the Greek tradition, and yet the details he takes over also serve to place her within the sphere of pagan divination:

(1.70.3) Ἡράκλειτος γὰρ οὐκ ἀνθρωπίνως φησίν, ἀλλὰ οὖν θεώ <τὸ> μέλλον Σιβύλλη πεφάνθαι. φασὶ γοῦν ἐν Δελφοῖς παρὰ τὸ βουλευτήριον δεικνυθαί πέτραν τινα, ἐφ’ ἣς λέγεται καθίζεσθαι τὴν πρώτην Σιβύλλαν ἐκ τοῦ Ἑλικῶνος παραγενομένην ὑπὸ τῶν Μουσῶν τραφεῖσαν. ἔνιοι δὲ φασίν ἐν Μαλίων ἀφικέσθαι Λαμίας οὖσαν θυγατέρα τῆς Ποσειδώνος.

(4) Σαραπίων δὲ ἐν τοῖς ἔπεσι μηδὲ ἀποθανοῦσαν λῆξαι μαντικῆς φησι τὴν Σιβύλλαν, καὶ τὸ μὲν εἰς ἀέρα χωρῆσαν αὐτῆς μετὰ τελευτῆς, τούτη εἶναι τὸ ἐν φήμαις καὶ κληδόσι μαντευόμενον, <ἐκ> δὲ τοῦ εἰς γῆν μεταβαλόντος σώματος πόας ὡς ἀναφυείσης, ὡσα ἐν αὐτὴν ἐπινεμηθὴθεν, κατ’ ἐκείνον δήποτε γενόμενα τὸν τόπον, ἀκριβὰ τὴν διὰ τῶν σπλάγχνων τοῖς ἀνθρώποις προφαίνειν τοῦ μέλλοντος δήλους γράφει, τὴν δὲ ψυχὴν αὐτῆς εἶναι τὸ ἐν τῇ σελήνῃ φαινόμενον πρόσωπον οἴεται.

(71.1) τάδε μὲν περὶ Σιβύλλης:

In this chapter of the *Stromateis*, Clement is enumerating examples of Greek wisdom being due to barbarians. André Méhat calls this part (1.66-73) "De l'origine barbare de la philosophie grec,"¹¹⁴ and includes it among those chapters which show a marked degree of unity.¹¹⁵ In it, Clement first claims that many of the Greek wise men were actually barbarians by race; then he tries to show that Plato admits the existence of barbarian philosophers and his own debt to them, that Pythagoras was the student of Egyptian prophets, that Democritus travelled much among barbarians and learned from them; then Clement mentions Zoroaster, then Zaratus as teacher of Pythagoras along with the

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¹¹⁴ Étude, p. 276. Note the transition at 1.74.1: Οὐ μόνης δὲ φιλοσοφίας, ἀλλὰ καὶ πάσης σχεδὸν τέχνης εὑρεταί βαρβάροι. The first part refers to the preceding section (1.66-73), the second to the following (1.74-80).

¹¹⁵ Étude, p. 241.
Galatians and Brahmans. Then follows one sentence about Aristotle's acquaintance with a Jew, on the evidence of Clearchus, after which Clement turns to the Sibyl. After reporting on her, he writes of Numa's debt to Moses, discusses special philosophical castes among various barbarian peoples, mentioning by the way the followers of the Buddha and Anacharsis, emphasizes the Jews as ancient and given to philosophy, somewhat skeptically lists the Idaean Dactyls, explicitly saying that they were Φρύγες...καὶ βάρβαροι (1.73.1), and devotes a few words to Atlas (also Phrygian) and to the centaurs Chiron and his daughter Hippo.\textsuperscript{116}

Clement's point in introducing the Sibylline notice into this chapter must be either that she was non-Greek herself or that she derived material from non-Greek sources. On the face of it, however, neither of these is the case, if Stählin's text is correct. The alternatives Clement reports concerning the Sibyl's origin both make her Greek, coming either from Helicon or from Malis (in Thessaly). There is some corruption in the text of the manuscripts: Plutarch's read εἰς Μαλεῶνα, which editors of Plutarch correct to ἐκ Μαλέων on the basis of the reading in Clement's ms. L, ἐκ μάλισκων on the basis of the reading in Clement's ms. L, ἐκ μάλισκων.\textsuperscript{117} Furthermore, the ms. of Clement reads οὐδῶνος, which can be corrected to Ποσειδῶνος by means of Plutarch and Pausanias, and μαλίας λαμίας in place of Plutarch's Λαμίας. I would suggest that Clement may have associated the mention of Lamia with the Libyan

\textsuperscript{116}\ Is Chiron the centaur, mentioned at Strom. 1.73.3-6, supposed to be an example of a non-Greek? Indeed yes, and not even human, one might argue. Note, moreover, that at the end of the chapter, the notice about the centaurs serves to turn the thought back to a comparison of dates: Hippo lived with Aeolus and taught him; Odysseus was Aeolus' guest; and remember that Moses lived well before the Trojan War. The focus on the transmission of knowledge and on the chronology of the transmission makes it certain that the centaurs are regarded as non-Greek. Hippo appears in the list of Greek χορηγολόγοι (1.132.3), but so, oddly enough, does Ζωροάστρης ὁ Μῆδος (1.133.2).

\textsuperscript{117}\ Endorsed, e.g., by S. Schröder, Plutarchs Schrift de Pythiae Oraculis: Text, Einleitung und Kommentar (Stuttgart, 1990), pp. 205-6: no place with the name Maleon seems to have existed; εἰς Μαλεῶνα would not supply the expected (ἕνωι δὲ φασιν) alternate version of the Sibyl's origins.
Sibyl, whom Euripides reportedly presented in the prologue of his play *Lamia*. I would not try to guess what else was in his text, but presumably it did not have a clear reference to the Malians. The context requires this to be a barbarian, or at least possibly barbarian, Sibyl. Indeed, since the Sibyl comes up between the references to Aristotle's knowledge of a Jew and Numà's dependence on Moses, one might even suspect that an association of the Sibyl with the Hebrew tradition is implied, if it were not for the particulars of the notice in other respects.

Apart from the associations with Delphi and the Muses, Clement gives here some details about the Sibyl's inspiration which are surprising, considering his generally positive attitude toward her. In the words of Heraclitus, the Sibyl predicted the future σὺν θεῷ—a formulation that one could certainly take in a monotheistic sense. In *Strom.* 1.70.4, however, depending on Sarapion's speech in Plutarch's dialogue, her gift is called μαντική, not προφητεία; she is credited with life after death as the face in the moon; and her body, once it has turned to earth, was to breed grass which, fed to sacrificial animals, would provoke divinatory results in their entrails. Here, then, the details transcribed from Plutarch, presumably included to enhance the Sibyl's prophetic prestige, have the side effect of placing her squarely within the world of pagan divination

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\(^{118}\) Varro *ap. Lact. DI* 1.6.8. The play may have actually been the *Busiris*, a satyr-play (Parke, *Sibyls*, p. 121 n. 9; Schröder, p. 193). This Lamia was also the daughter of Poseidon (Paus. 10.12.1), and a mythical queen of Libya (Diod. Sic. 20.41). Schröder, p. 199, remarks that Plutarch's association of a Sibyl with the Malian Lamia is surprising, and that the chronological primacy of a Libyan Sibyl may well have been quite generally held.

\(^{119}\) It should be noted that there was a Mileum, a Roman colony existing at least from pre-Imperial times, in Numidia (see *PRE* s.v.), and also that Pausanias apparently thought the first Sibyl came to Delphi from Libya, since he says that the Libyans gave her the name "Sibyl" (10.12.1); cf. E. Maass, *De Sibyllarum indicibus* (Diss. Greifswald, 1879), p. 7.

\(^{120}\) Sarapion paraphrases the Sibyl's verses in Plutarch; Clement says that Sarapion wrote about her in verse. There is some kind of confusion here, whether in Clement's ms. of Plutarch or in the textual tradition of Clement, or even as a result of a misreading by Clement.

\(^{121}\) Cf. the contrast between Greek and Hebrew modes of prophecy, *Strom.* 1.135.2-3.
and manticism. Although no pagan gods are mentioned, the apparent endorsement of pagan religion is unexpected.

The other two notices appear in a chapter dealing with chronology from the same book of the *Stromateis* (1.XXI.108.1-3 and 132.3), the first (Strom. 1.XXI.108.1-3) including a quotation and the second (Strom. 1.XXI.132.3) being merely a list of Sibyls:

(108.1) Καὶ οὔτι γε μόνος οὗτος, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἡ Σίβυλλα Ὄρφεως παλαιότερα· λέγονται γὰρ καὶ περὶ τῆς ἑπωνυμίας αὐτῆς καὶ περὶ τῶν χρησμῶν τῶν καταπεφημισμένων ἑκείνης εἶναι λόγοι πλείους. Φρυγίαν τε ὠςαν κεκληθήσει Άρτεμιν καὶ ταύτην παραγενομένην εἰς Δελφοὺς θρήνοι.

(2) οὗ Δελφοί, θεραποῦντες ἐκηβόλου Ἀπόλλωνος, ἤλθον ἐγὼ χρήσουσα Διὸς νόον αἰγιόχοι αὐτοκασιγνήτῳ κεχολωμένη Ἀπόλλωνι.

(3) ἔστι δὲ καὶ ἄλλη Ἑρυθραία Ἡροφίλη καλουμένη· μέμνηται τούτων Ἡρακλείδης ὁ Ποντικὸς ἐν τῷ Περὶ χρηστηρίων. ἐώς δὲ τὴν Αἰγυπτίαν καὶ τὴν Ἰταλίην, ἣ τὸ ἐν Ὀλύμπῷ Κάρμαλον ἤχωσεν, ὡς γὰρ Εὔανδρος ὁ τὸ ἐν Ὀλύμπῳ τοῦ Πανὸς ἱερὸν τὸ Λουπέρχιεν λαλούμενον πτίσας.

According to Christ's analysis of this chapter, which attempts to show that Hebrew wisdom was older than Greek wisdom, the information on the Sibyls occurs in two "appendices," the first dealing only with the Sibyl (1.108) after a demonstration of the antiquity of Moses (1.101-107), the second ("ein ganz locker zusammenhängender Anhang") being a catalog of Greek χρησμολόγοι paired with a review of the Hebrew prophets, which is not brought into any connection with the main idea of the chapter (1.132-36). In the first passage, Clement remarkably cites Sibylline lines which are not a part of the Jewish-Christian corpus but presumably come from his (pagan) source of

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Certain characteristics of the lines may have made them attractive to quote: she has come in opposition to Apollo in order to reveal the mind of Zeus (i.e. the supreme god)—hence, a Sibylline voice is in some sense opposed to the polytheistic system. The very existence of this first appendix shows that Clement is concerned to give the Sibyl a prominent place in the chronology of wisdom. Clement's concern is illustrated by the different treatment Tatian, on whom Clement draws heavily in this chronological chapter, accords the Sibyl in a list of pre-Homeric Greek writers, all of whom are later than Moses. Clement is not presenting the Sibyl as a Hebrew prophetess as he does in the Protrepticus, but he seems determined to give the generic name "Sibyl" the authority of antiquity. After discussion of the Sibyls, he turns to the Hebrew prophets (τῶν ἄλλων τῶν μετὰ Μωσέα παρὰ τοῖς Ἑβραίοις προφητῶν, 1.109.1), who are thus clearly distinguished from the Sibyls. The way they are brought in, however, appears to suggest that he wants to insist specifically on the Sibyl's chronological priority (with respect to Orpheus)—and thus in fact he links the Sibyl with Moses: Καὶ οὔτι γε μόνος οὗτος [Μωϋσῆς], ἄλλα καὶ ἡ Σίβυλλα ὡς ὁ Ορφέως παλαιότερα (1.108.1).

123 Note the similarity of Clement's notice and quotation to what Pausanias (10.12.2) says about the oracles of the (second) Sibyl Herophile: in her poems she also called herself Artemis, and the sister of Apollo (among other things). Also the Suda, s.v. Σίβυλλα Δελφίς: ἦν καὶ Ἀρτέμις προσηγόρευσαν.
124 Cf. OrSib 4.4, quoted at Protr. 50.1: The Sibyl proclaims that she is not a prophetess of false Apollo but of "the great God."
125 Compared to Orpheus, who presumably stands as one of the earliest Greek poets/wise men (cf. Strom. 1.59.1). Strangely, when Clement introduces the Sibyl she is singular: The Sibyl too is older than Orpheus. But then he admits that there are "many stories" about her name and poetry, and he ends up speaking about different Sibyls. The chronological position of the additional Sibyls is not made clear.
126 Tatian, Or. ad Gr. 41.1: οὔχ ὡς Ὁμήρου μόνον πρεσβύτερός ἐστιν ὁ Μωσής, ἀλλ' Μωσῆς καὶ ἡ Σίβυλλα οἱ οὗτοι πρὸ αὐτοῦ συγγραφεῖον. Λίνος, Φιλάμμων, Θαμύριδος, Ἀμφίος, Ὀρφέως, Μουσαίον, Δημοδόκου, Φημίου, Σιβύλλης, Ὑπομνημάτων τού Κρητής κτλ. Clement uses later parts of this very section just earlier (Strom. 1.107.4) and elsewhere in the chapter. See Christ, pp. 497-504.
127 ἄλλων might lead one to think he is including the Sibyls as Hebrew prophets, but it seems to be a redundant use (with μετὰ Μωσέα).
The aim of enhancing the Sibyl's authority appears to have disappeared by the second "appendix," in which the "crowd of Sibyls" is mentioned in company with oracle-mongers among the Greeks. Presumably Clement is here transcribing someone else's list of χρησμόλογοι, given that the list has little in common with Clement's earlier notices on the Sibyls; thus the Sibyls simply come in along with the rest.\(^\text{128}\) In common with them, however, this notice shows that Clement is aware of multiple Sibyls in the Greco-Roman tradition—again, unlike his other uses of the Sibyl, which always present her as singular.

If one compares the information on the different Sibyls provided in the three passages of \textit{Strom}. Book 1, it is clear that Clement made no attempt to construct a systematic list of Sibyls, nor any effort to correlate the list given in one passage with that given in another. In the first two passages (1.70.1-4 and 108.1-3), however, there is the common element of a Sibyl arriving at Delphi from a (probably) barbarian land. Both notices also seem calculated to enhance the authority of the name "Sibyl." Between the second and the third (1.108.1-3 and 132.3), only the mention of an Erythraean Sibyl is shared. While the third simply includes the Sibyls among other Greek oracle-mongers, the first treats emphasizes the divine power (and barbarian ties) of the "first Sibyl" even as it depicts her as intimately tied to pagan religion, and the second emphasizes her

\(^{128}\) On the other hand, Maass, \textit{De Sibyllarum indicibus}, p. 55, has a different method of composition in mind, since he attributes the differences between Clement's list of Sibyls and his putative source to careless citation from memory. His determination of the source (pp. 3-4, 53-55) is not quite convincing, however. He isolates, as probably taken from Hesychius, the Suda entries from Σίβυλλα Δελφίς to Σ. Κυμαία καί Σ. Θεσπρωτίς (as a list of Sibyls who left behind writings), omitting the Chaldaean as being derived by the compiler of the Suda directly from Pausanias. He notes the similarity of Clement's list to the "Hesychian" part of the Suda's entries on the Sibyls, which he attributes to a writer (possibly Dionysius of Halicarnassus) of the Hadrianic era. Once Maass has joined the name Phyto with the ethnic "the Samian," Clement's list is left with 8 entries, like the section of the Suda, and they partly correspond. Six of the Sibyls appear in both lists, including Taraxandra, which is one name given for the Phrygian Sibyl in the Suda. The order is different, and the differences in the Sibyls enumerated are not negligible. In Clement's list, the Samian (=) Phyto and the Macedonian are left unmatched; in the Suda, the Delphian and Elissa are left over. Maass, p. 4, wonders whether the Thesprotan might be the same as the Macedonian. Maass, \textit{De biographis Graecis quaestiones selectae}, Philologische Untersuchungen 3 (Berlin, 1880), pp. 123-4, finds the same source in Clement's earlier notice (\textit{Strom}. 1.108.1-3), but again the similarities are tenuous.
importance through chronology, suggesting also some conflict with traditional paganism. The three passages together have no details in common—except for their complete lack of any mention of a Hebrew Sibyl, despite the prominence of such a characterization in the Protrepticus. It appears that Clement has at least partly allowed his various sources for Sibyline information to determine his presentation. The themes of these notices, however, are at least somewhat visible in Clement's other uses of the Sibyl.

The treatment of the Sibyl as simply one of a series of Greek figures is not confined to the third of these scholarly notices. It also recurs in the third book of the Stromateis (3.III.14.3), in a collection of quotations from Greek literature, all concerned with the evils of life in the body:¹²⁹

\[
λέγει δὲ καὶ ή Σίβυλλα·
άνθρωποι θνητοὶ καὶ σάρκινοι, οὐδὲν ἐόντες, (OrSib fr. 1.1)
οὕτως τῷ γράφοντι ποιητῇ·
οὐδὲν ἀκιδνότερον γαῖα τρέφει ἀνθρώπῳ. (Homer, Od. 18.130)
\]

In this context, Clement is arguing against the Marcionites, who, on the grounds that the material world was evil, created by a subordinate and ignorant god, outlawed marriage and sex. He alleges that the Marcionites arrived at their position that γένεσις is evil through a misinterpretation of Greek thinkers such as Plato and Pythagoras, who, although they denigrated birth and sexual reproduction, did not consider them evil by nature (Strom. 3.13.1). Clement promises fuller refutation of the Marcionite position later,¹³⁰ but for the present contents himself with a catalog of excerpts from Greek literature, exemplifying the sentiment Marcion is supposed to have misinterpreted.

Authors quoted include Heraclitus, Empedocles, Homer, Theognis, Euripides, Herodotus,

¹²⁹ Strom. 3.14.1-23.3.
¹³⁰ Strom. 3.13.1 and 3, referring to a projected περὶ ὁργῆς...λόγον and a περὶ ψυχῆς; these were probably projected parts of the Stromateis but are not extant, and perhaps were never completed (Stählin, vol. III, pp. XXV-VI).
Plato, and Philolaus the Pythagorean. The Sibylline verse is the first line of \textit{OrSib} fr. 1, a text which provides Clement with quotable material on five other occasions; in fact, about one third of his citations of the Sibyl come from this fragment. It is most probable that even if Clement took most of the citations in this sequence from a florilegium or philosophical treatise on the subject, the Sibylline line was his own addition.\textsuperscript{131} This confirms the fact that Clement does \textit{sometimes} consider the Sibyl to be simply a (pagan) Greek authority, not particularly to be differentiated from others, whether poets, philosophers, or oracular voices.

Quite a similar view seems apparent also in another work of Clement's, the \textit{Paedagogus}, which, like the \textit{Stromateis}, is ostensibly directed toward Christians (as opposed to the \textit{Protrepticus}, an apology ostensibly aimed at the conversion of pagans).

Here too the Sibyl appears as a representative of pagan culture, albeit powerful:

\begin{enumerate}
\item[1] οἶκον δὲ καὶ πόλιν, ἐν ᾧ ἀσελγάϊνουσιν, [ναὶ μὴν] καὶ ἤ παρ' ὑμῖν ποιητικὴ ὀνειδίζουσα πως γράφειν·
μοιχεία παρὰ σοί τε καὶ ἄνδρῶν μίξις ἀθεσμὸς
θηλυγενὴς ἄδικος τε, κακὴ πόλι, πάντ' ἀκάθαρτε· \textit{(OrSib} 5.166-7[8])
\item[2] ἔμπαλιν δὲ ἀγαται τοὺς σωφρόνοντες·
oὔτε ἐπ' ἀλλοτρίᾳ κοίτῃ πόθον αἰσχρὸν ἔχοντας
οὔτε ἐπ' ἰρρενῷ ὕβριν ἔχοντας
ὁρμωμένους, ὅτι παρὰ φύσιν· \textit{(Paed.} 2.X.99.1-2)
\end{enumerate}

After giving his advice for the conduct of conjugal relations, Clement has turned to illicit relations (2.98)—or rather, has been deploring them in an elaborate \textit{praeteritio}, citing the apostle Paul (\textit{Eph.} 5.3), an Epicurean maxim, Ben Sira, and finally bringing in the Sibyl as a rhetorical climax, before moving on to a demonstration that concealment of one's sexual sins is futile. He quotes her, however, without naming her, but referring rather to ἤ παρ' ὑμῖν ποιητικὴ: a representative of poetry, not prophecy, and a source belonging

\textsuperscript{131}Cf. \textit{Strom.} 6.43.1, where Clement inserts passages from "Paul" in a context in which he is primarily citing the \textit{κήρυγμα} Πέτρου. On this kind of mixing of sources, see Méhat, \textit{Étude}, pp. 235-9.

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to his opponents. This is the sole passage where Clement appeals to the Sibyl explicitly as a pagan authority *sponte sua*. Strangely, this occurs in the *Paedagogus*, a work directed toward Christians; in the passage in question, some shifting of perspective takes place, and Clement, like the Sibyl, is momentarily addressing sexually corrupt pagans rather than the general audience of the work as a whole. The use of the words ὀνειδίζουσα and ἄγαται show that at least for the duration of her harangue, the Sibyl was only "in" the putative pagan context, not "of" it. This ambivalence should recall for the reader the partly detached attitude of the Sibyl toward pagan culture in the quotation of Strom. 1.108.1-3.

Sexual morality is also the occasion for Clement's second passage quoting the Sibyl in the *Paedagogus*, although in this case there is no characterization of the Sibyl as belonging to the Greco-Roman world:

\[ \text{τί ἐν τις φαίη τούτους ἰδών; ἀτεχνώς καθάπερ μετωποσκόπος ἐκ τοῦ σχήματος αὐτοῦ καταμαντεύεται μοιχοὺς τε καὶ ἀνδρογύνους, ἀμφοτέρων ἀφροδίτην θηρωμένους, μισότριχας, ἄτριχας, τὸ ἀνθρώπον μυσαττομένους, τὰς κόμας δὲ, ὡσπερ αἱ γυναῖκες, κοσμουμένους. } \]

\[ «ἐπ’ οὐχ ὁσίοις δὲ τόλμαις ζώντες οἱ παλίμβολοι ἱέζουσιν ἀτάσθαλα καὶ κακὰ ἔργα, (OrSib 4.154-5) φησὶν ἡ Σίβυλλα. (Paed. 3.III.15.2) » \]

In *Paed.* 3.15, Clement begins a section deploring men who "prettify" themselves (καλλωπίζεσθαι). As confirmation of his allegation that such men indulge in adultery and bisexuality, he quotes the Sibyl's description, attributing it to her afterwards with the spare φησίν ἡ Σίβυλλα. He seems to interpret all the vague words in a sexual manner,

132 Alexandre, 2: 266, argues for ἵμαν, since the work is addressed to Christians; but the rhetoric of the appeal (καὶ ἢ παρ’ ἵμαν ποιητική) requires ἵμαν; Clement's perspective therefore shifts, in fact to that of his quotation, which addresses the "wicked city."

133 Because of the address to pagans, therefore, this case is different from other appeals to traditional authorities in the *Paedagogus*, which H.-I. Marrou, "Humanisme et christianisme chez Clément d'Alexandrie d'après le Pédagogue," in W. K. C. Guthrie et al., *Recherches sur la tradition platonicienne*, Entretiens Hardt 3 (Geneva, 1957), pp. 190-92, cites to demonstrate the equivalence between Christian and pagan authorities for Clement.
although there is in fact nothing in the Sibylline passage, whether in the lines quoted or in the surrounding lines of the extant OrSib, to suggest an exclusively sexual interest. Lines 156-8 should have oriented the interpretation rather in terms of violence and bloodshed, directed especially against the pious: ὑβρεσι χαίροντες καὶ ἐφ' αἵμασι χεῖρας ἔχοντες (158). Still less is there anything there to connect sexual perversions with self-beautification. The quoted passage is part of a description of an eschatological time of extreme evil, when faith in piety has perished, along with justice (lines 152-3). Thus, he invokes an attack on quintessential pagan wickedness for the specific subject he is concerned with here. In any case, Clement must have considered the weight of the Sibyl's name an important voice to invoke in addition to his own attempt to overcome his speechlessness (τί ἂν τις φαίη) in the face of such evil, and if the reader continues to assume that the Sibyl is a voice from Greco-Roman paganism as earlier in the work, there is (in Clement's reading) a continued tension with that pagan context.

Clement's citation of an apocryphal appeal by the apostle Paul to the texts of the Sibyl and Hystaspes has already been mentioned; in this context, Clement presents the Sibyl as a Greek "prophetic" voice, in contrast with his usual tendencies, but in keeping with the argument of the Κήρυγμα Πέτρου, which he cites nearby. More characteristic for Clement, by contrast, is the pairing of Hebrew prophecy with Greek philosophy as two complementary preparations for the Christian message.134 He rarely uses the words προφήτης and προφητεία for Greeks.135 In this case, presumably Clement has the

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quotation ready and wishes to use it because it sanctions "Hellenic books" in general with apostolic authority, but the texts mentioned are both predictive; the predictive aspect and the conception of prophets among the Greeks make the references dovetail with the nearby citations of the Κήρυγμα Πέτρου. Clement does have a predilection for the Sibyl too, but never actually cites her elsewhere in the way that "Paul" does here; that is, as a pagan prophetess.

In strong contrast to much of what has been seen of Clement's views of the Sibyl(s) to this point, in the Protrepticus he allows a picture of a Sibyl intimately tied to the Hebrew prophetic tradition to emerge, but it does so little by little. He does much to distance the Sibyl from the Greek tradition and to associate her with the Hebrew, but for the most part does this in a subtle, unobtrusive manner. The best way to get an impression of this characterization is to follow Clement through the work and examine his presentation of the Sibyl at each stage.

Clement's first appeal to the words of the Sibyl (Protr. II.27.4) gives an ambiguous conception of her position. He calls her ἡ προφητικὴ...καὶ ποιητικὴ Σίβυλλα, the first epithet connecting her with the Biblical tradition, the second with the (Greek) poetic tradition; and he pairs the Sibylline quotation with a quotation of Empedocles:

(27.3) ύμιν δὲ καὶ ὁ ύμέτερος ὑποδύεται ποιητής ὁ Ἀκραγαντίνος Ἐμπεδοκλῆς
tογαροτοὶ χαλεπήσον ἀλύσοντες κακότησιν

97, 109. There are some exceptions to his restriction of the term to biblical figures: Epimenides is a Ἑλληνικὸς...προφήτης at Strom. 1.59.2 (in a phrase which Stählin athetizes); but Titus 1.12-13 (quoted by Clement) already calls him "one of their own prophets." The "prophets" of the Egyptians are in fact the counterparts of the philosophers (Strom. 1.71.4, 1.62.4; προφήτης is an Egyptian title also at Strom. 6.37.1-2).
οὔ ποτε δειλαίων ἄχεων λωφήσετε θυμόν.

(4) τὰ μὲν δὴ πλεῖστα μεμύθευται καὶ πέπλασται περὶ θεῶν ύμίν· τὰ δὲ [καὶ] ὅσα γεγενήσθαι ὑπείληπται, ταύτα δὲ περὶ ἀνθρώπων αἰσχρῶν καὶ ἀσελγῶς βεβιωκότων ἀναγέγρασται. τύφῳ καὶ μανίῃ δὲ βαδίζετε καὶ τρίβον ὀρθὴν εὐθείαν προλιπόντες ἀπῆλθετε τὴν δι᾽ ἀκανθῶν καὶ σκολόπων· τί πλανᾶσθε, βροτοὶ; παύσασθε, μάταιοι, καλλίτετε σκοτίην νυκτός, φωτὸς δὲ λάβεσθε.

[OrSib fr. 1.23-25, 27]

ταύτα ἴμιν ἤ προφητικὴ παρεγγυά καὶ ποιητικὴ Σίβυλλα· (5) παρεγγυά δὲ καὶ ἡ ἁλήθεια, γυμνοῦσα τῶν καταπληκτικῶν τούτων καὶ ἐκπληκτικῶν προσωπείων τῶν ἀγαθῶν τῶν θεῶν, συνονυμίας τιοί τὰς δοξοποιίας διελέγχουσα.

The function of the quotation is rhetorically to close one wave of his attack on paganism by means of an appeal to his readers to leave their error. Thus, the citation is adduced suddenly, asyndetically, and is identified as the Sibyl's only afterwards. Clement streamlines her appeal by leaving out one line (fr. 1.26) which would anticipate the light/darkness imagery of line 27; he thereby presents a quicker succession of imperatives, made more striking and urgent by the omission of the complicating subordinate clause.

Just before the citation of the Sibyl, Clement has quoted Empedocles. That quotation is a purely negative indictment (οὔ ποτε...ἄχεων λωφήσετε θυμόν), whereas the Sibylline quotation offers hope: you are walking in the wrong road; so leave it, and take hold of the light. The philosopher-poet is identified as belonging to his audience (καὶ ὁ υἱός...ποιητής), a Greek himself who indicts the Greeks; his attack is directed at "you" (ὑμῖν). By contrast, the Sibyl is brought on as a recognized authority,

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136 This passage is known otherwise only through Theophilus' quotation (Ad Autol. 2.36), who has lines 23-27 in the following version (differences in boldface):

τύφῳ καὶ μανίῃ δὲ βαδίζετε καὶ τρίβον ὀρθὴν εὐθείαν προλιπόντες ἀπῆλθετε καὶ δι᾽ ἀκανθῶν καὶ σκολόπων ἐπιλάνασθε· βροτοί, παύσασθε, μάταιοι, ὄρεμμομενοι σκοτίην καὶ ἀφεγγέει νυκτί μελαιῆ, καὶ λάβετε σκοτίην νυκτός, φωτός δὲ λάβεσθε.
to be sure, but not specifically as "one of yours"; her injunctions are directed "to us" (ἡμῖν—i.e. to you and to us). Empedocles' attack does not include the Christians; these, however, have already responded to the Sibyl's universal appeal. Empedocles is introduced to bring home the gravity of the pagans' situation; the Sibyl, to point to the solution. As Clement turns at this point in the *Protrepticus* to a different angle from which to attack pagan religion, he asserts that "truth" lays on the same injunction as the Sibyl: ταῦτα...παρεγγυνά...Σίβυλλα· παρεγγυνά δὲ καὶ ἡ ἀλήθεια...

At the end of chapter III, Clement turns his attention to the temples of the gods, arguing that they were really tombs; and then, in chapter IV, to their images, his main points being that they are man-made and insensible. After a brief digression on the deification of Antinous, which touches on the themes of moral reproach regarding the origins of certain cults, exposé of the deification of humans, and the sepulchral origin of temples, Clement announces (*Protr.* IV.50.1-4) that he will introduce Sibylla the prophetess (ἡ προφῆτις) as teacher (διδάσκαλος):

(50.1) διδάσκαλον δὲ ἰμῖν παραθήσομαι τὴν προφῆτιν Σίβυλλαν οὐ ψευδοῦς Φοίβου χρημιμήροφον, ὅν τε μάταιοι ἀνθρώποι θεὸν εἶπον, ἐπεψευσάτο δὲ μάντιν, ἄλλα θεοῦ μεγάλοιο, τὸν οὐ χέρες ἔπλασαν ἀνδρῶν εἰδώλοις ἀλάλοισι λιθοξέστοισιν ὁμιοῖον. [OrSib 4.4-7]

(2) αὕτη μέντοι ἐρείπια τοὺς νεὼς προσαγορεύει, τὸν μὲν τῆς Ἔφεσίας Ἀρτέμιδος χάσμασι καὶ σεισμοῖς «καταποθήσεται προμηθευόμενος οὐτως». ὥπτια δ’ οἰμώξει Ἔφεσος κλαίουσα παρ’ ὁχθαις καὶ νηὸν ζητοῦσα τὸν οὐκέτι ναιετά ὁμοῖον· [OrSib 5.294a, 296-7]

(3) τὸν δὲ Ἰσιδός καὶ Σαράπιδος ἐν Αἰγύπτῳ κατενεχθήσεται φησι καὶ ἐμπρησθήσεται... ἞σι, θεά τριτάλαινα, μένεις ἐπὶ χεύματα Νείλου μούνη, μανιάς ἀναυδός ἐπὶ ψαμάθοις Ἐχεροντος, [OrSib 5.484-5]
eίτα ὑποβάσα· καὶ οὐ, Σάραπι λίθους ἀργοὺς ἐπικείμενε πολλοὺς,

137 J. Jackson, "Minutiae Clementinae," *JThS* 32 (1931), pp. 263-4, as Stählin notes, proposed to emend to ἰμῖν, but the universal appeal here, as opposed to the selective attack of Empedocles, makes sense.

κείσαι πτώμα μέγιστον ἐν Αἰγύπτῳ τριταλαίνῃ. [OrSib 5.487-8]
(4) σὺ δὲ ἄλλ’ εἰ μὴ προφήτιδος ἔπαυσες, τοῦ γε σου ἀκουόνον φιλοσόφον, τοῦ Ἑρακλείτου τὴν ἀναισθησίαν ὀνειδίζοντος τοῖς ἀγάλμασι... 

Which of the subjects in play her testimony will address is not immediately clear.

Clement first cites some lines to specify her identity and credentials, lines which further distance her from the Greek tradition: she is a χρησμηγόρος not of false Phoebus but of "the great God, who has not been fashioned by human hands." Thus, her verses make a by-the-way attack on man-made images, and on the divine status of Apollo. Then, Clement adduces three passages to show that pagan temples will be destroyed. The place of this point in his argumentation is obscure. Clement's charge about temples earlier had been that they are in reality just tombs, but now the fact of their future destruction is the only consideration explicitly in view. I would suggest that the attack on images is the mental background for these quotations. If images of the gods are man-made, they can be destroyed; a little later, Clement presents examples of statues stripped of gold, subjected to the excrement of birds, and of temples plundered, burned, and shaken by earthquakes, as proof that the pagan cults are foolish, as well as to hint that they are under divine condemnation (52.2-53.3). One detail, the epithet ἄναυδος139 applied to Isis in the third Sibylline quotation, may form a further connection to the insensibility and impotence of pagan images.

To introduce the second quotation, Clement freely paraphrases the lines which appear immediately before it in OrSib, and which identify the temple as that of Ephesian Artemis; he retains verbatim the phrase which refers to the instruments of destruction:

139 Note that the mss. of OrSib read ἀτακτος; Geffcken opts for Clement's reading as the original; cf. ἀλάλοισι in the first quotation, OrSib 4.7.
χάσμασι καὶ σεισμοῖς. He actually quotes in full not the lines which describe the
destruction, but those which describe Ephesus mourning over the destroyed temple.

In the last two citations, Clement seems to be interpreting the pictures of gods
alone and helpless as metaphors for the destruction of their temples. Also, for some
reason, he adds the explicit idea of destruction by fire. Nowhere in the extant Sibylline
Oracles is there a prediction that specifically Isis' and Sarapis' temples will be burned. It
may be that, for Sarapis' temple, he has in mind the recent conflagration alluded to a little
later (Protr. 53.2). More likely, he has in mind the final universal conflagration
threatened, for example, in the cosmic battle at the end of Bk. 5.

Clement's distancing of the Sibyl from the Greek tradition continues after the
quotations, as he proceeds: "but if you will not heed a prophetess, at least listen to your
own philosopher" Heraclitus—and the discussion turns explicitly to the insensitivity of
images and therefore the futility of appealing to them or worshipping them. The Sibyl, as
a prophetess, is explicitly contrasted with witnesses "belonging" to his audience, such as
the philosopher Heraclitus.

At Protr. IV.62.1, in a manner similar to that of 27.4, Clement cites Sibylline
verses as a rhetorical cap, drawing the conclusion (note τοίνυν) after a heated diatribe
against mythology and physical representations of divinities as provocative of lust and
licentiousness: happy are those alone, he says, who abstain from participation in the
pagan rites:

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140 The picture in OrSib 5.54-55 of maenads darting around the foundation of Isis' temple, coupled with
the statement that Isis will be έν πολέμοι καταχθόν (55-6) is a similar image, but explicitly tied to
the physical temple; perhaps Clement is also thinking of this passage.
141 In Book 5 in particular fire is a prominent agent of destruction, often eschatological (e.g., lines 206-
14, 274-80). Note also 3.611-18 (after a great king comes from Asia and overthrows Egypt, "they" will
bend the knee to God, ἐφαγα δὲ χειροποίηται πυρὸς φλογὴ πάντα πεσέται; fr. 3.41-45, the judgment of
eternal fire on those who do not turn to God; Egyptians specifically are in view, given the animal cults
mentioned in lines 22, 27-28.
In fact, the context is a conclusion to the entire first part of the Protrepticus, the negative attack on pagan cult in general. The lines Clement quotes recall many of his themes thus far: rejection of temples and man-made (χειροποιήται) images, their impotence/insensibility (κωφῶν), the cruelty of sacrificial rites. But they do not directly tie in to the immediately preceding diatribe, which deplores the moral effects of verbal and artistic depictions of myths and divinities. Rather, the oracular description of the blessed who are not connected with polytheistic religion and sacrifices adds general force to the appeal, and thereby constitutes an effective summary of the work so far.

A new subject comes into the picture as the Protrepticus progresses: the plagiarism practiced by the Greeks. As Clement begins to explain that the Greeks (here at first specifically Plato) took much of their wisdom from the Hebrews, he cites a Sibylline description of that people (Protr. VI.70.2), without explicitly attributing it to the Sibyl. He uses the quotation as a convenient summary of Hebrew views, before demonstrating Greek dependence more fully:

(70.1) πόθεν, ὦ Πλάτων, ἀλήθειαν αἰνίττῃ; ...νόμους δὲ τοὺς ὡσοὶ ἀληθεῖς καὶ δόξαν τὴν τοῦ θεοῦ παρ᾽ αὐτῶν ὑφέλησαι τῶν Ἑβραίων,
(2) οἵτινες οὐκ ἀπάτῃσι κεναῖς, οὐδὲ ἔργα ἀνθρώπων χρύσεα καὶ πέτρας καὶ ἀργυροῦ ἠδὲ ἐλέφαντος καὶ ξυλίνων λιθίνων τε βροτῶν κενεόφρον βουλή.

142 For treatment of this theme, see most recently Ridings, who complains (pp. 33-35) that some have downplayed it in Clement because they consider it beneath his intelligence; Droge; and H. Dörrie, Der hellenistische Rahmen des kaiserzeitlichen Platonismus, vol. 2 of Dörrie et al., Der Platonismus in der Antike (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt, 1990), nos. 69-71, pp. 190-218, with comm., pp. 480-505.
The lack of attribution is to be explained by the fact that Clement is not using the Sibyl as an authority to advance or clinch an argument. The origin of the text is not so important in this nearly ornamental citation—yet, like the previously quoted description of the "blessed," the oracular verse must add to the emotional appeal; furthermore, the similarity of the references to pagan cult in this quotation would make it easy for a reader to guess that here too Clement is relying on the Sibyl. If the connection is made, of course, the Sibyl's association with the Hebrew tradition becomes all the stronger. The lines he chooses to quote focus on the Jews' rejection of the worship of images, their monotheism, and the piety and purity in their worship. He omits surrounding lines, which refer to the Jews' temple cult (575-9), their physically inhabiting particular places (581), their moral excellence (respect for parents and the marriage bed, 594b-595), as well as a passage referring to the Jews' exclusive possession of divine favor and truth (582-5). The former themes would not be germane to Clement's purpose, which here is to show Greek dependence on Hebrew monotheistic ideas; the last would sabotage his attempt to show that truth spread to the Greeks, and did not remain restricted to the Jews. He thus rigorously cites only what he needs, to the point of distorting the ideas of the oracle: he is in the odd place of endorsing the Sibyl as authoritative while twisting her words.

Some significant textual variants probably reflect a different text-type in his Vorlage, but some fit so conveniently into his arguments that they may be suspected as his own adaptations. To this class belong the reading βροτῶν...θανόντων for the

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143 So Geffcken, *Oracula Sibyllina*, p. XXXI.
Sibylline manuscripts' θεῶν...καμόντων in line 588, emphasizing the Euhemeristic interpretation of the origins of pagan cults. Clement's version does not deign even to allow them the title "gods." In 593, where ΦΨ have θεῶν τὸν ἄει μέγαν ὄντα, Clement reads μόνον τὸν ἄει μεδέοντα—a reading which stresses the Jews' monotheism.

Although these fit Clement's program, they may have originated with any earlier editor who wished to heighten the expression of monotheism.

The Sibyl takes on a more important role in Clement's argument about alleged Greek plagiarism in what follows. In Protr. VI.71.4, Clement cites Sibylline verses as a parallel to a passage of Xenophon:

(71.1) Καὶ μοι μὴ μόνον, ὃ φιλοσοφία, ἢν τούτον Πλάτωνα, πολλοὺς δὲ καὶ ἄλλος παραστήσαι σπούδασον, τὸν ἄνεον μόνον θεόν ἀναφθεγγομένους θεὸν κατ’ ἐπίσημον αὐτοῦ, εἴ ποι τῆς ἀληθείας ἐπιδράξαιντο. (2) Ἀντισθένης μὲν γὰρ Οὐκ οὐΚυνικὸν δὴ τοῦτο ἐνενόησεν, Σωκράτους δὲ καὶ ἄλλους παραστῆσαι σπούδασον, τὸν ἕνα ἀναφθεγγομένους θεόν ἀναφθεγγομένους ἐπιδράξαιντο εἴποι τῆς ἀληθείας ἐπιδράξαιντο. (3) Σωκράτους δὲ καὶ ἄλλους παραστῆσαι σπούδασον, τὸν ἕνα ἀναφθεγγομένους θεόν ἀναφθεγγομένους ἐπιδράξαιντο εἴποι τῆς ἀληθείας ἐπιδράξαιντο.

In fact, they are more than simply parallel: Clement alleges that the Sibylline passage was the source of Xenophon's statement, and finally calls her "the prophetess of the Hebrews" to emphasize in the strongest way yet that she is separate from the Greek tradition. Clement draws the very same parallel in the Stromateis 5.XIV.108.6, a text in
which the theme of the "theft of philosophy" is also especially important, but without making the explicit assertion that the Sibyl was the source, merely that she made her utterance first:

(108.4) ὃ τε Ἔωσσικίς ὁ Ἀντιοθένις, παρασφάζων τὴν προφητικὴν ἐξείλθην φωνὴν «τίνι με ὑμοιώσατε; λέγει χύριος», «<θεὸν> οὐδενὶ οὐκέναις φησίν» διόπερ...δύναται (quotation as above) (5) τὰ ὅμως καὶ Ἑνοφόνον ὁ Ἀθηναῖος κατὰ λέξιν λέγει· «ὁ γούν πάντα σείων...ἀφαιρεῖται» (quotation as above)
(6) τις γὰρ σῶθα δύναται τὸν ἐπουράνιον καὶ ἀληθῆ ὀφθαλμοῖς ἱδεῖν θεὸν ἄμβροτον, ὃς πόλον οἰκεῖ, ἀλλ' οὐδ' ἀκτίνων κατεναντίον ἥλιοι ἀνθρώποι στῆναι δυνατοί, θνητοὶ γεγαώτες, [OrSib fr. 1.10-13] προείπεν ἡ Σίβυλλα.

Clement is not always consistent in the way in which he presents this idea of "theft."

Sometimes Clement even seems ready to grant a measure of divine inspiration to those Greek thinkers who hit upon the truth, whereas at other times he certainly has in mind "historical" dependence of Greeks on the Hebrew scriptures—hence the elaborate efforts in *Strom* 1.101-147 (XXI) to demonstrate that Moses was more ancient than Homer—and at still other times, the theft appears to have been conducted by fallen angels. In the present cases, the citations of Xenophon and the Sibyl are part of a series of parallel quotations, each set containing one from Greek philosophy, and one from biblical material. The oddity comes from the fact that it is not a passage from the Hebrew scriptures that is adduced as a parallel to the text of Xenophon, but one from the Sibyl, introduced as the "prophetess of the Hebrews" (in the *Protrepticus*) and thus, apparently,

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144 Note especially *Strom*. 1.81-87, commenting on John 10.8, πάντες οἱ πρὸ τῆς παρουσίας τοῦ κυρίου κλέπται εἰσὶ καὶ λῃσταί. Also *Strom*. 5 and 6 passim.
145 See, e.g., in *Protr*. 71.1, cited above, κατ' ἐπίπνοιαν αὐτοῦ, and on Clement's adaptation of Justin's ideas of the λόγος, see Dawson, pp. 186-94; Daniélou, *Gospel Message and Hellenistic Culture*, pp. 54-55; on p. 71, Daniélou justly remarks: "The fact is that, even though Clement allots a very important place in theory to this source of philosophy, in practice he rarely appeals to it"—rather, when he finds a parallel, he usually ascribes it to borrowing.
146 *Strom*. 1.81.4-5, 1.86.1-87.1.
put on a par with the canonical Hebrew prophets. Clement does not announce that the sources in "the barbarian philosophy" which he alleges for Greek philosophy will all be biblical, but in practice they usually are.\footnote{147} Clement's canon of scripture, of course, is a slippery subject. Tollington observes: "As in the case of the Old Testament, so, and even more in the case of the New, it is exceedingly difficult to set limits to Clement's list of Sacred Books."\footnote{148} It may well be that the Sibyl stands, for Clement, in the "zone indécise"\footnote{149} between the generally recognized books and those generally not recognized.

If Clement's canon is somewhat nebulous, it is nevertheless striking that here he puts the Sibyl, who is almost never included in lists of apocryphal works\footnote{150} (and so presumably there was not perceived danger that anyone would treat her as canonical), on the same level as Biblical texts—and with the specific designation (in the Protr.) as Hebrew prophetess.

Clement has one further Sibylline citation in the Stromateis (5.XIV.115.6) which also seems to suggest the Sibyl as a source for Greek thought, at least in combination with a Biblical passage:

\begin{quote}
(5.115.4) 'Αλλ' ἀντίκρυς [καί] μίαν ἀρχήν καὶ παρ' Ἐλλήνων ἀκοῦσαι ποθεῖς; Τίμαιος ὁ Λοκρὸς ἐν τῷ φυσικῷ συγγράμματι κατὰ λέξιν ὥδε μοι μαρτυρήσει: »μία ἀρχὰ πάντων ἐστὶν ἀγένητο· εἰ γὰρ ἐγένετο, οὐκ ἂν ἦν ἐκεῖ ἄρχα, ἀλλ' ἐκεῖνα, εἴ ἂς ἄρχα ἐγένετο.« (5) ἐρρύη γὰρ ἐκεῖθεν δόξα ἡ
\end{quote}

\footnote{147} Ridings, pp. 112-17, lists the specific dependencies mentioned by Clement in convenient tabular form. There are instances elsewhere in which Clement seems to present some NT-related apocryphal material in the same relation to Greek wisdom as the Sibyl stands here: Strom. 2.70.5; 5.52.4; 5.96.2-3; presumably he must be thinking of a primal theft of wisdom by angels (5.10.2) who then became guardian powers of the nations (7.6.4) and were thus able to pass it along. In strong contrast to Clement's treatment of the Sibyl, cf. the explicit presentation of Orpheus' borrowings from Scriptural sources, Strom. 5.123-8.


\footnote{149} C. Mondésert, Clément d'Alexandrie: Introduction à l'étude de sa pensée religieuse à partir de l'Écriture (Paris, 1944), 118 n. 2.

\footnote{150} A.-M. Denis, Introduction aux pseudépigraphes grecs d'Ancien Testament (Leiden, 1970), p. 111: they only appear on the Armenian list of Mechithar; cf. Denis, p. XV; also, infra p. 216 n. 3.
ἀληθῆς· ἴδοιν. Ἰσραήλ, κύριος ὁ θεός σου εἶς ἔστιν, καὶ αὐτῷ μόνῳ λατρεύεις·

(6) οὗτος ἰδοὺ πάντεσσι σαφῆς ἁπλάνητος ὑπάρχει, [OrSib fr. 1.28]

ὁς φησιν ἡ Σίβυλλα.

The Sibylline citation appears asyndetically (ὁς φησιν ἡ Σίβυλλα follows) after Deut. 6.4, 13, which is introduced as the source for Timaeus of Locri. The Sibylline quotation could be construed either as providing another source for Timaeus or as a simply making a further comment. The first possibility seems difficult, since the passage of "Timaeus" and the oracular verse do not have much in common. A few lines later in fr. 1, the Sibyl makes a monotheistic pronouncement, but the line quoted here simply says that "he/this one" (ὁτος) is clear to all, and ἁπλάνητος. It may be that Clement has in mind the following lines of the Sibyl as well, which he quotes more fully at Protr. 77.2, in which case the Sibyl is more comprehensible as a source for the "single ἀρχὴ" of Timaeus. The second interpretation, on the other hand, would mean that the verse from the Sibyl is not connected to the plagiarism theme, except in so far as πάντεσσι σαφῆς might be an allusion to the diffusion of the knowledge of God. Given the context, namely a list of passages of Greek literature supposedly dependent on Hebrew wisdom, it is difficult to escape the first interpretation, even though the line quoted has no apparent connection with the quotation of Timaeus.

152 Sometimes an extra putative source is added without much comment from Clement: e.g., Strom. 5.120.3: a quotation from Isaiah is added after the quotation of Menander (the end of which it parallels), which is brought in as "paraphrasing" Ps. 4:6; Strom. 5.127.3, a quotation of Jeremiah (more general) is introduced after that of Isaiah, which more closely parallels the quoted Greeks; Strom. 5.106.1, where a N.T. text is added to an O.T. source alleged for Heraclitus.
Thus, in three passages, one from the *Protrepticus* and two from the *Stromateis*, Clement places the Sibyl in the same position as the Biblical sources he alleges to have been plagiarized by Greek philosophers. Functionally they are the same, and by this point in the course of the *Protrepticus*, it is hard to imagine Clement going further in the direction of assimilating the Sibyl to Hebrew prophets—but he does.

First, however, he injects another ornamental or hortatory Sibylline citation. After recounting the apocryphal story of Orpheus, how the former teacher of pagan mysteries had a change of heart and issued a palinode,\(^\text{153}\) some of which Clement quotes, he appends (*Protr.* VII.74.6) a couplet which appears in *OrSib* 3.624-5:

\[
οὕτως μὲν δὴ Ὄρφεὺς χρόνῳ γέ ποτε συνήκεν πεπλανημένος.
\begin{align*}
\text{άλλα} & \text{ σὺ μὴ μέλλων, βροτὲ ποιυλόμητι, βράδυνε,} \\
\text{άλλα} & \text{ παλύμπλαγκτος στρέψας θεὸν ἱλάσκοιο.}
\end{align*}
\]

At first glance he appears to be attributing it (falsely) to Orpheus, in which case, either he must be transcribing the couplet from a (badly labelled) florilegium or citing the lines from memory and imagining that they are Orphic.\(^\text{154}\) The usual assumption is in fact that Clement is quoting the verses as Orphic, but he certainly does not do so explicitly.\(^\text{155}\) The \(οὕτως\) which opens the sentence previous to the Sibylline quotation is really referring back to the material already cited, and the sentence thus serves as a conclusion to the discussion of Orpheus. The quotation that follows is therefore anonymous, and more than supposition is required in order to show that Clement intends it to be taken as Orphic. As we have seen, Clement sometimes cites the Sibyl anonymously. The final quality of the sentence about Orpheus makes it more probable that Clement is adding the

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\(^{153}\) On which now see Holladay.


\(^{155}\) Geffcken, *Oracula Sibyllina*, p. XXX, for example, shows the usual assumption.
couplet as a supplementary exhortation: having now heard how Orpheus finally changed
his mind, you should not wait, but rather turn and propitiate God.

Finally, Clement finishes his review of philosophical and poetic opinions about
the divine in the Protrepticus, and turns instead to the "prophetic writings." All the
quotations that follow are biblical,\(^{156}\) but the first witness to be summoned (Protr.
VIII.77.2) is the "prophetess Sibylla," and the verses she is called on to produce are
characterized as "the song of salvation" (τὸ ἄσμα τὸ σωτήριον):

(77.1) Ὄψα τοίνυν τῶν ἄλλων ἦμιν τῇ τάξει προδηνομένον ἐπὶ τὰς
προφητικὰς έναν γραφὰς· καὶ γὰρ οἱ χρησμοὶ τὰς εἰς τὴν θεοσέβειαν ἦμιν
ἀφορμὰς ἐναργέστατα προτείνοντες θεμελιοῦσι τὴν ἀλήθειαν· γραφά δὲ
αἱ θεῖαι, εἰ καὶ πολιτεῖαι σώφρονες σύντομοι σωτηρίας ὁδοί, γυμνοὶ
κομμωτικῆς καὶ τῆς ἐκτὸς καλλιφωνίας καὶ στωμύλιας ὑπάρχουσιν ἀνιστῶσιν ἀγχόμενον
ὑπὸ κακίας τὸν ἄνθρωπον, ὑπερείδουσι τὸν ὄλισθον τὸν βιωτικὸν,
καὶ τῇ αὐτῇ φωνῇ πολλά θεραπεύουσι, ἀποτρέπουσι μὲν ἡμᾶς τῆς
ἐπιζημίου ἀπάτης, προτρέπουσι δὲ ἐμφανῶς εἰς προὔπτον σωτηρίαν.

Clement thus now unambiguously classes the Sibyl along with Biblical prophets. The
"prophetic writings" of which the Sibyl's verses form a part are in the prefatory sentences
alternately called "the oracles" (οἱ χρησμοὶ) and "the divine Scriptures" (γραφαὶ...αἱ

\(^{156}\) Except for an apocalyptic mishmash at 81.4, which also appears in the Prayer of Joseph, and which
Stählin (ad loc.) thinks comes en bloc from Apoc. Petr.
θεῖαι), and the quoted lines certainly attempt to carry out what Clement says those scriptures do: turn people away from harmful deception, and towards the salvation that lies before them. Not only is the Sibyl included among biblical material, she is afforded pride of place as the first to be quoted. This does not necessarily mean, however, that Clement thinks of her as the foremost Hebrew prophet; rather, as elsewhere in the Protrepticus, the appeal of the Sibyl may be more emotional and even ornamental. In any case, here more than anywhere else in Clement's works, the Sibyl takes a place among the "chorus of prophets."

After the quotation, Clement engages in a few interpretive comments. First of all, her treatment is described with the adverb ἐνθέως, a term which denotes high praise if not necessarily inspiration. The Sibyl is praised for representing deception as darkness, and the knowledge of God as sun and light. Clement's interpretation of the imagery of light as representing the knowledge of God shows how he reads the quotation: γνῶτε looks forward to the following lines. One might therefore translate "storing wisdom in your hearts, know (that) there is one God..." The exact force of the end of Clement's interpretive sentence is specified by the next sentence, which appears to be Clement's explanatory comment rather than commentary: "Falsehood is dispersed not by the mere juxtaposition of what is true, but by the exercise of truth it is overpowered and

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157 Note line 29: μὴ σκοτίην δὲ διώκετε καὶ ζόφον αἰεὶ.
158 Here, knowledge and wisdom: γνῶτε δὲ κατθέμενοι σοφίην ἐν στήθεσιν ὑμῶν (line 31).
159 Note that despite Clement's proclamation that the "holy writings" are devoid of art, the first representative he chooses is the hexameter poetry of the Sibyl; Steneker, pp. 75-6, notes the paradox that Clement praises the simplicity of the Bible even while writing about it in a highly artificial prose: "Clément...réuse un style qui est le sien et plaide pour une simplicité que lui-même ne possède pas." For the vocabulary he uses in the description of Biblical style, cf. especially Plato, Gorg. 462-4; Hermog., Id. 1.12 (p. 297.25-298.1 Rabe).
160 See Protr. 2.2; 8.2; 79.2.
161 The word is otherwise only once used of a non-biblical author, Metrodorus ("although an Epicurean"), Strom. 5.138.2.
put to flight." Given this comment, τὴν ἐκλογὴν διδάσκει must mean not "she teaches which choice to make/what to choose" but rather "she teaches choice"—i.e., that choice is necessary. οὐγνωσίς, furthermore, here means not simply "comparison" but "discrimination." The Sibyl juxtaposes light and darkness, and shows that a choice between them must be made. Note that even here, where the Sibyl is quoted as a witness to divine truth—and the quotation thus includes theological information—Clement's comments show that he is using her primarily as a hortatory, not an informative, voice.

Clement's final Sibylline quotation in the Protrepticus is merely an anonymous appropriation of a short phrase concerning Alexander the Great:

οἶδε γὰρ ἄνθρωπος ἁποθεοῦν τετολμήκασι, τρισκαίδεκατον Ἀλέξανδρον τὸν Μακεδόνα ἀναγράφοντες θεόν, ὑδ Βαβυλών ἠλεγξε νεκρὸν.« [Protr. X.96.4, quoting OrSib 5.6a (= 12.6)]

The function might appear to be primarily ornamental, as is often the case with Homeric (and Sibylline) citations and reminiscences in Clement. The line has, however, been adapted to fit Clement's theme, becoming a terse dismissal of the deification of humans. In full, it reads: ὑδ Βαβυλών ἠλεγξε, νέκυν δ’ ὠρεξε Φιλίππῳ. By cutting short the quotation at νεκρὸν, Clement produces the meaning that Babylon convicted him as dead, i.e., not a god, whereas in the complete text νέκυν is part of the next clause: Babylon confounded him, and gave a corpse to Philip. The very next line in the Sibylline corpus explicitly rejects Alexander's divinity: οὐ Διὸς οὐκ Ἀμμωνος ἀληθέα

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162 Thus all the translations (W. Wilson [Edinburgh, 1868]; Butterworth [Loeb]; Mondésert [SC]; Stählin [Munich, 1934]; Galloni [Rome, 1991]; Migne, PG).
163 Cf. Strom 6.48.7: «ἴδοι γὰρ φησὶ πρὸ προσώπου ὑμῶν τὸν θάνατον καὶ τὴν ζωήν, ἐκλέξασθαι τὴν ζωὴν, πρὸς σύγκρισιν ἐκλογῆς τεθεῖσθαι λέγον ὁ θεός, οὐ πεποιηκέναι ἄμφω.»
164 Cf. also Polyb. 12.10.1: τὴν προαίρεσιν καὶ τὰς ἀποφάσεις συγκρίνωμεν ἐξ παραθέσεως.
165 Steneker, p. 79, on Homeric citations.
166 The text of the Sibyl was νέκυν, as that reading in Ω and at OrSib 12.6 shows. Φ and ψ have corrupt readings: νέην and ναίειν respectively. νεκρὸν is an adaptation to prosaic idiom.
φημιχθέντα. It may be that Clement has that line in mind too, and that by a kind of abbreviation, condenses together the content of the first line and the message of the second. In any case, Clement's last citation of the Sibyl in this work reverts to the old theme of combating pagan religion, and continues his tendency to focus his citations of her for emotional impact.

In the Protrepticus, therefore, Clement consistently (but increasingly over the course of the work) distances the Sibyl from the Greek tradition and assimilates her to the Hebrew, by giving her the title prophetess (finally, even "prophetess of the Hebrews"), by contrasting her with Greek sources which are explicitly marked as belonging to his (Greek) audience, by citing her as the source for a piece of Greek wisdom in an exposition of Greek debts to the Hebrews, and finally by introducing her testimony at the beginning of a section where his express intention is to turn to "the prophetic writings," where she is called on to sing τὸ ἄσμα τὸ σωτήριον. In the rest of Clement's works, apart from the passages in which the Sibyl provides a supposed source for Greek wisdom (Strom. 5.108.6, probably also 5.115.6—the connections are not made explicit, however, by contrast with Protr. 71.4), she is not specifically connected with the Hebrew tradition. At best, she is treated as barbarian and anterior to Greek sages (Strom. 1.70.3-4, 108.1). In other passages she forms a part of the Greek poetic corpus (Paed. 2.99.1; Strom. 3.14.3), or has connections to the Greek oracular/mantic sphere (Strom. 1.70.3-4, 108.1-3, 132.3; 6.43.1).

This pattern is the reverse of what one might expect. The prima facie apologetic value of the Sibylline Oracles (and the motive for the composition of Jewish and Christian forgeries thereof in the first place) is to provide an authority recognized in

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166 Except for the epithet ποιητική which appears in Protr. 27.5.
specifically Greek circles who makes pronouncements supporting Judaeo-Christian claims. Clement seems blithely to destroy this possibility in his apologetic work by making the Sibyl a Hebrew prophetess, against most earlier scholarly tradition. Before him, only Aelian (VH 12.35) and Pausanias (10.12.5) mention a Hebrew or Judean/Jewish Sibyl, Pausanias apparently based on his personal acquaintance with Sibylline texts dealing with Jewish matters.\textsuperscript{167} It may be that Clement knew and followed an authority such as Pausanias, or that he simply drew the same conclusion from the texts he knew as Pausanias had done.\textsuperscript{168} At the same time, since Celsus had already made the accusation that Sibylline Oracles had been forged by Christians, Clement may be responding to the suspicion about the oracles.\textsuperscript{169} He himself quotes only from Sibylline oracles of Jewish origin, not from those forged later by Christians, which contain such explicit "prediction" of Jesus' life that suspicion was well-deserved.\textsuperscript{170} It was thus possible for him simply to add (or endorse) a Hebrew Sibyl; he knew that "many stories" were circulating about Sibyls. Thus, in a roundabout way, he could forestall pagan expression of doubts about the authenticity of the Sibylline texts he used by admitting that they were in fact Hebrew in origin. Still, it remains strange that in his lists of Sibyls in the \textit{Stromateis}, he never mentions the possibility that there was a Hebrew Sibyl. And

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167 So Parke, \textit{Sibyls}, pp. 41-45. Varro's list of Sibyls (ap. Lact., \textit{DI} 1.6) does not include a Hebrew Sibyl, although later sources based on this list identify the Persian Sibyl with Sambetha, the Chaldaean or Jewish Sibyl: Joh. Lydus, \textit{De Mens.} 4.47; \textit{S ad Pl. Phaedr.} 244b; \textit{Tübingen Theosophy}, p. 59 (\textit{Theos. Graec. Frag.}, ed. Erbse [Leipzig 1995]); Prologue to \textit{OrSib}, ll. 32-34 (Geffcken's ed.); \textit{Chron. Pasch.}, 1: 201 (Dindorf) lists a Hebrew and a Persian Sibyl. The Sibyl of \textit{OrSib} bk. 3 could be called Hebrew only because of the subject matter or the circles in which the book was held in esteem, since she identifies herself as a daughter-in-law of Noah (pre-Hebrew), and gives her place of origin as Babylon (\textit{OrSib} 3.809, 827).

168 There is no direct evidence that Clement knew Pausanias, although his information at \textit{Strom.} 1.108.1-3, where he names Heraclides Ponticus as his source, bears resemblances to Paus. 10.12.2.

169 Origen, \textit{C. Cels.} 7.53.

170 This assumes that fr. 1 is of Jewish origin. In any case, it has no overt Christian content.
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nowhere does he actually use the phrase "Hebrew Sibyl," only "prophetess of the Hebrews."

In further contrast to the *Stromateis*, in which Clement has learned notes mentioning that there were in fact multiple Sibyls, in the *Protrepticus* Clement never alerts his audience to that possibility. Never, when he actually cites Sibylline lines, does he specify which Sibyl out of a possible range he is quoting.¹⁷¹ Thus, although he is aware that scholars had distinguished Sibyls active in different areas, he normally prefers to ignore that, and proceeds as if the Sibyl was a single, unified source. It appears that Clement's intention in this regard is to use the Sibyl's name for its recognized authority in the Greek world, while at the same time acknowledging (now and then) her connection to the Hebrew tradition. That is, he is trying to get the best of both worlds: to retain the emotional impact that an appeal to an oracular source might make on a potential convert, even while sporadically suggesting that the Sibyl was really Hebrew, although her name was well-known to the Greco-Roman world. The restriction to a single Sibyl in most contexts might even suggest that Clement, like Tertullian, considered there to have been a single true Sibyl who preceded all the rest, and that connections with pagan culture and religion visible in some who were called Sibyl need not therefore impugn the inspiration of the ancient, original Sibyl.

As Clement in his *Protrepticus* assimilates the Sibyl to the Biblical tradition more fully than any other before or after him, he can be seen as the apex in the first broad stage of Christian adoption of the Sibyl as a true and valid prophetess. Justin's espousal of the Sibyl was tentative and not very explicit. Theophilus accepted her as a true prophetess,

¹⁷¹ Even the (pagan) citation transcribed at *Strom.* 1.108.2 obeys this rule, since in the first part of the passage, he is still only referring to a single Sibyl, about whom different stories are told.
but placed her in the midst of the pagan world. Tertullian withdrew her from that world by positing such great antiquity for her that at least the current world of paganism had yet to arise. Finally, Clement felt free to consider her *in fact* as well as in function, a full-fledged Hebrew prophetess.
Chapter 4

A PAGAN ONCE MORE
THE SIBYL ACCORDING TO THE PSEUDO-JUSTINI
COHORTATIO AD GRAECOS AND CONSTANTINE'S ORATIO AD SANCTORUM COETUM

The direction taken by Tertullian and especially Clement of Alexandria's *Protrepticus* turned out to be more or less a dead end in the Christian use of the Sibylline Oracles. Although a "Hebrew" Sibyl does indeed turn up in late versions of Varro's list of the Sibyls, as an alternative name for the Chaldaean or Persian Sibyl (for example, in the Sibylline *Prologue* and in the *Suda*), such classification was not put to practical use, not combined with citation of Sibylline texts—that is, no one after Clement said, "There was a Hebrew Sibyl, and her words were as follows…" Rather, it was simply encyclopedic. The first difficulty with extending the approach of Clement and turning the Sibyl into a recognized Hebrew prophetess, in strict assimilation to the Biblical prophets, was presumably presented by the process of canonization.¹ Clement of Alexandria felt free to use a broad range of texts which most later Christian writers avoided.² As Christians slowly decided which texts would be a part of their own Scripture, the fact that *OrSib* were in fact neither recognized as Scripture by Jews, nor used as such by large sectors of the Christian world, would have militated against adopting Clement's classification of the Sibyl as a Hebrew prophetess. At the same time,


² For Clement, see von Campenhausen, pp. 291-307.
the implications of calling the Sibyl a true prophetess would have become clearer: if the Sibyl was an authentic Hebrew prophetess, there ought to be no problem incorporating her into the Bible—but in fact there is no indication that anyone seriously attempted to "canonize" OrSib in this way. OrSib do not appear in any extant lists of "apocryphal" books except for a late Armenian list. The second difficulty would have been simply the fundamental source of the usefulness of OrSib in the first place: their status as texts supposedly connected to a pagan authority figure, but one which nevertheless presented teachings that agreed with those professed by Christians, was the chief element of their supposed credibility before a pagan audience. Despite Tertullian and Clement (and the suggestions in other quarters of the existence of a "Hebrew Sibyl"), then, most use of OrSib probably continued to operate on the assumption of a Sibyl fully in the pagan sphere, with little attempt at explaining how it was that she nevertheless spoke the truth.

To secure the continued usefulness of Sibylline texts in polemic, therefore, the assimilation of the Sibyl to the Hebrew prophetic tradition could not proceed.

"Christianization" is thus an inadequate description of the general pattern of Christian use of the Sibyl and Sibylline texts—except, perhaps, if it is taken to describe only the composition of new OrSib by Christians, and hence with more perceptibly Christian content. In the descriptions provided by Christian writers of this later period, it is not the case that the Sibyl more and more takes on the characteristics of Christian sources of authority.

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3 See A.-M. Denis, p. xv (the list of Mechithar); and T. Zahn, Forschungen zur Geschichte des neutestamentlichen Kanons und der altkirchlichen Literatur, part 5 (Erlangen/Leipzig, 1893), pp. 115-17 for the list, pp. 145-8 for a dating of this Armenian list to c. 500, although it is preserved in the work of the 13th-cen. chronicler Mechithar of Aırivank.
Instead, the late 3rd and early 4th centuries form a period when presentation of the Sibyl by sympathetic Christians palpably reverts to the pagan sphere. Indeed, there is more detail about that pagan context than appeared earlier, except perhaps in the works of the scholarly Clement; concurrently, for the first time, Sibylline oracles with specifically Christian messages are cited and alluded to. It should be noted, of course, that these same decades were years which, although free of persecution, culminated in the Great Persecution of Diocletian and the conversion of the Emperor Constantine; it is natural that debates and tensions between Christians and the followers of traditional religion would have been intense, if not bloody before Diocletian—and oracles seem to have figured prominently in the discussions. W. H. C. Frend characterizes the period before the Great Persecution as a "propaganda war," and asserts that "[t]he importance of oracle literature in the debate between pagans and Christians in the period c. 260-320 is hard to exaggerate."\(^4\) In this context, the reversion of the Sibyl in Christian use to her pagan identity was especially important, in the interests of her usefulness for apologetics. In the highly charged bandying-about of oracle literature, the added emphasis on details of the putative pagan context of the Sibyl would have functioned to enhance her credibility with pagan audiences. It may well be that additional polemic from the pagan side attempted at the same time to diminish that credibility. Celsus had already challenged the authenticity of the Sibylline material used by Christians (see supra, p. 79); and now Porphyry may have added his voice of criticism too.\(^5\) It is significant that the Christian writers who

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5 Celsus' influence probably continued to be felt by anti-Christian polemic of the later empire, but this is difficult to prove. Porphyry's *Contra Christianos* is usually assumed to have a good deal in common with Celsus (De Labriolle, *Réaction païenne*, pp. 270, 272, 289); this despite significant differences such as Porphyry's deep knowledge of Christian texts and interpretations, and his primarily text-based historical criticism, as opposed to Celsus' philosophical attack—see J. W. Hargis, *Against the Christians: The Rise of Early Anti-Christian Polemic* (NY, 1999), pp. 69-70; A. Meredith, "Porphyry and Julian Against the
make use of OrSib in these years—Ps.-Justin, Constantine, and Lactantius—all offer some sort of extended defense of authenticity, as though challenges were known and expected. Moreover, Augustine's De Cons. Ev. 1.28 (20) mentions this sort of pagan objection to material such as OrSib, responding specifically to critics inspired to some degree by Porphyry. Debunking some Christians' favorite pagan seer would certainly fit in with Porphyry's program of discrediting the new religion through historical criticism, as in the case of the book of Daniel. It would also be in the tradition of Lucian's mockery of appeals to such oracular sources as the Sibylline Oracles. Whether or not Porphyry himself made disparaging comments about Christian use of OrSib, such disparagement was certainly in the air in the years prior to Constantine's rise to power—all the more reason for Christian apologists to reclaim the Sibyl's pagan milieu, with as much detail as possible, if appeals to OrSib were to have any chance of being heard.

The Pseudo-Justinian Cohortatio ad Graecos and Constantine's Oratio ad sanctorum coetum both cite the Sibyl as a prophetess of Christ specifically; both stress her originally pagan context, and defend the authenticity of OrSib; and yet both authors make an appeal to the Sibyl without a great deal of theological reflection on her status. From their apologetic perspective, the Sibyl must belong to the pagan world—nevertheless, both texts appear to value the Sibyl's testimony highly. Both authors have expended some effort on the investigation of the Sibyl as a pagan oracular figure, but

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Christians," ANRW II.23.2 (1980), 1133, 1135), but if Barnes' arguments stripping many of the fragments attributed to Porphyry by Harnack are accepted, there is little specifically to connect them—see Meredith, 1126-9; G. Loesche, "Haben die späteren Neuplatonischen Polemiker gegen das Christenthum das Werk des Celsus benutzt?" Zeitschrift für wissenschaftliche Theologie 27 (1883), pp. 257-302, tabulates parallel passages, with generally negative conclusions for direct borrowing by Porphyry and others; Hierocles is accused by Eusebius of plagiarism from Celsus (C. Hier. 1—there are indeed similarities of argument, but contra, see M. Forrat in SC 333, pp. 50-55, on Hierocles' "originality").

6 See infra, p. 366.
7 Cf. also Porphyry's writing against gnostics on the inauthenticity of texts attributed to Zoroaster—Porphyry, V. Plot. 16.
show little reflection about her status in a Christian context. They appear to assume, however, that her enunciation of true prophecy must imply true divine inspiration—although only Constantine actually says so explicitly. By contrast, Lactantius gives the impression of understanding the possible implications of different positions on her inspiration: if it was truly divine, then the Sibyl is something like the Biblical prophets (but certainly not herself a Hebrew prophetess); if not, then she must be analogous to the oracles of Apollo; the one position he does not appear to consider is that the Sibyl was granted a temporary true inspiration—but this seems to be the position of both Ps.-Justin and Constantine.

The best parallel to this position is early Christian treatment of the story from the book of Numbers about Balaam, summoned by Balak to curse the Israelites but compelled by God to bless them, and thus the story of another well-known pagan seer who nevertheless was portrayed as experiencing true inspiration from God. Karpp notes that Balaam represents "ein Stück heidnischen Altertums innerhalb der Bibel selber," although, as Origen points out, there are other somewhat similar figures (Nebuchadnezzar, Caiaphas) elsewhere in the Biblical corpus. Especially significant, moreover, is the fact that his prophecy was taken as Messianic by both early Christians and Jews. It is Origen's account of Balaam's prophecies, in fact, that best parallels these views of the Sibyl; earlier Christian authors either provide more nebulous accounts, or do not pay attention to the problem caused by the fact that a pagan diviner is said to have been divinely inspired. In his 13th homily on Numbers, Origen depicts Balaam's

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9 The figure of Balaam in the New Testament is entirely negative, and not based on the prophecy (2 Peter 2.14-16; Jude 11; Rev. 2.14; the account of the Star of the Magi in Matt. may well reflect knowledge of Balaam's prophecy; but it does not cite that prophecy or mention Balaam—see Fédou, pp. 459-60 and n.
experience as of an unexpected advent of God's power: *Igitur Balaam divinaculis acceptis, cum solerent daemones ad se venire, fugatos quidem daemonas videt, sed adesse Deum* (Hom. in Num. 13.6.3). Origen is very clear on the fact that Balaam was accustomed to prophesy under the influence of demons, but that on the occasion in question God intervened in the normal course of his divination in order to reveal his chosen message. Again, Origen describes the experience:

119; Dorival, pp. 327-33). Balaam's star-prophecy, on the other hand, was important in early Christian thought, and must have appeared in Christian collections of testimonia (Fédu, p. 459; on Christian citation and interpretation in general see Dorival, pp. 309-16, 333-52). Some (including the earliest attestation) simply cite it as Biblical without addressing the problem of the character of the prophet. Thus, Justin, *J Apol.* 32.12-13, quotes "Αναπτεί οὖσαν ἔνει Ἰσαὰκ, αὐτὸς ἐντολῆς τῆς γενεσίν ἐμμείνας, ἡ γὰρ ἐμμείνας γὰρ τῇ ἐντολῇ, ἡ ἐμμείνας τῆς γενεσίν ἐμμείνας ἐντολῆς τῆς γενεσίν ἐμμείνας." This is simply a lapsus calami, according to E. Kirschbaum, "Der Prophet Balaam und die Anbetung der Weisen," Röm. Quart. 49 (1954), p. 131; later, he cites it (*Dial.* 106.4) and alludes to it (*Dial.* 126.1) correctly as being in Moses' writings. Later authors sometimes ignore Balaam's role in similar fashion: e.g., Athanasius, *De incarn. verbi* 33, cites the prophecy as from Moses. One early interpretation of the Magi, however, is that their acknowledgment of Christ denotes the victory at birth of Christ over the devil (who is behind magic and astrology)—see especially Ignatius, *Eph.* 19.2-3: "...there was a perplexity to know whence came this strange appearance which was so unlike them [i.e. the other heavenly bodies]. From that time forward every sorcery (μαγεία) and every spell was dissolved, the ignorance of wickedness vanished away, the ancient kingdom was pulled down, when God appeared in the likeness of man unto newness of everlasting life." (trans. and discussion in Daniélou, The Theology of Jewish Christianity, tr. by J. A. Baker, vol. 1 of A History of Early Christian Doctrine before the Council of Nicaea [London, 1964], p. 217 and ff.). In Irenaeus' view, Balaam was originally to be considered a prophet—but his plan to entice Israel to fornication and idolatry meant that he had forfeited that title for that of *mantis*. "Ο γὰρ μηκέτι ἐν πνεύματι θεοῦ λαλῶν, ἀλλὰ κατέναντι νόμον θεοῦ, ἔτερον πορνείας νόμον ἱστάνον, οὗτος οὐκέτι ὡς προφήτης, ἀλλ’ ὡς προφήτης ἡ λαλήσει, ἡ λαλήσει ἡ μηκέτι ἐν πνεύματι θεοῦ λαλήσει." (cf. Baskin, p. 103, who interprets this to mean that Irenaeus thought Balaam was to be considered a prophet "for the occasion"). The status of prophet is connected to morality (cf. fr. 26). When the star-prophecy alone is in view, however, Irenaeus simply treats Balaam as one of the parallel texts, adducing his prophecy and its fulfillment in the Gospel just as he adduces other Biblical prophecies (Adv. Haer. 3.9.2: *...cuiaus et stellam Balaam quidam sic prophetavit...*; cf. Dorival, pp. 311-13, for further exploration of Irenaeus' position). Tertullian cites the example of Balaam as a parallel for Jesus' prohibition of preparing words to say in one's defense, rather than expecting the holy Spirit to supply the proper words extemporaneously (*Luke* 12.11-12); in this context, he mentions the fact that, at the prompting of the Spirit, Balaam pronounced words opposite to his original intention (*C. Marc.* 4.39.6l; 4.28.8). Yet, despite his admission that Balaam came to curse, Tertullian calls Balaam a prophet, who said that he would say what God placed in his mouth. At *C. Marc.* 4.28.8, Balaam is included as a *famulus creatoris*; although the sentence is ironic, the irony does not affect that characterization, but rather is simply meant to emphasize that Jesus' prescription at *Luke* 12.11-12 was not actually a new command. Clement of Alexandria once mentions Balaam in the context of a quotation from Jude, thus with Jude's negative characterization; Balaam appears to be alluded to in the words τὰς ἐπὶ πλούτῳ κακομηχανίας κακόμηχανιας καὶ τοῦ σωτήρος προεμήνυσαν την γένεσιν... Cf. *Excerpta* 69-75, on Theodotus' explanations: humans originally subject to Fate are rescued by the coming of Christ; the Magi were "astrologers who by their science know of the birth of Christ" (Daniélou's interpretation of §75, in Theology of Jewish Christianity, p. 223).
Κατὰ ἀλήθειαν θεία δύναμις παρεγένετο πρὸς Βαλαὰμ οὐ κληθείσα ὑπ᾿ αὐτοῦ. Παρεγένετο οὖν, ἵνα ἀποτροπισμὸν ποιήσῃ τῶν καλουμένων ὑπὸ τοῦ Βαλαὰμ δαιμόνων, καὶ τὰς θείας προφηθεῖσις σύνωνομήθη (Selecta in Num., PG 12: 577-80).

In the same way, for Philo, Balaam was not a prophet but a diviner (ἀνήρ ἐπὶ μαντείας περιβόητος, V. Mos. 1.263); his contact with the divine was partly pretense (V. Mos. 1.268); his oracles favorable to Israel were due to unintentionally true inspiration (ἐνθούς αὐτίκα γίνεται, προφητικῷ πνεύματος ἐπιφοιτήσαντος... ὡσπερ ἐρμηνεὺς ὑποβάλλοντος ἐτέρου θεσπίζει τάδε, V. Mos. 1.277). 10 Similarly, Josephus' account, which is more generous with regard to Balaam's sincerity as a diviner, claims that when Balaam spoke his oracles in this case, "his words were not his own" (Ant. 4.118). 11 According to Origen, Balaam was chosen as God's messenger to the Gentiles because he was well known as a diviner (Hom. in Num. 14.3.1-2; cf. 13.4.6); 12 he should not be numbered among the prophets because his true oracles were unwilling and temporary (Comm in Joh. 28.12, PG 14:707—note also Origen's comments on Caiaphas; Hom. in Num. 14.4). 13 Nevertheless, Balaam attained "a measure of salvation"—because he was the ancestor of the Magi, who recognized the coming of Christ. 14 Origen emphasizes that God put his word in Balaam's mouth (Num. 23.5, 16) rather than in his heart (Hom. in Num. 15.2.2). Augustine later also distinguishes temporary prophecy from permanent

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10 Baskin, p. 95; Dorival et al., La Bible d’Alexandrie, vol. 4: Les Nombres (Paris, 1994), pp. 414-17. For other Jewish uses of Balaam's prophecy (which do not reflect on Balaam's status), see Dorival, pp. 296-309.
11 Baskin, p. 97.
12 Baskin, p. 106, erroneously attributing this view to Selecta in Num., PG 12: 579.
13 Baskin, p. 107; Dorival et al., pp. 417-18.
prophecy: temporary prophets are not worthy to be counted among true prophets (Div. Quaest. ad Simpl. 2).\textsuperscript{15}

Thus, the example of Balaam shows that it was possible for Christian writers to account for an anomalous revelatory experience accorded to a famous (pagan) seer, by appealing to temporary, involuntary inspiration, which would not necessarily grant the seer any permanent status, but left the way open for some such more positive portrayal if desirable. Balaam's later actions in the book of Numbers showed that he was not permanently bettered by his experience of divine inspiration, but given the absence of such explicit information in the case of the Sibyl, the way might well have seemed open for a slightly different, more positive, portrayal of her.

Ps.-Justin, Cohortatio ad Graecos

Sometime in the late second half of the third century, an "exhortation to the Greeks" was written.\textsuperscript{16} It presented the great thinkers and poets in the Greek tradition as hopelessly in conflict with each other, and argued that when they did produce true statements, as sometimes happened, they did so in dependence on Biblical texts; thus,

\textsuperscript{15} Baskin, p. 110.
\textsuperscript{16} A. Puech, Les apologistes grecs du IIe siècle de notre ère (Paris, 1912), p. 233, like Von Harnack, Geschicht II.2: 153, suggests somewhere between 260 and 300, although the latter leaves open the possibility that it was composed as early as 221 (Geschichte II.2: 157-8). Harnack remarks that the role Sibylline and other oracles play puts the author closer to Lactantius than to the 2\textsuperscript{nd}-cen. apologists (Geschichte II.2: 546). Riedweg, pp. 30-33, reviews the evidence of the author's use of Julius Africanus' Chronographies, and vindicates its date (221 A.D.) as a firm terminus post quem for the Cohortatio. Riedweg, pp. 38-42, also attempts to show Ps.-Justin's dependence on Porphyry, somewhat less successfully. The strongest support for his view is a laudatory oracle on the Chaldaeans and Hebrews, which both Porphyry (F 324 Smith) and Ps.-Justin cite, and which the latter says he heard "from you"; concerning the consultation story, he calls his audience as witness—\(\omegaς\ \alphaυτοι\ \phiατε\) (11.2). Riedweg's further attempt (pp. 167-82) to connect the Cohortatio ad Graecos to Marcellus, a contemporary of Eusebius, is suggestive but not full enough to be convincing either (see M. B. Trapp, "Pseudo-Justin," CR 46 (1996), p. 15-16; Fiedrowicz, p. 93, on the other hand, is almost convinced).
what is needed is not philosophy but revelation, without which there is no way to resolve the competing claims. The intransigent attitude of this text, formerly attributed to Justin Martyr, toward pagan thought should be noted: Ps.-Justin falls squarely within the camp of writers such as Tatian and Tertullian, who are little inclined to find praiseworthy expressions of truth in paganism, and one of the most striking features of the *Cohortatio* is the author's detailed arguments for Greek authorities' literary dependence on Biblical revelation.\(^1\)

Ps.-Justin's first reference to the Sibyl is part of a string of citations of pagan authors on the subject of monotheism:\(^2\)

(1) Τίνα δὲ καὶ τὴν ἀρχαίαν καὶ σφόδρα παλαιὰν Σίβυλλαν, ἢς καὶ Πλάτων καὶ Ἀριστοτέλης καὶ ΄Εριπυτέους ὢς χρησμώδον μέμνηνται, διὰ χρησμῶν ὠς διδάσκων περὶ ἕνου καὶ μόνου θεοῦ συμβαίνει, ἀναγκαίου ὑπομνῆσαι. Λέγει δὲ οὕτως·

Εἶς θεός, <ἀρχαῖος> μόνος ἐστιν, ὑπερμεγέθης, ἀγένητος, παντοκράτωρ, ἀόρατος, ὁρώμενος αὐτὸς <ἀρχαῖος> πανταχόν τοις ὑμῖν περὶ ἕνου καὶ μόνου θεοῦ ἀνάμεσα· ὡς φροντίζειν ἀναγκαῖον ὑπομνῆσαι. Λέγει δὲ οὕτως·

Εἶτ' ἀλλαχοῦ που οὕτως·

'Ἡμεῖς δ' ἀθανάτοι τρίβους πεπλανημένοι ἦμεν, ἔργα δὲ χειροποίητα γεραίρομεν ἄφρονι ψυχῷ εἰδώλων <ἡμεῖς> πεπλανημένοι, ἄνθρωποι δ' οὗ βλέπεται θνητῆς ὑπὸ σαρκὸς ἀπάσης. (OrSib fr. 1.7-9)

(2) Καὶ πάλιν ἀλλαχοῦ που οὕτως·

'Ολβιοὶ ἄνθρωποι κεῖνοι κατὰ γαῖαν ἔφεσαν, ὡςον δὴ στέρξουσι μέγαν θεον εὐλογεύοντες πρὶν φαγέει πιέειν <τε>, πεποιθοῦσι εὐσεβὴσιν· ὥστε μὲν ἄπαντας ἀπαρνήσονται ἴδοντες καὶ βομβύς, εἰσαία λίθων ἀφιδρύματα κωφῶν, αἵμασιν ἐμψύχων μεμιασμένα καὶ θυσίας τετραπόδων, βλέπουσι δ' ἐνὸς θεοῦ ἐς μέγα κύδος. (OrSib 3.721-3)

Ταῦτα μὲν οὖν ἡ Σίβυλλα. [Coh. ad Gr. 16]

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\(^1\) Riedweg, pp. 123-9.

\(^2\) The first explicit reference, that is; some allusions have also been alleged. Thompson's allegation (pp. 131 and 134) that Coh. ad Gr. 23.6 (23.1 Marcovich? Thompson's reference seems garbled in some way, since the ANCL translation he refers to does not break the chapters into parts, and the sixth line of the chapter, for example, is not particularly significant) alludes to OrSib fr. 3.1-2 is less than convincing: presumably he is referring to the words πᾶν γὰρ τὸ γενόμενον φθαρτόν (and repetition and variation thereof), which he alleges Plato to have said earlier and now (Tim. 41b2-5) to be contradicting. Marcovich adduces Tim. 41a8: τὸ μὲν οὖν δὴ δεθέν πᾶν λυτόν. Note that Ps.-Justin makes a similar allegation also at 7.1 and 20.2, as Marcovich points out ad loc.
This appeal comes in a context which at first sight gives the impression that the Sibyl, like other Greek authorities, was dependent on Hebrew wisdom. Having already proved to his own satisfaction the antiquity and excellence of Moses, the first prophet (9-12), and presented the story of the Septuagint translation (13), he has made some further remarks about Greeks having become acquainted with the writings of Moses in Egypt and therefore (as it were unwillingly) expressing monotheistic views (14). The authorities then quoted are Orpheus (15), the Sibyl (16), Homer (17), Sophocles (18), Pythagoras (19), and Plato (20), after which the work progresses as a more detailed attempt to show the dependence of Plato and Homer on the Hebrew Scriptures. Of the authors cited, all but the Sibyl and Sophocles appear in the list of Greek authorities he gives at 14.2.\(^\text{19}\) In the series of quotations, reference is made to the Egyptian visits in the case of Orpheus (15.2), Pythagoras (19.1), Plato (20.1), and later also Homer (28.1), but not for the Sibyl and Sophocles. Thus, whether by calculation or inadvertently, i.e., because the list of citations once begun became a convenient way of citing any monotheistic utterances of pagan Greeks, Ps.-Justin's text gives the impression that the Sibyl and Sophocles also derived their opinions from the Hebrews.\(^\text{20}\) There is room for interpreting his presentation otherwise, however: if his precise wording in 14.2, describing those who despite themselves espoused monotheism, can be pressed, he does seem to be implying

\(^{19}\) The list appears to be taken from Diod. Sic. 1.96.2, who also lists Greeks who visited Egypt for wisdom (cf. also 1.69.4). Ps.-Justin refers to Diodorus "and others" as sources for his list, all of whose members also appear in this passage of Diodorus. Since he does not fully reproduce Diodorus' list, he further refers to ἄλλοι τίνες. Sophocles and the Sibyl are found neither in Diodorus' list, nor in the chapters which go into further detail on the visits to Egypt and the evidence for them (1.96-98). These two, indeed, are very summarily treated here by Ps.-Justin. It seems, therefore, that he had no specific information connecting them with the Hebrew tradition or with Egypt. The quotations in chapters 15-20 seem to be in a rough chronological order (presumably the wish to cite first poets, then philosophers, explains why Sophocles appears before Pythagoras); thus, the Sibyl, who is "very ancient," appears before Homer (cf. Riedweg, p. 338) but after Orpheus.

\(^{20}\) Thus Prümm, p. 62, citing the introduction to Häuser's translation (BKV, Justin), p. 240 n. 4; also, Zeegers-Vander Vorst, p. 204; Riedweg, p. 338, says this is implied from the present context, but that Justin goes on to explain more fully later.
that not all those who proclaimed one God had been in Egypt: καὶ μάλιστα οἱ ἐν Αἰγύπτῳ γενόμενοι. There is no reference ever in the Coh. ad Gr. to the idea that philosophers were able to arrive at truth by the exercise of reason and by living according to *logos*, as there is in Justin Martyr.\(^{21}\) Marcovich, however, brings out the importance for Ps.-Justin of the concept of Divine Providence, which he considers a substitute for Justin's idea of the *λόγος σπερματικός*.\(^{22}\) It is by Providence that some of the Greek thinkers and poets were exposed to Biblical truth; those who later wished to do so could, for example, glean the truth from Plato's purposely veiled accounts: ταῦτα μυστικῶς προῄρηται [sc. Plato] <ἐκτίθεσθαι>, τοῖς θεοσεβεῖν βουλομένοις τὴν ἑαυτοῦ σημαίνων δόξαν (25.3). But if Providence brought "especially" those who had spent time in Egypt to the truth through contact with the Bible, there could presumably be others who did *not* depend on such sources, but rather enjoyed some more direct insight.

Ps.-Justin's references to "compulsion" in the admissions of monotheism might be thought to entail a strong element of divine activity in those admissions. He might, for example, be claiming that Plato was actually forced by the direct activity of the divine spirit to concede what he would not have otherwise, just as Balaam was summoned by Balak to curse the Israelites, but was impelled to bless them instead—or that Plato experienced inspiration in the manner in which pagan manticism was portrayed as a

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\(^{21}\) For Bardenhewer, 1: 233-4, in fact, their different attitudes in this regard prove that the Coh. was not written by Justin (cf. M. Pellegrino, *Gli apologeti greci del II secolo* [Rome, 1947], pp. 219-24, 236).

\(^{22}\) P. 10. He says that Ps.-Justin was "under the spell of Justin"—and cites 2 Apol. 10.2-3 as parallel to Coh. 14.2, 2 Apol. 13.3 with Coh. 36.4, and 1 Apol. 44.9-10 with Coh. 5.1 to establish the dependence. Riedweg, pp. 124-5, emphasizes rather the difference with Justin, and specifically against Marcovich (p. 125 n. 525), does not consider Providence an important thematic element in this connection, despite its appearance at Coh. 14.2 and 36.4; Puech, p. 238, is more extreme: "il ne s'intéresse pas du tout à l'humanité païenne, antérieurement à la venue du Christ, et ne fait pas la moindre allusion au Verbe séminal, dont il n'a pas besoin."
compelling force exerted by the deity, for which parallels appear in *OrSib* as well. The full wording of the relevant sentence in 14.2, however, is as follows:

Πολλὰ γὰρ καὶ αὐτοὶ ὑπὸ τῆς θείας τῶν ἀνθρώπων προνοίας καὶ ἀκοντες ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν εἰσέλθησαν, καὶ μάλιστα οἱ ἐν Αἰγύπτῳ γενόμενοι καὶ ἀπὸ τῆς Μωϋσέως καὶ τῶν προγόνων αὐτοῦ θεοσεβεῖας ὁφεληθέντες.

Since, in tandem with expressions of compulsion, the specific occasion is specified, at least for those pagan thinkers who spent time in Egypt, the language of necessity must be interpreted broadly, so as to include dependence on Biblical sources. Indeed, the expressions of necessity and the appeals to Providence are much rarer than the plain allegations of plagiarism and dependence, which pervade the *Coh.*23 Somehow, by contact with the divine revelation of the Hebrew Scriptures, these Greeks were forced to concede the truth of its proclamations of the one God24—but whatever workings of Providence are to be discerned in this sort of compulsion, it is clearly on a different order from the compulsion envisioned in typical descriptions of mantic prophecy. It may well be that the difficulty in thought is explained by the fact that Ps.-Justin is (perhaps unsuccessfully) combining two disparate explanations of the origins of truth in the Greek world: Providence and literary dependency. Nevertheless, those who (like Sophocles?) discerned some truth by the exercise of reason—if there were any such—and those who (like the Sibyl, as Ps.-Justin later explains) experienced a more direct form of inspiration, can be distinguished from those who owed their knowledge of the truth to their acquaintance with Hebrew sources. Since, however, the *Coh. ad Gr.* grants almost nothing explicitly to the exercise of reason, limiting the acknowledged sources of truth to

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23 Hence, the *Coh.* quite naturally supplies a prominent quotation for Droge, p. 1 (cf. also p. 18), although Droge does not consider this text at length.

24 Cf. the avowals by apologists such as Tatian (*Or.* 29-30) and Theophilus (*Ad Autol.* 1.14.1) that they were convinced of the truth of Christianity by means of contact with the Scriptures.
revelation, some sort of true revelation is almost a necessity for any Greek oracular authority to have spoken truly.

The likelihood that Ps.-Justin transcribed many of these texts from an anthology may possibly explain how he inadvertently gives the impression that the Sibyl was dependent on Biblical wisdom. Zeegers-Vander Vorst considers the source of the Sibylline citations to be the "anthologie du plagiat."25 Daniélou too considers that "this [the collection of Sibylline quotations—or possibly a larger sequence] is undoubtedly a catena of Jewish origin, which the Cohortatio has reproduced in toto"—arguing apparently on the basis of the quotation of the first passage (OrSib fr. 1) by Theophilus and of the third (OrSib 4.24-30) by Clement of Alexandria.26 The fact that Ps.-Justin has obviously invested some effort in researching the Sibyl, whether through travel or books, raises the question whether he may not have had some fuller Sibylline texts than he presents here;27 for the present purpose it is enough to say that he does not demonstrate elsewhere a direct acquaintance with any Sibylline texts beyond those he quotes in Chap. 16, and there is thus no firm warrant for denying his dependence on a florilegium in 16.

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25 Citations, pp. 201-5.
26 Gospel Message and Hellenistic Culture, p. 100.
27 Riedweg, pp. 338-9, finds it significant that the Sibylline quotations are preserved "in order"—assuming that fr. 1 was from the original beginning of book 3—i.e., there is a citation from the early part of OrSib 3, then one from later in OrSib 3, and finally one from OrSib 4. But—apart from the small number of quotations, which increases the probability of pure coincidence—there is otherwise no evidence that book 4 was considered to "belong" after book 3 at Ps.-Justin's time. Lactantius says there are single books by single Sibyls, but they are confusi; only that of the Erythraean Sibyl can be distinguished because her name appears in it (DI 1.6.13). Similarly, the Byzantine collector of the oracles calls them ἐπιστολὴν εὐφριστομένους (line 9, Geffcken). Thus, it cannot be concluded from the sequence of the quotations that Ps.-Justin was acquainted with full texts of OrSib rather than excerpts in a florilegium.
Apart from this important point—that he gives the impression of classifying the Sibyl among those who were dependent on the Hebrew Scriptures—the characterization of the Sibyl is in terms that recur in the longer treatment at the end of the *Coh. ad Gr.*

In keeping with his general intention of bringing forward Greek expressions of monotheism, the subject Ps.-Justin announces for these Sibylline citations is "the one and only God"; this fits well the content of the first quotation, while the other two of course assume monotheism, but are focussed on the worshippers and their piety or impiety: the pious reject images (and temples and sacrifices), the impious worship them. The second citation, moreover, fixes the Sibyl herself firmly in the pagan religious context, since she confesses that "we" have strayed from the proper path. Such an identification with her fellow pagans might seem to support the conception that the Sibyl was dependent on Hebrew wisdom, since it gives the impression of a confession after conversion, a sort of palinode parallel to Orpheus' (and Orpheus is explicitly said to have visited Egypt), but all it necessarily entails is that she somehow ended up expressing the truth. The important conclusion that can be drawn is that the Sibyl did not always espouse monotheism, and that therefore her access to the truth was not constant throughout her life. The confession shows that monotheistic declarations were a departure from what she had otherwise (or earlier) proclaimed.

At the end of the work, Ps.-Justin returns to the Sibyl, with an extended discussion of Plato's mention of her, an explanation for the metrical faults in the oracles,

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28 His formulae of citation and conclusion, moreover, are generic and repeated: for τίνα...ἀναγκαῖον ὑπομνῆσαι, λέγει δὲ οὕτως, εἰτ' ἢ καὶ πάλιν ἄλλαχοι πον οὕτως, cf. 15.1 (Orpheus); the same concluding phrase, ταῦτα μὲν οὖν, appears also at 17.2 (Homer) and 18.1 (Sophocles); the similar οὕτω μὲν οὖν at 19.2 (Pythagoras). Thompson, p. 127, referring to this phrase, wrongly says that Ps.-Justin, after this set of Sibylline quotations, "concludes triumphantly"; similarly, on p. 117, he calls the formula "the clinching line," although earlier in the sentence he more plausibly calls it perfunctory.

29 In *OrSib*, it is a confession by the repentant pagans in the Messianic age.
a description of the oracle-site at Cumae, and a mention of some of her subjects, before a
final appeal to his audience. In fact, the last chapters of the *Cohortatio* are composed of
one final appeal after another. Thus, Chapter 36 is an attempt to demonstrate the
worthlessness of philosophy by pointing to Socrates' own admission of ignorance; the
inference being to read the prophets—or if his audience will not do so yet, at least to
believe Orpheus, who repented of his error, and others who wrote the same sorts of
things. Chapter 37 brings in the Sibyl, and after yet another oracle is adduced which
refers to Adam (38.1), the Sibyl's prophecy leads into an appeal to turn away from
polytheism and toward the reading of the prophets (38). Last of all, a further admission
of the impossibility of comprehending God is adduced, from "Acmon" and Hermes
Trismegistus (38.2).\(^{30}\) The Sibyl is thus an important part of the *Cohortatio*'s
complicated peroration, which applies a barrage of authoritative figures—Socrates,
Orpheus, the Sibyl, another oracle, and Hermes Trismegistus—to convince the audience
that the Biblical prophets are the only sure source of truth.

The *Cohortatio*'s treatment of the Sibyl is remarkably detailed, and worth
perusing in some detail:

(37.1) Ἐσται δὲ ὑμῖν ὃδε τὴν ὀρθὴν θεοσέβειαν ἐκ μέρους παρὰ τῆς
παλαιὰς Σιβύλλης μανθάνειν, ἐκ τινὸς δυνατῆς ἐπιπνοίας διὰ χρησμῶν
ὺμᾶς διδασκούσης ταῦθ', ἀπερ ἐγγὺς εἶναι δοκεῖ τῆς τῶν προφητῶν
διδασκαλίας. Ταύτινην δὲ ἐκ μὲν Βαβυλῶνος ύμηθαί φασι, Βηρώσσου
τοῦ τὴν Χαλδαϊκὴν ἱστορίαν γράψαντος θυγατέρα ὡς οὖν, εἰς δὲ τὰ μέρη
τῆς Καμπανίας οὐκ οἶδ' ὅπως διαβάσασθαι ἵκεί τοὺς χρησμοὺς ἐξαγορεύειν
ἐν τινὶ Κουμά ὡς ὧν καλομενὴν πόλει, ἐξ ἀνθεσθαι διεστώσῃ Βαΐων, ἕνθα τὰ
θερμαὶ τῆς Καμπανίας εἶναι συμβαίνειν. Ἐθεασάμεθα δὲ ἐν τῇ πόλις
γενόμενοι καὶ τινα τόπον, ἐν ὧν βασιλικὴν μεγίστην ἐξ ἑνὸς ἐξαγορεύειν
ἀπαγγέλλειν τοὺς χρησμοὺς αὐτὴν ὑπαγέλλειν οἱ ὡς <τὰ> πάτρια παρειληφότες παρὰ τῶν
ἐαυτῶν προγόνων ἔφασκον. Ἐν μέσῳ δὲ τῆς βασιλικῆς ἐπεδείκνυν ἴμιν

\(^{30}\) For "Acmon," see Riedweg, p. 528.
τρεῖς δεξαμενάς, ἐκ τοῦ αὐτοῦ ἐξεσεμένας λίθου, ὃν πληρουμένων ὤδατος λοιπῶς αὐτὴν ἐν αὐταῖς ἔλεγον καὶ στολήν ἀναλαμβάνουσαν εἰς τὸν ἐνδότατον τῆς βασιλικῆς βαδίζειν οἰκόν, ἐκ τοῦ αὐτοῦ ἐξεσεμένον λίθου, καὶ ἐν μέσῳ τῷ οἴκῳ καθεξομένην ἐπὶ ψηλῶν βήματος καὶ θρόνου οὗτος τῶν χρησμῶν ἐξαγορεύειν.

(37.2) Ταύτης δὲ τῆς Σιβύλλης ὡς χρησμοῦδο πολλοὶ μὲν καὶ ἄλλοι τῶν συγγραφέων μέμνηται, καὶ Πλάτων δὲ ἐν τῷ Φαίδρῳ. Δοξεὶ δὲ μοι ταύτης χρησμοῖς ὑπέρ πόλεως ο Πλάτων τοὺς χρησμοὺς ἐκθεῖνειν· ἔστω γὰρ τὰ ὑπ’ αὐτῆς πάλαι προειρημένα ἐργοὺς πληροῦσαν. Καὶ διὰ τούτῳ ἐξαρμάσας, ἐν τῷ πρὸς Μένωνα λόγῳ ἐπαινῶν τοὺς χρησμούς αὐταῖς λέξειν οὕτως γέγραφεν. "Ὅρθως ἁρὰ ἀν καλοίμην θείους τε αὐτοῖς, οὐς δή νῦν ἐγών κρατήρων χρησμωδοῦς... οὐχ ἡμιστὰ φαίμεν ἄν τούτους θείους τε εἶναι καὶ ἐνθυσίασαν, ἐπίτυχος ὄντας καὶ κατεξερμένοις ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ, ὅταν καταρθοῦσα λέγοντες πολλὰ καὶ μεγάλα πράγματα, μηδὲν εἰδότες ἄν λέγουσιν" [Meno 9c11-d5], σαφῶς καὶ φανερῶς εἰς τοὺς <τής> Σιβύλλης ἀφοροίς χρησμοῦς. Αὐτῇ γὰρ οὐχ ὅστε ἵππηται [καὶ] μετὰ τὸ γράφα τὰ ποιήματα εἰχὲν ἐξουθενίαν διορθοῦσαν καὶ ἐπιζεύχειν, μάλιστα διὰ τὴν τῶν μέτρων ἀκριβείαν, ἀλλ’ ἐν μὲν τῷ τῆς ἐπιστοικίας καιρῷ τὰ τῆς προφητείας ἐπιλήφου, παυσάμενης δὲ τῆς ἐπιστοικίας ἐπέπεμτο καὶ ἢ τῶν εἰρημένων μνήμη.

(37.3) Τούτῳ οὖν αἰτίαν τοῦ μή πάντα τὰ μέτρα τῶν ἐπών <τής> Σιβύλλης σφέθαι. Αὐτοὶ γὰρ ἐν τῇ πόλει γενόμενοι παρὰ τῶν περιγρητῶν μεμάθησαν, τῶν καὶ τῶν τόπων ἡμῖν, ἐν οἷς ἐχορημοῦ, ὑποδείξαντο καὶ φανὸν τινα ἐκ χαλκοῦ κατασκευασμένον, ἐν ὁ τὰ λείψανα αὐτής σφέθαι ἔλεγον. Ἐφασον δὲ μετὰ πάντων ὑπὸ διηγοῦντο (καὶ τούτῳ ως παρὰ τῶν προγόνων ἄκροστέτες), ὅτι ὁ ἐκλαμβάνοντος τοὺς χρησμοὺς τηνικάτα, ἐκτὸς παιδεύσεως ὄντες, πολλαχοῦ τῆς τῶν μέτρων ἀκριβείας δήμαρτον· καὶ ταύτην ἔλεγον αἰτίαν εἶναι τῆς ἐνώπιον ἐπτῶν ἄμετρίας, τῆς μὲν χρησμοῦ διὰ τὸ πεπαινοθα τῆς κατοχῆς καὶ τῆς ἐπιστοικίας μὴ μεμημένης τῶν εἰρημένων, τῶν δὲ ὑπογραφεῖν δ’ ἀπαινεῖν τῆς τῶν μέτρων ἀκριβείας ἐκπεπτοκότων. Διὰ τούτῳ τοῖς τὸν Πλάτωνα, εἰς τοὺς τῆς Σιβύλλης ἀφοροῦσα χρησμοὺς, περὶ τῶν χρησμιῶν τοὺτ’ εἰρηκέναι δήλον· ἐφ’ ἄρα οὕτως: "ὅταν καταρθοῦσα <λέγοντες> πολλὰ καὶ μεγάλα πράγματα, μηδὲν εἰδότες ἄν λέγουσιν". [Meno 99d4-5]

(38.1) Πλήν ἀλλ’ ἐπειδήθερα, ὁ ἄνδρος Ὁλληνες, οὐχ ἐν ποιητικοῖς μέτροις τὰ τῆς ἀληθείας θεωρείας πράγματα, οὐδὲ ἐν τῇ παρ’ ὑμῖν εὐδοκιμοσύνῃ παιδεύσει, ἀφέμενοι λοιπὸν τῆς τῶν μέτρων καὶ λόγων ἀκριβείας, τοὺς υπ’ αὐτῆς εἰρημένοις ἀφιλονείξιοι προσέχοντες, γνώτε πόσον ὑμῖν ἁγάθων αἰτία ἔσται, τῆς τῶν σωτηρίων ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ἀφίξειν σαφές καὶ φανερῶς προαγορεύουσα. Ὁς τοῦ θεοῦ ὑπάρχων λόγος ἄχρωφτος δυνάμει, τὸν κατ’ εἰκόνα καὶ ὁμοίωσιν θεοῦ πλασθέντα ἀναλαμβάνων ἄνθρωπον, τῆς τῶν ἀρχαίων ἡμῶν προγόνων ἀνέμισθε θεοσφιείας, ἵνα ἐν αὐτῶν γενόμενοι ἀνθρωποι καταλπόντες, διδασκαλία βασιλικῆς δαίμονος ἐπὶ τῆς τῶν μη <οντὼν> θεοῦ ἄτραπτον θρησκείαν. Εἰ δὲ τὰς ξύλους ὑμᾶς ἐνοχλεῖ πίστεως περὶ τῆς τοῦ ἄνθρωπον πλάσεως, πείσθητε τούτοις, οἷς ἔτι προσέχειν οἴσθε δεῖν, καὶ γνώτε ὅτι τὸ παρ’ ὑμῖν χρηστήριον, ἀξιωθὲν ὑπό
In this section, the Sibyl is introduced as a teacher\(^\text{31}\) of true piety, but—since the conclusion of the section ends up as another exhortation to read the Biblical prophets—only partially so (37.1.1-2); what she teaches is "close" to the teaching of the prophets; even at the end of the section, the Sibyl's words are still to be considered only a "preparation" for Biblical learning (38.2).\(^\text{32}\) On the other hand, for the first time, strong inspiration of some sort is mentioned (ἔκ τινος δυνατῆς ἐπιπνοίας, 37.1.2; cf. 38.2.23), a detail that separates the Sibyl from the plagiarizing Greek thinkers of the earlier sections of the work. Some biographical details are given: the Sibyl was the daughter of Berossus, who wrote the Chaldaean history, she came from Babylon, somehow ending up at Cumae (37.1.4-7).\(^\text{33}\) Ps.-Justin describes how he visited and saw the great underground "basilica" where she was supposed to have delivered her oracles.\(^\text{34}\)

\(^{31}\) The language of teaching (διδάσκειν, διδάσκαλος) is used equally of the Sibyl (37.1, 38.2) and the Biblical prophets (8.1, 10.2, 35.1, 38.2).

\(^{32}\) For προγύμνασμα, although sometimes it is a rhetorical term (as Pellegrino, p. 218, takes it) cf. Cyril, CJ 1.11 (517B), on Moses: Νέος δὲ ἐν ἔτι καὶ τῆς Αἰγυπτίων σοφίας εἰς πεῖραν ἐλθὼν, οἶχα προγύμνασμα τῶν θειοτέρων ἐποιεῖτο τὰ ἀνθρώπινα.

\(^{33}\) Pausanias 10.12.9 says that Berossus was the father of Sabbe, but does not specify which Berossus. Cf. Suda, s.v. Σιβύλλα. Maass, De Sibyllarum indicibus, pp. 18-19, traces Pausanias' information to Alexander Polyhistor, and emphasizes Berossus' fame as a prognosticator (Pliny, NH 8.137). The identification of the Babylonian Sibyl with the Cumaean is not attested elsewhere. Ps.-Aristotle De Mir.
A defense of *OrSib* against allegations of metrical faults is brought in off-hand, as showing that the Sibyl is who Plato had in mind at *Men*. 99c11-d5, and at first as though it is Ps.-Justin's own idea—and then he repeats the argument (with the addition of the uneducated recorders) as though from the mouths of the guides at the site; finally, he returns to Plato: that's why Plato, having in mind the Sibyl, said what he said. Thus, Ps.-Justin introduces this defense as though it were a side-issue, although it was clearly important to him, given the amount of time he spends on it and his concern to present a rhetorically polished appeal.\(^3\) The importance the author sees in this matter is confirmed as a live issue by similar references in Plutarch and Porphyry: the former introduces characters in *De Pyth. orac.* who defends the faulty meter of the oracles by attributing the

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\(^3\)See in general Riedweg, Intro. § IX, pp. 161-2.
actual verse to the priestess, not the god; the latter concedes that transmitted oracles are sometimes metrically flawed, and excuses his own corrections of such faults in his own citations (F 303 Smith). Furthermore, Ps.-Justin attempts to give the impression that Plato had some such argument in mind too. Afterwards, he uses the same theme to exhort the Greeks away from their putative small-minded attention to meter and their παίδευσις (as though these two things were of equal rank), and rather to pay attention to the Sibyl's words.

The mode of inspiration required explicitly by Ps.-Justin's explanation of the metrical faults in the Sibyl's oracles is strongly ecstatic. Such a mode, however, was not restricted to the Sibyl; the Hebrew prophets themselves, he says, were used as instruments by the Spirit:

...αὐτὸ τὸ θεῖον ἐξ οὐρανοῦ κατιόν πλήκτον, ὠσπερ ὀργάνῳ κιθάρας τινός ἢ λύρας τοῖς δικαίοις ἀνδράσι, ἁμώμουν, τὴν τῶν θείων ἡμῖν καὶ οὐρανών ἀποκαλύψῃ γνῶσιν. [Coh. ad Gr. 8.2]

They too did not contribute anything from their own understanding (διάνοια), but spoke ἐκ τῆς ἄνωθεν αὐτῶν παρὰ θεοῦ δοθείσης δωρεᾶς (10.2). The appeal to Plato to illuminate the picture of the Sibyl's inspiration takes on some legitimacy from the

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36 So Boethus, at 396e-f, and Theon, more reverently, at 397b-d. Note especially 397b-c: μὴ νομίζομεν αὐτὰ πεποιηκέναι τὸν θεόν, ἀλλ' ἐκείνου τὴν ἀρχὴν τῆς κινήσεως [on this phrase, see Schröder, p. 191] ἐνδιδόντος, ἃς ἐκάθετο πέφυκε κινεῖσθαι τῶν προφητίδων. [F. C. Babbit, in the Loeb edition, translates: "the prophetic priestesses are moved each in accordance with her natural faculties"; see Schröder, p. 151, on this "verschlungene Konstruktion"] καὶ γὰρ εἰ γράφειν ἐδεί μὴ λέγειν τοὺς χρησιμοὺς, ἵνα ἄρ χρηματα νομίζωμεν ἐφέρομεν ὅτι λείπεται καλλιγραφία τῶν βασιλείων. οὐ γὰρ ἔστι <<τού> θεοῦ ἡ γῆς αὐτῷ ἡ φθόγγος ἢ λέξις ἢ μέτρον ἀλλὰ τῆς γυναικος· ἐκείνος δὲ μόνας τὰς φαντασίας παρίστησι καὶ φῶς ἐν τῇ ἥψει ποιεῖ πρὸς τὸ μέλλον· ἡ γὰρ ἐνθυσίασμος τοιοῦτον ἐστὶ. Another speaker, Sarapion, suggests on the contrary that people should change their ideas about aesthetics to conform with the god's oracles (396d; 396f-397b), saying that in fact we are wrongly accustomed to finding pleasant things fair, and citing Heraclitus on the Sibyl: ἄγελαστα καὶ ἀκαλλώπιστα καὶ ἀμύριστα φθεγγομένη...

37 On Ps.-Justin's conception of inspiration in general, see Riedweg, pp. 115-19. Phraseology very similar to Justin's explanation appears in OrSib 2.4-5: οὐδὲ γὰρ οἴδα· ὅτι λέγοι; 11.295-6.

38 Cf. 8.2; 35.1.

39 Cf. 8.1, where what played no role was their own φαντασία.

40 Cf. 8.2: τῇ ἁμώθεν ἐπὶ τούς ἁγίους ἀνδρας τηναύτα αντελθούση δωρεά...
fact that Ps.-Justin has already argued that Plato had learned about the gift of the Holy Spirit, but for fear of criticism, disguised it as teaching about ἀρετή being bestowed on humans "by a divine portion, without [participation of] mind" (32.1, quoting Meno 99e4-100a1). The extreme picture of the Sibyl's ecstasy, although in keeping with traditional pictures of oracular possession, is nowhere else insisted on so strongly by Christian writers. Most other post-Montanist writers denied that true prophecy involved the complete suppression of the prophet's faculties: John Chrysostom, for example, appeals to Plato's characterization of oracle-givers as being unconscious of what they are saying, like Ps.-Justin, but does this as part of a negative characterization of pagan prophets in opposition to the Biblical writers. For Ps.-Justin, however, it is one of the elements that ties the Sibyl to the Biblical prophets.

A few details nevertheless distinguish the Sibyl from the Biblical prophets in Ps.-Justin's depiction. The Sibyl was consulted as an oracle, in the usual way, rendering answers to those who came to consult her (37.1)—there is no suggestion that she ever gave up such consultations. Ps.-Justin does not say anything of the sort was the case for the prophets. The prophets are said to have moral purity: καθαροὺς ἑαυτοὺς τῇ τοῦ θείου πνεύματος παρασχεῖν ἐνεργείᾳ (8.2); they are ἅγιοι (8.2, 10.2) and δικαίοι (8.2). The Sibyl, by contrast, confesses to having participated in polytheism along with other pagans (16.1), albeit in the past, as matter for regret—as she recognizes, presumably, in her inspired state. Whereas the Sibyl's ecstasy meant that she

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41 A. Piñero Saenz, "Sobre las concepciones de la inspiración de la Cohortatio ad Graecos del Pseudo-Justino," Estudios Clásicos 26 (1984), pp. 395-400, emphasizes the Platonic quality of Ps.-Justin's conception of inspiration; certainly there is strong influence of Philonic and Platonic ideas; however, as Riedweg points out (p. 117), there is no reference to Plato in ch. 8, where he deals with the prophets.
42 In Ep. 1 ad Cor. hom. 29 (p. 352 Field); Chrysostom further quotes two passages from oracles to emphasize the fact that δαίμονες speak by constraint.
remembered none of what she had said (37.2-3), Ps.-Justin says that Moses himself wrote down what he received from inspiration: ἡ...ιστορία, ἦν ἐκ θείας ἐπιπνοίας Μωϋσῆς γέγραφεν τοῖς τῶν Ἑβραίων γράμμασι (12.2).43 Similarly, the Septuagint translators, each having produced the same words by divine inspiration, wrote it down themselves (13.3). The inspiration of the Biblical prophets (and translators) in general was not such as to prevent them from being conscious of it and recording it themselves.44 Finally, it should be noted that Ps.-Justin hedges his bets to a certain extent: for Moses and the other Biblical prophets, he unambiguously speaks of θεία ἐπίπνοια as the source of their revelation (12.2, 38.2), but for the Sibyl, he only speaks of "a certain powerful inspiration" (ἐκ / ἀπὸ τινος δυνατῆς ἐπιπνοίας, 37.1, 38.2). Finally, in keeping with the fact that the entire Coh. ad Gr. is directed towards persuading pagans to consult the Bible as the only true source of knowledge, the Sibyl too is described as a προγύμνασμα for the reading of the prophets (38.2), not as an authority of ultimately equal value.

Only after this long preparation does Ps.-Justin spring the surprise, when he finally mentions the contents of the Sibyl's prophecies: the Sibyl also announced the coming of Christ (38.1).45 It is not absolutely clear, however, whether Ps.-Justin has the Incarnation in mind, although his commentary after the first summary of the Sibyl's message probably implies that he does:46

"Ὅς τοῦ θεοῦ ύπάρχων λόγος ἀχώρητος δυνάμει, τὸν κατ' εἰκόνα καὶ ὀμοίωσιν θεοῦ πλασθέντα ἀνάλογων ἄνθρωπον, τῆς τῶν ἀρχαίων ἡμᾶς προγόνων ἀνέμνησε θεοσεβείας, ἣν οἱ εἰς αὐτῶν γενόμενοι ἄνθρωποι

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43 Cf. 22.1; 28.3.
44 Riedweg, p. 118, points out that in contrast to the Sibyl, there is no "lack of knowledge" in the Biblical prophets according to Ps.-Justin.
45 Alexandre, 2: 261-2, points to a section of OrSib 8 as a possible referent (cf. also Neale, p. 322); there are a number of similarities with lines 258-86 in wording and train of thought, which seem more than fortuitous; Geffcken cites this passage of Ps.-Justin ad OrSib 8.259-63.
46 See Riedweg, pp. 523-4, for parallels to some of the wording.
καταλιπόντες, διδασκαλία βασικόν δαίμονος ἐπὶ τὴν τῶν μὴ ὀντῶν θεῶν ἐτράπησαν θρησκείαν. [Coh. ad Gr. 38.1]

Rzach finds a reference to the acrostic (OrSib 8.217-50) in the words τὴν τοῦ σωτήρος ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ἀφίξιν σαφῶς καὶ φανερῶς προαγορεύουσα (Coh. ad Gr. 38.1); but Mancini remarks that the acrostic concerns the second coming, while Ps.-Justin has the Incarnation in mind, and that if Rzach is right, he would have spoken not only of a prophesied coming, but of a prophesied name. In any case, Ps.-Justin would not be the only one to interpret the acrostic as referring to the Incarnation: that is also the focus of Constantine's and Augustine's citations of it. But he would be the first. In any case, he is certainly the first to refer to OrSib as prophetic specifically of Christ, rather than as a proclaimer of monotheism or of eschatological teaching. It is maddening that he does not cite any specific passage of OrSib to confirm his assertion, although the fact that his words, σαφῶς καὶ φανερῶς, recur so often in his work that it is not necessary to assume that he means a passage as explicit as the acrostic, which reveals the name of the prophesied Savior. Other sections of OrSib 8, or such texts as OrSib 6 (or 7, or 1) would probably be explicit enough to qualify as "clear and manifest," while the more general prospect of an eschatological king (e.g., OrSib 3.652-6) would presumably be too vague. In fact, the post-citation commentary coheres well with the later portion of OrSib 8. Ps.-Justin's apparent dependence on a florilegium earlier and his failure to quote any Sibylline material in this later context both call into question his direct access to Sibylline texts on the subject of the coming of Christ. Could it be that the specific predictions of Christ were only known to him by rumor, as opposed to the declarations of monotheism,

47 Oracula Sibyllina, p. 152 in app.
49 See infra, pp. 246-250, for Constantine; for Augustine, p. 394.
which were available to him textually? His behavior is puzzling: if he possessed Sibylline testimony to Christ, why not quote it? If he did not, how is it that he can declare with certainty that such testimony existed?

According to Riedweg, and now also Buitenwerf, the oracle he does quote (38.1), mentioning Adam, is Sibylline. This is probably a mistaken conclusion, however; the line is not attested in OrSib, and the introductory formula (τὸ παρ’ ὑμῖν χρηστήριον) strongly recalls the remarks about the oracle on the Chaldaeans and Hebrews cited earlier, Chaps. 11 and 14: "it is your own story." It seems most likely that he really did find this oracle in a pagan oracular collection. The reference to Adam would be less difficult to accommodate in such a collection than one to Christ including a side-reference to Adam, given the oracular recognition of the Hebrews also attested by Ps.-Justin. Furthermore, in citing the Adam oracle, Ps.-Justin gives the impression of producing a new piece of evidence in the argument, not merely giving further precision regarding Sibylline prediction of Christ: Εἰ δὲ τις ὀξυνὸς ὑμῖν ἐνοχλεῖ πίστεως πείσθητε τούτοις, οἷς ἔτι προσέχειν οἴεσθε δεῖν (38.1).

In Ps.-Justin's treatment of the Sibyl, there is an evident lack of clarity concerning the source of her prophecy—from which one might conclude that he does not want to be pinned down to an unequivocal statement; nevertheless, the vague expression itself, "a certain powerful inspiration," while it does not assert true divine inspiration, casts doubt

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50 Riedweg, ad loc.; R. Buitenwerf, Book III of the Sibylline Oracles and Its Social Setting: With an Introduction, Translation, and Commentary, Studia in Veteris Testamenti Pseudepigrapha 17 (Leiden, 2003), p. 79; Geffcken, moreover, ad OrSib 3.24 (also on the creation of Adam) cites Ps.-Justin's quotation without commentary.

51 As Buitenwerf, p. 79, points out, however, it has some verbal parallels with OrSib 3.24-5.

52 Prümm, p. 62—making the same point also about Clement of Alexandria, and Justin; both of these writers, however, are clearer on this point than the Coh., at least if for Clement one considers primarily the Protrepticus.
at the same time on the supposition that her inspiration in the texts he is concerned with was simply to be attributed to a pagan god. To an audience that assumed the Sibyl to have experienced inspiration by the Christian God, the phrase seems to call for caution about that idea; but to an audience of pagan Greeks, the ostensible audience according to the work's title, the phrase equally calls for caution—but caution in regard to the usual pagan view of the Sibyl's inspiration. In an apologetic work, the expression should thus be read as a suggestion that the Sibyl derived her truth from the supreme God espoused by the Christians, as well as an indication that Ps.-Justin is avoiding the task of proving it as an assertion. Indeed, the unremitting emphasis on the Sibyl's state, with no hint that such ecstatic inspiration might not be the "proper" way of presenting divine influence, lends further weight to the position that he regarded her inspiration as truly divine.53 Furthermore, the fact that in Chap. 16, Ps.-Justin quotes the Sibyl confessing to having participated in pagan worship, in contrast to the monotheistic and Christological declarations he is especially interested in, and that he makes no differentiation between the manner of her prophecy as attested for a pagan context (oracular consultation) and what he alleges for the prophecies of Christ, signifies that his account can be pressed to mean that therefore the Sibyl normally underwent standard mantic inspiration, involving a loss of self-consciousness, and that (unexpectedly?) on some occasion or occasions, she suffered the same type of ecstatic inspiration, but with the true God as its source. For the author of the Coh. ad Gr., then, the Sibyl had an experience much like that of Balaam, as interpreted by Origen, although Ps.-Justin does not himself make the comparison.

53 Thus, Bartelink, pp. 31-2, considers Ps.-Justin's view "clear": her oracles are "eine authentische Quelle der Wahrheit"; the Sibyl herself stands the closest of anyone in the pagan world to the Hebrew prophets.
Despite the author's high opinion of the Sibyl, however, it is important to remember that he still maintains that she proclaimed the truth "in part"—and that her oracles were only "close" to the Biblical prophecies (37.1). Thus, in the end, they serve only as a preparation for acquaintance with the Biblical texts themselves (38.2). This attenuated status agrees perfectly with the rhetorical structure of the conclusion of the *Coh. ad Gr.*, which introduces pagan authorities primarily to emphasize the impossibility of knowledge without the help of the Biblical revelation, and may thus also reflect a lingering unwillingness wholeheartedly to endorse the Sibyl, despite the author's positive presentation of her oracles. On the one hand, the portrayal of the Sibyl seems to go beyond the primary purpose for quoting her, in that the author goes into such great detail about the mechanism and implications of her inspiration. On the other hand, her mode of inspiration is perceptibly different from that which he assumes in the case of the Biblical writers, and he returns to the idea of "partial" truth at the close of his treatment. In fact, therefore, he does not intend to put the Sibyl on an equal footing with the Hebrew prophets, although he does consider her inspiration to have been true and divine.

**Constantine**

Perhaps a generation after the *Cohortatio ad Graecos*, perhaps two, the Western Roman Empire—and then the Eastern part too—found itself under the rule of its first Christian monarch, Constantine "the Great," the motivations, sincerity, and completeness of whose conversion have been endlessly debated.\(^{54}\) If the documents transmitted in his

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\(^{54}\) A good starting point for investigation of these questions is now A. Cameron and S. G. Hall, *Eusebius: Life of Constantine* (Oxford, 1999), pp. 42-46.
name can be credited, the first Christian emperor was also one of the most fervent advocates of the Sibylline Oracles—and it has already been argued that the Sibylline verse on the cross may have been promulgated as Constantinian propaganda.\(^{55}\) It might be possible to see in this enthusiasm the tenacious grip of pagan attitudes, or a conciliatory attitude towards traditional pagan religion—but the emperor strongly criticizes that paganism in the sources; more persuasive is the idea that in OrSib, the emperor found a prophetic text that seemed to endorse the cultural changes occurring all around him, at least partially as a result of his own adoption of the new religion. In that sense, he was especially ready to lend credence to a respected name from Greco-Roman history often connected by Christians with pro-Christian views.

Already before the battle of the Milvian Bridge, Constantine was eager to be seen as the fulfillment of utopian prophetic expectation, as a divinely favored agent.\(^{56}\) An early panegyrist portrays him in A.D. 310 as the fulfillment of prophecy, in the context of his supposed vision of Apollo: *vidisti teque in illius [sc. Apollonis] specie recognovisti, cui totius mundi regna deberei vatum carmina divina cecinerunt.* (Pan. Lat. VI [VII].21.5).\(^{57}\) Self-presentation that played with utopian ideas was not uncommon in new emperors, but appears more intensely in Constantine, especially in Christian circles once he identified himself with the Church. Such self-presentation continued the rhetoric of

\(^{55}\) See *supra*, pp. 151-155, on the "Macarism of the Cross."

\(^{56}\) For Constantine himself as "inspired," see Heim, p. 93-4 (Eusebius) and *passim* (37-51); also Lact., *DI* 1.1.13.

the Tetrarchy in general, however; Constantine wished to present his reign as a return of the Golden Age just as Diocletian and his colleagues had before him. As the panegyric of Eumenius from 297/8 says, *Adeo, ut res est, aurea illa saecula, quae non diu quondam Saturno rege viguerunt, nunc aeternis auspiciis Iovis et Herculis nascuntur* (Paneg. Lat. IX [IV].18.5).58

Much later, in Constantine's foundation of Constantinople, a willingness to use the divine sanction of oracles can perhaps still be discerned.59 One oracle from the Greek Anthology (*AP* 14.115) purports to be an oracle given to Constantine in the vicinity of Troy (ἐλθὼν ἐν τῇ Τροίᾳ πλησίον) and re-uses (line 4) a line from an oracle on the foundation of Byzantium.60 Zosimus also reports an oracle, either of the Erythraean Sibyl or Phaenno of Epirus, on the rise of Byzantium to importance—perhaps ironically, given his hostility to Constantine (2.36-37)?61 In a Christian twist on the cliché, the Church of the Holy Sepulchre is presented as the New Jerusalem spoken of by the prophets in the Constantinian propagandist Eusebius' work (*VC* 3.33). Constantine seems to have been willing to have his new foundations presented as the fulfillment of either

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59 For the Christian interpretation of Byzantium, see Sozom. 2.3; *CT* 13.5.7 ("Eternal city").

60 G. Wolff, *De ultima oraculorum acetate* (Berlin, 1854), p. 3: "Quin etiam Constantinus ipse, antequam Byzantii novam Romam condidit, oraculum nactus est." Wolff notes that no sanctuary is mentioned, and suggests that it may have been in a dream—cf. Plutarch, *Alex.* 26; Plato, *Crito* 44ab; the Emperor Julian supposedly heard hexameters in a dream (Zonaras 13.11); if this happened during incubation, perhaps it is relevant to mention the temple of Apollo Sarpedonius in the Troad, which was in existence during Tertullian's time—*De anim.* 46. Cf. the oracle on Byzantium, quoted in various forms by Dion. Byz. *De Bosp. navig.* 23; Steph. Byz. s.v. "Byzantium"; and Eustathius, *Comm. in Dion. Per.* 803 (p. 253 in Bernhardt's edition of Dion. Per. and the scholia).

61 See Parke, "The Attribution of the Oracle in Zosimus, *New History* 2.37," *CQ* 32 (1982), pp. 441-5, who argues that the first part of the oracle may have been originally Sibylline, but that the second part was probably an oracle of Apollo Chresteros in Chalcedon; he also considers Zosimus' attribution to reflect reading of Pausanias, who mentions Phaeniss in connection with the Sibyls (10.13.10, 10.15.2). Tzetzes cites part of the oracle, as Phaenno's (*sic*), but in conjunction with quotations of *OrSib* 4: *Chil.* VII.550-55.
oracular or Biblical prophecies. In any case, his positive evaluation of the Sibyl fits in with his perception of being the agent of the fulfillment of prophecy.

**ORATIO AD SANCTORUM COETUM**

Sometime between his embracing of Christianity and the foundation of Constantinople, the emperor probably delivered the *Oratio ad sanctorum coetum*—a text which, transmitted with Eusebius' *Vita Constantini*, has long been the subject of controversy. At *VC* 4.32, Eusebius says he will append an example of Constantine's speeches; and the titles match. Scholars have defended various positions concerning the extent to which the speech preserved in the mss. of Eusebius can be attributed to the Emperor Constantine himself, from absolute denial that any of it is authentically Constantinian to more or less unqualified acceptance. The present tendency is to admit the speech (and many other documents transmitted by Eusebius), with the proviso that, in accordance with Eusebius' words (*VC* 4.32), the emperor himself would have composed it in Latin and would not, therefore, be directly responsible for the Greek

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63 Thus recently R. P. C. Hanson, "The Oratio ad Sanctos Attributed to the Emperor Constantine and the Oracle at Daphne," *JThS* n.s. 24 (1973), pp. 505-11, who argues that the reference to Daphne betrays an origin in the later 4th century, as a response to the reign of Julian. *Contra*, see T. D. Barnes, "Sossianus Hierocles and the Antecedents of the 'Great Persecution,'" *HSCP* 80 (1976), pp. 251-2, who suggests the possibility that the oracle at Daphne was used in 302 by the instigators of the Great Persecution; H. A. Drake, *In Praise of Constantine: A Historical Study and New Translations of Eusebius' Tricennalian Orations* (Berkeley, 1976), pp. 136-7 n. 7; De Decker, p. 75 n. 3.

64 Notably Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius*, pp. 73-76.
translation.  

65 One need not suppose that every detail should be traced back to the emperor's thought, but on the whole the speech can now be treated as authentically Constantinian.  Assuming the speech is authentic, it should probably be dated shortly before or after the Council of Nicaea, in the spirit of triumph after Constantine's victory over Licinius.  

66 As a parallel to the manner in which Constantine presents himself in the speech, Constantine's self-presentation as the chosen instrument of God for the promotion of Nicene theology an...
of piety in the edict to the Eastern empire preserved in Eusebius in the context of the aftermath of that victory is significant (Eus., VC 2.28).

The Oratio ad sanctorum coetum is addressed to a group of Christians, including clergy (Or. ad s. c. 1). It "combines homily, philosophy, apologetic, and literary exegesis into an expression of its author's personality." The bulk of the body of the speech has an apologetic thrust: a curious fact, considering that the addressees are assumed to be Christians. Perhaps a wider audience was envisaged from the beginning—Ison's suggestion, that the emperor was providing his audience with apologetic material, is less convincing. Part of the apologetic has a philosophical tinge: Plato, interpreted in a Middle Platonic way, is praised for distinguishing a second god from the first (9.3). Meanwhile, Constantine attacks idolatry (4) and fatalism (6-7) and discusses the coming of Christ in the flesh (11, 15). At the end of the Oratio, he shows how recent history has vindicated both Christianity and himself as emperor (22-26).

As a supplement to the predictions of the prophets adduced in Chap. 16, which relate in the first instance to Christ, but also to the destruction of evil, specifically idolatry, and the rise of true religion (sc. under Constantine himself), the emperor

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68 Barnes, Constantine and Eusebius, p. 75. For convenient summaries of the speech, see Barnes, pp. 74-6, and Pizzani, "Costantino e l'Oratio," pp. 795-7 (adapted from Kurfess, "Kaiser Konstantins Rede an die Versammlung der Heiligen," Pastor Bonus 41 [1930], pp. 116-17).
69 Ison, p. 214.
70 Cf. Pfättisch, "Platos Einfluss auf die Rede Konstantins an die Versammlung der Heiligen," ThQ 92 (1910), pp. 399-417; Kurfess, "Platos Timaeus."
71 Chapter 17 is also devoted to Biblical figures—Moses (and his influence on Greek thinkers) and the prophet Daniel; the emphasis is on their wisdom and virtue, however, rather than on their prediction of Christ.
evinces in Chap. 18 a desire to bring forward also from the pagan sphere witnesses to the
divinity of Christ; these turn out to be the Sibyl (18) and Virgil (19-21):\textsuperscript{72}

Παριστάται δὲ μοι καὶ τῶν ἀλλοδαπών τι μαρτυρίων τῆς τοῦ Χριστοῦ
θεότητος ἀπομνημονεύσας· ἐκ γάρ τοι τούτων δηλονότι καὶ ἢ τῶν
βλασφημοῦντων αὐτῶν δάνῳ ὁδεγεῖν αὐτὸν θεόν ὄντα καὶ θεοῦ παῖδα,
eπερ γοῦν τοῖς ἑαυτῶν λόγοις πιστεύουσιν. [Or. ad s. c. 18.1, p. 179.4-7]

The purported subject of the evidence, then, is the divine nature of Christ, as Constantine
states clearly a second time: by such evidence (their own literature) even those who now
blaspheme him can see that he is God and the son of God.\textsuperscript{73} After a short discussion of
the Sibyl, he describes her prophecy further: περὶ τοῦ θεοῦ τὰ μέλλοντα
προεθέσπισεν (p. 179.16-17). These two elements in the characterization of the Sibyl's
message are not necessarily to be taken together, but doing so may provide further
grounds for understanding her predictions as relating to the Incarnation of Christ. She

\textsuperscript{72}For many of the references here to the Oratio, especially the 18\textsuperscript{th} chapter, I will refer to the page and
and line in Heikel's edition as well as, or instead of, using the chapter and section numbers, for greater
specificity. On pagan witnesses, does Constantine perhaps mean "the witnesses"?—implying that these
(the Erythrean Sibyl, and Virgil indirectly) are the recognized, standard examples of pagan witnesses to
Christianity? For the place of the appeal to the Sibyl in the work's structure, see Pfättisch, Rede
Konstantins, pp. 9-10. Besides the direct citations of the Sibyl, some have seen further "traces" of the Sibyl
in Constantine, e.g., at Or. 4.1 (p. 157.22): cf. Theoph. 2.3.2 (OrSib fr. 2)—cf. also Lact., DL 1.16.6, who,
however, changes the order of thoughts, which is retained by Constantine (Kurfess, "Kaiser Konstantin und
die Erythäische Sibylle," pp. 48-9; Pfättisch, Rede Konstantins, p. 75, who also finds numerous other, not
very convincing, parallels between Constantine and Theophilus). For the translator's acquaintance with
OrSib, visible in the Greek version of the 4th Eclogue, see the parallels enumerated by Pfättisch, Rede
Konstantins, p. 112. Pfättisch further argues that "blurry" allusions to Scripture should be traced back also
to OrSib: "the knowledge of evil and good" (γνῶσις κακῶν καὶ ἀγαθῶν, p. 158.22: τὴν τῶν ἀγαθῶν
τε καὶ κακῶν γνώσιν [cf. 158.19-20: ἀδαεῖς τ' αὐτοὺς κατ' ἀρχάς ἀγαθῶν καὶ κακῶν εἶναι
θελήσαι]; 172.19: γνῶσιν...κακῶν καὶ ἀγαθῶν; cf. OrSib 1.41; 8.262 [ἀγαθοῦ τε κακοῦ τε in both
cases]—whereas Gen. 3.5 has καλὸν καὶ πονηρὸν (Pfättisch, Rede Konstantins, p. 112)—but Pfättisch
exaggerates the significance of the similarity. Constantine does not see the knowledge of good and evil as
a prohibited thing (although not originally intended, as he admits at p. 158.19-20), but rather as something
166)—no discernible reference; but 15.2, p. 175.9, reads: ἔχειτο δὲ καὶ διὰ γυμνόσεως μανιμομένης
θαλάσσης ὑπὸ τὸ ἁνέμων ἀγριωθείσης καὶ ἀντίτιθε τὰ κύματα φέροντα ἁντίτιθες θεοῦ τε καὶ
προκεῖται δὲ θάλασσαι τοὺς μανιμομένους ποιεῖν ἰκνησάς [Pfättisch, Rede Konstantins,
p. 112-13]. NB also that Adam is called πρωτοπλάσιος (20.3 = p. 183.23: τοὺς πρωτοπλάσιους
[Adam and Eve]; cf. OrSib 1.285)—Pfättisch, Rede Konstantins, p. 113. The parallels are not particularly
impressive or compelling (Ison, pp. 87-88).

\textsuperscript{73}Cf. also 19.8 (p. 182.17-18), on the 4th Eclogue: τοῖς μὲν βαθύτερον ἐξετάζουσι τὴν τῶν ἐποίην
dύναμιν ὑπ' ὀρθὴν ἠγομένην τής τοῦ Χριστοῦ θεότητος.
predicted future events—future from her own perspective, not from that of Constantine and his audience. Her predictions related, furthermore, to God. These characterizations, taken together, can be linked to the previous mention of Christ's "divinity," in that they proclaim some future event connected to the divinity (the Incarnation), but might conceivably go further, to refer to God's future actions in general (eschatology?) or to future events and the nature of God (eschatology and theology).

The final description of the content of the Sibylline text before the actual quotation identifies it as τὴν ἱστορίαν τῆς τοῦ Ἰησοῦ κατελεύσεως (p. 179.18). The Sibylline acrostic (OrSib 8.217-50) he goes on to quote relates on the surface events of the eschaton, including the coming of the eternal king from heaven: Ἡξεὶ οὐρανόθεν βασιλεὺς αἰώνιος ὁ μέλλων (line 2). From Constantine's treatment, however, it seems probable that he views it as predicting the first, rather than the second coming of Christ.²⁴ Pfättisch argues that the fact that the acrostic actually tells of Christ's second coming is not a difficulty, since Constantine emphasizes that it is the first letters which tell of Christ's coming—and σταυρός in particular presupposes (or narrates, in fact, part of) the Incarnation.²⁵ More difficult to account for is the (partly parallel) expression in Chap. 19 (p. 181.14), τὴν τοῦ Χριστοῦ κάθοδον καὶ κρίσιν, apparently in reference to the content of the just-quoted acrostic, since Constantine's claim is that the effort of Christian

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²⁴ Cf. the terminology of 20.4 (p. 184.3): πρὸ γὰρ τοῦ τῆς κατέλευσεως τοῦ σωτῆρος—clearly referring to the first. In chap. 19 (p. 181.21), in treating the chronology of Cicero, Constantine mentions ἡ τοῦ σωτῆρος...παιδεία, which appears to be simply another equivalent of κατέλευσες καὶ κάθοδος, and since it is connected with the reign of Tiberius, certainly refers to the Incarnation. After the citation of the acrostic, Constantine refers to the Sibyl as chosen by "the Savior" to be a prophetess τῆς ἐστίν, καθὼς οἱ προφῆται προφητεύοντο, κηδεμονία τῶν ἱμῶν προφητείας (p. 181.4-5): this is also to be connected specifically to the incarnation of Christ—cf. 11.9 (p. 168.19-21): πῶς δʼ εἰς ἀνθρώπους καὶ γῆν κατῆλθεν; ἡ μὲν προάρθρωσις τῆς καθόδου, καθὼς οἱ προφῆται προφητεύοντο, κηδεμονία τῶν ἱμῶν ἐστίν.

chronologists has made it impossible to consider the poem an *ex eventu* prophecy, to think it was written "after Christ's descent and judgment"—and as Pfättisch notes, this obviously cannot mean the Last Judgment,\(^ {76} \) or Constantine is talking nonsense; but in that case, in what way is Christ's first coming understood as "judgment," and how could the quoted acrostic be thought to refer to that first coming?\(^ {77} \) The word *κρίσις* certainly seems to be echoing the acrostic, e.g. the first line: *κρίσεως σημεῖον* (also, line 3: *σάρξα παρὼν πάσαν κρίναν καὶ κόσμον ἀπαντᾷ*; line 6: *σαρκοφόρων ψυχὰς δ’ ἁνδρῶν ἐπὶ βήματι κρίνει*). In fact, the first stanza of the acrostic, like Constantine's phrase, contains the twin ideas of "descent" and "judgment," such that it seems difficult to maintain that Constantine is not referring to the content of the acrostic rather than simply to the message of the first letters.

Heikel considers Constantine to be using the acrostic for both first and second comings—*κατέλευσις* before the quotation conflicting with the surface subject of the acrostic; *κάθοδος* and *κρίσις* after it conflicting with each other—and uses this as evidence of the writer's "Leichtsinn."\(^ {78} \) In fact, however, there is no mention elsewhere in the speech of a concrete eschatological Last Judgment, and so Constantine's thought may actually turn out to be self-consistent in this respect. The middle of chap. 14 does refer to future "mansions" in the afterlife: *οὕτω γὰρ ἐν μοναῖς ἀθανάτοις καὶ ἀγήροις χρείσουσι πάσης εἰμαρμένης διάξομεν τὸν βίον, κατὰ τὸν ὑπὸ θεοῦ νόμον ὀρισθέντα βιώσαντες* (p. 173.29-31); but this is an account of the reward, not of the awarding of it. There is mention of punishment at the end of the same chapter, p.

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\(^ {76} \) Pfättisch, *Rede Konstantins*, p. 9 n. 1. For *κάθοδος*, cf. 21.1 (p. 186.25), where the same term certainly refers to Christ's birth (1st coming)—contrasted with a purely human birth.

\(^ {77} \) Note that Ps.-Justin, *Coh. ad Gr.* (apparently—*supra*, p. 236) and Augustine (*infra*, p. 394) also interpret the acrostic non-eschatologically.

\(^ {78} \) Heikel, p. xcvii.
174.6-7, but in the present tense (οἱ δ' ἀχαριστοῦντες ἥλιθιοι τὴν ἄξιαν τῆς ύπερηφανίας κομίζονται τιμωρίαν), as though the phenomenon is on-going rather than future; and at the end of chap. 23 (pp. 189.25-190.3) Constantine discusses eternal reward and punishment, but in connection with the individual soul rather than a universal "Last Judgment":

...τὴν δὲ συμπλήρωσιν τῆς ἁμοίβης εἰς τὴν τοῦ βίου σύμπληρωσιν ἠμῶν ὑπερτίθεται· πάσα γὰρ ἡ τοῦ βίου ψήφος τηνικαῦτα λογοθετεῖται, ἐν ὃ χρόνῳ τὸ σώμα ὑπὸ τῆς ψυχῆς καταλείπεται, αὐτὴ δὲ ἡ ψυχή καθαρὰ καὶ ἄχραντος καθαρῶς ἐν τῷ θείῳ πελάζει. ἢδε μὲν οὖν ἡ τοῦ θείου δικαιοσύνη, καὶ οὗτος [μὲν] ὁ τῶν δικαίων ἐξετασμός, πείρας γενομένης κατὰ τὸν βίον πίστεως τε καὶ ἐγκρατείας, καὶ ἐπειδὰν ταῦτα καλῶς ἔχει, ὁ μισθὸς ἑκατοχθεῖ τῆς αἰωνίου ζωῆς, μετέρχεται δὲ καὶ τοὺς πονηροὺς ἡ προσήκουσα τιμωρία.79

The very idea of the "end of the world" appears only in the description of the crucifixion, and even then not as part of Constantine's own exposition. Because of the darkness at mid-day, he says, people thought the world was ending: τὴν τῶν ἁπάντων πραγμάτων συντέλειαν ἥκειν, καὶ χάος σωφρός συντελειάν ἥκειν, καὶ ἡ προσήκουσα τιμωρία.

In this speech, then, Constantine gives little emphasis to the notion of future (eschatological) punishments and rewards; furthermore, these are not always connected to the figure of Christ himself, although at the end of the Oratio, Christ is characterized...

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79 Cf. 11.7 [p. 168.3-5]: ὁπως οἱ δεξιῶς καὶ σωφρόνως βιώσαντες κατὰ τὴν τοῦ παιδὸς κρίσιν δεύτερον βίον...[λαγχάνως]. For Constantine's non-eschatological view of death and judgment, cf. Euseb., VC 1.2, 9; 3.46; 4.64, 69—cited by G. F. Chesnut, pp. 157-8; F. S. Thielman, "Another Look at the Eschatology of Eusebius of Caesarea," JChr 41 (1987), pp. 226-37, however, argues that Eusebius did retain a more traditional ("Hebraic") idea of eschatology, and did not move to entirely "Platonic" ideas. Eusebius was, of course, a notable opponent of chiliastic views. See also C. Hill, Regnum Caelorum: Patterns of Future Hope in Early Christianity (Oxford, 1992), who, in the course of investigating the non-chiliastic tradition, analyzes the idea of the 'heavenly' intermediate state (between death and the parousia) in the views of some Early Christians, including Clement of Alexandria and Origen (pp. 120-141).
as κριτὴς ἀριστος, ἀθανασίας ἠγεμόν, ἀδιόυ ζωῆς χορηγός (26, p. 192.31-32). 80

Thus, whereas the surface meaning of the the acrostic has led readers of the speech to think primarily of the Last Judgment, Constantine is much more intent on describing Christ's incarnation on the one hand, and the present implications thereof on the other; he does not see (or else ignores, or reinterprets) the apparent eschatological detail. As a parallel to his treatment of the Sibyl, Constantine interprets the 4th Eclogue almost entirely in a non-eschatological way. 81 In chapter 16, too, the destruction of the works of evil and the spreading of the Christian religion are the known (predicted by the prophets) reasons for the incarnation:

φανερὰ δὴ ἦν καὶ ἡ αἰτία τῆς σαρκώσεως αὐτοῦ, ὅπως τὰ ἐκ τῆς ἀδικίας τε καὶ ἁκολασίας ἐκφύοντα γεννήματα...ἀναιρεθείη, πᾶσαι δὲ ἡ οἰκουμένη άγουσ' ἔρατον βασιλῆα...


81 Eschatological motifs are not entirely absent, if the usual chiliastic reading (Pfättisch's note in his translation, Des Eusebius Pamphili vier Bücher über das Leben des Kaisers Konstantin u. des Kaisers Konstantin Rede an die Versammlung der Heiligen, BKV 9.1 [Kempten and Munich, 1913], p. 252 n. 3; Kurfess, "Der griechische Übersetzer von Virgils vierter Ekloge in Kaiser Konstantins Rede an die Versammlung der Heiligen," ZNW 35 [1936], p. 100; Courcelle, "Les exégèses chrétiennes de la quatrième églogue," REA 59 [1957], p. 300; Ison, p. 40) of Constantine's interpretation of Eclogue 4.6, on the returning virgin (in association with Christ's parousia) is correct: τίς οὖν ἂν εἴη παρθένος ἡ ἐπανήξει; ἀρ' οὖν ἡ πλήρης τε καὶ ἐγκυομένη γενομένη τοῦ θείου πνεύματος...ἐπανήξει δὲ ἐκ δευτέρου, ὅταν ὁ θεὸς ἐκ δευτέρου τὴν οἰκουμένην παραγενόμενος ἐπικουφίσῃ (19.6, p. 182.6-10).

Note, however, that Constantine has already quoted the next line of Virgil (on the nova progenies) and taken it as referring to the "new race" of Christians (19.3-4, p. 181.20-24). It is odd that he then uncharacteristically makes reference to the eschaton, odd too that this particular eschatological motif is not attested elsewhere. Ison, p. 40, suggests that the Virgilian text required an eschatologial reference, but the translation itself, as well as later interpretations of the Eclogue, present alternatives. The end of line 6 in the Greek translation (ἀγουσ' ἔρατον βασιλῆα) might well be an attempted reference to the Incarnation rather than the parousia (as Ison, p. 40, himself observes). Quodvultdeus and Philargyrius interpret the line as a reference to Eve's return in the person of Mary (see Courcelle, p. 300). The future tense in Constantine (ἐπανήξει) need not necessarily be taken literally—in chap. 20 (p. 183.15-16) the future is used for the (recently past) liberation of Christians from the fear of persecution (see Courcelle, p. 302, for the interpretation of Constantine's comment, although he does not mention the future tense), apparently taking the temporal perspective of Virgil. Still, as the text stands, there is no real alternative to the eschatological reading. This section, however, remains exceptional for Constantine. Also in the discussion of Eclogue 4.23-25 appear a couple of references to resurrection; note especially 20.4 (p. 184.10-11): ἐν τῇ αὐτοῦ σεμνῆς διασήμου τε ἀναστάσεως τὰ ὄμων ἐλπίζειν ἐξέλθον. Constantine does not give details corresponding to an eschatological physical resurrection; as argued above, for him, judgment is individual and a return to a bodily existence is not in view.
Here, Constantine seems to be triumphalistically identifying the present with the completion of the destruction of evil (specifically connected in the context to polytheistic worship) inaugurated by Christ. It may be, therefore, that the word κρίσις, used by Constantine to characterize Christ's activity, is not a reference to eschatological judgment but to an aspect of Christ's life on earth—the condemnation of paganism and other evil, and his victory over them, just as his resurrection offers a pattern for the virtuous. In any case, Constantine treats the Sibylline acrostic as referring to the Incarnation, despite the unspoken interpretive effort it would take to establish this view. In this way, he presents himself as all the more justified in favoring the Christian religion and in striving to bring the work of Christ to completion in his own reign.

Another quality Constantine asserts for the Sibylline acrostic is the verses' morally beneficial character:

In the context of his defense of the poem's authenticity, the insistence on the fact that they contain "sayings helpful for life," rescuing the hearers from the grip of passions and producing instead a "modest and orderly life," appears to be one putative reason why

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82 Cf. κριτήριον as a paraphrase of κρίσις in the "Letter to Arius" (infra, p. 263)—interpreted as a reference to the Arian crisis or the Council of Nicaea. Biblical parallels from the life of Christ: Εἰς κρίμα ἐγὼ εἰς τὸν κόσμον τοῦτον ἦλθον, Joh. 9.39; καὶ εὰν κρίνω δὲ ἐγώ, ἡ κρίσις ἡ ἐμὴ ἀληθινή ἐστιν, Joh. 8.16; cf. 5.22ff., although verses 28-29 shift into an eschatological vein. Pfättisch, "Rote Konstantins," p. 117 n. 1, adverts to yet another possibility: he seems to suggest that with κρίσις, the genitive Χριστοῦ shifts to an objective sense—thus indicating his condemnation by Pilate. 
pagans suspected them to be forgeries. That is, Constantine is engaging in argument *ad hominem*: he alleges that the pagans are unwilling to undergo moral reform and therefore they impugn the authenticity of these improving lines. Alternatively, but less in keeping with the tenor of the passage, the participle ἔχοντα could depend on (Σιβύλλης θεσπίσματα εἶναι) λέγεσθαι, and thus be the supposed argument of Christians, as imagined by the pagan opponents for the Sibylline authenticity of the lines: they are said to be Sibylline, on the grounds that they are beneficial—just as the moral principles preached by Jesus are one of the most important aspects of his ministry.\(^8^3\) On the basis of an interpretation similar to this second possibility, David Potter thinks the moral qualities are the criterion of authenticity for Constantine.\(^8^4\) As Potter says in reference to the *OrSib* generally, however, "very little in the extant corpus corresponds with Constantine's method of authentication."\(^8^5\) In this particular case, however, the moral qualities claimed for the lines quoted seem to consist of the threat of divine judgment on the wicked—no hidden deeds remaining hidden (line 13 of the acrostic)—and the promise of reward for the pious. Specifically, it is predicted that people will cast aside idols and wealth (line 8), but otherwise there are no details of the character of the good and the evil, who are characterized with various general terms: πιστοί/ἀπιστοί (line 4; cf. πιστοί, line 29); ἁγνοὶ/ἀνομοὶ (line 12); ἐνσεβεῖς/κόσμος (line 30); κλητοὶ (line 31). The threat of punishment, however, especially the punishments of hell, is often brought forward by early Christian writers as one of the morally beneficial aspects of their beliefs—and Constantine himself earlier in the speech commends the morality of Plato's teaching

83 Dörries, pp. 138-40.
about rewards and punishments after death (although he condemns the philosopher's polytheism): "For who can believe such a statement…without desiring to practice righteousness and temperance, and to turn aside from vice?" (9) That is to say, Constantine is attributing to the Sibyl's prophecies a quality normally claimed by Christians for the teachings they themselves proclaim, and by so doing presents a second "Christian" characteristic of Sibylline oracles (besides direct prophecy of Christ). This is, incidentally, also a way in which they can be of practical use for present life, thus another element of distance between the surface eschatological emphasis of the acrostic and Constantine's interpretation. But if the Sibyl has these "Christian" characteristics, what conceivable involvement in traditional paganism can she have had?

What, then, does Constantine say about the Sibyl herself? In the first place she seems to precede ancient pagan culture, like Tertullian's Sibyl; she is ancient—dating to the sixth generation, after the flood—and Constantine alleges that she herself says this: \( \phi\acute{a}s\kappa\omicron\omicron\omicron\alpha \varepsilon\acute{a}u\tau\omicron\heta \varepsilon\kappa\tau\eta \gamma\nu\varepsilon\varepsilon\acute{a} \ \mu\acute{e}t\acute{a} \tau\omicron \ \kappa\alpha\tau\alpha\kappa\lambda\nu\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron \ \gamma\varepsilon\nu\varepsilon\omicron\omicron\omicron\acute{a} \). One is tempted to connect this information with OrSib 1.287-8, a passage that places the Sibyl in the sixth generation (after the narrative of the flood), \( \acute{h}\acute{e}s \varepsilon\lambda\acute{o}\chi\omicron \ \mu\acute{e}\tau\acute{e}\pi\acute{e}\tau\omicron\alpha \); and also with OrSib 3.820-29, which places the Sibyl in the context of the flood without assigning her to a numbered generation. Constantine might have used both these passages—but if he knew

\[ \text{86 These must be taken not together, but as independent chronological indications, not together, if the influence of OrSib 1 is to be seen at all, and so Geffcken's exclamation point ad OrSib 1.287f. is not necessary—Pflüttisch, Rede Konstantins, p. 114. Ison, p. 92, reads the two phrases together, and compares Theophilus' chronology, which (he says) puts the flood 3453 years before, the sixth generation following it 700 years thereafter, "i.e., about 2900 years before Constantine"—which agrees, more or less with the Letter to Arius' "about 3000 years." Against Ison's argument, Theophilus does not single out the sixth generation after the flood for special notice; on the other hand, although his computation is flawed, if Ison's figure of 700 years is corrected, the connection with Theophilus has a better chance. The sixth in Shem's line (counting Shem) would be Ragau, born 531 years after the Flood, and thus 2922 years before Theophilus' present, or in fact a little more 3000 years before Constantine. In any case, Ison's point is to argue that the Oratio agrees with the Letter to Arius, for which, see infra, pp. 260-264. By way of contrast, Eusebius dates the Erythraean Sibyl's floruit to 742 B.C.; Augustine, De Civ. Dei 18.23.92-4, treats her as a contemporary of Romulus, although he notes that some date her to the time of the Trojan War. \]
them, he avoids mentioning her married status, which appears clearly from OrSib 1.289-90, and more ambiguously in 3.827: τοῦ [sc. Noah] μὲν ἐγὼ νύμφη καὶ ἀφ' αἴματος αὐτοῦ ἔτυχθην. In fact, so far from mentioning her marriage, Constantine calls the Sibyl παρθένος after citing the acrostic—and this characterization of the Sibyl is also found in the inscription at Erythrae.  

It appears that his specificity is primarily aimed at showing the great antiquity of the Sibyl, yet his direct derivation of his biographical information from OrSib 1 or 3 may well be doubted, since his description of her as a virgin conflicts with the very passages in which the chronological information could have been found. In any case, Constantine has a fairly consistent idea of the antiquity of the Sibyl—much earlier than Greek society and literature, a chronology not entirely at ease with the cultural context in which he places her.

In Constantine's presentation, the (Erythraean) Sibyl is assumed to be a figure of the pagan world; not only that, but her personal participation in its worship is explicitly

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87 Engelmann and Merkelbach, no. 224, line 19 (10); cf. supra, Chap. 2, n. 173.  
88 Kurfess, "Kaiser Constantin und die Erythräische Sibylle," pp. 43-5, for the two Sibylline passages which put the Sibyl in the context of the Flood, and for the judgment of Constantine's intentions. Geffcken, ad OrSib 1.287f., cites Constantine's dating of the Sibyl; Pfättisch, Rede Konstantins, p. 114, similarly, mentions only OrSib 1.284ff.  
89 Although Constantine refers mainly to the Erythraean Sibyl, he does not distinguish clearly between Sibyls, unlike his contemporary Lactantius. It has been argued that he conflates at least the Erythraean and the Cumaean Sibyl—although he is not as explicit as Ps.-Justin, Coh. ad Gr., who similarly says that the Sibyl (Babylonian as the daughter of Berossus, thus possibly considered the same as the Erythraean, because of the epilogue of OrSib 3) travelled to Cumae. Kurfess in fact argues that such an identification was assumed by the OrSib themselves, at 3.814ff ("Kaiser Constantin und die Erythräische Sibylle," pp. 45-7; on OrSib 3.814ff., where the Sibyl says people will call her the daughter of Circe, see p. 46 n. 18). For Constantine, it seems as though the Sibyls of Books 1, 3, and 8 are not distinguished from each other, since he quotes from the latter two and appears to take chronological information from the first (Pfättisch, Rede Konstantins, p. 113; the reference to Book 3 is in the letter to Arius). Pfättisch considers the reference to the Erythraean Sibyl in chap. 21 (p. 187.1) to be an interpolation; this is an exceptional reference within the speech, since Constantine does at least distinguish between Cumaean and Erythraean Sibyls in it (although elsewhere they may be identified), since the former is the only one clearly associated with Virgil's poem (Pfättisch, Rede Konstantins, p. 45). Pfättisch seems to contradict himself in arguing on the one hand that the speech knows only a single Sibyl, on the other that it distinguishes Cumaean and Erythraean. But the phrase Κυμαίαν αἰνιττόμενος δηλαδὴ τὴν Σίβυλλαν (chap. 19, p. 182.1) clearly means that the emperor thought that Virgil was revealing his dependence specifically on the Cumaean Sibyl. When the speech cites the Erythraean Sibyl in the midst of dealing with the 4th Eclogue, however, it
described in some detail. As an example of pagan worship, the cult of Apollo is incidentally derided throughout. The Sibyl was a priestess of Apollo (ἱέρεια ἦν τοῦ Ἀπόλλωνος, p. 179.9), having been devoted to this service (λατρεία, p. 179.12) by her parents; she wore a diadem just as the god she worshipped did (διάδημα ἐπ’ οὐς τῷ θρησκευομένῳ ὑπ’ αὐτῆς θεῷ φοροῦσα, p. 179.9-10) and she tended the tripod around which the serpent coiled (p. 179.10-11). She gave oracles to those who came to consult her (ἀποφοιβάζουσά τε τοῖς χρωμένοις αὐτῇ, p. 179.11-12); Constantine says that even those who deny the authenticity of the lines he cites agree that the Erythraean Sibyl was a μάντις (19.1, p. 181.7). The consultations involved her entrance into the ἁδύτα (εἴσω τῶν ἁδύτων ποτὲ...προαχθεῖσα, p. 179.14-15), described as though this was the usual procedure. Guillaumin translates τὰ ἁδύτα as "l'espace sacré," and remarks on the oddity of using this term, usual for the oracle-location at Delphi, for the grotto of the Erythraean Sibyl; she further compares p. 179.14-16 with Virgil, Aen. 6.262: tantum effata furens antro se immisit aperto. Thus, the Cumaean Sibyl, anomalously, is associated with a cave. The oracle of Apollo (no location specified) reported by Constantine at VC 2.50, is also associated with a cave—ἐξ ἄντρου τινὸς καὶ σκοτίου μυχοῦ—and there is mention of tripods too. In fact, the description of the worship of

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90 Note her parents' ἡλιθιότης (p. 179.12), the ἀσχήμονες θυμοὶ καὶ οὐδὲν σεμνὸν (p. 179.13) involved in the cult; τῶν ἁδύτων...τῆς ἀείλαθες δεινοδαιμονίας (p. 179.14-15)
91 Apollo often appears with laurel wreath or diadem-like hair band (LIMC, RIC s.v.), and in any case Stephanus, TLG s.v. notes that διάδημα can have the sense of στεφάνη. A διάδημα also figures in the Apolline oracle cited by Porphyry (F 329 Smith).
93 "L'exploitation des 'Oracles Sibyllins,'" p. 196 n. 58.
94 See also Parke, Sibyls, pp. 89-90.
Apollo in Constantine's Or. ad s. c. is assimilated in many respects to standard ideas about the Pythia and Delphi, especially the tripod and the serpent. Pagan authors too asserted some connection between the Sibyl and Delphi. According to Pausanias (10.12), the Erythraean Sibyl travelled around, including to Delphi—but is still distinguished from the Pythia. Ison argues that Pausanias' inclusion of the Erythraean Sibyl in the Delphic context constitutes a precedent for Constantine's assimilation of her to the Pythia. Plutarch, however, also says that the first Sibyl was active at Delphi (Mor. 398cd), without identifying her with the Pythia.

Constantine does not mention Delphi explicitly; rather, he compares the Erythraean Sibyl explicitly to Daphne. Pfättisch, Hanson, and Barnes treat the mention of Daphne as a reference to the oracle at Daphne near Antioch; Barnes, furthermore, has suggested that this oracle may have been consulted in 302 by the advocates of persecution. The reputation of this Daphne for luxury would in this case presumably be present in the emperor's thinking. As Kurfess and Ison point out, there is another possibility: a daughter of Tiresias named Daphne (more usually called Manto) is said to have been captured by the Epigoni and dedicated at Delphi, where she gave oracles.

96 Ison, p. 93, following Kurfess, "Kaiser Konstantin und die Sibylle," p. 21 n. 3.
97 Pfättisch, Eusebius Pamphilus, p. 247 n. 3; Hanson, "The Oratio ad Sanctos," pp. 507-11, for whom the reference is a mark of inauthenticity in the speech; Barnes, "The Emperor Constantine's Good Friday Sermon," JThS n.s. 27 (1976), p. 416.
98 Barnes, "Sossianus Hierocles."
99 Libanius, Or. 60 (and John Chrys., On St. Babylas). For Daphne's luxury, see also HA Avidius Cassius 5.4: legiones Syriacae... diffluentes luxuria et Daphnidis moribus agentes; cf. Sozomenus, HE 5.19.7-8: ἐπιβαίνειν τοῖς ἐπεισέκοιν αἰχμην ἐνομίζετο... ὥ γαρ ἡ διατηρήματος ἐκτὸς ἐρωμένης ἐν Δάφνῃ ἐτύγχανεν, ἦλθὼς τε καὶ ἄχαρις ἐδόκει. Gibbon has an idyllic description of the place in chap. 23 of his Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire (1: 896-8, ed. D. Womersley [London, 1994]).
100 Anticipated, in fact, by the note ad loc. in the ANF translation.
and thus was also called Sibylla (Diod. Sic. 4.66.5-6).\textsuperscript{101} Constantine's point in comparing the Sibyl to this Daphne would not be clear, however, unless it is that the Sibyl here, like Daphne, had been dedicated to Apollo, thus to the service of a pagan god, by her parents (as Daphne was by the Epigoni). The connection, however, may be more specifically sexual. Constantine says that the result of her being dedicated to the worship of Apollo included "shameful passions":\textsuperscript{102}

...τῶν γονέων ἐπιδεδωκότων αὐτὴν τοιαύτη λατρείᾳ, δι' ἣν ἄσχήμονες θυμοί καὶ οὐδέν σεμνόν ἐπιγίνεται, κατὰ τὰ αὐτὰ τὸις ἱστορομένοις περὶ τῆς Δάφνης.

Constantine seems to introduce the story of Daphne specifically in relation to the ἄσχήμονες θυμοί καὶ οὐδέν σεμνόν, which may simply suggest that she (like the Erythraean Sibyl) experienced inspiration by Apollo in the same way as Christian sources allege for the Pythia—through the pudenda.\textsuperscript{103} Even in pagan sources, in fact, the inspiration of ecstatic female seers is described in sexual terms: for example, commenting on Plato's Phaedrus, Hermias says that οὐδένα...ἐνθουσιασμὸν ἄνευ τῆς ἐρωτικῆς ἐπιπνοίας συμβαίνει γεγενῆσθαι.\textsuperscript{104} Manto herself was impregnated with Mopsus by Apollo.\textsuperscript{105} Pausanias says that the Erythraean Sibyl (in one persona) was Apollo's γυνὴ γαμετή (10.12.2). There may be a further suggestion that the nymph Daphne (a different mythological figure from Daphne/Manto, but possibly here the two

\textsuperscript{101} Ison, p. 93; Kurfess, "Zu Kaiser Konstantins Rede an die Versammlung der Heiligen," \textit{Theologie und Glaube} 39 (1949), p. 169 n. 7; for this Daphne, see \textit{PRE} s.v. "Daphne 7" and Parke, \textit{Sibyls}, pp. 113 and 123 n. 22. Σclipse 1.308 (= \textit{Epigoni} fr. 4 [Allen, \textit{Homeri Opera} 5: 116]) tells a further story (from the \textit{Thebais}) connecting her with the temple of Apollo at Claros.

\textsuperscript{102} \textit{ANF} translates "indecent fury."

\textsuperscript{103} Origen, \textit{C. Cels.} 3.25, 7.3; Joh. Chrys. \textit{In Ep. I ad Cor. hom.} 29, p. 352 Field.

\textsuperscript{104} Hermias, \textit{ad Platr.}, \textit{Phaedr.} p. 105 Ast (non vidi); p. 88, lines 24-25 Couvreur (Paris, 1901), reading γίνεσθαι—see E. Norden, \textit{P. Vergilius Maro: Aeneis Buch VI}, 3rd ed. (Leipzig, 1927), p. 146, for this and other examples. Of course, Hermias is appealing to Plato's types of madness, not specifically to oracular inspiration.

\textsuperscript{105} \textit{Apollod.}, \textit{Bibl. Epit.} VI.3.4 (2: 243-5 Frazer).
are conflated) and the Sibyl were both the objects of Apollo's lust—although in neither case were they thought to have given in to Apollo; yet their prophetic power was a gift of Apollo. The most familiar version of this Daphne's story, that in Ovid, *Met.* 1.452-67, does not mention her prophetic powers (nor does Parthenius, *Erot. Path.* 15), but others do. Pausanius tells the story of Daphne (daughter of Ladon in Arcadia), focusing, like Parthenius, on the attempt of Leucippus to court her; he mentions "the story of Daphne told by the Syrians beside the Orontes"—this appears to be simply that Daphne fled Apollo from Arcadia to Syria, and was transformed into a tree there; or else the whole story, Ladon and all, is moved to Syria. Thus, Daphne might again be connected with the place's immoral reputation, in addition to the shameful treatment suffered by the nymph at the hands of Apollo. In any case, whether because of Apollo's lust, the shameful passage of the inspirational vapors through the sexual organs, the reputation of the town of Daphne, or simply the fact that she was dedicated to one of the gods of paganism, the Sibyl herself is described as involved in "shameful passions" and "nothing holy," and thus the details of the story insisted on by Constantine bring out fully the depths of depravity involved in the Sibyl's normal state.

The cause of the Sibylline lines Constantine actually quotes was, he says, an (unanticipated) incursion of "true divine inspiration" (θείας ἐπιπνοίας ὀντὸς γενομένη).
in the course of the Sibyl's regular mantic procedure. That the type of inspiration envisioned involves compulsion, though apparently not complete loss of self-consciousness, emerges from the emperor's citation of the Erythraean Sibyl near the end of his explanation of the 4th Eclogue (21.2): she asks why the Lord lays on her the necessity (ἀνάγκη) of prophesying, rather than preserving her "far above the earth" until his coming. This confirms the inadvertence of the prophecy, but also portrays her as accepting its contents, eagerly expressing a personal Messianic hope. After quoting the acrostic, Constantine repeats the view that her inspiration came from God (θεόθεν ἐπέστη προφητεία, p. 181.3), and furthermore goes so far as to judge her "blessed" since she had been chosen by God as a prophetess: μακαρίαν δ' αὐτὴν ἐγὼ ἐξελέξατο προφῆτιν τῆς ἑαυτοῦ περι ἡμῶν προμηθείας (p. 181.4-5).

Now, the clearly Christian content of the resulting prophecies, as well as the evident intention to distinguish the inspiration the Sibyl suffered on the occasion of those prophecies from her normal Apolline inspiration further serve to demonstrate that it was the true God who compelled her to speak on those occasions. Thus, Constantine is espousing a view similar to that of the Coh. ad Gr., but more clearly; and he adds the idea more explicitly that she herself was converted by her own prophecy, and so was able (at least in retrospect) to recognize the true inspiration from God in distinction to the usual inspiration she had experienced. The macarism in fact shows that Constantine ends up

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108 For ἐπιπνοία, cf. the inspiration of the Father and the Son requested by the emperor himself at the outset (chap. 2, p. 156.1-2) and the inspiration of the poets (chap. 10, p. 165.7-8)—the same expression is used.

109 The quotation is in prose, and does not correspond closely enough to anything in the extant OrSib to identify it (unlike the quotation in the letter to Arius). Still, the first part, protesting the imposition of inspiration, is easily paralleled (e.g., OrSib 3.2-7, 162-5, 295-301 [with the word ἀνάγκη], 489-91); the second part seems to reflect the commonly found idea that the Sibyl's soul was taken up above the earth (to the moon, according to Plutarch)—see, e.g., the Sibylline oracle quoted by Phlegon of Tralles (p. 90.19-21 Keller) and the adaptation by Sarapion (apud Plutarch, Mor. 398c-d), and the wish to see the "day of the Lord" appears in OrSib 8.151-2: οἴμοι ἐγώ τριτάλαινα, πότ' ὄψομαι ἡμαρ ἐκεῖνο / σείο;
with a very high characterization of the Sibyl, since, although her inspiration is apparently unexpected in his version, he goes on to call her "blessed" for being "chosen" as prophetess. The implication of this may well be that in Constantine's view, she did not then continue in her role as priestess of Apollo, or continue to serve pagan polytheism, although Constantine does not say so explicitly. That would explain the fact that he goes on to quote her wish to see the Incarnation, as well as his further reference to the Sibyl in his letter to Arius. In this, Constantine seems to have gone beyond the paradigm of Balaam, in conceding to the Sibyl a permanently blessed status after her inspiration, although Origen allowed for an extension of Balaam's blessing in the person of his followers the Magi.

Unfortunately, neither Constantine nor Ps.-Justin ever mentions Balaam as a possible parallel to their treatment of the Sibyl, nor can either be closely connected with Origen's exegesis of Scripture. As Pfättisch remarks about Constantine, "[e]s handelt sich nicht um ein Auflösen des Buchstabens in einen höheren Sinn oder ein Allegorisieren, das mit einem unbequemen Wortlaut fertig werden möchte." Yet Constantine's apparent understanding of the Sibylline acrostic can be seen as a sort of allegorical exegesis. If no specific connections can be made between Ps.-Justin and Constantine, on the one hand, and Origen on the other, one might assume that Origen's manner of dealing with the problem of Balaam was either well known to Christians available to Constantine, although the possibility cannot be excluded that the idea of

111 Lactantius, who is often alleged to have been influential for Constantine's views, unfortunately never mentions Balaam either; one might imagine that Ossius, bishop of Corduba and closely connected with the emperor in the years around the Council of Nicaea, who was skilled in Greek and may have introduced Constantine to Middle Platonist thinkers (so Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius* p. 74), might well have been familiar with Origen's works.
unexpected inspiration was simply an obvious way of saving respect for the Sibylline prophecies of Christ while continuing to disparage the pagan environment in which the Sibyl lived. For Origen, the guarantee of the divine origin of Balaam's prophecy was its inclusion in the Bible; he even argues that God must have revealed to Moses the parts of the story that he could not have known, humanly speaking: nisi enim verba Domini essent, non ea utique revelasset famulo suo Moysi (Hom. in Num. 16.7.12). The Sibyl, of course, did not have the same guarantee; nevertheless, Ps.-Justin and Constantine seem to have availed themselves of the Balaam-paradigm as the theoretical framework for their enthusiasm for her prophecies.

**LETTER TO ARIUS**

The Sibyl proved useful to Constantine also in a post-Nicene non-apologetic context, a fact that presupposes Constantine's full approval of OrSib and their authenticity: a letter from Constantine to Arius and the Arians (preserved in Gelasius of Cyzicus, HE 3.19 and mss. of Athanasius) quotes "the Erythraean" against Libya as prophesying "Arius' madness" 3000 years earlier. The quotation appears to be (loosely) based on OrSib 3.323ff., with the meter lost as a result of paraphrase. It may not be coincidence that Lactantius systematically treats OrSib 3 as the work of the Erythraean Sibyl.

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113 Cf., however, supra, n. 89.
This letter's authenticity, of course, has been questioned. Winkelmann argues that Gelasius did not take the document from Athanasius, but that it was later interpolated into his work (from Athanasius'). On the other hand, the very boorishness of the letter has been seen as a guarantee of its authenticity; it would be an unthinkable sort of forgery. Furthermore, Epiphanius reports on the letter. Gelasius' HE was written ca. 475, and was largely a work of compilation—from Eusebius, Rufinus, Theodoret, Socrates, and perhaps also Gelasius of Caesarea's HE; of the other works he claims in his preface to have used, the authenticity of some has been admitted. The authenticity of the letter may thus be treated as generally accepted. Dörries and Barnes date the letter to 333 on the basis of manuscript indications; Keil contends rather that it belongs earlier, 325-27. Kraft argues that the first part of the letter was written before 325, and not by Constantine—but his interpretation, that Arius must literally be in Libya, is perhaps not necessary; it may be enough that Libya was a strongly Arian area. In any case, the

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115 Dörries, p. 108 and n. 2; Baynes, p. 23.

116 Panarion 69.9.3-6 (see Dörries, pp. 103 and 108 n. 2)—he says it is "still preserved among the philokaloi", quoting the opening and a Homeric allusion, as well as describing the contents somewhat. He describes it not as a letter to Arius but a circular letter (ἐπιστολὴν...ἐγκύκλιον) to the Empire as a whole, a letter filled with "all sorts of wisdom and truthful sayings" (Tr. F. Williams [Leiden, 1994]; the Greek is πάσης σοφίας ἐμπλεων καὶ ἀληθινῶν ῥημάτων). Epiphanius' description appears to make the Homeric allusion (Gelasius HE 3.19.6) the end of the letter; at least, taken literally, 69.9.5 places the allusion "after copious refutation from the divine oracles" (ἐκ θείων λόγιων).

117 C. Curti, in Encyclopedia of the Early Church, s.v. "Gelasius of Cyzicus." Besides the article of Winkelmann, he also cites R. P. C. Hanson, The Search for the Christian Doctrine of God, chap. 6.


119 Keil, p. 122.

120 Keil, pp. 122-3. Secundus of Ptolemais and Theonas of Marmarike refused to sign the Nicene Creed, and so went into exile along with Arius (Barnes, Constantine and Eusebius, p. 217); Arianism was strong in Libya—on this subject, see H. Chadwick, "Faith and Order at the Council of Nicaea," HThR 53 [1960] 171-95 [pp. 175-9, 189-91, 192-5].
vilification of Arius seems likely to belong after the Council of Nicaea, and thus is contemporary with or later than, the Or. ad s. c.

The passage runs as follows, with first God, afterwards Arius, being referred to in the second person:

ἲγὼ γὰρ ὁ σὸς ἀνθρώπος ἔλεω ἔχων τὴν παρὰ σοῦ προμήθειαν καὶ ἔξ Ἑλληνικὴς καὶ ἐκ Ἑρυθρᾶς ἡγασάραντα ἵππος ἔχων τὴν Ἀρείου μάνιαν πρὸ τρισχιλίων που ἐτῶν ὑπὸ τῆς Ἑρυθρᾶς προφητεύσαντα τε καὶ προφητεύσαν. (19) ἡπὶ γάρ ἑκείνῃ γε: ἔσοι σοι, Αἰβύη, ἐν παραλίαις κειμένη χώρας· ἔφη γὰρ ἑκείνῃ· οὐάι σοι, Λιβύη, ἐν παραλίοις κειμένη χώρας· ἥξει γάρ σοι καιρός, ἐν ὧν μετὰ τῶν δήμων καὶ τῶν σαυτῆς θυγατέρων δεινῶν ἀγώνα καὶ ὡμῶν καὶ παγχαλέπου ὑπελθεῖν ἀναγκασθήσῃ, ἀφ’ οὗ κριτήριον μὲν εἰς ἅπαντα πίστεως τε καὶ εὐσεβείας διαδοθήσεται, σὺ δὲ πρὸς ἐσχάτον ἀποκλινεῖς καταστροφῆς· ὑμεῖς γὰρ τῶν οὐρανίων ἀνθῶν τὸ δεκτήριον ἀνασπάσαι τετολμήκατε καὶ δήγματι σπαράξαι καὶ μέντοι σιδηροῖς ἐχράνατε τοῖς ὀδοῖσιν. (20) ἐὰν δὲ οὐ φήσης ταυτὶ οὕτως ἔχειν, μαρτύρομαι ἤδη τὸν θεὸν ἦμεν μὴν ἄρχαιότατον Ἑρυθρᾶς συντεταγμένον γλώττῃ, εἰς Ἀλεξάνδρειαν ἀποστέλλειν, ὡς ἂν θάττον ἄπολοιο.

The Sibylline text has been transformed into prose by liberal paraphrase, and rendered nearly unrecognizable by equally liberal interpolation and reinterpretation. Whether Constantine himself paraphrased the verse oracle or whether he depended on an earlier

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121 Athan. Ἑρυθρᾶς Gel.  
122 παράλοις Athan.  
123 τοῦ δήμου Athan.  
124 σοὶ...ἀποκλινεῖ Athan.  
125 ἔφη Athan.  
126 Cf. OrSib 3.323-9: αἰαὶ σοι, Αἰβύη· αἰαὶ δὲ ἡθάλασσα τε καὶ γη· θυγατέρες δυσμών, ὡς ἔστω πυρὸν ἐς ἡμοῦ· ἔστω καὶ χαλέποιο διωκόμεναι ὑπ’ ἄγωνος, δεινοῦ καὶ χαλέπου· δεινή κρίσις ἔσσεται αὕτως, καὶ κατ’ ἀνάγκην πάντες ἔλπις ἔστω σὺν τὸν ὀλέθρον. αἰαὶ ὃν ἀπαγάγανα μέγαν διεδηλήσανεν οἶκον ὀδοῦσι σιδηρεῖοις τῇ ἐμασήσατε δεινῶς.  
127 The words apparently quoted closely from the Sibyl here appear in boldface, clearly paraphrased material underlined.

128 Kurfess, "Ad Oracula Sibyllina," Symb. Osl. 28 (1950), pp. 102-3, compares the passages, and in fact emends the text of OrSib: to παγχαλέποι in line 325, and endorses Rzach's ἔλπις ἔστω σὺν τὸν ὀλέθρον in 327. The paraphrase is much freer, for example, than Alexander Polyhistor's prose version of OrSib 3.97-104, cited by Josephus, AJ 1.4.3 (118).
prose paraphrase is not clear, although the expansion of the word κρίσις to a "judgment [test?] of faith and piety" [i.e. the Council of Nicaea?] seems to indicate the perspective of Constantine himself, wishing to interpret the ἄγών in reference to the Arian crisis. Other divergences from the Sibylline text can be explained more innocently. The adapter takes θάλασσά τε καὶ γῆ as a description of Libya, sea and land together making "coastal region." The word δήμων might easily represent a corruption of δυσμῶν, probably in the verse oracle as extant for the adapter. The imminent destruction is explained as due to Libya's ripping to shreds τῶν οὐρανίων ἄνθων τὸ δεκτήριον, a strange but not tendentious expression. Interestingly, the words οὐρανίων ἄνθων would fit into a hexameter line, giving a further indication that the Sibylline text before Constantine may not have been exactly the extant OrSib 3.323-9. Despite the free adaptation, there is still nothing that connects the Sibyl's utterance unambiguously to the Arian heresy. Nevertheless, whatever Constantine's understanding of the "destruction"—whether it was simply threatened for the future, or had already begun—he certainly understands the "judgment" as a current event in which he himself is personally involved. The emperor is thus using a Sibylline prophecy and applying it to his contemporary situation just as he does in the Or. ad s. c.

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129 ἄνθων has arisen from misreading (unpunctuated) ἄνθ' ὄν; οὐρανίων paraprases ἀθανάτοιο. δεκτήριον (Lampe: "receptacle"; not in LSI) is a hapax legomenon, but is possibly paraphrasing οἶκον, and thus perhaps refers to the Church as a whole. For the reference to flowers, cf. Constantine's interpretation of Ecl. 4.23-25 at Or. ad s. c. 20.3-5: ἀοτὰ γάρ τα τοῦ θεοῦ στάργανα, πνεύματος ἄγιον δύναμις, εὐώδη τινὰ τοῦ θεοῦ σπάργανα ἀναπαύειν (p. 183.21-22)...φύεθαι δὲ ἄνθην καὶ πανταχοῦ φύεθαι τὸ ἄμωμον πλῆθος τῶν θρησκευόντων προσαγορεύει· οἷον γάρ ἐκ μιᾶς ὀρίζῃς πλῆθος κλάδων εὐώδεσι θάλλον ἄνθεσιν, ἀρδομένοιν συμμετρίᾳ δρόσου, βλαστάνει (p. 184.14-17).

130 Opitz, Athan. Werke III.1: 71, in fact considers the Vorlage to have been a different recension. Interestingly, Constantine makes reference to a physical text (πυκτίον) of the Erythraean Sibyl's prophecy, which he sarcastically offers to send, "so that you may perish more quickly"; this may imply a short, focused text rather than (e.g.) the complete text of OrSib 3.
The quotation in the letter does not add anything to the Constantine's characterization of the Sibyl in the *Or. ad s. c.* As in that speech, the Sibyl is ancient: πάνυ ἀρχαιοτάτης (then specified as 3000 years in the past); and her witness belongs to "Greek and Roman writing"—i.e., it is firmly placed in a pagan context. Finally, Constantine makes clear his view that he is the agent whereby the will of God (as articulated in the Sibyline oracle) is being and will be fulfilled; addressing God, he refers to himself as "your man." There is a contrast between the situations presupposed by the *Or.* and the letter to Arius, in that one brings in the Sibyl for apologetic purposes vis-à-vis paganism and the other uses the Sibyl to attack a heretic. Constantine's attitude towards her, however, and his manner of using her witness—broadly interpreted to refer to contemporary events—is the same.

**CONCLUSION**

The Pseudo-Justinian *Cohortatio ad Graecos* and the works of the Emperor Constantine thus show striking similarities in their treatment of the Sibyl. Both emphasize the pagan environment in which the Sibyl originally took part, and both seem to have the idea that the Sibyl experienced an unexpected incursion of divine power, which resulted in the true inspiration of oracles relating to Christ, on the pattern of Origen's interpretation of the figure of Balaam. Ps.-Justin and Constantine, however, did not have the same motives for emphasizing the Sibyl's pagan environment: for Ps.-Justin, the argument for authenticity seems to be the catalyst for establishing the model of ecstatic prophecy—that is, to defend the texts against the charge of being faultily composed (and hence, presumably, inauthentic?)—although it agrees to a certain extent
(not perfectly) with his characterization of Biblical prophets. It is surprising that this metrical subject should seem so important, but this focus is explicable by reference to Ps.-Justin's personal inclinations and self-conscious cultivation (his attempt to impress with his erudition and rhetoric), as well as to the parallels in Plutarch and Porphyry. The subject also allows for a specious connection to Plato, who then seems to be endorsing the Sibyl as presented by Ps.-Justin. For Constantine, on the other hand, the Sibyl seems much more important and is cited in parallel with Virgil (and defended by reference to Cicero)—thus, as one of the most important cultural voices fundamental to the Roman State. She is depicted in terms that evoke the equally important (from a cultural-historical perspective) Delphic oracle. The importance of a fully pagan figure endorsing the new favored religion (and through the 4th Eclogue, also the new Golden Age) cannot be overestimated. If the Sibyl were presented as connected to the Jewish or Christian tradition, the connection with the traditions of state would be in danger of being broken, and the Sibyl would lose much of her apologetic importance for Constantine specifically, as leader of the state. It is also significant that Constantine is confident enough in the Sibyl as an authority that he feels free to cite her also in a matter of heresy, not just in an anti-pagan apologetic setting. The question of Constantine's syncretism, which is bound to be brought up as part of an explanation for the emperor's willingness to appeal to a mantic source like the Sibyl, cannot be discounted, as Constantine can plausibly be seen as attempting to graft Christianity (and his own régime) onto a pagan tradition. Still, the disjunction between the message of the Sibyl (and Virgil's poem) and the broader pagan tradition makes it clear that the emperor intends no assimilation of Christianity to paganism by the use of the Sibyl specifically.
EPILOGUE: CONSTANTINE'S RELATION TO LACTANTIUS

Constantine has often been thought to have depended on Lactantius for many of his ideas, possibly including his emphasis on the Sibyl. The *Oratio ad sanctorum coetum* has points of contact with Lactantius' work, not only in its general character but also in specific statements and enthusiasms. In his high esteem for the Sibyl, Constantine's *Oratio* certainly seems closer to Lactantius than to Eusebius, among whose writings the speech has been transmitted but who has little regard for *OrSib*; furthermore, the speech is primarily an apology, the subject matter being the same as Lactantius'—and, taking into account the triumphalistic sections on his predecessors, the *Oratio* can be seen as a sort of précis of *DI* and *DMP*.\(^{131}\) Widely varying assessments of the origin of the parallels have been made. According to Guillaumin, the speech would have been composed by Constantine on the basis of a sketch provided by Lactantius, the emperor's personal touch being visible in the syncretistic echoes (ideas of inspiration, the role of the Sibyl in providence), and the Greek version having been made by a "secrétaire de chancellerie" with little experience in the Biblical or Latin literature.\(^{132}\) According to Kurfess, Lactantius' role was not necessarily so direct: Constantine's attention was


\(^{132}\) Guillaumin, p. 197. The Eclogue was translated and a Latin commentary thereon was used independently, such that the explanations given do not always agree with the translation: Courcelle, "Exégèses chrétiennes," p. 296 n. 1; p. 303.
attracted to Virgil's 4th Eclogue and to OrSib by Lactantius. Pizzani gives more weight to the differences, but still considers the "numerous and convergent points of contact" between them enough to postulate a genetic connection. Others, however, explain away the parallels as fortuitous, the result of similar subject matter (apologetic) and situation (the end of the persecution and Constantine's accession), not of dependence on Lactantius' personal influence or writings. Pfättisch, for example, attempts to do away with the parallels Heikel finds, and opts rather for some dependence on Theophilus independent of Lactantius. Bolhuis similarly dismisses most of the parallels alleged by Kurfess as apologetic commonplaces. Specifically on the issue of the Sibylline quotations, Bolhuis argues that the fact that Lactantius only cites a few lines of the acrostic, whereas Constantine cites it entire, and does so in a completely different context, is a sign that the emperor's speech is not dependent on Lactantius, rather than the reverse.

Ison advances the most thoroughgoing criticism of the position that Lactantius substantively influenced Constantine's Oratio. First, he questions the idea that Lactantius was closely and early connected with Constantine. He argues first of all that Lactantius' position as tutor of Constantine's son Crispus was probably not before 313, since Jerome puts this in his extreme old age (extrema senectute, Jer., De Vir. Ill. 80), and Lactantius seems to have lived at least until 324. This perhaps presses Jerome's words

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134 Pizzani, "Costantino e l'Oratio," p. 798.
135 Ison, pp. 75-9, 81-3—in the latter pages pointing out differences of detail which, in his opinion, make dependence unlikely; Fàbrega.
136 Pfättisch, Rede Konstantins, pp. 71-77.
137 Bolhuis, pp. 30-31.
138 Contra Barnes, Constantine and Eusebius, p. 291 n. 97.
139 Ison, p. 72.
too far, but Ison's other arguments are more telling. The DMP differs from Constantine's propaganda in his treatment of Maximian and Maxentius; thus, Lactantius was probably not moving in "court circles" at the time of its writing (314). Furthermore, the dedications to Constantine added to DI around 324 on the one hand indicate that he was not closely connected with Constantine at the time of the original edition, and on the other hand, need not imply such a connection even in 324, since they do not demonstrate that the author was a "literary client" of the emperor—they show that he intended to ingratiate himself with Constantine, not that he succeeded. Ison thus emphasizes that a close relationship between the two men is not well attested. Any possible literary relationship between DI (etc.) and the Oratio must be investigated on the basis of textual comparison, not on assumptions about the relations of Lactantius with Constantine. Ison also details significant differences between the two texts—for example, at DI 4.26.29-36, Lactantius explains Christ's ignoble death on a cross, whereas the Or. ad s. c. does not discuss the cross, although it does use the "circumlocution" πάθημα (pp. 154.5; 170.14; 176.14, 19).

In the rush to make connections between Lactantius and Constantine, other possible sources of the emperor's knowledge of Sibyls and Sibylline prophecy have usually been ignored, but there is one further source known to have been connected to Constantine. Sopater of Apameia, a sophist and philosopher, and student of Iamblichus, who was active in the foundation of Constantinople and was initially favored by

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140 Ison, p. 73, depending on Barnes, "Lactantius and Constantine," JRS 63 (1973), pp. 39-42, for the date, authenticity, and characterization of the DMP.
141 Ison, p. 73, depending on E. Heck, Die dualistischen Zusätze und die Kaiseranreden bei Lactantius: Untersuchungen zur Testgeschichte der Divinae institutiones und der Schrift De opificio dei (Heidelberg, 1972), via Barnes, Constantine and Eusebius, p. 291 n. 96, for the date and authenticity of the dedications.
142 Ison, p. 79. In chap. 20 (p. 184.5-6), the corresponding verb occurs.
Constantine, although later alleged to have tampered with the grain supply from Egypt by magic, is said by Photius (Bibl. cod. 161) to have composed an encyclopedic work in which, on the basis of the History of Music (μουσικὴ ἱστορία) of "Rufus" (date unknown),\(^1\) he described flautists and poets, and also περὶ γυναικῶν μαντικῶν ἀναγράφει, τίνες τε καὶ θεν αἱ καλούμεναι Σίβυλλαι, καὶ ταύτα μὲν ὡς ἀπὸ τῶν Ῥούφου. At least, it should not be thought that Lactantius was the only available source of Sibyline scholarship.

The conclusion cannot be that Constantine was certainly not subject to Lactantian influence, but only that such influence has not been adequately demonstrated. Yet, whether or not Constantine is indebted to Lactantius in other ways, with respect to Sibylline texts and the 4\(^{th}\) Eclogue his method and point of view are very different.\(^1\) The Sibylline acrostic, like the 4\(^{th}\) Eclogue, is interpreted by Lactantius in an eschatological manner—and without any attempt to interpret the puer of the Virgilian poem as a reference to Christ—\(^1\) in contrast to Constantine's arguable avoidance of eschatology. Lactantius does not connect the Sibylline acrostic to the 4\(^{th}\) Eclogue as the emperor's presentation does.\(^1\) While Constantine argues that Virgil concealed the true import of the Sibyl's prophecy because of the pagan Roman authorities, Lactantius quotes the poem after mentioning poetic misunderstanding of the Golden Age mentioned in prophecy. Finally, Constantine's position that the Sibyl experienced unexpected divine inspiration is nowhere to be found in Lactantius. Furthermore, it is not apparent that the emperor had more than a few excerpts of OrSib at his disposal, perhaps together with

\(^{1}\) See Schultz, PRE s.v. Rufus [17], col. 1207.
\(^{1}\) P. Monat, Lactance et la Bible (Paris, 1982), 1: 60-61, emphasizes the differences between Lactantius' and Constantine's treatment of Virgil's 4\(^{th}\) Eclogue.
\(^{1}\) As Pizzani, "Costantino e l'Oratio," p. 805, points out.
\(^{1}\) Pizzani, "Costantino e l'Oratio," p. 805.
scholarly treatment of the Sibyl, whereas Lactantius apparently had multiple whole books. If Lactantius had any influence on Constantine's views of the Sibyls and of the 4th Eclogue, it can only have been in the most general terms.
Chapter 5
"DIVINE TESTIMONY"
LACTANTIUS' USE OF SIBYLS AND SIBYLLINE ORACLES

Lactantius has reaped scorn from scholars for his credulity in using sources like the Sibylline Oracles, and from theologians for being excessively devoted to pagan sources, to the point of allegedly neglecting Biblical material and Christian theology. He is undoubtedly the single most profuse Christian quoter of OrSib,¹ and one of the Christians most open to adducing the evidence of traditional pagan philosophers and poets in his version of Christian apologetic.² Nevertheless, both charges are unfair. The second—that he has only a superficial knowledge of Christian doctrine and of the Bible—depends to a large extent on the paucity of scriptural quotation in his works, and his dependence on testimonia.³ But Lactantius' reluctance to cite the Bible is the result of his apologetic strategy, which he defends explicitly: he criticizes the previous apologetic of Cyprian for attempting to convince a pagan audience by appeal to Christian sources (the Bible) which the pagans consider "empty and apocryphal" (vanam fictam

¹ In this respect, at least, the use of OrSib "reached its peak in Lactantius" (Thompson, p. 117); his citations, according to Parke (Sibyls, p. 163), are "scattered throughout lengthy discussions of many different theological questions." These, however, generally boil down to: monotheism (and Euhemeristic interpretation of myths), the person and life of Christ, and eschatology. Parke is certainly right to say that Lactantius appears to have spent the most time and effort of all early Christian writers in his use of OrSib.
² J. Stevenson, "Aspects of the Relations between Lactantius and the Classics," St. Patr. 4 (1959), p. 497, says that he is "the one [early Christian Latin writer] most imbued with the spirit of ancient education."
³ A. Wlosok, "Zur Bedeutung der nichtcyprianischen Bibelzitate bei Laktanz," St. Patr. 4 (1961), pp. 234-50, retains Brandt's idea that Cyprian was the most important source of Biblical material, and tries to specify a further Gnostic-tinged source; J. A. McGuckin, "The Non-Cyprianic Scripture Texts in Lactantius' Divine Institutes," VCChr 36 (1982), pp. 145-63, contests Wlosok's characterization of his source, preferring to see the emphasis as anti-Jewish; Monat, Lactance, 1: 95-103, shows that there are more divergences from Cyprian's text than had previously been thought, but retains the idea of testimonia. For the supposed appropriation of Cyprianic material, see Brandt in his edition of DI, pp. XCIX-CII, and his apparatus fontium in DI 4.
commenticiam, 5.4.4). Indeed, in DI 5.4, he reviews his predecessors in general, reflecting on the proper task of Christian apologetic: Tertullian's *Apologeticum* is good as far as it goes, but "it is one thing to answer accusers...another thing to instruct [instituere]" as he plans to do (5.4.3); Cyprian, on the other hand, should have used "arguments and reason" to start potential Christians on a gentle path which would eventually involve Biblical education too:

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\text{dilatis paulisper divinis lectionibus formare hunc a principio tamquam rudem eique paulatim lucis principia monstrare, ne toto lumine obiecto caligaret.} \text{(5.4.5)}
\]

Especially important should be the citation of "human testimonies" (philosophers and historians), since the prospective convert is not ready for "divine testimonies" (i.e., the Bible). Elsewhere, too, Lactantius explicitly recognizes the usefulness of citing one's opponents' authorities. By following the approach he thinks will work best, Lactantius hopes to convince *docti homines ac diserti* of the truth of Christianity (5.4.8). Similarly, at the beginning of his work, he discusses rhetoric (*eloquentia*) and defends his presentation of a polished, stylistically careful apology. While Christianity could be defended without it, eloquence would make the process easier:

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5 This use of the expression *divina [testimonia]* does not agree with its usual meaning in Lactantius—elsewhere in *DI* it is not restricted to Biblical authorities, and he cites the Sibyl and oracles of Apollo under the rubric. Book 5 of *DI* appears to have been composed early, before his vision for the work as a whole had crystallized (Stevenson, "The Life and Literary Activity of Lactantius," *St. Patr.* 1 (1955), pp. 669-70). His common practice, in any case, is to present rational argument, then human authorities, then "divine" authorities—see *infra*, pp. 287-290.

6 Note *DI* 4.10.4 (appealing in his account of Christ to the Jewish scriptures): *eorum ipsorum litteris qui Deum suum mortali corpore utentem violaverunt...; 4.13.14 (citing an oracle of Apollo on Jesus): *Cur...pro stultis...habemur, qui sectamur magistrum etiam ipsorum deorum confessione sapientem?* Cf. *DI* 6.14: *praeclarum et excellens est bonum misericordia idque divinis testimoniis et bonorum malorumque consensu optimum iudicatur*—to argue that thus certain philosophers were wrong (i.e. Cicero).
In both spheres—the appeal to authorities and the use of rhetoric—Lactantius is convinced that his method of apologetic will be more successful than Cyprian's, since it will avoid unnecessarily offending cultivated pagans by the difficulty and stylistic strangeness of Christian sources. If this has the side effect of causing Lactantius to appear unskilled with such sources, his rhetorical model, Cicero, has little claim to philosophical originality either in the minds of many modern scholars. Lactantius' claim, moreover, is to have a novel and effective presentation, not ground-breaking theological speculation or systematization. This does not, however, by itself imply that he was insufficiently schooled in Christian doctrine, only that his Christian character is sometimes obscured by his method. Thus, Michel Perrin concludes, "...Lactance est plus chrétien qu'il n'y paraît."
must be kept in mind when assessing his use of Sibylline oracles. Scholars have often not done so. Alexandre, for example, asks the rhetorical question: *nonne totus Sibyllinus est?* More severely, De Labriolle brands him with a lack of critical sense (shared with others):

> Il use avec la même crédulité que ses prédécesseurs (sauf saint Irénée et Origène) des oracles Sibyllins...où il croit trouver tant d'aveux décisifs arrachés aux Sibylles païennes par la force de la vérité.  

Monceaux speaks of Lactantius' naïveté in making appeal to blatant forgeries, and calls it a "puerile manoeuvre" because such texts were not taken seriously by pagans. Such remarks seem to confuse the mindset of modern critical scholarship (or at best, some examples of ancient scholarship) with that of a generally cultivated Late Antique pagan public. The Neo-Platonic movement fostered a mind like Porphyry's, which could submit the Biblical book of Daniel to a searching historical criticism, and yet also provided the locus of acceptance of the hardly less unbelievable *Chaldaean Oracles*. Despite the defensiveness of Origen, Ps.-Justin, Lactantius, and Constantine (later also Augustine) on the subject of *OrSib* 's authenticity, the half-heartedness of their arguments in favor of it show that they themselves were ready to be convinced, and expected such readiness in their audience. The fact that Lactantius especially could cite such sources, despite his demonstrable sensitivity in this area, indicates either that *OrSib* seemed such a fruitful

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10 Alexandre, 2: 271.
12 He includes citations of *Orphica, Hermetica* and Apolline oracles in this charge: "Lactance invoque sans cesse le témoignage des poèmes orphiques, des livres hermétiques, des Oracles d'Apollon, surtout des Oracles Sibyllins...Dans l'usage qu'il fait de ces apocryphes, il trahit une naïveté extraordinaire. Il n'a pas le moindre doute sur l'authenticité de ces élucubrations incohérentes, de ces prophéties rédigées après coup, où l'on reconnaît généralement la main d'un juif ou d'un chrétien" (P. Monceaux, *Histoire littéraire de l'Afrique chrétienne depuis les origines jusqu'à l'invasion arabe* [Paris, 1901-23], 3: 319).
mine for quotations that he overcame his reservations or that modern scholarship has
mispoken the critical sensibilities of his audience, that his reservations were not so very
great to begin with—and justifiably so, if he realistically expected any kind of hearing.

A passage from a letter of Lactantius, preserved only in Jerome's quotation of it,
reveals a scholarly, philological use of the text of OrSib, as evidence for a linguistic
detail—and therefore also a non-apologetic willingness to treat OrSib as "authentic":

*Lactantii nostri quae in tertio ad Probum volumine de hac gente opinatus sit
verba ponemus. Galli inquit antiquitus a candore corporis Galatae
nuncupabantur et Sibylla sic eos appellat. quod significare voluit poeta, cum ait:
'tum lactea colla Auro innectuntur', cum posset dicere 'candida'...

(Lactantius, fr. 1 Brandt,14 citing Virgil, Aen. 8.660-61)

This reference shows that Lactantius was able to treat OrSib simply as a text of Greek
literature which could be mined for linguistic information. No defense of their
authenticity seems to have been necessary here, although the full context is not known.15

The designation Γαλάται appears in the extant OrSib at 3.485, 509,16 599 (this last
definitely a Jewish passage); and 5.340;17 these are mostly general oracles against various
nations, not necessarily of Jewish (or Christian) composition. He could possibly have

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14 (From Epistulae ad Probum) ap. Jerome, Comm. in ep. ad Gal. Bk. 2 pr. Note also (cited by Brandt
in app.) Isidore of Seville, Etym. 9.2.68 (and 14.3.40); 9.2.104: Galli a candore corporis nuncupati sunt.
Γάλα enim Graece lac dicitur. Unde et Sibylla sic eos appellat, cum ait de his: 'Tunc lactea colla/auro
innectuntur. So Lindsay's OCT (1911), in whose text conflation of the references to the Sibyl and to Virgil
is evident; note, however, that Brandt [following the editio Arevaliana, in Migne] gives
Vergilius for Sibylla, although he notes the latter as the reading of "codd. quidam."

15 Jerome cites it in his commentary on Galatians, to explain who the "Galatians" are; it should not
be assumed that Lactantius was also expounding Scripture. The other extant fragment from the
Epistulae ad Probum deals with the meter of Latin comedy (fr. 2 Brandt); Damasus (Jerome, Ep. 35.1; test. 7 Brandt)
testifies that in his letters Lactantius did not often discuss Christian doctrine: ...plurimae epistulae eius
usque ad mille spatia versuum tenduntur et raro de nostro dogmate disputant, quo fit ut et legenti fastidium
generet longitudo et si qua brevia sunt, scholasticis magis sint apta quam nobis, de metris et regionum situ
et philosophis disputania. Fr. 1, then, is presumably an example of Lactantius' treatment of regionum
situs. In any case, as to the authenticity of the Sibyline material, the Sibyl is adduced off the cuff, in a way
which does not suggest that a defense of his use of her testimony has been lost.

16 Part of the continuation of the fragment, hinc...Galatia provincia, in quam Galli aliquando venientes
cum Graecis se miscuerunt, has some verbal correspondence with OrSib 3.509-10: σύμμικτοι Γαλάται
τοις Δαρδανιδάσιν 'Ελλάδ' ἐπεσσυμένως πορθέοντες...[sic Geffcken, following the mss.: πέροντες Rzach].
The content, however, does not coincide, so the resemblance is probably fortuitous.

17 Cf. Γάλλοι, OrSib 5.200.
found the designation in pagan Sibylline texts, although he never elsewhere betrays any knowledge of Sibylline texts not either extant in *OrSib* or at least closely allied to the corpus. Significant for Lactantius' picture of the Sibyl is his inclusion of her among "ancient" writers (although it is not specified exactly how ancient); thus, she can serve as an example of how the Gauls were designated *antiquitus*. There is the breath of a suggestion that Sibylline oracles affected Virgil's presentation of Gauls in *Aen. 6*. This fragment may also show that Lactantius was acquainted with *OrSib* early in his career; De Labriolle, at least, dates the *Ep. ad Probum* to the years between 290 and 303 (?), before his conversion.¹⁸ Most importantly, this fragment shows Lactantius treating Sibylline texts as unproblematic, worth citing not only for apologetics but as a believable piece of ancient Greek literature. It therefore weakens the supposition that only the overwhelming usefulness of *OrSib* for apologetic purposes overcame Lactantius' sensitivity to the principle of using texts that his audience would treat as authoritative.

Before turning to Lactantius' use of *OrSib* more specifically, it is also necessary to discuss the misconception of his supposedly excessive openness to pagan traditions.¹⁹

Combès, for example, on Lactantius' attitude to Cicero, writes: "Il ne connaît pas d'autre

¹⁸ De Labriolle, *Histoire littéraire*, 3: 306; since he is known to have continued teaching (Crispus, at least), however, it is certainly not safe to classify his scholarly works as necessarily pre-conversion (Stevenson, "Life and Literary Activity," p. 668).

It is true that, like Clement, Lactantius sometimes depicts the insights of pagans in terms of oracular inspiration or direct divine influence. A recent interpreter of Lactantius who emphasizes this aspect of his presentation excessively is Elizabeth DePalma Digeser, who considers him "unique in his respect for the innate goodness of classical writers" and, although she does recognize that Lactantius often finds philosophers and poets in error, cites his characterizations of Cicero as "a man inspired by God" and Virgil as "a prophet"; "[p]oets see with divine clarity." Her broader argument is that Lactantius presented Christianity in terms congruent with graduated illumination as described in Hermetism or "philosophical monotheism" and thus attempted to produce a more tolerant version of Christianity. Wlosok earlier investigated Lactantius' mindset and view of revelation, wisdom, piety, and justice, finding deep sympathy between Lactantius and the "tradition of philosophical gnosis"—i.e., the Platonic tradition including the *Hermetica.* While Lactantius is the first to put the Hermetic writings to real use in his apologetic,

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21 P. G. Van der Nat, "Zu den Voraussetzungen der christlichen lateinischen Literatur: Die Zeugnisse von Minucius Felix und Laktanz," in M. Fuhrmann (ed.), *Christianisme et formes littéraires de l'Antiquité tardive en Occident*, Entretiens Hardt 23 (Geneva, 1977), p. 216, lists the various means by which Lactantius thinks pagans achieved some measure of truth: 1) by the "Evidenz" of truth; 2) by natural understanding; 3) by a kind of divine inspiration; and 4) by (imperfect) knowledge of Scripture. As examples of 3), van der Nat cites *DI* 6.8.10 and 5.9.6. Rambaux, p. 161 n. 12, comes up with a similar list, substituting "superior intelligence" for Van der Nat's second way, and interpreting the third in a not necessarily divine sense—since Lactantius' words at 6.8.10 are *spiritu aliquo instincti*; and he adds the possibility of demonic inspiration from *DI* 4.27.19-20.
23 Making of a Christian Empire, Chapter 3, especially pp. 78-90.
the way to his position is prepared by the philosophical and religious background of his teacher Arnobius and North African predecessors such as Apuleius. Yet even for Wlosok, the adoption of a gnostic/Hermetic conception of religion is not entirely a personal prejudice, but rather serves Lactantius as a consciously chosen, apologetically useful stance—an important caveat. As a final example of this view of Lactantius, Eberhard Heck, without appealing to the same Hermetic environment, also makes the leap from positive use to "inspiration" in his summing up of Lactantius' attitude towards traditional literature:

Nahezu alle Klassiker erscheinen sowohl als Zeugen bekämpfter Ansichten—dann sind sie verrückt—wie als Kümmer von Wahrheiten—dann sind sie inspiriert—oder als Lieferanten von Munition zur Polemik, so Persius und Lucrez gegen den Götterkult. [emphasis added]

Lactantius indubitably refers to pagan philosophers and poets using the language of inspiration, but close examination shows that this language is always qualified, and should not be taken literally, but rather (as Wlosok sees) as an apologetic stance.

While justifying his recourse in the first book of *DI* to poets and philosophers in preference to the prophets for demonstrating the oneness of God, Lactantius refers to the overwhelming power of truth:

\[
\textit{ex his unum deum probemus necesse est, non quod illi habuerint cognitam veritatem, sed quod veritatis ipsius tanta vis est, ut nemo posit esse tam caecus, quin videat ingerentem se oculis divinam claritatem} \ (DI 1.5.2).
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*der Wahrheit: Die christliche Hermetikrezeption von Athenagoras bis Laktanz*, Theophaneia 36 (Berlin/Vienna, 2002).

Digeser cites *DI* 7.7 for the same point.\(^{29}\) That chapter says that each separate truth of Christian teaching was apprehended by some philosopher or other—rendering yet another philosopher's ideas invalid; but no one school was so bad as not to have any truth:

\[
\text{non enim sic philosophiam nos evertimus, ut Academici solent...sed docemus nul-}
\]
\[
\text{lam sectam fuisse tam deviam neque philosophorum quemquam tam inanem qui non viderit aliquid ex vero. (DI 7.7.2)}
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In the first passage, however, Lactantius suggests that these authorities did not "hold onto" whatever truth they "recognized"; as to the second, although the motif recalls Clement's defense of eclecticism (*Strom.* 1.XIII.57-58), saying that no school was entirely without truth is hardly tantamount to making great claims for the inspiration of philosophers. In a similar vein, Digeser cites *DI* 1.1.3, paraphrasing it as saying that "they deserved to attain wisdom because they yearned for truth so persistently," but neglects to mention the end of the sentence, which states that nevertheless they did not achieve it, since the truth was beyond natural human comprehension.\(^{30}\) At best, Lactantius is allowing for some pieces of truth to have been available to some/most pagans, but that position is far from unique among early Christian writers.

Some of Digeser's interpretations appear to be due to misreadings of Lactantius' text;\(^{31}\) this is also the case for the language approaching that of inspiration.\(^{32}\) At *DI* 6.8.6,

\(^{29}\) *Making of a Christian Empire*, p. 87.

\(^{30}\) *DI* 1.1.3, 5: *erant illi quidem veritatis cognitione dignissimi, quoniam scire tanto opere cupiverunt atque ita, ut eam rebus omnibus anteponerent...sed neque adepti sunt id quod volebant et operam simul atque industrium perdiderunt, quia veritas id est arcanum summi dei, qui fecit omnia, ingenio ac propriis sensibus non potest comprehendi*. Contrast Digeser's attribution to Lactantius of "the view that knowledge about God can come from everyone's own God-given reason and perception."

\(^{31}\) On p. 86, e.g., she says that according to Lactantius, "poets see with divine clarity" and cites *DI* 1.5.6, 10, neither of which contain anything to support the statement; at 1.5.6, the apprehension of some truth comes about *natura...et ratione ducente*; 1.5.10 explains why Hesiod was *wrong*. Also on p. 86, she alleges that Lactantius thinks that "poets see truth more clearly than the philosophers"; *DI* 1.5.15, which she cites, says more or less the opposite. Lactantius does not say that Plato was the "wisest of philosophers" (p. 87), but that he is so judged: *omnia sapientissimus indicatur (DI* 1.5.23).

\(^{32}\) The passages discussed in this paragraph are also cited for the same view by Van der Nat, "Voraussetzungen," p. 216.
Lactantius transmits Cicero's characterization of the universal divine law: *Marcus Tullius... paene divina voce depinxit...* He further makes this a kind of general principle, suggesting that Cicero and others like him had divine help in achieving such knowledge: *eos, qui vera imprudentes loquuntur, sic habendos puto, tamquam divinent spiritu aliquo instincti.* Such phraseology is in fact quite rare for Lactantius, but another example appears in *DI* 5.9.6, where, as a possible explanation of the persecutory impulse of the Roman administration, he suggests Terence's proverb, *Veritas odium parit,* which he says the comic poet pronounced *quasi divino spiritu instinctus.* Nevertheless, it is clear from these instances that Lactantius would not really hold to the view that Cicero and Terence had been inspired a way comparable to the Biblical writers. For one thing, the expressions are mitigated by the words *tamquam* and *quasi.* Furthermore, the argumentative structure undermines the strong expressions. The sentence of Terence is advanced off-hand as one of a number of possibilities; and Cicero's description, while valid up to a point, is imperfect: Lactantius points out that Cicero did not actually know the content of this universal law, but was only able to eulogize it in general terms—and Buchheit shows that *depingo* is a word with deprecatory force. If Cicero had achieved detailed knowledge of the law's content, he would have been a prophet; as it is, he was just a philosopher:

*Quod si, ut legis sanctae vim rationemque pervidit, ita illut quoque scisset aut explicasset, in quibus praeceptis lex ipsa consistere, non philosophi functus fuisset officio, sed prophetae. (DI 6.8.11)*

Although Cicero did have a true insight, according to Lactantius, he nevertheless remains *homo longe a veritatis notitia remotus* (*DI* 6.8.10).

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The combination of the endorsement of a particular thought and explicit expression of the incompleteness of the thinker's knowledge is Lactantius' usual response to truth perceived by pagans. At DI 6.24, Lactantius relates a mirabilis sententia of Seneca. He says that "nothing truer" could be said, but in the process emphasizes that Seneca was separated from real knowledge: *Quid verius dici potest ab eo qui Deum nosset, quam dictum est ab homine verae religionis ignaro?* Seneca's observations indicate that he could have been a Christian—if only someone had taught him further: *Potuit esse verus Dei cultor,quis illi monstrasset.* Lactantius consistently makes contrary-to-fact observations of this kind in such contexts. As a further example, after he summarizes the human testimonia for monotheism, he concedes that they touched on truth, but argues that they were not able to hold onto it:

*Nunc satis est demonstrare, summo ingenio viros attigisse veritatem, ac paene tenuisse, nisi eos retrorsum infatuata pravis opinionibus consuetudo rapuisset... (DI 1.5)*

At DI 3.27, Lactantius explains more fully why, although the philosophers often come near to the truth, their understanding was faulty. Their testimony has only the weight of human, not divine, authority, and therefore no certainty. Furthermore, their motives were faulty: fixed as they were on earthly things, they followed a "shadow of virtue" rather than virtue itself. When it comes to Lactantius' explicit statements about the possibilities of pagans to achieve truth, therefore, Buchheit's conclusion fits the evidence better than Digerer's interpretation: "Inspriert kann nach Laktanz nur sein, wer Gott kennt und an seiner Offenbarung teilhat. Es is nur folgerichtig, daß Laktanz diesen Status niemals
paganen Autoren zubilligen kann. \textsuperscript{35} More generous expressions appear only "aus protreptischen Gründen." \textsuperscript{36}

It could still be argued that Lactantius' apparent unwillingness to recognize pagans as enlightened is also a rhetorical stance—that of polemic. Perhaps Lactantius tips his hand in Book 6, when he purposefully omits discussion of moral precepts common to pagans and Christians \textit{ne quid ab iis videar mutuari, quorum errores coarguere atque aperire decreverim} (\textit{DI} 6.2). That is, by choosing to write in defense of Christianity, he has forced himself to say that whatever truths pagans are able to achieve, they are never "enough." It remains arguable, of course, to what degree Lactantius retained a personal affection for the works of Virgil or Cicero; he certainly seems to have had an appreciation for the seductive power of both oratory and poetry. \textsuperscript{37} Before investigating his opinion of the Sibyls, however, it is necessary to see clearly this sharp theoretical and rhetorical divide between pagan thinkers and Biblical prophets, whatever his private inclinations may have been.

Possibly in order to intensify this rift between pagans and Christians, Lactantius avoids one common early Christian explanation of the coincidence between pagan philosophy and Judaeo-Christian teaching: the theory of direct dependence or plagiarism. At \textit{DI} 4.2.4, Lactantius marvels that Pythagoras and Plato, although they went to the Egyptians, Magi, and Persians to study their rites, did not arrive as far as the Jews. \textsuperscript{38} His

\textsuperscript{35}Cicero inspiratus", p. 364.  
\textsuperscript{36} \textit{Ibid}. For the view that Lactantius is more severe than usually thought in his treatment of pagan authors, see also A. Bender, \textit{Die natürliche Gotteserkenntnis bei Laktanz und seinen apologetischen Vorgängern} (Frankfurt am Main, 1983), passim—e.g., p. 45, speaking of Lactantius' "rigorose Ablehnung einer wirklichen Gotteserkenntnis ohne Offenbarung."
\textsuperscript{37} Van der Nat, pp. 215, 223. 
explanation is that they were turned away by divine providence, since it was *nondum fas* for the religion of the true God and justice to become known to *other nations*—that the broadening of knowledge was reserved for the time when God planned to send Jesus.\(^{39}\)

Lactantius makes a similar statement at 2.10.6, explaining the poets' presentation of the creation of humans with traits that recall the Biblical story by recourse to dependence, but dependence on a corrupted oral tradition, not on the text of the Bible: \(^{40}\)

\[
\text{Nullas enim litteras veritatis attigerant, sed quae prophetarum vaticinio tradita in sacramento Dei continebantur, ea de fabulis et obscura opinione collecta et depravata, ut veritas a vulgo solet variis sermonibus dissipata corrumpi, carminibus suis comprehenderunt.}
\]

In contrast to Eusebius' picture of gradual expansion of knowledge in the Gentile sphere through the influence of the Hebrews (*HE* 1), Lactantius seems to be assuming that there was no such direct influence, at best a corrupted and obscured transmission. \(^{41}\)

Does all this not present a problem for a positive portrait of the Sibyls? Perhaps; yet for Origen, who also states in a homily on *Numbers* that the Bible was not available to Gentiles, this idea makes the role of Balaam especially important in providing them with knowledge about the future coming of Christ—and makes the choice of Balaam understandable, in that it took advantage of his authority among Gentiles. \(^{42}\) Origen, however, does not deny the plagiarism theory outright, as Lactantius seems to; rather,

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\(^{39}\) Cf. *DI* 5.7.1-2 for a parallel to the end of this passage; and, more generally, *DI* 4.14.17: *Iudaei...quibus solis arcanum dei creditum fuerat; DI* 2.13.8: *Hebraei...penes quos religio dei resedit.*

\(^{40}\) On this as Lactantius' view of the poets' manner of transmitting material belonging to "revelation," see Van der Nat, "Voraussetzungen," pp. 56-7.


\(^{42}\) *Hom. in Num.* 14.3.2: *Agebatur enim mira et magna dispensatio, ut quoniam prophetarum verba, quae intra aulam continebatur israeliticam, ad gentes pervenire non poterant, per Balaam, cui fides ab universis gentibus habebatur, innotescerent etiam nationibus secreta de Christo mysteria et thesaurum magnum perferret ad gentes.*
elsewhere it remains one of his explanations for similarities between Christian teaching and Greek thought.\textsuperscript{43} Sometimes he expresses himself in terms that could denote "hearsay," but sometimes he mentions direct association.\textsuperscript{44} As for Lactantius, it may well be that he sees the Sibyl as a unique mouthpiece, or one of a very few who were specially inspired as anomalous sources of truth—not one who would be understood at the time, however, but whose words would constitute confirmation of the Christian message in Lactantius' time. The picture of a misunderstood Sibyl in fact seems to chime in quite well with Lactantius' descriptions of the truth as secret and veiled (until the proper time, at least): \ldots\textit{cuius velamento} [i.e., \textit{stultitiae titulo}] \textit{deus}, \textit{ne arcanum sui divini operis in propatulo esset, thensaurum sapientiae ac veritatis abscondit} (\textit{DI} 4.2.1-3).\textsuperscript{45} Thus, while Buchheit is right to insist that for Lactantius, Virgil's status was non-prophetic,\textsuperscript{46} it would be misleading to take a further step and claim that the Sibyl herself could not have been truly divinely inspired because Lactantius argues here that truth was not known outside Israel.

Although the philosophers did not borrow from the Scriptures, some Classical writers may have borrowed from Sibylline texts, in Lactantius' view. This is a certainty for Virgil's \textit{4th Eclogue}, as will be seen and discussed later; suffice it to say that Lactantius clearly says that Virgil depended on the Cumaean Sibyl for the poem. At \textit{De}

\textsuperscript{43} Droege, pp. 157-63.

\textsuperscript{44} Possible hearsay: \textit{C. Cels.} 4.12, on the idea of eschatological conflagration; 4.21 on the Tower of Babel and the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah; he says further that \textit{Plato, Ep.} 7.341c (\textit{C. Cels.} 6.3) was paralleled by \textit{Hosea} 10.12 (\textit{C. Cels.} 6.5). As for more direct influence, Origen says that parts of the \textit{Phaedrus} came from Hebrew persons or books: \textquoteright\textquoteright;'Εγὼ δὲ οὐχ ἀπογιγνώσκω τὰς ἀπὸ τοῦ Φαίδρου λέξεις ἀπὸ τινὸς 'Εβραίων μεμαθηκότα τὸν Πλάτωνα, ὥς δὲ τίνες ἀνέγραψαν, ἔτι καὶ τοῖς προφητικοῖς ἐντυχόντα λόγοις ἐκτεθείσαι... (\textit{C. Cels.} 6.19); \textit{cf.} 6.43-44. He criticizes Celsus for not including the Jews in the list of "ancient and wise nations" as Numenius did (\textit{C. Cels.} 1.15). Nevertheless, he does not go into details of chronology to establish the idea (see further Droege, p. 161).

\textsuperscript{45} \textit{Cf. DI} 1.1.7, which refers to the present situation, but in terms reminiscent of Lactantius' description of the past: \textit{obvoluta in obscuro veritas latet}. As Buchheit, "\textit{Cicero inspiratus}," p. 365-66, points out, Lactantius' sources for this idea are Biblical: \textit{Rom.} 16.25-6; \textit{1 Cor.} 2.7-8.

\textsuperscript{46} "\textit{Cicero inspiratus}," pp. 368-72.
Ira 23.6, after citing OrSib 4, certainly not from the Cumaean Sibyl, as the transition shows (De Ira 23.2-3), on the deflagratio of the world, and before going on to offer more material from OrSib 4, Lactantius quotes Ovid for the destruction of the world by fire:

Unde apud Nasonem de Iove ita dicitur: Esse quoque in fatis...(Met. 1.256-8). The implication is that Ovid, like Virgil in the 4th Eclogue, depended directly on Sibylline texts for this passage. Also, in the middle of Lactantius' account of the Sibyls taken from Varro, the allegation appears (attributed to the Sibyl herself) that Homer plagiarized from the Erythraean Sibyl (DI 1.6.9). The Sibyl for Lactantius thus seems to function as a possible, but rare, source of truth which was also used by some pagan authors, despite his general restriction of truth to the Hebrew nation.

These preliminaries out of the way, a detailed examination of Lactantius' view of the Sibyls and their prophecies is now necessary. One generally held view is that, given his profuse citations, he must consider OrSib an unquestioned authority, as great or greater than the Bible; the dangers of this train of thought have been discussed. Besançon, for example, considers that Lactantius simply took over the "general pagan opinion" uncritically, regarding Sibylline oracles as trustworthy, without discussion or doubt about their value. Alexandre interprets Lactantius' use of OrSib as "divine" but not simply in the sense in which he treats Apolline oracles; rather, sometimes they gave true oracles in an ecstatic state, by the will of God—through an unexpected incursion,

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47 Thompson (p. 128) treats this simply as Lactantius' opinion, although it appears in material dependent on Varro; Lactantius does treat Varro as a credible source for the Sibyls, and it is probably no coincidence that OrSib 3.419-25 has just this sort of allegation about Homer.

48 P. 36.

49 2: 271-2, citing DI 7.24 for the ecstasy; Prümm, p. 64, endorses Alexandre's opinion.
as Constantine (and probably Ps.-Justin, *Coh.*) thought.\(^{50}\) Recently, even higher estimations of Lactantius' views have been made: Sfameti Gasparro says that "with unwavering faith in the divine origin of the oracular words of the various Sibyls," Lactantius puts them on the same level as the Hebrew prophets, or rather preferred them because of their pagan origin;\(^{51}\) similarly, Sardella says that Lactantius espouses "the absolute authority of the Sibyl" and gives her "the greatest possible prominence" even when "the Christian Sibyl" is not in view—and that this reflects his general position towards pagan culture.\(^{52}\) On the other side, Pierre Monat argues that it is misleading to allege that Lactantius puts Sibyls and Scripture on the same level;\(^{53}\) while he does not have the critical mistrust of a Eusebius, for example, he cites them "like Justin and Theophilus."\(^{54}\) In his view, Lactantius presents three separate "levels of inspiration" within the category of "supernatural witnesses"—oracles, Sibyls, and prophets—and does so "with adequate precision."\(^{55}\) Monat wavers between seeing this distinction as practical—some supernatural sources pagans reject, others they accept—and seeing it as theoretical—all three are supernatural, but the revelations of oracles and Sibyls are perverted or deformed (presumably by the agency of demons).\(^{56}\) He sums up as follows:

...recherche d'aveux dans les oracles païens, quête de *traits de lumière* chez les Sibylles, peuvent préparer le lecteur à la sereine *contemplation de la vérité* dans le texte des prophètes.\(^{57}\)

\(^{50}\) See *supra*, pp. 237-238; 257-259.
\(^{51}\) "La Sibilla," p. 596.
\(^{52}\) P. 549 (cf. *supra*, p. 54).
\(^{54}\) *Lactance*, pp. 52-3.
\(^{55}\) *Lactance*, pp. 52, 55.
\(^{56}\) *Lactance*, pp. 52, 55.
\(^{57}\) *Lactance*, p. 56.
Monat's attempt at a nuanced description of Lactantius' usage is an improvement on simplistic views that seem to see the multitude of quotations and jump to conclusions, but it is also misleading to describe a clear three-fold distinction. Rather, close consideration of Lactantius' use will show a more ambiguous picture—with the Sibyl sometimes appearing to be classed along with other pagan oracles, sometimes assimilated to the Biblical prophets, such that it might make better sense to speak of a kind of calculated ambiguity in Lactantius' presentation.

**Monotheism and the Characterization of the Sibyl**

In the first book of the *Divinae Institutiones*, titled *De Falsa Religione*, Lactantius unfolds his arguments against the traditional polytheism of Graeco-Roman paganism. He begins with rational arguments about the existence of Providence and the appropriateness of connecting it with a single deity rather than many, then continues with testimonia (1.3.24), of which he first mentions the prophets (1.4); that is, the biblical prophets. Although he defends their testimony as being unanimous, sane, and credible, he admits that not all believe it (1.4.2; 1.5.1). He therefore proceeds to auctores (1.5.2); that is, texts which will be recognized as authorities by his pagan audience. In this

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58 On Book 1, see M. A. Moreno de Vega, "Citas de autores griegos y latinos en el libro I de las 'Instituciones' de Lactancio," *Helmantica* 35 (1984), pp. 209-230, who does little more than go through DI 1, noting the citations; pp. 214-17, 222, and 229 for the Sibylline material. OrSib are quoted to show: that there is only one God, that he is the creator, that he alone should be worshipped (1.6); that God did not come into being by sexual reproduction (1.8); that the "gods" were originally men (1.11.47); and OrSib are referred to as parallel/confirmation of Euhemerus' version of the story of Saturn, not getting into the specific differences between the various versions, however, since the only thing he is interested in is the fact that the gods were humans, not the details of the stories (1.14.8—pp. 229-30). Rambaux, pp. 159-76, attempts to show how for Lactantius, as for other early Christian thinkers, the Greco-Roman tradition was influential in the development of Christian doctrine, despite the consistent value accorded to the Bible at the expense of that tradition.
category, he cites first poets (Orpheus, Homer, Hesiod; Virgil, Ovid), next philosophers as higher authorities.\textsuperscript{59} Among philosophers, he begins again with Greeks, the last adduced being Plato, \textit{qui omnium sapientissimus iudicatur} (1.5.23), followed by Romans (Cicero and Seneca). Lactantius' general comment on the philosophers is that they came close to the truth, but were hindered by the traditions of paganism.\textsuperscript{60} The final category of witnesses comprises \textit{divina testimonia} (1.6.1), the first cited being transitional, only \textit{simile divino}—Hermes Trismegistus, not fully divine since he was only a man, although \textit{antiquissimus...et instructissimus} (1.6.3)—and the others being oracles, more certain than the other authorities he has cited—more certain for his audience, arguably, as usual: \textit{de responsis sacrisque carminibus testimonia quae sunt molto certiora} (1.6.6).\textsuperscript{61}

Lactantius' progression of appeals to authority here is very similar to that used in the \textit{De Ira Dei}, in which, after his rational investigation of the various philosophical positions regarding divine anger, and having come to the conclusion that a just wrath befits God, he adds an epilogue of "divine testimonies," which turn out to be the (Biblical) prophets, the Sibyls, and Milesian Apollo.\textsuperscript{62} For this technique he explicitly appeals there to the precedent of Cicero:

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Note 1.5.15: \textit{quorum gravior est auctoritas certiusque iudicium}. The appeal to philosophers is all the more useful, considering that Homer and Hesiod do not actually provide Lactantius with any support for monotheism.
\item DI 1.5.28: \textit{summo ingenio viros attigisse veritatem ac paene tenuisse, nisi eos retrorsus infucata pravis opinionibus consuetudo rapuisset, qua et deos esse alios opinabantur...}; cf. 1.5.14, on the poets (presumably Virgil and Ovid): if they had followed their insights through to the end, they would have held the same opinions as the Christians (1.5.14).
\item Cf. \textit{Epit.} 5.1 where, after citing Hermes, at the beginning of the truncated version of \textit{DI} 1.6, Lactantius says, \textit{Superest de vatibus dicere} (the only examples now being the Sibyls).
\item The approach is, in fact, quite frequent in Lactantius. Cf. Monat, \textit{Lactance,} 1: 52; Ingremeau, in her edition of \textit{De Ira} (Lactance: \textit{La colère de dieu}, SC 289 [Paris, 1982]), p. 361, cites as comparable also \textit{DI} 4.6.3 (and book 4 \textit{passim}); 7.13-24; \textit{divina testimonia} are appealed to but not cited in \textit{Epit.} 5.4; 40.3; 66.1—the reader is simply invited to consult the books themselves. Ingremeau further suggests that Lactantius' putting the \textit{divina testimonia} in a "secondary place" in \textit{Epit.} and \textit{De Ira Dei} may reflect an evolution in Lactantius—i.e., presumably a greater reliance on his argument, less or at least less important appeal to this type of authority. Certainly the position near the beginning of \textit{DI} book 1 is more prominent,
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
Cicero introduces, as an epilogue (*rhetorum epilogus*) to his *Tusc. Disp.* (1.112ff.), examples of the gods' judgments concerning death—albeit these are in the form of stories involving the gods' relations with humans (fulfilled prayers/vows), as opposed to Lactantius' citation of oracular material:63 *(113) Deorum immortalium iudicia solent in scholis proferre*. . . *(116) His et talibus auctoribus usi confirmant causam rebus a dis immortalibus iudicatam.* Cicero also distinguishes divine and human *testimonia* at *Part. Orat.* 2 (6).64 The explicit appeal to Cicero puts this strategy indubitably in the realm of apologetically useful rhetorical structure, confirming Lactantius' references to the greater credibility of such divine witnesses for his audience; in fact, there is a double appeal to authority here, since Lactantius first refers to Cicero to justify his method, then cites the authorities for his own views. In an exactly parallel case, the same simple distinction between "human" and "divine" testimony recurs at the end of *DI*, in Lactantius' discussion of resurrection. After rehearsing the somewhat similar, but flawed, opinions of poets and philosophers on the fate of the soul, Lactantius appeals to a higher authority, which turns out to be the Sibyl alone in this case: *sed nos ab humanis ad divina redeamus. Sibylla dicit haec* *(DI* 7.23.4) Similarly again, at *DI* 2.11.18, on the

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64 Monat, *Lactance*, 2: 29 n. 113; Monat in SC 326, pp. 19-20 n. 4. Further, on kinds of *testes*, see *Part. Orat.* 48-51, 117-18, the tabulation in B. Reyes Coria, *La retórica en La partición oratoria de Cicerón* (Mexico City, 1987), p. 40; these references are from R. Giomini's edition of *Part. Orat. ad loc.* Quintilian also, after dealing with the use of *iudicia* from various sources (nations, wise men, poets, proverbs) for *auctoritas* (5.11.36-41), brings up oracles as a source given a high priority by some, although he himself is more cautious: *Ponitur a quibusdam, et quidem in parte prima, deorum auctoritas, quae est ex responsis...Id rarum est, non sine usu tamen...Quae cum propria causae sunt, divina testimonia vocantur, cum aliunde arcessuntur, argumenta.* Aristotle's categorization is quite different (*Rhet. I.15.13-14 [1375b-76a]).
providential creation of mankind, after Cicero's commendable ideas have been cited.\textsuperscript{65} *sed tamen divinis opus est testimonis, ne minus humana sufficiant.* A quotation from the Sibyl follows, then mention of *sanctae litterae* (the Bible) as containing the same information. The repetition of this argumentative structure drives home Lactantius' idea that human efforts at knowledge frequently fail, and that therefore divine information is necessary.

But if apologetic usefulness is patently his aim at *DI* 1.6 and *De Ira* 22.2, one may legitimately wonder to what degree Lactantius himself—as a Christian, and as an individual thinker—would class any or all of the "divine" sources he cites as truly divine. The question of the status of the Sibyl is not fully resolved by Lactantius' classing her among *divina testimonia*, which he uses to confirm his own rational arguments or to correct the purely human efforts of poets and philosophers, these latter being either misdirected despite glimpses of the truth, or unable to supply the weight of conviction of a higher authority.\textsuperscript{66} The inclusion of pagan (or purportedly pagan) sources along with Biblical ones is *prima facie* an apologetic concession: Lactantius cannot be assumed to be asserting for himself or for Christians in general the divine inspiration of pagan oracles. At least in the case of oracles of Apollo, as will be seen, Lactantius makes plain his reservations about the sincerity of the oracular god, although he is perfectly willing to use the oracles to expose Apollo.\textsuperscript{67}

\textsuperscript{65}Note *DI* 2.11.15: ...*quod Cicero quamvis expers caelestium litterarum vidit tamen, qui libro de legibus primo hoc idem tradidit quod prophetae.*

\textsuperscript{66}At *DI* 5.19, Lactantius challenges proponents of polytheism to defend their religion—not by their own assertion (mortal man's authority not sufficient) but by some *divine* testimony, "as we do." This is a curious challenge, if Lactantius is familiar with Porphyry's *Phil. ex. orac.*, as Digenes argues, pp. 102-7; she identifies (pp. 93-102) the anonymous *antistes philosophiae* of *DI* 5.2.3 as Porphyry; *contra*, Barnes, "Porphyry, *Against the Christians*: Date and Attribution of Fragments," *JThS* n. s. 24 (1973), pp. 424-42.

\textsuperscript{67}See further *infra*, p. 295.
Beyond the simple distinction of human and divine sources, however, Lactantius also frequently makes a distinction within the divine category. In *DI* 7.14.15, introducing his treatment of eschatology, he discusses his sources:

>quammodo autem consummatio futura sit et qualis exitus humanis rebus impendeat, si quis *divinas litteras* fuerit scrutatus, inveniet. (16) sed et *saeculorum prophetarum* congruentes cum caelestibus voces ⁶⁸ finem rerum...adnuntiant... (17) quae vero a *prophetis et vatibus* futura esse dicantur, priusquam superveniat extrema illa conclusio, collecta ex omnibus et coacervata subnectam.

The sources Lactantius appeals to in the first place are the *divinae litterae*, i.e., the Bible; in the second place, he asserts that "secular" prophets make similar proclamations. The *divinae litterae* correspond to the *caelestes [voces]* in section 16, both in contrast to *saeculares prophetae*; the contrast is restated in section 17 as that between *prophetae* and *vates*. Specifically, he claims that the pagan prophets assert that the "end of things" is near and describe it as the world's senescence. The same distinction between Biblical prophets and pagan seers appears at *DI* 7.23.5: *quodsi non modo prophetae, sed etiam vates et poetae et philosophi* anastasim mortuorum futuram esse consentiunt, nemo quae rerum non tandem congruentes in unum voces prophetarum, sed etiam Trismegisti praedicatio et Sibyllarum vaticinia demonstrant. ⁶⁹ In making this distinction, Lactantius reflects contemporary Latin Christian usage, which borrowed the Greek *propheta* for Biblical sources, but avoided *vates* precisely for its pagan associations. ⁷⁰

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⁶⁸ For this phrase, cf. *DI* 7.19.9: *quod etiam Sibylla cum prophetis congruen's futurum esse praedixit.*
⁶⁹ Note also *DI* 5.18.3: we learn of the afterlife from 1) the arguments of the great philosophers; 2) the responses of the seers (*vatum responsis*); 3) the divine words of the prophets; and 4.6.4, where he clearly distinguishes Hermes Trismegistus and the Sibyl from the Biblical prophets: *esse...summi Dei filium...nond tantum congruentes in unum voces prophetarum, sed etiam Trismegisti praedicatio et Sibyllarum vaticinia demonstrant.*
⁷⁰ C. Mohrmann, *Études sur le latin des chrétiens* (Rome, 1961-77) III: 46, citing precisely *DI* 7.23.5, notes that *propheta* is Lactantius' word for the "Judaean-Christian" prophets, as opposed to *vates* for pagan seers—and alleges that in this, he operates "conformément à l'usage du parler courant." Latin Christian poetry did not have the same scruples as prose usage.
The Sibyls certainly fall into the category of \textit{vates}.\footnote{See Fàbrega, p. 131, who judges that the 10 Sibyls are for Lactantius the \textit{vates} "κατ' ἐξοχήν."} At \textit{Epit}. 5.1, introducing citation of Sibylline testimony, Lactantius announces: \textit{Superest de vatibus dicere.}\footnote{Cf., in the quotation from Varro at \textit{DI} 1.6.7: \ldots quod omnes feminae vates Sibyllae sint a veteribus nuncypatae...} As a general rule, Lactantius does not give further details about the Sibyl's inspiration, but some do emerge and show the Sibyl in an apparently fully pagan light. In \textit{DI} 1.6, where Lactantius transmits Varro's catalogue of Sibyls, the details and vocabulary not surprisingly reveal Sibyls who fit into the context of pagan divination: the etymological explanation of the word Sibyl derives it \textit{a consiliis deorum enuntiandis} (\textit{DI} 1.6.7); the activity of the Erythraean and Phrygian Sibyls is described with the verb \textit{vaticinari} (\textit{DI} 1.6.9, 12); the Tiburtine Sibyl is worshipped as a goddess at Tibur, and a statue \textit{(simulacrum)} of her holding a book was found in the river Anio (\textit{DI} 1.6.12). Lactantius himself uses the word \textit{vaticinari} of the Sibyl at \textit{De Ira} 23.5, and at \textit{DI} 7.24.2 couples the term with \textit{furere} apparently to give a picture of the Sibyl's prophetic frenzy: \ldots \textit{Sibylla vaticinans furensque proclamat} (there follows a quotation of \textit{OrSib} fr. 4).\footnote{But see discussion of the term \textit{vaticinari} and this passage \textit{infra}, pp. 297-298 and 308-310.} The source of inspiration of pagan oracles is explicitly addressed in \textit{DI} 7.18.1: \textit{haec ita futura esse cum prophetae omnes ex dei spiritu tum etiam vates ex instinctu daemonum cecinerunt.}\footnote{Cf., e.g., \textit{DI} 4.27.14: \ldots si constituantur in medio et is quem constat incursum daemonis perpeti et Delphici Apollinis vates, eodem modo Dei nomen horrebunt et tam celeriter excedet de vate suo Apollo quam ex homine spiritus ille daemonicus et adiurato fugatoque deo suo vates in perpetuum conticescet. On the demons as involved in pagan religion in general, see \textit{DI} 2.14-17; on oracles, especially 2.16.13-15. The demons spoke truly sometimes, "by necessity" \[sc. imposed by God\]: \textit{veritate pressus negare non potuit...} \textit{(4.13.13); cum... verum necessitate dixisset} (4.13.16)} Hystaspes is then cited, introduced with \textit{enim}; Lactantius alleges that his otherwise good information has been tampered with by the demons; next, Hermes is cited, then the Sibyls. Although the relation of Hermes and the Sibyls to the introductory
words of the chapter is not explicit, the initial impression one is left with is that all vates spoke by the inspiration of pagan gods—i.e., demons.\textsuperscript{75}

Nevertheless, a couple of passages suggest that for Lactantius, the position of the Sibyls may be distinguishable from that of other (pagan) oracles. In the transition from quotation of Or\textit{Sib} to quotation of oracles of Apollo at \textit{DI} 1.6.17, Lactantius stops and poses the rhetorical question: \textit{Sed…quod genus probationis adversus eos magis adhibere debemus quam ut eos deorum suorum testimoniis revincamus?} The citation of Apollo's words is then connected with the particle \textit{enim}. This implies that the foregoing Sibylline quotations do not qualify as \textit{deorum suorum testimonia}—suggesting that perhaps the Sibyl's inspiration was \textit{not} demonic in Lactantius' view.\textsuperscript{76} When describing the oracles of Apollo in the following section, in accordance with their character as providing testimony from the pagan gods, he always presents them as the words of Apollo himself:

\textit{Apollo...Colophone respondens...respondit...} (1.7.1).\textsuperscript{77} Unlike the Sibyls, who are cited in their own \textit{personae}, the oracles of Apollo have no individual personality; they are assumed to be simply the mouthpieces of Apollo, and therefore completely ignored as human beings. When a Sibylline text gives the words of God in the first person, by contrast, this is exceptional and pointed out specifically: \textit{item alia Sibylla quaecumque est cum perferre se ad homines vocem dei diceret, sic ait...} (\textit{DI} 1.6.16). Furthermore, as the monotheistic expression in the quotation that follows makes clear, the god whose "voice" she is conveying is not that of Apollo, but that of the supreme God. While Lactantius' wording does not unequivocally state that he is endorsing her claim to be

\textsuperscript{75} Fàbrega, p. 131, says the "context makes it clear" that he is including the Sibyl among the \textit{vates} here, and therefore calling her demonically inspired.

\textsuperscript{76} Heck, "Lactanz und die Klassiker," p. 166, wrongly takes this passage as implying the contrary: that the Sibyl (and Hermes Trismegistus) fall into the category of \textit{deorum suorum testimonia}.

\textsuperscript{77} Cf. \textit{De Ira} 23.12; \textit{DI} 4.13.11.
acting as spokesperson of God, with an authentic inspiration like that of the prophets—a minimalist interpretation could be that his introductory formula is simply signalling the transition from quotations talking about God in the third person to a quotation in the persona of God himself—he is certainly endorsing her statement as true. In a similar case, that of Hystaspes at DI 7.18.2, while the general formulation mentioned already (7.18.1) seems to introduce Hystaspes, Hermes and the Sibyls as all having sung ex instinctu daemonum, in fact this explanation is given primarily because Lactantius wishes to explain the appearance of the name "Jupiter" in his text of Hystaspes—it is first of all that name which he explains implicitly by the previous recourse to demons: the whole quotation is true, except that "Jove" appears instead of "God" (7.18.2). Then, still in connection with Hystaspes, Lactantius explains that it is the demons who are responsible for "removing" a reference to the Son of God (7.18.3). Thus, the demons certainly had a hand in Hystaspes' text—but Lactantius continues with an adversative to introduce Hermes: quod Hermes tamen non dissipulavit (7.18.3); and puts the Sibyls in parallel with that truthful testimony: Sibyllae quoque non aliter fore ostendunt quam ut dei filius a summo patre mittatur (7.18.5). Hermes and the Sibyl are specifically said to tell the truth on the matter which Hystaspes, influenced by demons, dissimulated. Another reason not to see the opening reference to demonic inspiration as controlling the entire section is that, in Lactantius' presentation, Hermes Trismegistus does not fully count as a divine witness. In DI 1.6.1, as already mentioned, his testimony is only simile divino, because he was an ancient man later considered to be a god; Lactantius continues: tametsi homo fuit, antiquissimus tamen et instructissimus omni genere doctrinae (1.6.3). The same intermediate position for Hermes appears in DI 7.13.4, where after citing
Hermes as a "credible" witness, he recognizes that one might simply classify him as a philosopher. Not being a "seer," therefore, Hermes breaks the continuity of section 7.18 and ensures that Lactantius' reference to demons can only be taken with confidence to refer to Hystaspes. Neither here, then, nor elsewhere in Lactantius' works is there any explicit suggestion that a traditional pagan god is responsible for the Sibyl's words.

As a further contrast with the Sibyl, the citations from Apolline oracles in *DI* 1.7 are surrounded with commentary that points out how the god undermines his own claim to be treated as a divinity: Apollo himself confesses that he is an ἄγγελος of the supreme God (1.7.1)—but even this is a lie (*ille mentitus est*, *DI* 1.7.9). Citing other oracles, Lactantius shows that Apollo elsewhere admits that his status is rather that of δαίμων (1.7.9)—which Lactantius takes, of course, in the Christian sense—and therefore he is subject to the "whips of the indefatigable God" (1.7.10)—which Lactantius interprets not as an expression of the necessity of obeying the will of a higher god, but as a confession of the eternal torment (*poena sempiterna*) that is the lot of the demons in Christian theology. Apollo's oracles undermine his own credibility and status even as they are cited as authoritative for the argument. The Sibyl's words, by contrast, are not called into question in the same way.

Far from participating in the demons' fraud in wishing to be worshipped as gods, the Sibyl is introduced later in Book 1 to castigate the Greeks for their divinization of originally human figures (*DI* 1.15.14-15):

[14] *Quod malum a Graecis ortum est, quorum levitas instructa dicendi facultate et copia incredibile est quantas mendaciorum nebulas excitaverit. Itaque*

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78 Cf. Lactantius' similar treatment of Apollo in *DI* 4.13.11-17. This treatment of Apolline oracles is of course in line with common Christian attitudes; and Lane Fox's characterization (p. 680) of Lactantius' method of dealing with oracles as quoting them "with Christian improvements" and making them "proofs of the Christian faith" is better suited to *OrSib*, not these oracles of Apollo.
admirati eos et susceperunt primi sacra illorum et universis gentibus tradiderunt.

[15] Ob hanc vanitatem Sibylla sic eos increpat:

Ἐλλὰς δὴ, τί πέποιθας ἐπ’ ἄνδρασιν ἤγεμόνεσιν;
Πρὸς τί τε δόρα μᾶταια καταφθιμένοις πορίζεις;
Θυεῖς εἰδώλοις; τίς σοι πλάνον ἐν φρεσὶ θήκεν
Ταῦτα τελεῖν προλιπόντα θεοῦ μεγάλου πρόσωπον;
[OrSib 3.545, 547-9]

The Sibyl is, if not explicitly the emissary of the μέγας θεός, at least his partisan, and she positions herself in direct opposition to pagan worship. With regard to the precise area of divination, moreover, Lactantius in the next book avails himself of the Sibyl's hostile words. Various methods of divination and magic, including "so-called oracles," were really invented by demons, he claims (DI 2.16.1-2):

[1] Eorum [sc. demons] inventa sunt astrologia et haruspicina et auguratio et ipsa quae dicuntur oracula et necromantia et ars magica et quidquid praeterea malorum exercent homines vel palam vel occulte: quae omnia per se falsa sunt, ut Sibylla Erythreaa testatur:

...ἐπεὶ πλάνα πάντα τάδ’ ἐστιν,79

ὁσσα περ ἀφρονες ἄνδρες ἐφευρνώσον κατὰ ἡμαρ. [OrSib 3.228-9]


Although the Sibylline passage he quotes does not include a list of practices, nor does it trace them back to demons, Lactantius is presenting the Erythraean Sibyl as denouncing oracles and other trappings of paganism, and thus speaking against the demons/gods that stimulated them—a presentation which further serves to separate her from the general class of vates. She does not simply admit the existence of a supreme or single God; she even attacks the pretensions of the demons who inspire and the humans who participate in polytheism.

79 [τὰ γὰρ πλάνα πάντα πέφυκεν / ὁσσα κεν... Geffcken]
Finally, although some of the descriptions of the Sibyl's activities seem to fit the context of pagan divination, in fact a subtle distinction can also be observed at the level of vocabulary. Oracles of Apollo are treated as the *verbatim* words of the god (i.e. demon). They are further described as *versus* (*DI* 1.7.1, 9)—like Sibylline texts—but more specifically, as *responsa* (*DI* 1.7.8, 9, 10; *De Ira* 23.12; cf. *respondere*, *DI* 4.13.11), with reference to the practice of consultation at pagan oracular sites. Lactantius' quotations from *OrSib*, on the other hand, are never described as *responsa*, but they are once identified as *vaticinia* (*DI* 4.6.3), just as the verb *vaticinari* is also predicated of the Sibyls, not only in the adaptation of Varro's treatment (*DI* 1.6.7-12), but also elsewhere (*DI* 7.24.2; *De Ira* 23.5). Although these terms are obviously connected etymologically with the noun *vates*, which Lactantius does not use for the Biblical prophets, Lactantius does not restrict them in the same way. In fact, he uses the verb *vaticinari* almost exclusively for the Sibyls, and *vaticinium* in his usage refers primarily to Biblical prophecy (*DI* 1.4.2; 2.10.6; 5.3.18), an exception being one reference to the *false* prophecy of (certain) heresiarchs (*DI* 4.30.8). In any case, even here *vaticinium* is used

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80 *DI* 1.6.15, 1.11.47; 4.15.15, 18; 4.18.20; *De Ira* 22.7; cf. references to the Sibylline oracles as *carmina* (*DI* 1.6.13-14; 2.8.48; 4.15.24, 28; *De Ira* 22.6) and the use of the verb *canere* of the Sibyl (*DI* 4.15.15, 18).
81 Cf. *De Ira* 23.12: *Apollo...de Iudaeorum religione consultus...*; similarly, *DI* 4.13.11.
82 Apart from *DI* 7.15.19, where the text of Hystaspes is described as *admirabile somnium sub interpretatione vaticinantis pueri*. It is not clear exactly what Lactantius is envisioning as the reference here; whether the boy (perhaps Zoroaster) is interpreting the dream (of Hystaspes), in such a way that he is "prophesying" but not in any kind of ecstatic state, rather illuminated by a divinity—this situation having a parallel in Daniel's interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream in *Dan*. 2 (Windisch, p. 46, although he ends up dispensing with any dependence on *Dan*. 2, p. 47.); or whether the boy is himself in a trance or otherwise enabled to prophesy (Windisch, pp. 48-49, citing parallels for youths endowed with prophecy, especially in Egyptian tradition; so Plutarch, *De Is. et Os*. 14: τὰ παιδάρια μαντικὴν δύναμιν ἔχειν οἴεσθαι τοὺς Ἀἰγύπτιους, καὶ μάλιστα ταῖς τούτων ἑπεμβαίναντας ἱερών ὡς καὶ φθεγμένοις ὃτι ἰδίᾳ τύχῃ; this at least seems to involve no trance). Cf. also J. Bidez and F. Cumont, *Les mages hellénisés: Zoroastre, Ostanès et Hystaspe d’après la tradition grecque* (Paris, 1938), 2: 367, pointing out the parallel with Daniel and Nebuchadnezzar, and suggesting that the child may have been Zoroaster; E. Benveniste, "Une apocalypse pehlevie: le *Zamasp Namak*," *RHR* 104 (1932), p. 378.
83 The reference may be to the Montanists, since the *Phryges* are the only obvious candidates for this category in the list of sects that follows in *DI* 4.30.10.
for a group originally within the Judaeo-Christian, not the Gentile pagan sphere. *De Opificio Dei* contains a further exception to these principles, but one that proves the rule, since in that work he is very careful to exclude specific references to Christianity; hence, he refers to *philosophi nostrae sectae* (1)...and to the *responsa vatum nostrorum* (18)—i.e., he uses the term *vates* to refer to Biblical prophets and *responsa* for their prophecies. At the end of the work he explains that he has spoken *obscurius fortasse quam decuit, pro rerum et temporis necessitate* (20)—a presumable reference to the Great Persecution. Thus, in Lactantius' usage, *vaticinium* does not normally, and *vaticinor* does not necessarily, indicate ties to demonic inspiration, but rather seems to connote true prophecy in the Biblical mold. The term *vates* he does normally restrict to pagans. All these terms, however, are used of the Sibyls, although even within the category of *vates* Lactantius distinguishes the Sibyls from others by his treatment.

The consideration of Lactantius' vocabulary has so far excluded an important side of the Sibylline tradition: the *Libri Sibyllini* preserved by the Roman state. These are the subject of a further—but easily explicable—exception in the matter of Lactantius' terminology: in *DMP* 44.8, Lactantius refers to an oracle from the *Libri* with the word *responsum*, and this is in line with his general presentation of them as texts which have nothing in common with Christian teaching. The *Divinae Institutiones* twice mention the Sibylline Books as they functioned traditionally in Roman religion. *DI* 2.4.29 refers to a consultation of the *Libri Sibyllini* during the Gracchan period; it was found that rites should be celebrated for Ceres: *...cum repertum esset in carminibus Sibyllinis*
In *DI* 2.7.12 there is a casual reference to the institution of the cult of the Magna Mater after consultation of the *Libri Sibyllini*: *cum ex libris Sibyllinis Idaea mater esset accita*...  

In these passages, pagan cults are endorsed by Sibylline texts. In an author who nearly everywhere else uses the Sibyl as a witness to Christian doctrine, the exclusion of the *Libri Sibyllini* from that witness demands further consideration.

For more clarity on this matter, it is necessary to return to the general description of the Sibyls in Book 1. There, Lactantius first shows his familiarity with the priesthood which had charge of the *Libri Sibyllini* (*M. Varro...cum de quindecimviris loqueretur*...[*DI* 1.6.7]) and indicates that the official texts could only be consulted by the *quindecimviris* (*DI* 1.6.13). This restriction appears in connection with the Cumaean Sibyl, about whom Lactantius also tells the story of Tarquinius' acquisition of her prophetic books (*DI* 1.6.10-11). Lactantius' statement that all "these" Sibyls proclaim a single god (*DI* 1.6.14: *omnes...hae Sibyllae unum deum praedicant*) is ambiguous, but most likely refers to all except the Cumaean, the inaccessibility of whose verses is mentioned immediately after the list of Sibyls, with some material on the Erythraean Sibyl intervening before 1.6.14. Thus, the Cumaean Sibyl is connected with the Sibylline texts consulted only by the official body of XVviri—and from Lactantius' own [Footnotes]

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84 For this consultation, see Parke, *Sibyls*, p. 205; Lactantius' information is derived from Cicero, *In Verrem* 2.4.49 (108): *...aditum est ad libros Sibyllinos; ex quibus inveniut est Cererem antiquissimam placari oportere.*  
85 For this, see Parke, *Sibyls*, pp. 201-2  
86 The cult of Asclepius was also brought to Rome on the advice of the Sibylline Books (Livy 10.5.47). Lactantius refers to this without mentioning the Sibylline connection, but says that the installation of the cult was due to demonic influence, made all the more obvious by the fact that the god arrived in the form of a serpent (*DI* 2.16.9-11)  
87 Correctly: see Parke, *Sibyls*, e.g. p. 130.  
88 This interpretation is probably confirmed by the unambiguous *Epit.* 5.3: *Hae omnes de quibus dixi Sibyllae praeter Cumaean, quam legi nisi a quindecimviris non licet, unum deum esse testantur.*
narration in *DI* 2, it is possible to know positively something about the content of the these texts despite their inaccessibility: they endorsed, even instituted, pagan cults, unlike the texts associated with other Sibyls.

The outline so far is lucid, but unfortunately the details begin to muddy the waters somewhat. Lactantius goes further into the history of the official collection, telling about their increase in number after the destruction of the original collection at the time of Sulla—the *Libri* were reconstituted by collecting Sibylline oracles from "all the Greek and Italian cities, especially Erythrae" (*DI* 1.6.11); further on, Lactantius quotes Fenestella's description of the mission to Erythrae, which collected "about 1000 verses," and notes Varro's substantial agreement with Fenestella: *idem dixisse Varronem supra ostendimus* (*DI* 1.6.14). Despite the reconstitution of the Capitoline collection, which resulted in a heterogeneous corpus, as Varro indicates (*DI* 1.6.11: *adlati sunt Romam cuiuscumque Sibyllae nomine fuerunt), Lactantius nevertheless treats the Sibylline Books consulted by the *quindecimviri* in his present as Cumaean (*DI* 1.6.13); according to Lactantius' own treatment, however, this would be valid for the examples he cites from Roman Republican history (*DI* 2.4.29, 2.7.12), but not for the later period. The traditional connection of the Cumaean Sibyl with the Roman *Libri Sibyllini* seems to have exerted a stronger force on Lactantius' pen than the logic required by the details he recounts.89

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89 This connection was supplied by Varro in the first instance. It is noteworthy that Lactantius' general treatment here seems to owe nothing to Virgil, but rather transcribes Varro quite faithfully—more faithfully, for example, than Servius (*ad Aen.* 6.36), who seems to have misunderstood Varro's description of the reconstitution of the *Libri Sibyllini* as an attempt to argue that the *Libri* belonged to the Erythraean Sibyl from the beginning, and that this was confirmed by the fact that Erythrae was an important source for the reconstituted collection. G. Radke ("Die Deutung der 4. Ecloge Vergils durch Kaiser Konstantin," in R. Chevallier [ed.], *Présence de Virgile* [Paris, 1978], pp. 147-59) took this notice as a faithful reflection of Varro's argument, which would vitiate Lactantius' presentation significantly; but Wlosok, "*Cumaeum carmen* (Verg., Ecl. 4, 4), Sibyllenorakel oder Hesiodgedicht?" in *Forma Futuri: Studi in onore del*
The importance of Varro's and Fenestella's descriptions of the reconstitution of
the Sibylline collection is evident from Lactantius' manner of proceeding afterwards.
Because Erythrae is the principal source, according to Varro, and the only source
mentioned in the fragment of Fenestella, the implication is that if Lactantius can identify
the Erythraean Sibyl's works, he has a source which is at least largely identifiable with
the new official Libri Sibyllini, and therefore possessed of an even higher authority for
his audience than it might otherwise have. In accordance with the reconstitution, then,
but also something of a strain on the reader's credulity, is the claim that the lines of the
Erythraean Sibyl he subsequently quotes were among those brought back from Erythrae
by the official mission and were therefore now in the official Sibylline collection. 90
Surely Lactantius did not have a source that placed these specific lines (OrSib fr. 1.7, fr.
3.3-5 and fr. 1.15-1691) in the corpus currently residing in Rome. One piece of evidence
may have been that the length of his text of "the Erythraean Sibyl" probably seemed to
agree with the amount of material brought to Rome. 92 Most likely, though, he simply
considered it as belonging to the Erythraean Sibyl because of the end of the book (OrSib

90 cardinale Michele Pellegrino (Turin, 1975), pp. 693-711, argues effectively against him that the Cumaean
Sibyl was commonly associated with the pre-83 collection, that Varro in particular made the association
(the independent agreement of Lactantius and Philargyrius on this is an important component of the
argument). Servius notably assumes the chronology of the Aeneid—and associating the Cumaean Sibyl
with Aeneas was an innovation of Virgil—when he judges (supposedly following Varro) that there is an
implausibly long time between then and the reign of Tarquinius; Lactantius associates the Erythraean Sibyl
with the time of the Trojan war, which would (if Varronian) fall prey to Servius' chronological argument
too.
91 DI 1.6.14: in his ergo versibus quos Romam legati adtulerunt de uno deo haec sunt testimonia...
92 After this string of quotations Lactantius adduces the testimony of a different Sibyl; so these two
quotations are included implicitly in what Lactantius says about fr. 1.7.
93 If, as seems likely, Lactantius' version of OrSib 3 included fragments 1 and 3, the total number of
lines is 913; with unknown other material lost at the beginning, the book could easily have contained about
1000; note that the mss. of Ψ give line-counts of 1034 for Book 3. The correspondence of size may have a
role in Lactantius' reasoning that his Erythraean Sibyl was that brought to Rome. Fenestella does not, of
course, say that the lines found at Erythrae were found together in a single book!
3.813-14) and therefore thought it must have been (among the) material collected by the mission.

In DMP 44.8, however, where Lactantius refers to a recent use of the official collection, there is no trace of the idea that the Erythraean Sibyl is the author of the "current" Libri. Before the battle of the Milvian Bridge, Maxentius orders that the Libri Sibyllini be consulted:

\[
vocatis quibusdam senatoribus libros Sibyllinos inspici iubet: in quibus repertum est illo die hostem Romanorum esse periturum. quo respondso in spem victoriae inductus procedit, in aciem venit. \textsuperscript{93}\]

Maxentius ordered the consultation in response to the people's unanimously voiced opinion that Constantine could not be defeated. The oracle does not, of course, resemble anything in the extant corpus of OrSib. Lactantius, however, treats the response as true—Maxentius the enemy of the Roman people was defeated by Constantine—but whether he considered it the product of truly divine revelation (as belonging to the Erythraean or some other Sibyl) or simply a purposely ambiguous oracle, in the manner of the Delphic oracle to Croesus, \textsuperscript{94} is difficult to tell. \textit{Illo die} refers to the imminent anniversary of Maxentius' accession (44.4), 28 October 312\textsuperscript{95}—a day he might naturally have taken to be propitious; Zosimus' account says that he also consulted the haruspices, but does not provide the results. Zosimus is no friendlier to Maxentius than Lactantius, and by not

\textsuperscript{93}Cf. Zosimus, 2.16: Μαξέντιος δὲ ἐναποκλείσας ἑαυτὸν τοῖς θεοῖς ἱερείᾳ προσήγαγεν καὶ τῶν ἱεροσκόπων περὶ τῆς τοῦ πολέμου τύχης άνεπιθύμητο καὶ τὰ Σιβύλλης διηρεύνατο. καὶ τι θέσφατον εὑρὼν σημαίνον ὡς ἄνάγχει τὸν έπι βλάβη τι πράσσοντα. Ἡρωμαιον οἱκτρῷ θανάτῳ περιπέσειν, πρὸς ἑαυτὸν τὸ λόγιον ἐλάμβανεν ὡς δὴ τους ἐπελθόντας τῇ Ἡρωμῇ καὶ ταύτῃ διανοομένους ἐλεῖν ἀμυνομένους. If we can assume that Zosimus' Greek more likely reflects the original text better than Lactantius' Latin, the oracle seems to be phrased in general terms, and Lactantius' \textit{illo die} is an improvement.

\textsuperscript{94}Creed, in his edition, pp. 119-20 n. 12, e.g., refers to oracles of that type. See also Cicero, \textit{De div.} 2.115-16 with the parallels Pease cites \textit{ad loc.} and \textit{ad} 1.52 (p. 187). (See also Weiland, pp. 26-34, esp. 31). Lact., \textit{DI} 2.14.6, on the demons: \textit{sciant illi quidem futura multa, sed non omnia, quippe quibus penitus consilium dei scire non liceat, et ideo solent responsa in ambiguos exitus temperare.}

\textsuperscript{95}See Barnes, \textit{Constantine and Eusebius}, p. 43. Lactantius puts the date one day early, the 27th; see Creed, p. 118 n. 7.
relating any omens he places the blame squarely on Maxentius for willfully interpreting an ambiguous oracle in his own favor. Maxentius is portrayed by Lactantius as excessively superstitious as well, such that earlier, he is said to have holed up in Rome on the basis of an oracle: *se Maxentius Romae contineret, quod responsum acceperat periturum esse, si extra portas urbis exisset* (44.1).6 As Portolano observes, Maxentius' unsuccessful consultation of oracles is intended by Lactantius to contrast with the divine help accorded to Constantine—on the battlefield, as he says, *manus dei supererat aciei* (DMP 44.9). The negative picture of Maxentius in DMP need not reflect negatively on the Sibylline oracles themselves, however, since, from Lactantius' perspective, the Sibylline response was indeed fulfilled—*inter alia* by the action of God himself. The emphasis on God's agency in Maxentius' fall makes this more than an ironic story of a superstitious man whose credence in oracles and omens failed to protect him. As in the case of Herodotus' account of Croesus, the narrative serves in fact to validate the source of the oracle: the Pythian Apollo in Croesus' case, and in the case of Maxentius, in a polemical history of persecutions of Christianity, who but the Christian God could be behind the oracle? Thus, Lactantius' sole mention of post-83 B.C. consultations of the Libri Sibyllini can be seen as compatible with his historical conjecture that the present books contained the words of the Erythraean Sibyl— that is, veridical Sibylline oracles, as opposed to those which instituted pagan cults. At the same time, it could be seen as problematic that he is presenting in a positive light a clearly ambiguous oracle, of the sort normally derided by Christian writers.

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6 Cf. *Pan. Lat.* 12(9).14.3; 4(10).27.5; Eus., *VC* 1.37.2; Zos., 2.16.1.; Creed, p. 118 n. 2 and Moreau in his edition of *DMP* (SC 39), 2: 428, on the possible strategic intention of his remaining inside the city. For the portrayal of Maxentius as given to superstition, see Moreau, 2: 428.

7 Portolano (in his edition of *DMP*), p. 98.
On balance, it seems likelier that in dealing with the official Roman collection of Sibylline oracles, even at a period after their reconstitution, Lactantius simply slips unwittingly into a position in line with traditional accounts of such oracles. Thus, he does not register any difficulty in his references to consultations of the *Libri Sibyllini* which fostered pagan cult, and treats Maxentius' oracle as ambiguous, in accordance with the stereotypical quality of oracles in both Christian and pagan literature. On the other hand, when he has the opportunity and an important point to prove, as in *DI* 1.6, he feels free to identify elements of the corpus available to him with the official collection; but he does not press this identification in other contexts, although it may perhaps be seen beneath the surface in his account of Maxentius.

One final reference to the Cumaean Sibyl shows the lines blurred again. In the final book of *DI*, Lactantius cites numerous lines from the 4th Eclogue to illustrate the "Golden Age" of the Millenium to come, then notes that Virgil composed the poem in dependence on the Cumaean Sibyl: *quae poeta secundum Cymaeae Sibyllae carmina prolocutus est* (*DI* 7.24.11-12). Here, of course, Lactantius had no choice in identifying Virgil's source, which is identified implicitly in the fourth line of the poem as a *Cumaeum carmen*. In fact, the citation of Virgil is problematic, because it does not really exemplify what he has just said about pagan misunderstandings of the prophesied Messianic age, that pagans—and specifically *poetae* (*DI* 7.24.9)—were misled by the fact that the prophets sometimes speak of future events *quasi iam peracta*, and thus concluded that there had been a Golden Age in the distant past.98 What Lactantius quotes from Virgil's text, however, is cast in the future tense and therefore reflects a truer understanding, from

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98 Lactantius here conveniently also omits to mention that he too concedes that there was a golden age in the past under the rule of Saturn (*DI* 1.13).
his perspective, than the general category of poets. In parallel to the Eclogue,

Lactantius cites not the Cumaean but the Erythraean Sibyl—without any reference to the relationship between the two Sibyls. It may be that in the absence of material he could attribute to the Cumaean Sibyl himself, he satisfies himself with citing something similar from the Erythraean. On the other hand, Virgil was writing his Eclogues after the old collection of Libri Sibyllini had been destroyed. How could his poem have been based on the oracles of the Cumaean Sibyl, in that case? Lactantius may then be implicitly correcting Virgil's reference to a Cumaeum carmen on the basis of his reading of Varro. Following Varro's presentation, Lactantius could reasonably class Virgil's reference to a Cumaeum carmen as an example of the popular (but misleading) way of referring to Sibylline Oracles in general, and conclude that the poet's true source (if he was referring to the official Libri) could have been the Erythraean Sibyl, in which case the parallels he finds serve to confirm the idea that the "present" official collection contained or consisted of OrSib 3. If the poet's source was simply Sibylline material in

99 Thus Fàbrega, p. 143, arguing that Lactantius is citing Virgil purely as a purveyor of Sibylline wisdom, thus as a positive source in his depiction of the eschaton, not as a poet subject to the misunderstanding he has described. Fàbrega, p. 144, prefers to connect this description to Ovid. Monat, Lactance, 1: 59, views the transition to quotation of Virgil here as disjunctive, although there is nothing to indicate it as such; he emphasizes that despite a tendency to see Virgil presented here as a prophet, all that can be gleaned from the quotations is that Virgil was "less wrong" than other poets, but that he is still presented as an indirect recipient of revelation.

100 This seems to be Fàbrega's view (p. 143), when he says that Virgil's poem was all the more valuable to Lactantius because the Cumaean Sibyl's books were not accessible to the general public.

101 Varro's treatment of the history of the Libri after the fire on the Capitol seems to have given rise a misunderstanding by Servius—that Varro denied altogether that the fata Romanorum were written by the Cumaean Sibyl, arguing rather that they belonged to the Erythraean (cf. supra, n. 89). Despite the misunderstanding, perhaps Varro's point can be discerned through it. Servius (ad Aen. 3.36) describes part of Varro's putative reasoning as follows: ducitur tamen Varro, ut Erythraeam credat scrisisse, quia post incensum Apollinis templum, in quo fuerant, apud Erythram insulam ipsa inventa sunt carmina. As Servius tells it, confirmation of the Erythraean origin came from the fact that ipsa carmina were found at Erythrae; conceivably this could simply reflect the argument that the present Libri should not be called Cumaean, since they had been reconstituted from sources among which Cumae is never mentioned. If that is the case, Varro was not simply relating a dry history but was attempting to correct a popular misconception by explaining the "true story" usually ignored in casual references to the "Cumaean Sibyl" as the originator of the official Libri Sibyllini.

102 Wlosok, pp. 710-11.
general, then it was equally appropriate for Lactantius to cite whatever parallel material he could find. Thus, Virgil's possession of a 'true' prophecy is comprehensible within Lactantius' framework, and the subsequent citation of the Erythraean Sibyl is a possible clue toward the sort of argument that would have justified this—and although the transition between his discussion of the poets' misunderstandings is plainly misleading, it is clear that Virgil in this passage cannot represent for Lactantius the misinformed opinions of poets in general, but an example of a Sibyl's well-founded prophecy being understood to some degree.\(^{103}\)

To return to more general consideration of the status of Sibyls in Lactantius' view: Lactantius classes the Sibyls as sources of divina testimonia, and as vates, but, at least with the exception of the Cumaean Sibyl, as palpably different from "normal" pagan oracles or poets. Also in certain more detailed descriptions of her inspirations Lactantius steers a middle course. On the issue of ecstasy, Lactantius' views are clear: the Biblical prophets were in their right minds, not in some sort of altered state. While defending the prophets' testimony against pagan resistance—in particular, against the charge that the prophets spoke simply as humans, and indeed as crazy or mendacious ones, since they declare the existence of a single god, Lactantius argues that both their mutual agreement and their coherence mean that they were in their right minds:\(^{104}\)

_impleta esse implerique cottidie illorum vaticinia videmus et in unam sententiam congruens divinatio docet non fuisse furiosos. Quis enim mentis emotae non modo futura praecinere, sed etiam cohaerentia loqui possit?_ (DI 1.4.3)

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\(^{103}\) Albeit not perfectly, if, as is likely, Lactantius understands Virgil to be referring to imminent events; elsewhere, Lactantius also cites Virgil for statements about the past Golden Age under Saturn (Di 1.13.12-13).

\(^{104}\) Cf. Cicero, _De Div._ 2.54 (111) on the evident rational composition behind Sibylline acrostics.
Rather, they were "sent by God as heralds of his majesty and 'correctors' of human wickedness" (DI 1.4.4) and spoke "filled with the spirit of the one God" (DI 1.4.1). The description of their assigned role fits admirably with what the Sibyl herself is subsequently cited for, namely, the doctrine of monotheism, and the denouncing of its opposite. This raises the question whether it could be that the Sibyl herself was also filled with the Spirit of God. The same allegations of insanity were made about the Sibyl, Lactantius says later: her prophecies were taken as deliramenta (DI 4.15.28); in fact, she foretold that she would be called insana et mendax, as he establishes by citing OrSib 3.815-18 (DI 4.15.29). The reason was that what she said was incomprehensible to her hearers before it achieved fulfilment: denuntiabant... monstruosa quaedam miracula, quorum nec ratio nec tempus nec auctor designabantur (4.15.28). The general point echoes the Sibyl's words: "When all these things happen, you will remember me and no one will say that I am raving" (OrSib 3.816-18); but it might be thought that Lactantius' description brands the Sibylline texts specifically as ambiguous and chaotic: no method, times, or agent were clearly marked out. Lactantius, however, immediately goes on to make a broader point, constructing a parallel with the Biblical prophets, which in the same way were not, and could not, be understood until the Incarnation (nec ullo modo poterant... intelligi, 4.15.31). These parallels therefore imply that in Lactantius' view, the well-known portrayal of the Sibyl as raving and ecstatically possessed by the inspiring god is false, that she was in fact lucid, and inspired in the same way as the Biblical prophets. Her self-description as "not raving" and θεοῦ μεγάλου προφήτης (OrSib 3.818) could be taken at face value.
A later off-hand description, however, as well as a subtle correction of the Sibyl, both in the treatment of eschatology in DI 7, place her once more in an ambiguous position. At DI 7.24.2, Lactantius introduces a quotation of OrSib fr. 4 with the words: *quod alia Sibylla vaticinans furensque proclamat*. The verb *vaticinor*, as has been shown, is used by Lactantius almost exclusively for the Sibyl, and sits balanced between *vates*, which refers to pagan seers, and *vaticinium*, which normally refers to Biblical prophecy. But the other term, *furens*, is a close cousin of words Lactantius has reported as pagan charges against both Biblical prophets (cf. *furiosus*) and Sibyl (cf. *insanus; deliramenta*) alike; in fact, it effectively translates *μαινομένη*, the description the Sibyl predicts will be given to her in OrSib 3.815-16, and also reflects precisely the description of the Sibyl in Aen. 6.100-102 (*furenti...furor*). Similarly, Servius ad Aen. 3.443. explaining the words *insanam vatem*, distinguishes the Sibyl's manner of inspiration as *per furorem*. Thus, one possibility for explaining DI 7.24.2 is that Lactantius slips into the traditional picture of the Sibyl and mantic inspiration unwittingly. A second is that he uses the term *furens* in its capacity of synonym for *vaticinans* (cf. Servius ad Aen. 2.345) without taking into account his considered opinion on ecstasy. A final possibility is that he is using the term in some way with some specific point. If so, the point is lost; there seems no rationale for describing her as *furens* on the basis of this quotation. She addresses humans, apparently in her own *persona*, and nothing about the quotation itself suggests mental disturbance:

κλύτε δὲ μου, μέροπες, βασιλεὺς αἰώνιος ἄρχει.

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105 And is so translated, it appears, back into Greek by the Theos. Tüb 3.2.7 (Beatrice), although the Theosophy sometimes gratuitously adds such participles describing the Sibyl's prophetic state (cf. 3.1.24; 3.1.32).
The context of fr. 4 is unknown, however, since Lactantius is the only writer to attest it, and it is possible that adjacent lines described her experience more explicitly, for example, in terms resembling those used at OrSib 3.4-6:

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ἀλλὰ τί μοι κραδίη πάλι πάλλεται ἤδε γε θυμός
τυπτόμενος μάστιγι βιάζεται ἐνδοθεν αὐδήν
ἂγγέλλειν πάσοιν;
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In fact, often in OrSib this sort of outburst is a transitional device that leads into a new section beginning with an address to "wretched mortals" or the like, and so the conjecture about the original context of fr. 4, which looks like such an address, has some plausibility. Conceivably, also, the fragment could have been originally a speech by God put in the Sibyl's lips, as is the case at OrSib 8.359-61, for example, which (as extant) juxtaposes a claim that God has revealed to her what she says (or rather, what is said "through her mouth") with the beginning of a long speech in which God speaks in the first person (OrSib 8.361ff.). In the absence of any further evidence about the context of fr. 4, however, it is impossible to be dogmatic about the likelihood of these suggestions; but whether or not there was warrant for the description furens in that context, the word as it appears, with no explanation, injects an element of doubt regarding the divine origin of the Sibyl's inspiration. One thing the single reference to "raving" here cannot show is that Lactantius conceives of the Sibyl's inspiration as momentary or temporary as opposed to constant or permanent—vaticinans furensque by itself might indicate such inspiration, but then the contrast with the otherwise non-ecstatic picture would be

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106 See, e.g., OrSib 3.4-7 leading into 3.8-9: ἀνρώπωσι...τίπτε μάτην πλάζεσθε; 3.297-99 describes the onset of inspiration, 3.300-302 the new subject, and then 3.303: αἰαί σοι, Βαβυλών ἡδ' Ἀσσυρίων γένες ἀνδρῶν...; 3.490-91 (identical to 297-8) lead into 3.492: αἰαί Φοινίκων γένει ἀνδρῶν ἢδ' γυναικῶν...; 3.162-5 and 3.698-701 do not lead into such cries of woe or reproach, but only to a change of subject.
puzzling: why should she be inspired in the same calm way as the Biblical prophets normally, but on certain occasions fall into ecstasy?

Not long before the anomalous description of the "raving" Sibyl, Lactantius again subtly calls into question the divine origin of her inspiration (DI 7.20.5). On the theme of the resurrection of the dead for judgment, he cites Sibylline evidence (DI 7.20.2-4), in the form of three quotations, including the following lines:

ἥξουσιν δὲ ἐπὶ βῆμα θεοῦ βασιλῆος ἀπαντεῖς. (OrSib 8.242)
...καὶ ὑστέρον εἰς χρίσιν ἄξων κρίνων εὐσεβέων καὶ δυσσεβέων βίων ἀνδρῶν. (OrSib 8.415-16)

After the third quotation, Lactantius proceeds implicitly to correct the Sibyl, arguing that, in contrast to her statement about judgment "of the pious and the impious" (OrSib 8.416), this resurrection and judgment will only involve those who worshipped God (DI 7.20.5ff.). To make his case, he appeals to the testimony of the sanctae litterae (Ps. 1.5). The contrast between Lactantius' own views and OrSib is indicated only by the word tamen in the sentence following the quotation, a word which nevertheless indicates that he is conscious of the contrast; still, he does not draw any further attention to the fact that he is disagreeing with the Sibyl here. By comparison with his treatment of the oracle of Apollo, to expose whose contradictions and untruths he spares no rhetorical effort, he appears to be treating the Sibyl quite gingerly. Later in Book 7, a similar reference to judgment of both pious and impious together (OrSib 4.43) does not evoke any clarification, since the overall point of that citation is to support the resurrection of the dead, with no specific connection to judgment, and he simply glosses over the minor

107 For his argument, cf. Monat, Lactance, 1: 260-63; other Christian texts make a similar distinction, such as Iren., Adv. Haer. 5.35-6; Tert., Adv. Marc. 3.24.
108 Fàbrega, pp. 134-5, is struck by the effort Lactantius makes to reconcile OrSib with the Biblical data here; thus, for him the correction is handled with a light touch—it is only "eine einschränkende Bemerkung."
discrepancy (*DI* 7.23.4). Despite the understatedness of the correction, however, *DI* 7.20.5 reveals that the Sibylline Oracles do not have unquestioned, absolute authority for Lactantius.

These last two indications of uncertainty in the portrayal of the Sibyl both appear in Book 7, which might suggest that by the time of completing *DI* he had reached a stage of disillusionment with the details of *OrSib*. The likelihood of this is small, since he continues to quote the Sibyl with great freedom. Yet perhaps by then he recognized that *OrSib* was not lucid and well-organized (or entirely in agreement with his views?) when it came to eschatology. 

The Sibyls' position can be instructively compared to that of Hermes Trismegistus, to whom Lactantius sometimes refers in glowing terms: *de deo patre omnia, de filio locutus est multa quae divinis continentur arcanis* (*DI* 4.27.20). Hermetic texts appear in important contexts as credible witnesses for pagans to believe, like the Sibyls, although Lactantius only classifies his testimony as *simile divino*, and quotes it with much lower frequency. Lactantius does, however, controvert Hermes' opinions on one occasion, however, and more vigorously than is the case with the Sibyl in *DI* 7.20.5.

While considering the question how the Son was born the first time (i.e., before the

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109 Note, however, one other passage where he adverts to the fact that the Sibyl's agreement with his other source (in this case, Ennius) is not perfect: *haec historia quam vera sit, docet Sibylla Erythraea eadem fere discens, nisi quod in paucis quae ad rem non attinent discrepat* (*DI* 1.15.8).

110 See infra, pp. 319-342, for more detailed discussion of *DI* 7.


112 *DI* 1.6.1 and 7.13.3-4. Where Lactantius specifies one manner in which Hermes may have acquired some of his learning, it does not place him in the category of *vates* either, although he is connected with divinatory methods: at 4.27.20, Lactantius suggests that Hermes "arrived at the truth by some such method" as he has outlined in the foregoing section—namely, necromancy (Lactantius suggests the experiment of attempting to call up the spirits of pagan gods, who will come, and Christ, who will not) or possibly, if the reference may extend further back, the observation of people possessed by demons and the exorcism of them. Surprising as such experiments may seem, they hark back to similar challenges: Tertullian, e.g., invites a test of Christians' ability to exorcise demons (*Apol. 23*). Theophilus alleges that demons who have been exorcised by Christians have confessed to having inspired famous Greek poets of antiquity (*Ad Autol. 2.8.8*). In any case, the point for Hermes is clear: he was not a *vates* himself.
incarnation, which Lactantius treats as his second birth), he rejects the idea that God needed some "female" with which to procreate, but also (on the basis of Scripture—the prophets) the idea that God is both male and female, which he ascribes to Orpheus and Hermes:

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\text{nisi forte existimabimus deum, sicut Orpheus putavit, et marem esse et feminam...sed et Hermes in eadem fuit opinione, cum dicit eum αὐτοπάτορα et αὐτομήτορα. quod si ita esset, ut a prophetis pater dicitur, sic etiam mater diceretur. (DI 4.8.4-5)}
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This argument is less hostile than the ridicule Lactantius elicits for the oracles of Apollo, but more so than his subtle modification of the Sibyl's testimony. It is striking that despite the light correction of the Sibyl, he evinces very little reluctance with respect to her statements, whereas in dealing with others such as Apolline oracles, and even Hermetic material, his criticisms are much clearer.

Lactantius' presentation of the Sibyls and their inspiration remains somewhat ambiguous to the end. He classes them among the purveyors of divina testimonia, but that classification does not mean that Lactantius himself considered their inspiration divine in a Christian sense. The primary value of Sibyline quotations for him is certainly as pagan authority figures who nevertheless offer opinions agreeing with Christian teaching (and therefore useful for apologetic). More detailed consideration of their specific position shows that while the Sibyls certainly fall under the category of vates, which ought to imply for a Christian that their inspiration is demonic, Lactantius' treatment of them differs significantly from his treatment of others, such as oracles of Apollo and Hystaspes, in contrast to whom, the Sibyls—apart from the Cumaean Sibyl responsible for the pre-83 B.C. Libri—oppose pagan religion, are not cited polemically, do not have their inspiration explicitly ascribed to pagan gods or demons, and seem to
occupy a middle ground between vates and prophetae in the field of vocabulary. Lactantius cites and seems to endorse the Sibyl's self-description as not "raving" (despite the portrayals that she predicts will be made of her prophetic frenzy) and thereby places her in strong parallel to the Biblical prophets. On the other hand, one passage in DI 7 shows the contrary, a traditional picture of a "raving" Sibyl, and another gently corrects her teaching about eschatology. For the most part, Lactantius is silent about the Sibyl's inspiration and status; he seems nearly as reluctant to class the Sibyls unambiguously with Biblical prophets as he does to rank her alongside other pagan oracular sources. This reluctance extends even to his treatment of the Libri Sibyllini—he neither condemns explicitly the Tarquinian collection, nor globally endorses the post-Sullan collection. It is as though he is unsure—unsure of the source of her information or, more likely, unsure of the degree to which he should insist on it before his audience. It is most likely part of his apologetic strategy not to go into too much detail about the Sibyl's inspiration: by a sort of calculated ambiguity it was possible to get as much mileage out of Sibylline texts as possible without being put in the potentially embarrassing position of having to explain and justify whatever Sibylline materials someone might have challenged him with. Thus, in contrast to the generally held opinion which assumes that Lactantius wishes to give equal or greater authority and status to the Sibyls than to the Biblical prophets, as well as in contrast to Monat's view, that three clearly delineated levels of inspiration appear in Lactantius' portrayal, in fact Biblical "divine testimonies" and pagan "divine testimonies" are clearly differentiated, while the Sibyl hovers uncertainly between the two, sometimes almost definitively joining the Biblical side, but sometimes fluttering back toward the pagan side. Her status is not a clear middle ground, but an ambiguous one: it is not clear
that there is a true middle ground for Lactantius in the matter of inspiration—and yet, he refuses to cut the Gordian knot.

**Sibylline Influence on DI 4 and 7**

One further gauge of the importance of the Sibyl in Lactantius' framework must be the effect that use of *OrSib* has substantively on his theology and presentation of the Christian message. Although Lactantius says that the Sibyl's (and Hystaspes') statements about the end of the world are clear and open, as opposed to the Biblical prophets' obscure utterances, Sibylline influence on his views has been overrated. A close examination does indeed show Lactantius following the testimony of the Sibyl beyond—perhaps even against?—his Biblical or traditional Christian sources, but the examples are rare and quite small-scale, for the most part. The two areas of consideration are *DI* Book 4, in which Lactantius presents the person and life of Christ, and Book 7, in which he outlines his eschatology. The contexts of passages or lines quoted by Lactantius will sometimes be significant in determining the importance of *OrSib* on his thinking; although it should not be assumed blithely that these texts were necessarily in their exact extant form for Lactantius, some unity exists in the extant forms of *OrSib* 3, 4, 5, and 6, which arguably reached something like their present form before Lactantius used them; *OrSib* 8 is less unified, but a great majority of Lactantius' quotations come from the second half of the book, which enjoys much longer sections of connected material than the first, so that some confidence in the extant form of the half-book is possible.

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113 *DI* 7.15.17-19: *et id futurum [sc. interitum] brevi contiones prophetarum denuntiant sub ambage aliorum nominum, ne facile quis intellegat. *Sibyllae tamen aperte interituram esse Romam locuntur...* [Hystaspes follows]
Nevertheless, McGuckin's warning is also salutary: he finds generally that Lactantius, when using sources, does not pay much attention to the original context of the material cited, but rather "regards them as mines from which he can quarry material" piece-meal. This description fits well Lactantius' use of OrSib in DI 4 and 7.

Through the middle of the fourth book of DI, in Lactantius' account of various details of the earthly life of Christ, quotations from OrSib frequently appear in parallel with quotations of Biblical prophecy. DI 4.16.17 cites OrSib 8.257 in parallel with Ps. 71.6-7 and Is. 53.1-6 (DI 4.16.14-16) on the obscurity and humility of Christ's first advent. In his treatment of the passion, Lactantius quotes OrSib 8.287-90 for the physical violence offered to Jesus (DI 4.18.15) to parallel details predicted by David and Isaiah (Ps. 34.15-16 and Is. 50.5-6); OrSib 8.292-4 on Jesus' silence (DI 4.18.17) in conjunction with Is. 53.7; OrSib 8.303-4 and 6.22-24 on the gall and vinegar (DI 4.18.19-20), together with Ps. 68.22-23. The general by-product, certainly amenable to

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114 "The Non-Cyprianic Scripture Texts," p. 149; Cicero is the one exception (p. 158 n. 34), with whose arguments and contexts Lactantius does assume familiarity.
115 Ibid., p. 156.
116 Cf. Epit. 40.3: (after list of Jesus' miraculous works) Quae omnia et in prophetarum libris et in carminibus Sibyllinis praedita invenimus.
117 The second half of the Sibylline verse turns to the positive aspect of Jesus' coming: ἵν οἰκτροῖς ἐλπίδα δώσει—which suggests the reason for the necessity of the Incarnation; similarly the quotations of David and Isaiah have positive aspects. Note also that Lactantius does not quote line 256, leaving the syntax of 257 incomplete.
118 The Sibyl adds the anti-Jewish motif that Jesus will "come into lawless hands, even (hands) of the disobedient": so one might translate Lactantius' text (εἰς ἀνόμους χεῖρας καὶ ἀπίστους; the editions of Augustine, De Civ. Dei 18.23, have been corrected from Lactantius' quotation: in manus < iniquas>), which differs from that of the Sibylline mss., εἰς ἄνόμους χεῖρας...
119 The Sibylline vss. specify (in part anti-Jewish) motive: so that they [the Jews] will not recognize his words or where he came from, so that he might speak to the dead; they also mention the crown of thorns.
120 This passage adds the characterization of this as a "table of inhospitality," τὴν ἀφιλοξενίης... ταύτην...τράπεζαν; another muted anti-Jewish attack.
121 This citation mentions the gall, but is in fact much more general castigation of Jews for not recognizing Jesus as God (τὸν οὸν θεὸν οὐκ ἐνόησας): Lactantius' introductory comments call it a reproach to the land of Judaea (Sibylla Iudaeam terram his increpat versibus...), which shows furthermore that he interpreted (correctly) the address of Σοδομίτη γατίθ at OrSib 6.21.
Lactantius' attitudes, of these Sibylline passion quotations is to intensify the anti-Jewish rhetoric. Furthermore, sometimes the Sibylline quotations "predict" more clearly than the Biblical prophecies he cites. At Jesus' death, Lactantius notes, the veil of the temple was torn, and there was darkness from the sixth to the ninth hour; for this, he quotes Amos 8.9-10 and Jer. 15.9, then OrSib 8.305-6 (DI 4.19.2-5). The Biblical prophets speak of darkness, but the Sibyl proves more helpful: only she mentions the length of time and the scission of the temple veil. Sometimes the Sibylline material probably guides (or at least facilitates) Lactantius' further discussions. At DI 4.19.10, Lactantius cites OrSib 8.312-14 for Jesus' resurrection, in parallel to Biblical quotations (Ps. 15.10, 3.6; Hos. 13.13-14, 6.2); however, the Sibylline passage speaks more generally of Christ's ending death in general and showing the way (to the elect) for resurrection. In fact, the last Biblical citation (Hos. 6.2: Vivificabit nos post biduum tertio die) provides the transition to this more general application of Jesus' resurrection, which Lactantius expands upon (DI 4.19.11) after quoting the Sibyl, in terms which do not seem to depend on the Sibyl's phraseology. The presence of the comments on the universal significance of the resurrection, though not surprising, may have been determined in this case by the Sibylline citation.

Once in Lactantius' explanation of the significance of Jesus' life, OrSib are a more important witness to the specific point he is making than are the parallel Biblical

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122 As the previous few footnotes indicate; Lactantius' Biblical references too may reflect use of a collection of testimonia for anti-Jewish polemic (McGuckin, "The Non-Cyprianic Scripture Texts," pp. 154-6), so the choice of Sibylline material facilitates the tendency he shows in non-Sibylline material as well.

123 And cf. the nearby digressions from a strict narration with prophetic parallels: DI 4.17.8-21, on the allegorical significance of the Mosaic Law; DI 4.18.10-12, a rhetorical deploration of the crime of the crucifixion; DI 4.20.2-13 on the meaning of testamentum and the Christians as heirs to the Jews' place. The comments in question, however, are much shorter, a momentary swerve before turning to the next historical detail (DI 4.20.1), thus more likely to be a passing comment more or less required by the content of a citation he was determined to include.
passages. At DI 4.17.4, Lactantius quotes the Sibyl (OrSib 8.299-300) among texts from the Old Testament which he interprets as predicting the dissolution of the Mosaic Law, 
Micah 4.2-3 (Lex de Sion proficiscetur…) and Deut. 5.2 (on the prophet like Moses):

Quam [sc. legem Mosaicam] Sibylla fore ut a filio Dei solveretur ostendit:

† ἂλλ᾽ ὅτε δὴ ταῦτα πάντα τελειωθῇ ἄπερ εἶπον,
Εἰς αὐτὸν τότε πᾶς λύεται νόμος.

In the extant OrSib, these lines appear immediately after a description of Christ's earthly career and in the midst of his passion. There is little doubt that Lactantius knew them in such a context (and is thus enabled to connect the lines with the action of the "Son of God"), since he quotes them in association with the passion, or rather in the discussion of the Jewish Law (4.17) which is appended to the section (4.16) explaining and justifying the passion before it is actually narrated (4.18). The part Lactantius quotes seems to speak more generically (πᾶς λύεται νόμος) than is appropriate for the point he is supporting, but in the Sibylline mss. it is clear that the Mosaic Law is in view: ἐδόθη διὰ λαὸν ἀπειθῆ (OrSib 8.301). The Sibylline quotation is especially important for Lactantius' argument, because it alone refers explicitly to dissolution, whereas the Biblical passages require deeper interpretation—for example, arguing that the reference

124 ἂλλ᾽ ὅτε ταῦτα γε πάντα Geffcken, following Φ. Brandt considers that Lactantius' text was already corrupt (as he indicates with the dagger)—but the corruption does not impair the sense; something more or less to this effect is indicated by the Latin translations in mss. SP, sed cum haec omnia fuerint perfecta; Brandt proposes, but rejects on the basis of the hiatus (not necessarily a cogent objection in OrSib), the correction (in app.) ἂλλ᾽ ὅτε ταῦτα ἄπαντα.

125 Cf. Matt. 19.7 (and other early Christian parallels), as well as the characterization of the Mosaic Law at OrSib 8.326-8: ἓνα τὸν ζύγον ἡμῶν ἄπελθαν δυσβάστακτον ἐπʼ αὐτῷ τὸν ἑαυτοῦ τουτεύτερον θεσμὸς ἀπόθου (this latter, however, could conceivably refer to people); on the other hand, ἅπερ ἁρχῆς (OrSib 8.300) appears to contradict this supposition.
to Zion in *Micah* shows that not the Mosaic Law but a different one is at issue—to make Lactantius' point. The Sibyl supports Lactantius more clearly than the Bible.¹²⁶

In some instances, specific details in the account of Christ's life or the manner of their presentation appear to depend on *OrSib* rather than on any Biblical material at all. Thus, at *DI* 4.15.3, Lactantius tells that at Jesus' baptism *spiritus Dei...in specie columbae candidae* descended. The color of the dove is not specified in the Gospel accounts, but its wings are white at *OrSib* 6.7, which is thus Lactantius' most likely source.¹²⁷ *DI* 4.15.9 has a quotation of *OrSib* 8.272, which specifies that Jesus did his works simply by the power of his words: Πάντα λόγῳ πράσσων πάσαν τε νόσον θεραπεύων. The preceding lines, *OrSib* 8.264-270, in fact portray the Father's plan enunciated to his "counsellor,"¹²⁸ which may have fostered Lactantius' comments after the quotation referring to the Son as the Word (*DI* 4.15.10): *Nec utique mirum quod verbo faceret mirabilia, cum ipse esset Dei verbum.*¹²⁹ The emphasis on Jesus' performing miracles verbally is a feature of this particular Sibylline account of Jesus, and thereby acquires prominence in this passage of Lactantius.

Lactantius' presentation of the miracles of Jesus uses Sibylline quotations to confirm the details. In *DI* 4.15.16-25, this involves citing the Sibyl in parallel to narrations based on Gospel accounts rather than to Old Testament prophecies. Thus, he quotes *OrSib* 8.275-8 at *DI* 4.15.18 for the story of the feeding of the 5000; then, after

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¹²⁶ Cf. *DI* 7.15.17-19, where Lactantius says that the Sibyl (and Hystaspes) prophesy more clearly (*aperte*) than the Biblical prophets, who made predictions *sub ambage aliorum nominum, ne facile quis intellegat*; the motive for the Sibylline quotation on the dissolution of the law is the same, even though there the subject is the end of the world.

¹²⁷ Gefcken *ad loc.* cites the Lactantian passage.

¹²⁸ Note especially νῦν μὲν ἐγὼ χερσί, σὺ δ' ἐπείτα λόγῳ θεραπεύσεις/μορφήν ἰμμετέρην (8.267-8).

¹²⁹ Cf. also, however, Tert., *Apol.* 21.17: *ostendens se esse verbum dei...eundem qui verbo omnia et faceret et fecisset.* Note *OrSib* 5.259, discussed earlier with *DI* 4.20.11.
telling the stories of Jesus' walking on water and his calming of the storm, he cites OrSib 8.273-4 and 6.13-15 (DI 4.15.24-25). The conjunction of the stories of the calming of the storm and the walking on water (DI 4.15.20-22) appears in the quotation of OrSib 8.273-4, whereas 6.13-15 includes the calming of the storm and the other miracles mentioned earlier—the healing of the sick, raising of the dead, and feeding of the multitude. Monat notes that apart from Origen, whom Lacantius is not following, none of Lactantius' known models mentions both the walking on water and the calming of the storm. Monat also isolates the detail that in the story of the feeding of the multitude, the disciples had the loaves and bread in a scrip (in pera, DI 4.15.16) as an addition to the Gospel accounts. OrSib 6.15 describes the episode with that very word: ἐκ δὲ μῆς πῆρης ἄρτου κόρος ἔσσεται ἀνδρῶν. In both these cases, the Sibylline accounts are likely to be the source of Lactantius' details and collocations; Monat's references to different conjectures are unnecessary.

In Lactantius' account of the Son, Sibylline influence seems to have introduced some anti-Jewish coloring, reinforcing the bias of his other sources; in a small number of cases Sibylline oracles appear to have guided the course of discussion or to have offered a clearer witness to the motifs Lactantius wishes to describe; finally, but very rarely, sometimes specific minor details of his versions of Gospel accounts have probably entered them because of Lactantius' reading of OrSib.

The Sibyl also appears prominently as a quoted source in DI 7, which is devoted to the final end of man—immortality—and thus includes a long section treating

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130 Lactance, 1: 194.
131 Lactance, 1: 194.
eschatology, as Lactantius attempts to show when and how the human race will achieve that goal. For the most part, Lactantius is content to present his picture of the end of the world as a synthetic, digested account, without reference to his sources for the details. He invites his readers to consult the Bible for the information he expounds, and afterwards has only very rare references to the Christian Scriptures. The direct citations he makes are rather from putatively non-Christian and non-Jewish sources, among which the Sibyl figures most frequently, others being Hystaspes, Hermes Trismegistus, and Virgil. It is quite possible that Sibylline influence goes beyond direct citations; at least, many details of Lactantius' account have parallels in OrSib. Kurfess, for example, sees Lactantius' use of OrSib as pervasive. Thompson says that "he adapted them [OrSib] into an exaggerated chiliasm." Lactantius certainly had extensive knowledge of Sibylline oracles, but for many of the eschatological details paralleled in OrSib there are parallels in other eschatological texts, Christian or otherwise. The questions are, then: granted that Lactantius quotes liberally from the Oracles, to what extent, and in what way, did Sibylline oracles demonstrably determine or influence Lactantius' eschatology; and how did he use them as a source?

First of all, the actual influence of Biblical material and other traditional Christian material cannot be discounted, despite the lack of specific quotations in Lactantius'...
account of the end of the world. As argued earlier, Lactantius' avoidance of Biblical
citation in general is to be explained by his apologetic purpose; in *DI* 7, the agreement of
non-Christian sources with the narrative presented as the synthesis of Biblical material is
meant to convince the pagan audience of the truth of that narrative, and should thus not
nullify its Biblical background. The other reason Lactantius gives is that his own work
would have to be extended to intolerable length if he were to quote all the Biblical
material. Furthermore, the citation of every Biblical source for it would render the
account much less comprehensible to a pagan, and would, moreover, expose the fact that
the picture is composite, including details taken from disparate sources. Thus, the fact
that Lactantius does not generally quote the Bible in this context is no reason to
underestimate its influence. He is certainly confident that his description agrees with
Biblical sources. The influence of the book of *Revelation* in particular seems to be
important, although it is difficult to find precise details which can be proved to be
taken directly from it.

Christian *Sibylline Oracles*, the Hermetic tract *Asclepius*, and the Hellenized Zoroastrian work known as
the *Oracles of Hystaspos*; he explains this character as due to "apologetic and popularizing intentions," but
such a concession does mitigate his negative evaluation of Lactantius' Biblical competence. Hill, p. 38,
calls book 7 "an expansive collection of traditional chiliastic teaching, paraded forth under the
indiscriminate sponsorship of prophet, poet and Sibyl"—the word "indiscriminate" reflecting again the
stereotyped view of Lactantius.

For the apologetic reason, and the intolerable bulk of material, as well as another invitation to consult
the Biblical material for oneself, note *DI* 7.25.1: *Haec sunt quae a prophetis futura dicuntur: quorum
testimonia et verba ponere opus esse non duxi, quoniam esset infinitum nec tantam rerum multitudinem
mensura libri caperet tam multis uno spiriuitu similium dicentibus simulque ne fastidium legentibus fieret, si ex
omnibus collecta et translata congererem, praeterea ut ea ipsa quae dicerem non nostris, sed alienis
potissimum litteris confirmarem doceremque non modo apat nos, verum etiam apat eos ipsos qui nos
insectantur, veritatem consignatam teneri, quam recusent adgnoscere. (2) si quis autem diligentius haec
voluerit scire, ex ipso fonte hauriat et plura quam nos in his libris complexi sumus admirabilia reperiet.

So Perrin, "Quelques observations," p. 18, in agreement with Fàbrega, "Die chiliastische Lehre des
morte et l'eschatologie."

Fàbrega, p. 136, admits that Lactantius' dependence on *Revelation* is partially concealed by the intervening
Christian tradition and by Lactantius' technique of citing pagan sources.
Lactantius' eschatological schema is a materialistically oriented chiliasm in the tradition of "Asiatic" Judaeo-Christianity. Many of the elements of his picture thus have parallels in other treatments of eschatology, and the constant appearance of certain stock elements in many different apocalyptic texts makes it difficult to know exactly where Lactantius derived any particular detail. Charles Hill in fact characterizes Lactantius' eschatology as "utterly traditional" and its elements as reproducible from the works of such writers as Irenaeus, Tertullian, Commodian and Victorinus. All this simply means that specifically Sibylline influence is very difficult to prove.

One further major complicating factor in scholarship treating the eschatology of Lactantius is the question of his use of "Hystaspes," a lost apocalyptic work for which Lactantius in fact is the main evidence. The name Hystaspes indicates a Persian/Zoroastrian setting, although many have conjectured that the work known to

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143 V. Loi, Lattanzio nella storia del linguaggio e del pensiero teologico pre-niceno [Zurich, 1970], pp. 251-61; cf. (on that tradition) Daniéléou, Theology of Jewish Christianity, pp. 380-403 passim; K.-H. Schwarte, De Vorgeschichte der Augustinischen Weltalterlehre (Bonn, 1966), pp. 163-8. Loi, p. 250 n. 67, notes that Victorinus of Pettau propounds a realistic/hedonistic millenarianism (which Schwarte, pp. 220-26, sees as in the tradition of Papias and Irenaeus) roughly contemporary with Lactantius. Loi further emphasizes that Lactantius lived in Asia Minor at the beginning of the Great Persecution—a time which must have fostered millenarian hopes. See also Daniéléou, "La typologie millénariste de la semaine," VChr 2 (1948), pp. 1-16. Daniéléou (p. 15) lists the sources for Lactantius' chiliasm as Irenaeus, Judaeo-Christian apocalyptic, and Pseudo-Hystaspes. It should be noted in passing that Lactantius, though a chiliast, was by no means expecting the end soon—contra Lane Fox, p. 605, who says that in Lactantius' view "the time seemed ripe for the promised end of the world." Lactantius considered the world in decline, but he thought there were "no more than 200 years left" (DI 7.25.5)—scarcely the position of a rabid apocalyptic.

144 The suggestion that some of Lactantius' eschatological details reflect the Tetrarchy (Diocletian and Galerius as anti-Christ figures)—for which see Digeser (pp. 149-50); cf. Stevenson, "Aspects of the Relations," p. 503—is attractive, but the features possibly pointing in that direction can be paralleled from other eschatological texts.

145 Hill, p. 38.

early Christian writers under that name was actually a pseudepigraphon of Jewish origin. One difficulty in considering Hystaspes is that whereas Clement of Alexandria (citing "Paul") says that it contained clear reference to the Son of God and his παρουσία (Strom. 6.43.1), Lactantius says that God's action was attributed to Jupiter, and that there was no reference to the sending of the Son of God (DI 7.18.2-3). The likelihood is that there were multiple versions in circulation. Although Lactantius only cites Hystaspes twice (DI 7.15.19; 7.18.2), it is often thought that the influence of the lost work was more extensive. Flusser argues on often shaky grounds that nearly the whole of DI 7.15.19-7.19.8 comes from Hystaspes. Other scholars have combed extant Zoroastrian texts for parallels to Lactantius in hopes of better guesses about the content of Hystaspes' "oracle" and about Lactantius' use of it. Firm conclusions are difficult to arrive at, however, given the similarity of motifs in Jewish, Christian and Zoroastrian eschatology, the disagreements between ancient writers in their characterization of the "oracle" of Hystaspes, and the fact that Hystaspes has been seen as a source, e.g., for the book of Revelation, not to mention OrSib 8 and Commodian.

There are no certain instances in which Sibylline influence has clearly changed the eschatological picture Lactantius would otherwise have presented, but there are some few examples in which such influence is quite likely. At DI 7.15.10, Lactantius brands...
Egypt as the first to suffer punishment in the last days: *et prima omnium Aegyptus stultarum superstitionum luet poenas et sanguine velut flumine operietur*. It should first be noted that Lactantius mentions Egypt much earlier, in his review of human religious history, as the first nation to worship the celestial bodies,\(^{152}\) and this would already make Egypt a logical choice for the first to be punished. Brandt cites some Sibylline passages from book 5 as possible sources of this idea, such as *OrSib* 5.54ff., in which the Sibyl mourns for Isis: \(\pi \omega \tau o\nu\) μεν περὶ σεῖο βάσιν ναοῦ πολυκλαύστου/μαινάδες ἀιξοῦσι. Certainly, Egypt is the first nation to be singled out for judgment in the extant version of *OrSib* 5, after the review of the στονόεντα χρόνον...Λατινιδάων (5.1); similarly, line 180, part of a section renewing the expression of mourning for Egypt, addresses Memphis as leader (i.e. first?) to suffer the toils (of punishment): πόνων ἀρχηγὸς ἐσῃ. The words "first" and "leader" need not necessarily be interpreted in the same way as Lactantius would to arrive at his opinion, but they may have helped his opinion along.\(^{153}\) Lines 77-85 identify the cause of God's wrath as the worship of idols, which agrees with Lactantius' reference to *stultae superstitiones*,\(^{154}\) although lines 68-70 make the cause out to be the treatment of the chosen people:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{ἀνθʾ ὧν } \varepsilon \xi \varepsilon \mbox{μάνης } \varepsilon ζ } \varepsilon \mu ους } \pi \alpha \iota δας } \theta εοχρίστους \\
\text{και } \tau ε } \kappa \mbox{αθην } \varepsilon η } \varepsilon \mbox{δοτας } \varepsilon η } \varepsilon \alpha \mbox{θαιοιν,} \\
\text{ζεις } \alpha π ι τόσων } \tau ι δας } \tau ροφόν } \epsilon ιν εκα } \pi οινης.
\end{align*}
\]

Although this aspect of Egypt's guilt is not mentioned by Lactantius here, it may be relevant that he has just dealt with the Exodus story as a type of the *eschaton* (*DI* 7.15.1-213.10: *sed omnium primi qui Aegyptum occupaverant caelestia suspicere atque adorare coeperunt*. The descendents of Ham in general have just been mentioned as the first to lose the knowledge of God after the flood (2.13.7).

\(^{152}\) "First" in reference to Isis may be describing the first *stage* of Isis' troubles; Memphis as "leader" of troubles may refer to Memphis as the place in Egypt affected first or most severely—Memphis is first mentioned immediately after Isis, in line 60.

\(^{154}\) Van Rooijen-Dijkman, pp. 105-7 and 161, also cites Min. Fel. 28.7 [28.7-9]; Tert., *Apol.* 24.7—but these are simply about Egyptian cults, with no reference to future judgment.
6). *OrSib* 5.56-58, on the other hand, describing part of the punishment, refer to excessive flooding of the Nile—a literal *flumen*, that is, rather than Lactantius' simile *sanguine velut flumine*. Van Rooijen-Dijkman also refers to the passage in which the Sibyl warns that a sword will pass through the middle of Egypt (ὁμφαῖα γὰρ ἥδελεψεται διὰ μέσον σεῖο—*OrSib* 3.316),¹⁵⁵ which certainly speaks of military struggle in Egypt, but implies nothing about Egypt being the first to suffer.¹⁵⁶ Since it originated in Egypt, *OrSib* 3 naturally focuses on it, *inter alia* in eschatological sections; at line 614, when the "seventh king of Egypt" rules, a great king will come from Asia and ῥίψει...Αἰγύπτου βασιλείον—i.e., an eschatological figure will destroy Egypt, which is the only country mentioned by name; however, the context is problematic, since the "seventh" king is counted from the "rule of the Greeks" in Egypt (3.609-10) and the passage is followed immediately by people turning to God and burning their idols—but these details would work against Lactantius here.

The Sibylline material, therefore, interpreted in a certain way, might well have contributed to Lactantius' identification of Egypt, although it does not explicitly say what Lactantius does. Other texts of Egyptian provenance are also relevant, however:

*Asclepius* 24 predicts that the Nile will run full of blood and overflow:

> te vero appello, sanctissimum flumen, tibique futura praedico: torrenti sanguine plenus adusque ripas erumpes undaque divinae non solum pollutur sanguine, sed totae rumpentur et vivis multo maior numerus erit sepulcrorum.¹⁵⁷

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¹⁵⁵ Various conjectures preserve the general sense while attempting to restore the meter.

¹⁵⁶ *OrSib* 3.314-18 in general announce the destruction of Egypt as a πληγὴ μεγάλη...δεινή [314-15] which will come upon her. Cf., however, Lactantius' following sentence, which refers to the whole world, not just Egypt, but with strikingly similar phraseology: *tum peragrabit gladius orbem metens omnia* (*DI* 7.15.11); could Lactantius have interpreted the Sibyl's Egypt (3.314) as referring to the whole (evil) world here as before when treating the Exodus story? If so, perhaps the reference to the "seventh generation" (3.318, as elsewhere in *OrSib* 3) can be connected (or reconciled) with Lactantius' seven millenia.

The *Asclepius* too focuses on the future misfortunes of Egypt; it also laments the abandonment of piety (i.e. traditional/pagan religion)—and so it may be that Lactantius is also aware of this reference to religion, and turns it into the *reason* for the judgment of God, although he elsewhere takes the work's references to the prevalence of evil at face value.\(^{158}\) The *Apocalypse of Elijah*, in which Egypt is prominent, probably because of its Egyptian provenance, also includes the motif of the Nile turning to blood, although it does not present the misfortune as the result of Egypt's idolatry in general, and Lactantius does not cite it by name.\(^{159}\)

Finally, a Biblical source is just possible, although less likely here. *Daniel* 11.42-43 describes the subjugation of Egypt (along with Ethiopia and Libya) by the "King of the North"; the combination with *Dan.* 7.8, describing the uprooting of three horns by the "little horn," results in a picture of an Antichrist who will first subjugate those three areas.\(^{160}\) This idea appears as early as Irenaeus (*Adv. Haer.* 5.26.1) and Hippolytus (*De Chr. et Ant.* 51), so it is quite possible that Lactantius knew the tradition. Unfortunately, the evidence shows that he has has a different interpretation. The first Antichrist figure\(^{161}\) in Lactantius' account does indeed come from the North (*ab extremis finibus plagae septentrionalis*, *DI* 7.16.3), and does destroy three of the ten kings then reigning—but the three kings are rulers over Asia, not Egypt: *tribus ex eo numero deletis qui tunc Asiam obtinebunt* (7.16.3). It would be attractive to think that Lactantius' recognition of the

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\(^{158}\) Lactantius elsewhere cites the *Asclepius* (or λόγος τέλειος) in particular, as well as Hermetic texts in general—including in the eschatological section (*DI* 7.18.3-4).

\(^{159}\) *Apoc. Elij.*, based on Jewish original, came to final form showing Christian influence by the early 4th cen.; see Wintermute in *OTP* 1: 729-30. Wintermute, p. 730, judges that the prominence of Egypt indicates Egyptian provenance.


\(^{161}\) Not called Antichrist explicitly, as is the second (*DI* 7.19)—see Van Rooijen-Dijkman, pp. 113-15 and 163.
future resurgence of Asia, whence the second Antichrist figure arises, might be skewing an account drawn from *Daniel*—yet he cannot be indebted to *Daniel* (or interpretations thereof) for Egypt's primacy in punishment and at the same time be interpreting the same evidence as "really" referring to Asia. The prominence of Egypt in both Sibylline and Hermetic texts, then, seems to be the most important factor in this connection.

*OrSib* are a fecund source of anti-Roman sentiment, and of predictions of Rome's collapse, benefitting the hitherto oppressed Asia. Thus, when Lactantius goes on to describe exactly such events, it is quite imaginable that *OrSib* have provoked it:

*Romanum nomen...tolletur e terra et inperium in Asiam revertetur ac rursus oriens dominabitur atque occidens serviet* (*DI* 7.15.11). In justifying this statement, he reviews the dominions of various empires in the history of the world, appeals to Seneca on the concept of Rome's "old age," and, turning to specific prophecies, mentions the Bible as containing the idea *sub ambage aliorum nominum* and thus difficult to understand (*DI* 7.15.17), and quotes both the Sibyl (in Latin paraphrase) and Hystaspes for the destruction of Rome (7.15.18-19). Lactantius' earlier reference to *Romanum nomen* finds a close parallel in his paraphrase of Hystaspes (*sublatui ex orbe imperium nomenque Romanum*), and is likely to derive primarily from that source. The reason for Rome's destruction appears in the Sibylline paraphrase: *quod nomen eius [sc. dei] habuerit*

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162 Cf. Fuchs, pp. 31-36 nn. 19-20. See, for example, *OrSib* 3.350-55; 5.162-78; 342-3; 8.9-159, 165 (= 3.364), 171-3.

163 For these (*DI* 7.15.13), Brandt cites *OrSib* 3.159-61 and 8.6-9, which give lists that do not correspond exactly with Lactantius' list; the appearance of the Assyrians at the end of his list implies that he is neither striving for chronological precision nor transcribing a specific list, but simply mentioning some former world powers. *OrSib* are a possible, but not a necessary, inspiration for his list.

164 The interpretation of the legs of the statue in Nebuchadnezzar's dream (*Dan*. 2.31-35), and the fourth beast (*Dan*. 7.7, 23), as references to the Roman Empire are well-attested in Christian circles (see, e.g., Iren., *Adv. Haer*. 5.26.1, not naming the Roman Empire, but "the empire which now rules"; Hippolytus, *De Chr. et Ant*. 25, 28 is explicit). The fact that Lactantius says the Biblical prophecies are more difficult to understand does not mean that he has thrown his hands up in despair about them, simply that it would be counter-productive in an apologetic context to cite and interpret them. Perhaps Lactantius' reference to "other names," however, fits best if the "Babylon" of *Rev*. 17-18 is the primary reference.
The reversion of power to Asia, however, does not appear in either citation, yet Asia has some importance in the following narration: the three kings overthrown by the first Antichrist will be rulers of Asia (7.16.3); the king from the north will "change the seat of empire" (7.16.4)—perhaps to Jerusalem, although Lactantius does not say so; and the second Antichrist will appear from Syria (7.17.2). In contrast to the usual Sibylline view—revenge against Rome—in Lactantius' view the ascendancy of Asia is simply a stage on the way to the millenial kingdom of Christ.

The appearance of two "Antichrist figures" in Lactantius' treatment (although he only gives one the designation "Antichrist") is striking, and shared with only a few other sources. Commodian also has a second Antichrist who kills the first, along with his two Caesars (Carm. Apol. 911). Another possible parallel appears in OrSib 8. This book has multiple references to Antichrist/Nero redivivus. The first occurs in connection with the review of Roman rulers, as the one for whom wealth is being built up—and comes "from the ends of the earth": ἵν', ὅταν γ' ἐπανέλθῃ ἐκ περάτων γαίης ὁ φυγὰς μητροκτόνος αἰθῶν, ταῦτα ἅπασι διδοὺς πλοῦτον μέγαν ἀσίδι θήσει (8.70-72). There follows a description of Rome's expected fall, the confusion and chaos of the end, "when the Ruler

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165 Cf. OrSib 5.158-61, relating the cosmic punishment of "Babylon" (i.e., Rome) and Italy; note especially 160-61: Ἰταλίης γαίαν θ', ἥς εἶνεν θαλάσση πολλοὶ ὀλόντοι ἀρχοντοί τῆς ἔρευνος ἄγριοι πιστοὶ καὶ λαὸς ἀληθῆς. Geffcken cites the present passage of Lact. ad OrSib 5.159-61; Van Rooijen-Dijkman, p. 111, also points out the similarity between λαὸς ἀληθῆς and alumnum veritatis populum.

166 Cf. Irenaeus, Adv. Haer. 5.25.4 for this idea—the Antichrist shows himself as God in the temple after moving his kingly seat to Jerusalem; and other passages cited by Bousset, Antichrist, pp. 160-61. Lactantius diverges from tradition (whereby the Antichrist rebuilds the temple—Bousset, Antichrist, pp. 162-3) with his mention of the temple: he says that the second Antichrist figure will attempt to destroy (ερυεῖ) the temple (DI 7.17.6); cf. Van Rooijen-Dijkman, p. 122.

167 Cf. Hippolytus, De Chr. et Ant. 57, who interprets references to the "king of Assyria" (Is. 8.6-7) and "the Assyrian" (Mic. 5.5) as symbols of the Antichrist.
of all comes to judge the world" (81-3), ending with Rome left in the darkness of the underworld (95-121). The lines following are probably lacunose (so Geffcken), and it is not clear whether they are continuing the description of Rome in Hell, or simply renewing the reproaches. At line 131, a new section seems to begin, placing the events of the end in relation to the chronology of "Latin kings" (131), rulers of Egypt (138) and the Phoenix (139)—again, Rome's destruction is anticipated, this time in connection with the arrival of a ruler "from Asia": ὁππόταν ἐξ Ἀσίης κρατέων ἔλθῃ σὺν Ἄρη (146-7). Another chronological indication appears, to the effect that Rome will have "fulfilled" (the numerical value of) its name, having existed for 948 years (148-50). After a few lines of predictions of destruction for various places including Rome and Egypt, a "holy king" (ἁγνὸς ἄναξ, line 169) will rule, raise the dead, "but they will not obey" (173), and then "the wretch" will convene the council and make plans "to destroy..." (174-7)—and the text breaks off. Geffcken interprets this "holy king" as Elijah; that is, as the equivalent of Lactantius' "great prophet" and Rev.'s witnesses; then "the wretch" (the Antichrist) will destroy him. The state of the text is not such as to warrant much positive assertion; besides the frequent lacunae, there is no guarantee that these sections were composed in conjunction with each other. Nevertheless, if Lactantius' text was anything like the extant first half of OrSib 8, it is possible that he may have seen references to two eschatological kings, one comparable to Nero and coming, as, Lactantius says, ab extremis finibus (OrSib does not specify plagae septentrionalis, as Lactantius does); the other, arising from Asia, will attack and kill the prophet, as Lactantius also says. Especially the reference to Elijah is quite garbled or allusive in the

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168 Lactantius, DI 7.24.1, uses this passage for his description of the judgment.
169 Cf. the closely following τὸν... Ἀσίδος ἐκ γαίης ἐπὶ Τρῳκὸν ἄρη ἐπιβάντα, θυμὸν ἔχοντ' αἰθωνος (153-5).
present state of *OrSib*, however, and it is difficult to see how Lactantius could have interpreted it (even as a reference to a "prophet") without having a prior schema to fit it into. That schema may well have been contained in Hystaspes, as some argue.

In *DI* 7.18, Lactantius shifts from the normal manner of his eschatological sketch, whereby he presents a picture without much discussion of sources, to a focus on those sources in connection with a central point of his account: the return of Christ and his defeat of the Antichrist. He mentions the prophets in general as presenting this scenario, then quotes Hystaspes (and corrects him), Hermes Trismegistus, and finally a series of Sibylline passages: *OrSib* 5.107-10, 3.652-3, and 8.326-8. Lactantius' introductory comments at *DI* 7.18.5 set the Sibylline quotations into his context, but in fact the precise wording of these comments has little in common with the quotations themselves, apart from the following sentence: *Sibyllae quoque non aliter fore ostendunt quam ut dei filius a summo patre mittatur*, qui et iustos liberet de manibus inpiorum et iniustos cum tyrannis saevientibus deleat. The passage cited first (*OrSib* 5.107-10) comes, in the extant form of *OrSib* 5, at the end of a version of the actions of *Nero redivivus*. The imagined context of the second (*OrSib* 3.652-3) is difficult to determine—*OrSib* 3.645-48 tell of an earth deserted and unploughed; lines 649-51 appear to relate the destruction of implements of war; these belong logically after 652-3, which describe the coming of a king who stops war on earth. The foregoing lines in the extant book (624-45) are an admonition to practice piety and a warning of eschatological warfare and slaughter, and

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170 Flusser, p. 38, says that it is "unthinkable" that Lactantius is paraphrasing the Sibyl, because his description here is "fuller, more lucid and more consistent."

171 See especially Flusser, pp. 36-8.

172 Cf. *OrSib* 5.108: τις θεόθεν...πεμφθεὶς; 3.652: θεὸς πέμψει...

173 Cf. *OrSib* 5.109: πάντας ὁλοὶ βασιλεῖς μεγάλους καὶ φῶτας ἄριστους. This, however, does not have the negative epithets Lactantius includes.
so might have suggested a suitable general context for the lines Lactantius quotes. Either the reference to a king sent by God commended itself per se (possibly with the help of 624-45), or the order and content of the immediately preceding lines was different in Lactantius' version.174

These first two passages have in common the reference to a βασιλεύς sent by God (θεόθεν, OrSib 5.108; ἄπι ἡελίοιο θεός πέμψει β., OrSib 3.652), which recalls Lactantius' prior narration (DI 7.17.11): deus...mittet regem magnum de caelo. Hystaspes apparently did not supply him with this detail; the discussion at DI 7.18.3 alleges that the fact that the Son of God would be sent by the Father was taken out (subtractum) by the agency of demons.175 Lactantius' quotation of Hermes Trismegistus (DI 7.18.4) also lacks any reference to a "king." It is quite likely, therefore, since the phraseology does not seem to reflect any biblical source either,176 that the cited narration referring to a "king from heaven" (7.17.11) was inspired by the Sibyl. Of course, the general idea of Christ's return comes from Christian tradition in general; it is only the specific characterization of that return here that is indebted to OrSib.

The third Sibylline quotation (OrSib 8.326-8) is from a Christian composition, from a section partly based on Zech. 9.9:177

ος ρά κε πρωτς ιδου ήξει, ινα το ζυγον ήμον178

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174Geffcken notes lacunae after lines 648 and 656, so some shuffling of contents seems to have occurred, although 545-656 forms a somewhat unified oracle (see Collins in OTP 1: 354).
175See Van Rooijen-Dijkman, p. 123, and Beatrice, "Le livre d'Hystaspe," pp. 370-71, 381; Cumont, pp. 84-6, argues that Mithras/Apollo appeared as Savior, but that Lactantius did not want to mention him. Clement of Alexandria's version of Hystaspes' contents (Strom. 6.43.1), however, attests the appearance of a Savior figure identifiable with Christ.
176Despite such passages as Dan. 7.13-14; Rev. 19.16. Zech. 9.9 is the inspiration of the context (OrSib 8.324-6) of the following quotation, and refers to a "king," but is normally associated by Christians with the First Coming (Matt. 21.5; Joh. 12.15).
177Cf. OrSib 8.324-6 for the connection with Zech.
178The text of the first line quoted by Lactantius (OrSib 8.326) is corrupt, especially the first half; neither the original nor the exact version quoted here can be reconstructed with confidence. I have printed the line as Brandt reconstructs it. For further suggestions, see the apparatus of Brandt and Geffcken ad loc.
Lactantius would easily have identified the figure as Christ, especially if, as seems likely from the continuity of tone and subject, this short appeal to "the daughter of Zion" was preceded in Lactantius' text, as in the extant OrSib 8, by the account of Jesus' earthly career cited often in DI 4. He is called βασιλεὺς in line 325; this may have influenced the association with the two previously cited passages—but Lactantius surprisingly applies this description of Christ's life on earth (i.e., the "Triumphant Entry" seen as the fulfillment of Zechariah 9.9 by the Gospels) to his eschatological appearance. The references to Christ's removal of the "hard-to-bear yoke," "godless laws," and "forceful bonds"—in the Sibylline context strongly anti-Jewish characterizations of the Mosaic Law—become, for Lactantius, predictions of Christ's destruction of the régime of the Antichrist. The intensely negative depiction goes beyond Lactantius' conception of the Mosaic Law. Perhaps Lactantius' interpretation was suggested by that intense negative picture, or perhaps by the position of the passage in OrSib 8, after the completion of the account of Jesus' earthly career, death, and resurrection, or perhaps—a more specific connection—by the similarity of OrSib 8.324ff. to OrSib 3.785ff. (based on Isaiah 11.6-9), which is in an eschatological context regarding the beginning of a Messianic Era. One

The word πραῢς, or something like it, at least, seems assured by the correspondence with Zechariah 9.9 (and Matthew 21.5).

179 See Matthew 21.1-9; John 12.12-16; similarly, e.g., Justin, 1 Apol. 35; Iren. Haer. 4.33.1, 12; Hilary, Tract. in Ps. 145.1. Origen, however, notes that the verses following Zechariah 9.9 were not fulfilled literally by Jesus (Comm. in Joh. 10.161); such an observation might have been taken as an indication that the passage of Zechariah could be applied also to the second coming. Note Ps.-Epiph., Hom. [PG 43:505AB], which seems to give the Gospel episode such future/cosmic implications.

180 Possibly contributing to its depiction as a "tyranny" (DI 7.18.5; 7.19.1 etc.)?

181 Note that the Sibylline text quoted by Lactantius for the abrogation of the Mosaic Law (OrSib 8.299-300 at DI 4.17.4) occurs quite a bit earlier in OrSib 8, and contains a less negative portrayal of the Law. The later description certainly does refer to the Mosaic Law too, since it is an exhortation to cast off the old law in favor of the new Son, to recognize him as "your" God (8.329), to wash away his blood (8.328); for he is not propitiated by "your" cries of woe and prayers (8.333); then you will also know his Father (8.336).
consequence of this reinterpretation is that Christ is portrayed as "meek" (πραΰς) at his Second Coming.

One further instance of likely Sibylline influence should be mentioned. At DI 7.24.1, Lactantius quotes OrSib 8.81-3, a passage directed primarily at Rome: she will be bereft of allies because of the "confusion" (σύγχυσις) of the whole earth when God comes to judge the souls of the living and the dead. The reference to eschatological judgment, and specifically the mention of living and dead, connect the passage to Lactantius' earlier exposition, if not so much to the present one, which moves to treatment of the millenial kingdom, although the single word ἔλθῃ asserts Christ's physical coming. Lactantius' phrase, veniet...ut vivos ac mortuos iudicet, parallels the Sibyl's ἔλθῃ... χρίναι in structure and phraseology. Lactantius glosses the Sibyl's ὁ παντοκράτωρ with summi et maximi dei filius, without argument, fitting the passage into his own ideas of the eschaton. The Sibylline impact here is negligible.

Besides these examples of probable Sibylline influence on Lactantius' eschatological presentation, there are a number of passages in which there is a more remote possibility of such influence. At DI 7.16.11, Lactantius cites the Sibyl...
explicitly for the theme of the trumpet sounding from heaven: *ac ne quid malis hominum terraeque desit, audietur e caelo tuba: quod hoc modo Sibylla denuntiat: σάλπιγξ οὐρανόθεν φωνὴν πολύθρηνον ἀφήσει* *(OrSib 8.239).* *Itaque trepidabunt omnes et ad luctuosum illum sonitum contremescent.* The effect of the trumpet—frightening humans—is the same as in Commodian, *Carm. Apol.* 901-2: *Interea fremitum dat tuba de caelo repente,/cuius omni loco sonitus praecordia turbat.* In the Sibylline context, the drying up of rivers etc. has just occurred, but there is no reference to the reactions of human beings. Perhaps Lactantius' line 240 was in a form allowing some conclusion about such reactions, or about further misfortunes, which Lactantius then enumerates in *DI* 7.16.12—sword, fire, famine, disease, and *super omnia metus semper inpendens.*

Other readings extant suggest such possibilities: in Geffcken's text line 240 reads *Ὡφόνουσα μύσος μελέων καὶ πήματα χόσμου;* for *μελέων,* Constantine reads between the mountains and the sea at *Test. Mos.* 10.4; the reference to the sea is actually 10.6, separated from the levelling of the mountains; moreover, there is no reference to navigability. For *DI* 7.19.5—*cadet repente gladius e caelo*—cf. *OrSib* 3.672-3; Van Rooijen-Dijkman, p. 127, also cites *OrSib* 3.798-99 [swords, plural, in both cases]. Cf. *OrSib* 4.174 for a singular (so Geffcken, printing the reading of Ω; Buresch follows ΦΨ in espousing σάλπιγξ οὐρανόθεν φωνὴν πολύθρηνον) sword, along with a trumpet (Bousset, *Antichrist,* p. 233). Although the motif is attested in *OrSib,* the similarity with Jos., *BJ* 6.288 could indicate a wider use of it in now lost eschatological tradition. *DI* 7.21.6: The judgment is described as a trial by fire; cf. *OrSib* 2.253-5; 8.410f. (Brandt *ad* 7.21.6-7); for Persian parallels, however, see Van Rooijen-Dijkman, p. 133-34, who cites also *OrSib* 2.196-208, 302ff.—and for this latter passage, see Kurfess, "Ad Oracula Sibyllina," *Symb. Osl.* 28 (1950), p. 101, who thinks (on the basis of *DI* 7.18.2 and Justin, *1 Apol.* 20) that the Sibylline passage derives from Hystaspes. *DI* 7.26.4, on the peace after the post-millenial battle with the devil: *tum per annos septime perpetes intactae erunt silvae nec excidetur de montibus lignum, sed arma gentium comhurentur, et iam non erit bellum, sed pax ac requies sempiterna.* Brandt cites *Ezek.* 39.9-10 and *OrSib* 3.724-31; the Lactantian passage is quoted by Geffcken *ad OrSib* 3.649-51 (cf. also 3.728-9 and 731, in a section bracketed as an interpolation by Geffcken). The differences between Lactantius' formulation and *OrSib*—seven years of safety for the forests rather than of the burning of the weapons; the order, focussing first on the forests, then on the burning—*are equally differences with Ezekiel,* except that *OrSib* does not mention *seven years* specifically, only "seven lengths of time, as the years roll on" (ἐπτά [πολλά, 3.649] χρόνων μήπις περιπελλομένων ἐναντίων), whereas *Ezek.* 39.9 has ἐπτά ἐτη. It seems more likely, then, that Lactantius is following the Biblical version.

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μέλλον;\textsuperscript{185} for πῆματα κόσμου, Augustine probably attests πῆματα πολλά, since the version he quotes reads variosque labores. Especially if it contained something like these variants, that line could have signified to Lactantius that the trumpet was an announcer of further ills for humans, but the specific connection he makes is not obviously related to the Sibylline context. The chronological point at which he inserts the trumpet is more problematic, however. Comparison with \textit{Epit.} (66.5-7)\textsuperscript{186} seems to indicate that this is the time when the (second) Antichrist comes onto the scene, as does the examination of \textit{Epit.} 66.9, which conflates the killing of two thirds of the righteous (cf. \textit{DI} 7.16.14) and the flight of the remaining righteous into the desert (cf. \textit{DI} 7.17.10)—thereby locating woes narrated after the trumpet in 7.16 with the actions of the Antichrist in 7.17. The appearance of the Antichrist is also the context of the trumpet in Commodian, \textit{Carm. Apol.} 901.\textsuperscript{187} By contrast, most frequently in Christian literature, a trumpet signals the arrival of Christ and the imminent resurrection of the dead\textsuperscript{188}—and this seems to be the case also for the Sibylline passage Lactantius quotes, since the lines following the troublesome 240 refer to a general resurrection and judgment.\textsuperscript{189} In \textit{Rev.} 8.2-11.15, however, there are seven trumpets, the last three of which are associated with "three woes," but all of which (except the last?) precede disasters for wicked mankind; at 9.6 (after the fifth trumpet), people "will wish for death and death will flee from them," as in

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\textsuperscript{185}Cf. also the Latin version of the 8th book, which has for the beginning of this line \textit{lamentatio futura} (Bischoff, "Die lateinische Übersetzungen und Bearbeitungen aus den Oracula Sibyllina," in Bischoff, \textit{Mittelalterliche Studien} I (Stuttgart, 1966), p. 160).
\textsuperscript{186} The trumpet itself is not mentioned in the shortened version—possibly reflecting revision of Lactantius’ ideas.
\textsuperscript{187} There is also a sound from heaven associated also with the end (though not specifically with the resurrection) at \textit{Carm. Apol.} 1001-2: \textit{Ecce canit caelo rauca, sed ubique resultans, quae pavidat totum orbem in ruina cadentem.}
\textsuperscript{188} \textit{Matth.} 24.31; \textit{1 Cor.} 15.52; \textit{1 Thess.} 4.16, quoted by Hipp., \textit{De Chr. et Ant.} 66; cf. Ps.-Hipp., \textit{De consumm. mundi} 37.
\textsuperscript{189} Ταρτάρεον δὲ χάος δείξει τότε γαῖα χανοῦσα. / Ἡξουσιών δʼ ἐπὶ βήμα θεοῦ βασιλῆος ἄπαντες (OrSib 8.241-2).
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Lactantius, *optabitur mors et non veniet* (DI 7.16.12). Thus, the immediate context of the Sibylline verse Lactantius quotes may have supported its placement at this point in the narrative, but the generality of that context does not account for the specific association with the rise of the Antichrist shared by Lactantius and Commodian.

In the following section (DI 7.17) the possibility exists that Lactantius follows Sibylline material to such an extent that he contradicts Biblical teaching on his subject. Lactantius explains that near the end, a wonder-working prophet will be sent by God and will convert many people, but will be killed by the "king from Syria" (the second Antichrist) and be left unburied, after which he will rise on the third day and ascend into heaven. In most of its details, the affair closely resembles the account of the "two witnesses" in Rev. 11.3-12, except for the fact that Lactantius has only a single figure,

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190 Cf. also *OrSib* 8.353 = 2.307; the wider contexts show many common elements with Lactantius' paragraph here: gnashing of teeth (*OrSib* 8.350; 2.305), calling on God in vain (*OrSib* 8.355 = 2.309). The surrounding lines in *OrSib* 2 place this scene after the judgment, however, while those in *OrSib* 8 put it after a complete extinction of animal and human life, without reference to judgment in the extant form of the text. Interestingly, the previous lines in *OrSib* 8 refer to a threatening sound before the general extinction: κόσμος ἀτακτὸς ἕον οὐ χρήσιμον ἕχον ἁχούσειν ἅρχησε εὗ βαθὺς πόντος μέγαν ἔχον ἀστείας (8.345-6). It could well be that Lactantius is interpreting these lines as a reference to the trumpet-blast for which he quotes *OrSib* 8.239. The differences are important, however: the passage in *OrSib* 8 describes complete annihilation, whereas in Lactantius, only nine tenths of humans die. The parallel with Rev. 9.6 may have prompted the interpretation of the Sibylline passage as referring to events before the end. [That only one tenth of humans remain is an interpretation/paraphrase of *Amos* 5.3; I have found no parallels in other eschatological literature, Lactantius' being the only patristic interpretation of the verse noted by Allenbach et al., *Biblia Patristica*; for the other fraction in view—the survival of one third of the worshippers of God—see *OrSib* 5.103 (with ref. to Nero redivivus' depredations) and 3.544, although both these passages refer to the fraction of the entire population of the world; a much closer parallel to Lactantius' phraseology is Zech. 13.8, cited by Geffcken *ad OrSib* 3.544]. Many of the motifs of the chapter have Zoroastrian parallels, for which see Van Rooijen-Dijkman, p. 119, but if the attempt in this note to tease out his possible lines of interpretation of *OrSib* is correct, these may in fact be the primary source for the section.

191 A possible parallel, too, is *OrSib* 2.188, where Elijah displays σήματα τρισσά to the world; cf. *Didache* 16, cited *ad loc.* by Geffcken: three signs, the second and third of which are the sound of a trumpet and the resurrection of the dead respectively. It cannot be argued, however, that *OrSib* 2 has exactly those signs in mind for Elijah; cosmic cataclysm and the resurrection of the dead are in fact narrated in the following verses, but there is no reference to the sound of a trumpet. Victorinus, *ad Rev.* 7.2, interprets the "trumpets and phials" as referring (inter alia) to "either the desolation of the plagues that are sent upon the earth, or the madness of Antichrist himself."

192 Van Rooijen-Dijkman, p. 120; Brandt., *ad loc.*; Fàbrega, p. 136, in a more general demonstration of the points of contact between the eschatology of Lactantius and *Revelation*, pp. 134-7.
not *Revelation*'s two. Commodian once again agrees with Lactantius (*Instr.* 1.41.11; *Carm. Apol.* 833-34), identifying the prophet with Elijah. At *OrSib* 2.187-9, similarly, there is a prediction of the eschatological arrival of "the Tishbite," unaccompanied—just as in *Matt.* 11.14, 16.14, and 17.10, as well as later, in Justin's *Dialogue with Trypho* 49 (Justin and Trypho agree), Elijah is expected as an eschatological figure.\footnote{Van Rooijen-Dijkman, pp. 120-21; the OT basis for the the expectation was *Mal.* 4.5. Victorinus, *ad Rev.* 7.2 interprets the angel mentioned there as Elijah, and emphasizes Elijah as the eschatological witness (*ad Rev.* 12.6), but does give full weight to Rev. 11’s mention of two witnesses (*ad Rev.* 11.5; cf. 12.14). He suggests Jeremiah for the second, against others who suggest Elisha or Moses (*ad Rev.* 11.5).} Because of this reference, some have seen Sibylline influence on Lactantius as likely here, causing him to modify the picture presented in *Revelation*.\footnote{Fàbrega, p. 136 n. 90.} The Sibylline reference to Elijah, however, is in a book (*OrSib* 2) that Lactantius never quotes from explicitly, and the argument would thus be insecure. More likely is the view that here Lactantius depends on Hystaspes.\footnote{So Aune, p. 593; Flusser, pp. 23, 41-43; Van Rooijen-Dijkman, p. 121 ("wellicht"). See *supra*, pp. 322-323, for the consideration of the influence of Hystaspes on *OrSib* 8; in any case, even if 8.169 does refer to the eschatological coming of Elijah, the terminology there does not agree with Lactantius' description of the prophet, and he would have needed other accounts to make sense of it.} The single prophet seems to have been the prevailing Jewish view,\footnote{Van Rooijen-Dijkman, p. 120-21.} however, whereas *Revelation* is diverging from the tradition; thus, a single source for this information is not a necessary hypothesis. In any case, there is no need to have recourse to *OrSib* to explain Lactantius' reference to a single prophet. Sibylline influence in this case is unlikely. As for the contradiction with *Revelation*, it remains a difficulty. One might suppose that Lactantius had not read the book carefully: a strange supposition, given Lactantius' great interest in eschatology, and some details—e.g., the second resurrection—seem to imply some acquaintance with it, even if he only cites it expressly in *Epit.*; or possibly he thought there was some way of reconciling the two traditions.
A number of the sometimes alleged examples of Sibylline influence are still less likely than the passages already treated. For example, at *DI* 7.19.2 Lactantius quotes *OrSib* fr. 6 for the midnight context\(^{197}\) of the (second) coming of Christ:  ὀπτῶταν ἔλθῃ ἐὰν νυκτὶ μελαίνῃ. Bousset thinks Lactantius here and to the end of 7.19.3 follows a Jewish Sibylline source.\(^{199}\) But he is specifically placing Christ's return during the night before Easter Sunday, which is attested elsewhere in Christian tradition without Sibylline reference.\(^{200}\) An eschatological sense of the Paschal vigil appears also in Jerome, *In Matt.* 25.6 [PL 26: 192], who speaks of a *tradtio apostolica*; Gaudentius also includes eschatological expectation as part of the Easter celebration.\(^{201}\) Thus, according to Loi, Lactantius was probably inspired by a western liturgical tradition, common to northern Italy, Spain, and Gaul.\(^{202}\) He was therefore selecting a short Sibylline quotation to fit his idea of the παρουσία.

In *DI* 7.20.1-4,\(^{203}\) after mentioning the subsequently expected events—the resurrection of the dead, judgment, and the reign of Christ—Lactantius offers a string of three Sibylline quotations: *OrSib* 3.741-3;\(^{204}\) 8.241-2; 8.413-16. His introductory comments seem to echo and explain the quotations somewhat: for example, his statement

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\(^{197}\) Note his introductory comments: ...aperietur caelum medium intempesta et tenebrosa nocte, ut in orbe toto lumen descendentis dei tamquam fulgur appareat; quod Sibylla his versibus elocuta est.

\(^{199}\) So Brandt; οὐκότοσεν Geffcken (Kurfess, *Sibyllinische Weissagungen*, p. 234, adds τ' after μέσῃ, but otherwise follows Geffcken; Van Rooijen-Dijkman, p. 126, endorses Kurfess' reading), comparing Lactantius' words (*intempesta et tenebrosa nocte*); he also notes examples in *OrSib* of masc. forms of adj.s with fem. nouns.


\(^{202}\) Loi, p. 248 n. 59 for this conclusion and the references.

\(^{203}\) Van Rooijen-Dijkman, p. 128: in *DI* 7.20.1-6 Lactantius seems to have consulted ("geraadpleegd") the Sibyls out of preference ("voorkeur").

\(^{204}\) Line 742 only in Lact.; its content is similar to that of 743, such that both are not likely to be original, and 743 fits the grammar.
that the judgment will be by *idem ipse rex ac deus...cui summus pater et iudicandi et regnandi dabit maximam potestatem* specifies and justifies the idea that it is the Son who will judge, whereas the quotations refer to the κρίσις ἀθανάτοιο θεοί (OrSib 3.742) and βῆμα θεοῦ βασιλέως (OrSib 8.242). For the themes of resurrection and judgment themselves and their place in the eschatological picture, however, Lactantius does not depend heavily on these Sibylline sources. The lines following (OrSib 3.744ff.) the first Sibylline quotation place it in connection with an eschatologically fruitful and pacific time, but the preceding material is less helpful. The Sibylline acrostic puts the (resurrection and) judgment in a general context, after the trumpet, before the river of fire from heaven (OrSib 8.239-43). In the last passage, the Judgment is associated with and assimilated to the cosmic conflagration. Except possibly in a general way, the Sibylline contexts are not reflected in the placement of the section.

At *DI* 7.24.6, Lactantius cites OrSib 5.420-21: καὶ πόλιν, ἣν ἐπόθησε θεός, ταύτην ἐποίησεν/ λαμπροτέραν ἄστρων ἠδὲ ἡλίου ἠδὲ σελήνης. He quotes this in parallel to his exposition that after the first judgment, the just will gather together to form the *civitas sancta*, in which God (the Son) himself will dwell with them. The reference to a savior-king figure at OrSib 5.415-18, who is in fact still the subject of 420-21, makes this interpretable for Lactantius in a Christian sense. He strengthens ἐποίησεν to (civitas) constituetur—reading the lines as representing the foundation (cf. also his

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205 βαιολης correctly here Lactantius, vs. βαιολης (Constantine and the Sibylline mss.).
206 Besides the one quoted, there are other, less important possible echoes in this passage: *aperientur inferi*—καταφθαρέων δὲ χάος δείξει τότε γαία χανούσα (OrSib 8.241); *iacium magnum*—μεγάλῃ κρίσις (OrSib 3.743); *iacio et regno*—κρίσις ἢδὲ καὶ ἄρχη (OrSib 3.743).
207 ὁππότε δὴ καὶ τοῦτο λάβη τέλος αἰώνον ἵμαρ (OrSib 3.741, the first line of the quotation) is general; the reference is unclear [cf. the Latin translation in B and P: *cum vero et hic dies acceperit fatalem finem*], but a blessed period has been described already (702-731), when the "sons of the great God" will live "around the temple," and the Gentiles will repent and worship the true God; 732-40 are an appeal to Greece to worship God.
reference to God as *conditor* of the holy city, rather than as Jerusalem's revival and rise to pre-eminence. Thus he must also reinterpret ἐπόθησε to mean "desired" (to exist) rather than "loved," as it seems to mean in the Sibylline context. The general terms in the Sibylline source, as well as in Lactantius (*iusti*), mask the fact that the one refers to the literal capital city of the Jews, while the other is thinking of Christians.

Again, Lactantius' citation of Sibylline material does not necessarily imply that he took his picture of eschatology primarily from such material. A passage like *DI* 7.16.13 even more clearly displays him referring to the Sibyl for a detail of his picture while ignoring the context and meaning of that detail in *OrSib*. In describing the misery and decimation of the human race following the trumpet blast from heaven, Lactantius cites *OrSib* 7.123: ἔσται κόσμος ἀκοσμος ἀπολλυμένων ἀνθρώπων. Although his paraphrase which introduces the quotation, *...solitudo fiet in terra et erit deformatus orbis atque desertus*, includes an attempt to render the Greek phrase κόσμος ἀκοσμος, Lactantius' focus is on the perishing alluded to only in the second part of the line. The Sibylline context (*OrSib* 7.118ff.) has to do with elemental cataclysm—fire engulfing the entire world, which does indeed cause deaths of humans—whereas Lactantius' casualties are due to broader causes: ferrum ignis fames morbus (*DI* 7.16.12). Some seem to be due to the action of the Antichrist, since the deaths of two thirds of the worshippers of God (*DI* 7.16.14) corresponds to the Antichrist's persecution narrated in the following chapter (*DI* 7.17.7-9). Thus, it appears that Lactantius extracted the line mainly because of its striking expression, as well as the reference to dying humans, even though the eschatological doctrine is not precisely his. Nevertheless, it could not be said that he is

correcting the Sibyl—at least, he gives no hint that he is doing so; rather, his procedure has the look of an opportunistic appropriation.

As with Lactantius' account of the life of Jesus, then, there is little evidence that the Sibylline Oracles played anything more than a secondary role in Lactantius' eschatology. His general framework and narrative of the end of the world appear to be independent of the Sibyl, which he cites for particular details rather than for the larger structure. Thus, apart from the fact that the shadowy presence of Hystaspes has often been arguable for many of the peculiar motifs of Lactantius' account, Perrin's judgment seems to be accurate: "il a construit son exposé sur un schéma chrétien, même s'il semble mettre quasiment sur le même plan l'Écriture, les Sibylles, Hystaspe, Hermès Trismégiste, le poète Virgile."209 This is not entirely surprising, since it would be difficult to weave a coherent picture of eschatology from the various sections on the subject in the extant OrSib. Further, there seems to be no evidence that he follows any one particular Sibylline text to structure any larger unit of his eschatological account. Some details of the account, such as the mentions of the "king" at DI 7.17.11 and of the single prophet at DI 7.17.1-3, as well as Egypt's prominence in eschatological punishment, may possibly reflect the Sibyl, even though she is not named. Frequently, however, parallels between Lactantius' text and OrSib are eschatological commonplaces, or at least as likely (and sometimes more likely) to have come to Lactantius from another source. Consideration of DI 7 shows, therefore, that Lactantius here as always quotes Sibylline oracles primarily for their apologetic usefulness, and keeps to a minimum the amount of substantive "influence" Sibylline texts had on him. His eschatology would be

209 "Quelques observations," p. 17.
largely the same, even if he did not refer to the Sibyl; as it is, he has simply found passages that express details of the picture he wishes to present, and although some details thereby come into the picture from the Sibylline material, on the whole the effect is only to give the (often false) impression that even pagan texts present exactly the same eschatology as he does, following a traditional Christian framework.

The conclusions of both parts of this consideration of Lactantius' treatment of the Sibyls are in agreement with each other. In his more theoretical treatment of the Sibyl's status, Lactantius displays a calculated ambiguity—he is entirely convinced of the authenticity and apologetic usefulness of the Sibyl's testimony, but he avoids committing himself on the subject of her inspiration, sometimes appearing to class her with the Biblical prophets—and almost never taking issue with her statements. In the same way, he presents Sibylline quotations to substantiate his views of the life of Christ and the end of the world, but the Sibylline material does not provide the framework for his accounts, or significantly distort his presentation. He chooses quotations to fit into his already formed framework of Christian teaching, both on the subject of Christ's earthly existence and the end of the world.
Chapter 6

PART OF THE CITY OF GOD?
THE SIBYL IN THE THOUGHT OF AUGUSTINE

Alfons Kurfess assesses Augustine's attitude towards the Sibyl in the following terms:

"Augustinus hält die Gedichte der Sibylle für prophetisch, wie der spätere Hymnendichter: testae David cum Sibylla. Wie nämlich den Juden durch die Propheten Gottes Offenbarung zuteil geworden ist, so hat sich Gott den Heiden durch den Mund der Sibylle geoffenbart und ihnen seine Heilsabsichten kundgetan."¹

With the proviso that there is frequent mention of Augustine's lack of interest in plunging deep into Sibylline material, most scholarship takes this general point of view.² Put baldly in this way, the imputation is very misleading: both the Sibyl's status as "prophetic" and the parallelism evoked between the Biblical prophets and the Sibyl in fact seem drawn rather from Faustus, a Manichaean opponent of Augustine, than from the Father himself; at best, the characterization approaches Augustine's views at the end of his career, but the tentative steps toward that goal are utterly ignored in Kurfess' summary. It may be that exaggerated views of Augustine's esteem for OrSib owe something to the fact that certain sermons formerly attributed to Augustine, now rather to Quodvultdeus, show "great reverence" for the Sibyl;³ yet even in these sermons, the reverence shown is far from blind. Quodvultdeus took his Sibylline material largely from Augustine's most positive pronouncement, De Civ. Dei 18.23, which, for the medieval

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² The proviso: Kurfess, "Die Sibylle in Augustins Gottesstaat," p. 537; B. Altaner, "Augustinus und die Neutestamentlichen Apokryphen, p. 247; Besançon, p. 35. For Alexandre, 2: 285-6, the one or two negative expressions can be put down to Augustine's rhetoric; otherwise, Sibyl(s) "were chosen from among the Gentiles, who, in order to rouse the minds of pagans from their error, showed in advance the daybreak of a truth which had not yet arisen, by the will of God." Thompson, pp. 118, 128, 130, 133, mentions Augustine only for De Civ. Dei 18.23, the most laudatory passage. Prümm, p. 76, however, notes that if Augustine eventually views the Sibyl as part of the City of God, this represents an extraordinary gift; and Parke, Sibyls, p. 169, recognizes the lesser importance Augustine places on the Sibyl and the "noticeable lack of precise quotation."
³ The phrase is Alexandre's (2: 285).
period, served to "guarantee her credentials in the West." Yet it does little justice to the vagaries of Augustine's conceptions of the Sibyl to peer through the lens of the Dies irae quoted by Kurfess, so as only to see Augustine's endorsement. Rather, the Sibylline references interspersed throughout the Father's extensive output must all be considered in the investigation of the attitudes of a penetrating mind face-to-face with an anomalous contender for the role of prophet.

Augustine's attitude toward traditional learning underwent shifts, like much of his thought. An enthusiast for Virgil from the time of his early education (see, e.g., Conf. 1.13 [20-21]), spurred on to a philosophical life by Cicero's Hortensius (Conf. 3.4 [7-8]), and freed from his Manichaean perspective largely through arguments of pagan Neo-Platonists (Conf. 7.9.20), he owed a large debt to traditional literary and philosophical culture. Into later life, he continued to hold that the Platonists had achieved knowledge of God to a greater extent than other pagan philosophers (De Civ. Dei 8.5-9). Despite his conversion to orthodox Christianity, the early literary products of that conversion hark back to the philosophical dialogues of Cicero, and at Milan he had the intention of writing a series of treatises on the traditional liberal education. After his baptism and ordination, however, he had a keen consciousness of his role as Christian teacher, which for him involved the avoidance of irrelevant displays of learning and of giving the impression that traditional authorities were valid for Christian culture. Hence, he is fairly

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4 Parke, Sibyls, p. 170.


7 Marrou, Saint Augustin, pp. 190-91; 237-8; 290-91; on pp. 570-79 Marrou tries to determine what, apart from the De Musica, may survive from this enterprise. The primary indication for this project is Retr. 1.6. See also Saddington, "The Function of Education," p. 96, and Bardy's note ad Retr. 1.6 (BA 12).
scrupulous not to cite pagan texts in intra-ecclesial contexts. He refers to classical authors and texts with "affected scorn": *Aeneae nescio cuius errores* (Conf. 1.13 [20]); *librum cuiusdam Ciceronis* (3.4 [7]). Yet he continued to consider the traditional educational system important for aspiring Christian intellectuals. His *De Doctrina Christiana*, for example, while outlining a program for Christian education, also incorporates or values elements of the traditional educational system (2.27-61). At the end of Augustine's career, however, in his *Retractationes*, he looks back and criticizes his "concessions to traditional literary culture" in the early works—pagan expressions, conventional literary opinions, specific philosophical doctrines; but he does not regret philosophical thought as a whole.

In judging Augustine's practice of quotation, Hagendahl argues that a distinction should be made between his letters and apologetic works on the one hand, and his doctrinal and exegetical works on the other. In the latter, citation of pagan authorities is avoided, whereas in the former, citation may be necessary (i.e., polemical) or desirable (e.g., ornamental). Hagendahl points out a further principle often followed by Augustine: the quotation of secular works for purely linguistic questions is innocuous, whereas their quotation for content in doctrinal or exegetical works is to be avoided:

> Quod testimonium non adhiberem, nisi locutionis esset; verborum quippe illi sunt nobis auctores, non rerum vel sententiarum. (Quaest. in Hept. 1.31—after a quotation from Horace, Ep. 1.10.41)

If these distinctions are kept in mind, Augustine in fact appears to be quite principled in his use or avoidance of pagan material. The broad outline of his career in this respect

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8 Marrou, *Saint Augustin*, p. 26 and n. 3.
9 Marrou, *Saint Augustin*, pp. 403-6; note especially Marrou's general characterization (p. 403): "Aussi le programme que trace saint Augustin n'est-il autre chose que l'adaptation au cas particulier de la Bible et de l'éloquence chrétienne, du programme d'études préparatoires que recevaient les lettrés de son temps chez le grammaticus et le rhéteur."
12 Hagendahl, *Augustine*, pp. 713-22, and sections within chapters on individual authors (esp. Virgil and Cicero); B. Stock, *Augustine the Reader* (Cambridge, MA, 1996), p. 4, endorses Hagendahl's outline;
shows a high frequency of Classical material cited or alluded to in the early period of the philosophical dialogues, a sharp decline in the early years of Augustine's episcopate, and another peak of frequency at the time of his composition of *De Civitate Dei*, which, as his compendious work of apologetics, required the collection of material from traditional pagan authorities—but this effort of collection also "spilled out" into other contemporary work to a certain extent: thus, both the latter books of the *De Trinitate*, composed after an interval but during the period when Augustine was preparing the *De Civ. Dei*, and the roughly contemporary *Contra Julianum*, also show an increased use of pagan quotations.\(^{13}\) In particular (*De Trin*. 13 and 14), he returns to Cicero's *Hortensius*, which had sparked his interest in philosophy much earlier. In the *Contra Julianum*, writing against an opponent who made a display of his own learning, he felt the need to respond in kind. The debate with Pelagian ideas, furthermore, made it necessary to ponder the heroes of classical antiquity, to consider how far they were able to attain virtue. His conclusion is that their virtue is imperfect, for being directed towards the wrong goals—temporal rather than eternal.\(^{14}\) Furthermore, Cicero's exhortation to philosophy is not sufficient without Christ as mediator; still, the great orator and philosopher "came close" (*christianae fidei propinquasse*, *C. Jul*. 4.78). Is it imaginable that for Augustine, some ancient figures came even closer? That is the possibility evoked by the example of the Sibyl.

\(^{13}\) Hagendahl, *Augustine*, pp. 450-52, 494-5.

Through the years of Augustine's literary production, a line of development can be traced in his views of Sibyls and Sibylline Oracles. At first, Augustine knows the Sibyls only by reputation, and textually only through Virgil's 4th Eclogue. He is aware that the "authenticity" of Sibylline (and other) texts useful in Christian apologetic is questionable, although he personally still holds that they are not forgeries; he envisions Sibylline inspiration, however, as demonic. Later, he shows specific knowledge of Sibylline texts, and finally he suggests that the Erythraean Sibyl was a member of the City of God—and thus, that her inspiration was divine, not demonic. The chronology of his developing awareness of them is not entirely clear, however, and rather than a straight line of constantly increasing knowledge and acceptance, one should imagine a low line, rising barely perceptibly, until the dramatic spike represented by De Civ. Dei. Despite this increasing knowledge and enthusiasm, however, Augustine from the beginning to the end of his career evinces a reluctance or diffidence with respect to using sources like Sibylline Oracles; as he says in De Civ. Dei 19.23, "we should...shun the testimony of false demons, whether they insult Christ or praise him." In general, Augustine does not go out of his way to find Sibylline material, and resists putting too much weight on such sources, but once confronted with OrSib 8, or something like it, he acknowledges that the phenomenon must be divine, thus finally coming around to the position that these oracles, at least, do not in fact have anything to do with "false demons."15 Nevertheless, although including the Sibyl in the City of God is one of the highest marks of approval accorded by any Church Father to her, Augustine still considers Sibylline texts strategically inferior to Biblical material, even for the purpose of drawing converts; thus, he never quite gets to a place of agreement with Kurfess' assessment quoted above, so as to make the Sibyl a strict parallel to Biblical sources. A comparison with Lactantius brings out their differences: whereas Lactantius was firmly convinced of the value of using

15 Generally on Augustine's use of the Sibyl, see Alexandre, 2: 283-6; Prümm, pp. 67-76; Dölger, pp. 57-9 [51-65]; Kurfess, "Die Sibylle in Augustins Gottestaat," pp. 532-42; Guillaumin, pp. 199-200; see now also Roessli, pp. 263-86.
Sibylline texts in his apologetics, while he wavered on the question of the Sibyl's inspiration, Augustine always hesitated to use such a source in the first place, partly from qualms about its perceived lack of authenticity, but partly in deference to Biblical sources, even though in the end his assessment of the Sibyl was unambiguously positive.

**Augustine's Works, c. 395-411**

Augustine's first mentions of the Sibyl occur in the context of his polemic against Manichaeism. The work of **Faustus of Milevis** in particular appears (in the state of our evidence) to have provided the most important stimulus for Augustine's early thoughts on Sibylline prophecy. Because of his charisma, as well as his learning and eloquence, which were greater than those of other Manichaean preachers, Faustus presented a significant threat to the Catholic Church in North Africa. Augustine became acquainted with Faustus in Carthage, while still an adherent of Manichaeism (A.D. 383). Faustus' reputation, however, was greater than his ability, as Augustine tells the story, and he served more to disillusion the young Manichee than to solidify his attachment to the sect. Between 386 and 390, however, the Manichaean teacher published a work, the *Capitula*, defending his views and attacking those of the Catholics. In response, Augustine eventually (probably between 398 and 400) penned his longest anti-Manichaean work, the *Contra Faustum*.

Faustus' use of the Sibyl (*C. Faust. 13.1*) serves in the first place to justify the Manichaean rejection of the Hebrew Scriptures. In response to the question how the Manichaean worship Christ while repudiating the (Hebrew) prophets who predicted him,
Faustus first expresses doubt about the possibility of proving that the prophets really did predict Christ, then further objects that even if they did, it would mean nothing to Gentiles, who have another law and another set of prophets:

...sub alia nati lege et praefatoribus alii, quos gentilitas vates appellat, atque ex his postea sumus ad christianismum conversi, non ante effecti Iudaei...sed sola exciti fama et virtutum opinione atque sapientia liberatoris nostri Iesu. (pp. 377.21-378.1)

Since Gentiles do not already believe in the Hebrew prophets, they would otherwise have to be first persuaded to believe in those prophets, then (through the prophets) in Christ—Faustus notes the danger of circular reasoning. Instead, the Gentile Christian is indebted to no one and nothing other than to his faith: ita totum nulli alii quam suae fidei debet, quicunque fit ex gentibus christianus (p. 378.33-34). Then, almost as an afterthought,

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20 Elsewhere Faustus, somewhat differently, while commenting on Jesus' statement that he came to fulfill the law and prophets, not to destroy them, distinguishes three senses of "law"—that of the Hebrews, that of the Gentiles (Rom. 2.14-15), and that of the truth (Rom. 8.2)—and similarly three kinds of prophets—those of the Jews, those of the Gentiles (demonstrated by Paul's words about Epimenides, Tit. 1.12), and those of the truth (Matt. 23.34; Eph. 4.11) [C. Faust. 19.2: Sunt autem legum genera tria: unum quidem Hebraeorum...alii vero gentium, quod naturale vocat [sc. Paulus]...tertium vero genus legis est veritas...item prophetae alii sunt Iudaeorum, alii gentium, alii veritatis]. Jesus is referring to the law and prophets of the truth when he extends the purview of the prohibitions of murder, adultery, and bearing false witness—Faustus mentions Enoch, Seth, "and the other righteous men" as the ancient promulgators of these laws—and to the law of the Jews when he gives prescriptions negating, e.g., the lex talionis and the provision for divorce [C. Faust. 19.3: ubi vero...sola...recenset antiquiora praecepta, id est: non occides, non moechaberis, non peierabis—haec autem erant antiquitas in nationibus, ut est in promptu probare, olim promulgata per Enoch et Seth et ceteros eorum similis iustos, quibus eadem industres tradiderint angeli temperandae in hominibus gratia fertitatis—cui non videatur hoc eum de veritatis dixisse lege et eius prophetis?]. The Sibyl and the others would seem to fit rather into the category of Gentile prophets, along with Epimenides as quoted by Paul; the prophets of truth correspond to patriarchs mentioned in the Hebrew scriptures, but antedating the birth of the Hebrew nation. Later, Faustus also mentions Gentile patriarchs, as being just as worthy of salvation as (or rather, more worthy than) the "fathers of the Jews" [C. Faust. 33.1: sed hoc tamen mihi unum in opinione hac vestra molestum est, cur id de Iudaeorum tantum patribus sentiatis ac non de ceteris quoque patriarchis gentium, quod et ipsi senserint aliquando nostri liberatoris hanc gratiam praeertim cum de ipsorum filiis magis christiania constet ecclesia quam de semine Abraham, Isaac et Iacob.]. P. Alfaric, L'évolution intellectuelle de saint Augustin (Paris, 1918), pp. 169-73, paraphrases Faustus' arguments on the inappropriateness of using the Jewish Scriptures to bring Gentiles to faith in Christ, rather than such authorities as the Sibyl, Hermes Trismegistus, and Orpheus, as well as his distinction between three types of prophet and his general position with regard to pagan oracles (p. 171): specifically, pagan oracles are not sufficient, since darkness and light, evil and good, are mixed up together in the physical world—hence the importance of a critical attitude, not only towards Jewish and Christian Scripture, but also towards pagan oracles (Alfaric cites C. Faust. 18.3; C. Fel. 2.2; and Hegemonius, Acta Archelai 113; cf. Epiphanius, Panarion 66.65). Thus, while the oracles of the Gentiles may be helpful in winning Gentile converts, they are still subject to a criticism: they are not "prophets of the truth."
Faustus adverts to the possibility of testimony to Christ from recognized pagan authorities:

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sane si sunt aliqua, ut fama est, Sibyllae de Christo praesagia aut Hermetis, quem
dicunt Trismegistum, aut Orphei aliorumque in gentilitate vatum, haec nos
aliquanto ad fidem iuvare poterunt; \textsuperscript{21} qui ex gentibus efficimur christiani;
Hebraeorum vero testimonia nobis, etiamsi vera, ante fidem inutilia sunt, post
fidem supervacua, quia ante quidem eius credere non poteramus, nunc vero ex
superfluo credimus. (pp. 378.27-379.6)
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Faustus knows that the Sibyl, Hermes Trismegistus, and Orpheus are supposed to have prophesied about Christ. Such authorities—that is, the vates proper to Gentiles—would be of some help to bring Gentiles to faith (\textit{aliquanto...ad fidem iuvare}), in contrast to Hebrew witnesses, which must be either useless or superfluous. Thus, Faustus is able to suggest an alternative to the usual Christian argument from prophecy. Nevertheless, these pagan sources are not the primary focus of the section, nor does Faustus show specific knowledge of any of their texts, as Augustine points out later. The only information Faustus gives is professedly based on hearsay (\textit{ut fama est}) and very general: prophecies of Christ. The word \textit{aliquanto} is also significant—Faustus is far from giving the Sibyl or Hermes Trismegistus an exalted position. Faustus does \textit{not}, therefore, exemplify Alfaric's statement of supposed Manichaean activity: "Ils s'appliquent à montrer que le Christ a été connu et glorifié par les Prophètes de la Gentilité les plus anciens et les plus réputés."\textsuperscript{22} Rather, without painstaking demonstration, he simply mentions names which have the reputation of being associated with prophecy of Christ or

\textsuperscript{21} Alfaric, p. 170, loosely rendering this clause: "D'jà le cas s'est présenté souvent"; in n. 4, he reads \textit{potuerunt}—but the concreteness of the perfect is against the hypothetical tendency of the sentence (\textit{si sunt aliqua, ut fama est...}); Alfaric makes Faustus out to be asserting that such texts actually have produced conversions. Zycha (CSEL) reads \textit{poterunt}, with no indication of variant readings; so also Migne; R. Stothert (NPNF ser. 1, vol. 4), p. 200: "they might aid the faith of those who, like us, are converts from heathenism to Christianity."

\textsuperscript{22} Alfaric, p. 172.
"Christian" (e.g., trinitarian) teaching. Faustus' words as quoted by Augustine show that he does not trouble himself with supporting these claims; his effort is given to negative polemic, not the construction of a viable and detailed alternative. His presentation here thus coincides with De Stoop's overall judgment: despite his detailed critique, Faustus was more interested in making easy objections than in systematically outlining principles of exegesis.23 Thus, in terms of Chap. 2 of the present study, Faustus only shows a general knowledge of the Sibyl's reputation, and a general endorsement of the use of it.

In fact, Faustus' theoretical openness to different sources of revelation and hostility towards the Hebrew Scriptures24 are quite in keeping with Manichaean ideas in general—as is his failure to follow up the openness with full investigation: other Manichaeans appealed to significant cultural traditions of their environment,25 and yet they did not normally delve deeply into those traditions, or accord them more than a theoretical importance, since revelations earlier than Mani, while authentic, were incomplete.26 Thus, Manichaean openness in theory is more striking than that of most Christians; the assumed authenticity of Mani's predecessors recalls, for example, the status allowed to Greek philosophy by the Kerygma Petrou (and Clement of Alexandria) as parallel to the Hebrew Scriptures—both now being trumped, however, by Christian revelation. Faustus does not present the Sibyl as unique, as does Theophilus, and as other general endorsements often seem to assume. Rather, the appeal to the Sibyl and others

23 É. de Stoop, Essai sur la diffusion du Manichéisme dans l'Empire Romain (Gand, 1909), p. 106. On p. 104, in fact, he observes that Faustus didn't know Greek, on the basis of Conf. 5.6-7.
25 See especially the fragment of the Shābuhragān transmitted by Al-Birūnī, Chronology (The Chronology of Ancient Nations: An English Version of the Arabic Text of the Athār-ul-bākīya of Albīrūnī, ed. and tr. by C. E. Sachau [London, 1879], p. 190, lines 2-8), which is cited by Lieu, Manichaeism in the Later Roman Empire and Medieval China, 2nd ed. (Tübingen, 1992), p. 86; also, Alexander of Lycopolis, Contra Manich. opiniones disputatio 5 [p. 8.5-10, ed. Brinkmann (Stuttgart, 1895)].
has the appearance of opportunism: these are apologetically useful names, and a convenient replacement for the Hebrew Scriptures. In both theory and practice, his position does not amount to a full approbation of the Sibyl. The collocation of the Sibyl and Hermes Trismegistus in Faustus' list is a point in common with Lactantius, who would certainly also agree with the Manichaean's position that such pagan authorities are more useful than the Bible in making converts from paganism; it may well be that Faustus' knowledge of the Sibyl (and Hermes) comes from Lactantius. Yet his tentative expression and apparent lack of precise knowledge make a close acquaintance with Lactantius' text unlikely.

In response to Faustus' polemic against the Christian Bible, Augustine constructs a polemic against Manichaean sources of authority, attempting to show that their faith in Christ is in fact groundless. If Faustus rejects the Hebrew prophets, he asks, where did the Manichaeans then hear about (the name of) Christ? Their appeal to Mani invites the same questioning as Faustus has applied to the Hebrew prophets: why should one believe Mani? (13.4) Other sources to which they might appeal—the writings of the

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27 NB 13.3: (after quoting Matt. 22.42ff.) *ecce, inquam, nos ostendimus Hebraea prophetia Christum deum; vos ostendite aliquam prophetiam vestram, unde nomen Christi didiceritis.* The name as such has not appeared in Augustine's quotes—but the point seems to be that the Manichaeans can produce no prophecies of Christ whatsoever, not just that they have none containing his name/title—although he goes on to argue in 13.4 that the name Christ is known only from the Jews.

28 In 13.2, Augustine turns Faustus' emphasis on the cultural/ethnic divisions of mankind back on his opponent. He professes to find it strange that an African, Faustus, should believe a Persian, Mani. Thus, however, although he scores rhetorically, he does not do justice to the point at issue—the status of the Hebrew Scriptures. It is not because they are Hebrew *per se* that Faustus rejects them, but because, being foreign, they are not viewed as authoritative by Gentiles (although, as a Manichee, Faustus does have other criticisms of them). Mani himself may have no inherent trustworthiness for (e.g.) Africans, but on the other hand, the texts actually appealed to by Faustus for generating faith in Christ—the Sibyl, Hermes, Orpheus—were in fact venerable names in Greco-Roman culture, and viewed as authoritative. All were, not surprisingly, cited by Christian apologists.
apostles or *fama* about Christ—in fact contradict their doctrine.\(^{29}\) The Manichaeans have no texts of recognized authority, none confirmed by a succession of apostles, bishops, and councils, unlike the Catholic Christians (*nstrorum...librorum auctoritas tot gentium consensione per successiones apostolorum, episcoporum conciliorumque roborata*, 13.5 [p. 382.18-20])\(^{30}\) And their doctrines are certainly not so self-evident as to need no confirmation (13.6). On the positive side, Augustine tries to vindicate the Catholic practice of appeal to Biblical prophecy by showing how a Gentile could easily be brought to recognize the truth of the Hebrew Scriptures by the evidence of their fulfilled prophecies (13.7-9); the fact that the writings are Jewish guarantees that they were not forged by Christians *ex eventu* (13.10);\(^{31}\) the fact that the Jews do not believe in Christ might be a difficulty but for the fact that it too is foretold in the same Scriptures (13.11), as is the rise of heresies (13.12), and the manner of recognizing the true Church among them (13.13). Thus, according to Augustine's argument, the Jewish prophets are eminently appropriate witnesses to Christ and Christianity, whereas Manichaean authorities are useless.

Augustine objects that the texts Faustus mentions (*vaticinia Sibyllae et Orphei vel si qua alia sunt vatum gentilium*, p. 379.19-20) are not read in churches, whereas the Hebrew prophets are, and do draw Gentiles to Christianity:

\(^{29}\) 13.4 deals with the apostles; 13.5 with *fama*: *ea quippe clarior [sc. *fama*], ea praepollentior, aures et mentes et linguas omnium gentium tenet, quae Christo ex semine David secundum scripturas Hebraeas disseminato inplet, quod ibi scriptum est promissum Abrahae et Isaac et Iacob* [p. 382.12-16]

\(^{30}\) On the authority of Scripture, cf. Augustine's remarks a little later: *usque adeo nihil credi voluit [sc. Jesus]—this follows quotation of Matt. 24.24f., on false prophets and false Christs* \_*adversus confirmatam scripturarum auctoritatem, quae fidem suam rebus ipsis probat, quae per temporum successiones haec impleret et efficiat ostendit, quae tanto antequam fierent, praemuniet.* (13.5 [p. 383.18-21]); cf. also C. Faust. 33.6—on the importance of an "unbroken chain of evidence" beginning with contemporaries of the writers in question.

\(^{31}\) NB especially p. 389.25-390.3: *per eorum quippe codices probamus non a nobis tamquam de rerum eventum communitis ista esse conscripta, sed olim in illo regno praedicta atque servata, nunc autem manifesta et implieta...*
...nec [sc. Faustus] adtentat in nullis ecclesiis illa recitari, cum Hebraei prophetae in omnibus gentibus clareant atque ad christianam salutem tanta fidelium examina adducant. dicere autem non esse aptam gentibus Hebraeam prophetiam, ut credant in Christum, cum videat omnes gentes per Hebraeam prophetiam credere in Christum, ridicula insania est. (p. 379.21-6) [13.2]

This argument is not only based on authority or canonicity, but on pragmatism: the voice of the Hebrew prophets is heard the world over, and it does in fact bring Gentiles to faith—thus Faustus' judgment is empirically false. As mentioned already, Augustine goes on to show in detail how a Gentile might be led by the Christian Old Testament to faith in Christ. Perhaps Prümm's observation of the corollary to this pragmatic argument can be accepted: Augustine is also implying that neither Greek OrSib nor Latin versions thereof were widely available in Africa.

Augustine does not utterly deny the apologetic usefulness of Sibylline, Orphic, or Hermetic, or any other pagan theologus, wise man, or philosopher, in so far as they support Christian doctrine—but their usefulness, he argues, is purely negative: they can help to refute paganism, but this does not give them an independent authority (13.15).

The latter possibility seems to be vitiated, in Augustine's view, by the fact that these same pagans also promulgated, or at least did not oppose, idolatry. Thus, their predictions are implicitly connected with demons; the figures themselves are sacrilegi.

Sibylla porro vel Sibyllae et Orpheus et nescio quis Hermes et si qui alii vates vel theologoi vel sapientes vel philosophi gentium de filio dei aut de patre deo vera praedixisse seu dixisse perhibentur, valet quidem aliquid ad paganorum vanitatem revincendam, non tamen ad istorum auctoritatem amplectendam, cum illum deum nos colere ostendimus, de quo nec illi tacere potuerunt, qui suos congregiles idola et daemonia colenda partim docere ausi sunt, partim prohibere non ausi sunt. (p. 394.17-25) [whereas the Hebrew authors directed the Hebrew nation not to tolerate idolatry]...quamobrem quantum distat de Christi adventu

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32 Cf. Ep. 64.3, referring to the canon of Scripture determined at the Council of Carthage in 397, and reminding Quintianus not to "cause a scandal" by having non-canonical works read in church; Apocrypha are used by heretics, especially Manicheans, to deceive the ignorant. Roessli, p. 266, by contrast, considers the argument here purely one from authority: "ils ne sont pas lus dans les églises et ne bénéficient donc d'aucune reconnaissance officielle."

33 Prümm, pp. 71-2, comparing Alexandre, 2: 283, who refers to mss. of OrSib in general.

34 Compare/contrast De Civ. Dei 19.23 (tr. Dyson, p. 956): "we should...shun the testimony of false demons, whether they insult Christ or praise Him."

35 Roessli, p. 266, selects this as the second major element of Augustine's critique.
Augustine is unclear about the source of their statements: somehow, they "were not able to be silent about" the true God, despite their collusion with idolatry. Augustine uses the language of compulsion, which might bespeak a kind of divine inspiration, but it could equally be a reference to the power of the truth—i.e., natural revelation—or to the veracity of demons under the pressure of divine power, as in the Gospels. To do justice to Faustus' position, however: if his distinction between three kinds of prophets (19.2-3) is taken into account, in which the Sibyl falls into the category of "prophets of the Gentiles," not that of "prophets of the truth," then Faustus does not in fact appear to be granting her independent authority *per se*, but only using the authority already attached to her in Gentile (or rather, specifically Greco-Roman) circles. She is not independently trustworthy as a witness; but her alleged predictions of Christ are more useful than the alleged predictions of the Hebrew prophets, and more appropriate for the conversion of participants in Greek and Roman culture. Faustus' apologetic strategy thus appears to follow that of Lactantius, who also proclaims the greater usefulness of recognized pagan authorities, against that of Cyprian (e.g.), whom Lactantius criticizes.

Augustine finally criticizes Faustus' ignorance of the very texts he appeals to: *eos quippe sibi incognitos fassus est dicens* [here he quotes Faustus' words at 13.1]...*horum ergo iste litteras nesciens, quandoquidem per famam putat esse aliquos tales, non eas utique legeret...* (13.17) Faustus would not be *able* to produce such texts in order to convince a pagan about Christ, since he betrays by his words that he is not directly familiar with them himself. Faustus' opponent puts great stress on the hypothetical expression, and on the phrase *ut fama est*, yet identifies thereby an important weakness in the Manichaean's case. The recognition of Greco-Roman authorities such as the Sibyl and Hermes Trismegistus remained only a theoretical position; there is no evidence

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36 Stothert's translation, p. 205: "the predictions of heathen ingenuity."
whatever that Faustus undertook any detailed investigation of Sibylline oracles. As with Mani's identification of authentic predecessors in the figures of Zoroaster and Buddha, the universalist propagandistic impulse of the sect encouraged the use of recognized authorities of the area of mission, but not detailed interaction with texts and teachings associated with those authorities. Faustus treats in detail only the Biblical texts. Too many scholars, in fact, have given Faustus' passing allusion to these fringe authorities too much weight.\(^{37}\)

Augustine himself does not display any greater knowledge of the texts Faustus appeals to here. Undoubtedly he was familiar with the Sibyl as a figure of literature and with the Roman *Libri Sibyllini*, and thus knew her, on the one hand, as a seer inspired by the pagan god Apollo, and on the other, as the origin of texts which prescribed rites to placate the gods. Either of these roles would mark her as a participant in polytheism—and so, according to his argument, even if Sibylline predictions of Christ existed, the Sibyl would be less suitable a witness than the Hebrew prophets, who never tolerated idolatry. This general statement about such sources—either they participated in idolatry, or else didn't speak against it—could surely be taken as an indication that he had no real idea of the nature of *OrSib*, which are full of the sort of criticism Augustine alleges to be absent.\(^{38}\) Unlike Faustus, however, Augustine displays his awareness of the possibility of multiple Sibyls, as his wording at 13.15 (*Sibylla *...*Sibyllae*) shows. This slight correction shows that Augustine does have some independent knowledge of the Sibyl,

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\(^{38}\) One rhetorical question (13.3—see n. 27 supra) implies that Faustus cannot produce prophecies with the name of Christ: such a challenge might indicate specifically that Augustine is unaware of the Sibylline acrostic, which contains exactly that; but the reservations indicated above mean that he is not really concerned with the name itself.
more in fact than he lets on. Nevertheless, there is no breath of a suggestion that different Sibyls might have received different types of inspiration—no quarter is given to Faustus' argument. Augustine's purpose being to safeguard Scripture from Faustus' attempted substitutions, it would not be in his interest to concede much. In this sense, it is true that Augustine's negative position here owes something to his task of polemic, as Alexandre and Roessli allege, but other works of Augustine confirm his reluctance to recognize the Sibyl as a genuine prophetess at this period.

The fact that Augustine already did have a specific idea of the Sibyl's prophecies emerges also from his unfinished commentary on Romans dated a few years earlier than his tract against Faustus—a little before 396. The general background is again Augustine's polemic against Manichaeism. This text reveals more clearly Augustine's early views on the nature and content of Sibylline oracles: they are connected with Virgil's 4th Eclogue, which also provides support for the authenticity of such prophecies; yet their inspiration does not seem to have been divine, despite the truth revealed in them.

39 In the related matter of Hermes Trismegistus, W. H. C. Frend, "Pythagoreanism and Hermetism," pp. 251-60, argues that Augustine had an early interest in Hermetic texts: the precise quotations in De Civ. Dei 8.23-24 suggest that he kept a text nearby (Frend, p. 257-8, quoting Hagendahl, Augustine, p. 702ff.; the opening passages of the Confessions appear to have been influenced by Corp. Herm. 5, and there are some other early parallels (Frend, p. 258, citing W. Theiler, Die Vorbereitung des Neoplatonismus [Berlin, 1930], pp. 128-34, and adding Conf. 1.6.7 and 4.15.24 as further connections). This is not uncontroversial—Fowden, The Egyptian Hermes, p. 210, for example, assumes that Augustine was only familiar with the Asclepius, which he quotes in De Civ. Dei—and thus, probably not from an early age; he does at least acknowledge Theiler's comparison. Frend, however, begins his argumentation with references precisely to Contra Faustum: he takes Faustus' words as indicating a familiarity with esoteric texts such as OrSib, Hermetica, etc., (or at least an openness to such texts) existing among Manichaeans in contemporary North Africa; this familiarity, however, cannot be proved from this vague and tentative passage of Faustus; Ephraem's claims that Mani appealed to the authority of Hermes might suggest a more widespread familiarity among Manichaeans, but when Horsfall Scotti, "The Asclepius: Thoughts on a Re-opened Debate," VChr 54 (2000), p. 406, recently assumes that Augustine will (necessarily) have become acquainted with Hermetic texts while a Manichaean, that is surely going beyond the evidence.

40 Alexandre, 2: 286; Roessli, pp. 265-6.


42 Fredriksen, Augustine's Early Interpretation of Paul (Diss. Princeton 1979), p. 120-21, citing P. Brown, Augustine of Hippo: A Biography (Berkeley, 1967), p. 151 [new ed., pp. 144-45]; but note Fredriksen's further characterization of this period, which "marks a...shift in Augustine's anti-Manichean polemic, which from this point on turns increasingly less on philosophical argument as such and more on biblical, and specifically Pauline, exegesis" (Fredriksen, "Expositio quarundam propositionum ex epistula apostoli ad Romanos," in AttA, p. 346).
Augustine's comments on the Sibyl are occasioned by the wording of Romans 1.1-3: *Paulus servus Iesu Christi vocatus apostolus, segregatus in evangelium dei, quod ante promiserat per prophetas suos in scripturis sanctis de filio suo, qui factus est ei ex semine David secundum carnem.* Explaining the second verse of the letter to the Romans, Augustine comments at *Exp. inch. epist. ad Rom.* 3.3-4.2:  

3. ...(3) *Fuerunt enim et prophetae non ipsius, in quibus etiam aliqua inveniuntur, quae de Christo audita eccinerunt, sicut etiam de Sibylla dicitur, quod non facile crederem, nisi quod poetarum quidam in Romana lingua nobilissimus, antequam diceret ea de innovatione saeculi, quae in domini nostri Iesu Christi regnum satis concinere et convenire videantur, praeposuit versum dicens: Ultima Cumaei iam venit carminis aetas.*  

(4) *Cumaeum autem carmen sibyllinum esse nemo dubitaverit. Sciens ergo apostolus ea in libris gentium inveniri testimonia veritatis, quod etiam in actibus apostolorum loquendi Atheniensibus manifestissime ostendit, non solum ait: per prophetas suos, (5) ne quis a pseudoprophetis per quasdam veritatis confessiones in aliquam impietatem seduceretur, sed addidit etiam: in scripturis sanctis volens utique ostendere litteras gentium superstitionis idolatriae plenissimas non ideo sanctas haberi oportere, quia in eis aliqaud, quod ad Christum pertinet, inventur.  

4. *Et ne quisquam etiam prophetas aliquos remotos atque alienos a gente Iudaeorum forte praeferreret, in quibus nullus simulacrorum cultus esset, quantum attinet ad simulacra, quae humana operatur manus, nam simulacris phantasmatum suorum sectatores suos omnis error illudit, (2) ne quis tamen aliqua huiusmodi praefers, quia ibi Christi nomen ostentat, eas potius sanctas scripturas esse asserat, non eas, quae populo Hebraeorum sunt divinitus creditae, satis opportune mihi videtur adiungere cum dixisset: in scripturis sanctis, quod adiecit: de filio suo, qui factus est eis ex semine David secundum carnem. (3) David enim certe rex Iudaeorum fuit.*

In each phrase of Paul's sentence, Augustine finds great significance: each element, in his view, is calculated to demonstrate that the apostle's intention in the passage is to restrict the concept of Holy Scripture to the Jewish prophets, the true precursors of the Gospel, as opposed to any others.  

43 Prümm's interpretation (pp. 69-70) of Augustine's *Gedankengang* is quite valuable.  

44 Alexandre, 2: 285, not impressed by Augustine's discovery of significance in the smallest phrases here, complains: *Sapit hoc...argutiam commentatoris parati quidvis potius quam nihil e singulis auctoris sui oraculis expiscari.* Prümm, pp. 70-71, on the other hand, attempts to vindicate Augustine's interpretation of Paul somewhat: the expressions Augustine notices in fact strongly emphasize the special authority of Biblical prophets; if the words are not likely to have been intended specifically to combat
because these authorities show definite resemblances to the prophets of the Old Testament—in some sense, at least, Augustine himself can refer to them as prophetae, and they have in fact delivered prophecies of Christ. Thus, in this commentary, Augustine deals with the very view of the Sibyl's message asserted by Faustus: although he does not mention opponents of his own view explicitly, the ideas he combats are that the Sibyl (and others) prophesied about Christ and that Sibylline texts might therefore be used either in place of or by the side of the Old Testament.

Augustine's exposition is not absolutely lucid, since prophetae non ipsius at first appears in contrast with Paul's reference to prophetae sui, and thus allows him to identify the non-Biblical prophets; in scripturis sanctis should then by rights further restrict the number of prophets properly so called, but in fact turns out to be used simply for more detailed characterization of this same group. A subtle shift, furthermore, should be noted: from prophetae non ipsius to alienos a gente Iudaeorum. The elimination of non-Hebrew sources from the picture is his goal, then, but in so doing, he finds he must appeal to the reference to Christ's human lineage—which is not modifying the prophetae (or rather promiserat) in Paul's sentence—to ensure the exclusion even of Gentile sources showing apparent piety.

Despite this unclarity of exposition, it is clear that in this passage he distinguishes two different kinds of non-Hebrew prophecy. The first kind is delivered by pseudoprophetae, who are participants in pagan idolatry. The danger Augustine perceives with respect to these is that people may be led astray into "impiety" by texts which, although recognizing some aspect of Christian truth, yet espouse error elsewhere.

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45 As Prümm, p. 71, suggests: "Die leise Überspitzung des Sinns der Stelle erklärt sich zudem daraus, daß vonseiten des Manichäers Faustus tatsächlich die Forderung erhoben worden war, man solle den Heiden gegenüber die Sibyllen...zur Grundlage des Wahrheitsbeweises für das Christentum nehmen." Cf. also Faustus' own comments (C. Faust. 11.1) on Rom. 1.2: the statement about the incarnation and genealogy of Christ cannot be accepted; Faustus offers the suggestion that Paul's thought evolved from earlier [Romans] to later [1 & 2 Corinthians]. Augustine appears to counter this in general by insisting on Christ's genealogical connection to the people of Israel.
That the impiety and error he refers to consist of pagan religion is clear from the fact that he considers Paul, through the specifications *per prophetas suos* and *in scripturis sanctis*, to be exposing idolatry: *ostendere litteras gentium superstitiosae idolatriae plenissimas*. The second kind of non-Hebrew prophets have the appearance of purity to the extent that they do not teach idolatry: *prophetas aliquos remotos atque alienos a gente Iudaeorum...in quibus nullus simulacrorum cultus esset, quantum attinet ad simulacra, quae humana operatur manus*. They are not called *pseudoprophetae*, and might be thought to be included in *prophetas suos* because of the structure of the commentary: that is, they are not excluded from consideration by reference to Paul's expression *prophetae sui*, but only by the further reference to Christ's human descent. But of course, such inclusion is impossible, since the tenor of the whole passage is to deny authority also to this second group: they only *seem* to be true prophets of God. The content of their prophecy is more specific than that of the first group: the *nomen Christi* rather than the more general *testimonium veritatis and aliquid, quod ad Christum pertinet* of the previous paragraph. Nevertheless, they cannot be relied upon either, in Augustine's estimation.

Augustine's complaint against the first group is that they espouse idolatry; his reservations with respect to the second seem to be simply that they are not Hebrew. Augustine is nevertheless convinced that this second type of prophet is also implicated in error of some kind. Although they are free from the taint of idolatry (*simulacrorum cultus*), Augustine assumes that they are necessarily deluded by error: *simulacris phantasmatum suorum sectatores suos omnis error illudit*. Augustine is condemning the substitution of non-Jewish texts for the Old Testament. The unargued assumption, then, is that non-Hebrew sources are necessarily imbued with some kind of error,46 but since

46 Augustine's language of *simulacra and phantasmata* here is paralleled in *De vera rel.* 38.69, where, after enumerating the sorts of created things people worship in place of the creator (37.68), he speaks, as here, of a *cultus* involving non-man-made *simulacra*, but rather the *phantasmata* of the mind—the worshippers in question end by denying that anything ought to be worshipped, but are still in slavery—e.g., to lusts: *Est enim alius deterior et inferior cultus simulacrorum, quo phantasmata sua colunt, et quidquid*
Augustine has in mind texts—or theoretical approaches—used by Manichaeans, it seems to be the association with heretical fantasies rather than a priori assumptions about the Gentile world that immediately conditions Augustine's expression here.

The Sibyl is the only specific non-Jewish authority Augustine names, apart from the mention of Paul's speech on the Areopagus, in which the apostle quotes Aratus. But does the Sibyl fall into the first or the second category of Gentile "prophet"? Augustine's introductory rubric identifies her as one of the prophetae non ipsius, but this turns out to be a general term applicable to both categories. Since, however, Augustine seems to consider first of all the possibility of "idolatrous sources with a grain of truth" (including Aratus, then, who begins his poem with a reference to Zeus, Phaen. 1) and only afterward that of non-Jewish sources that avoid idolatry altogether, the Sibyl's appearance at the outset makes it more likely that she falls into the former category. Augustine's presumable familiarity with the Sibyl as priestess of Apollo and the originator of the Libri Sibyllini would tend to confirm this. So also does the phraseology of the first part of his assessment of the Sibyl (among others) in C. Faust. 13.2: suos congentiles populos idola et daemonia colenda partim docere ausi sunt, partim prohibere non ausi sunt. Later, by contrast, Augustine describes the contents of the Erythraean Sibyl's prophecy in terms

animo errante cum superbia vel tumore cogitando imaginati fuerint, religionis nomine observant, donec fiat in anima nihil omnino colendum esse et errare homines, qui superstitione se involvunt et misera implicant servitute. Sed frustra hoc sentiunt...remanent quippe ipsa vitia, quibus ut illa colenda opinarentur attracti sunt. Cf. also De vera rel. 10.18: Quamobrem sit tibi manifestum atque perceptum nullum errorem in religione potuisse, si anima pro deo suo non coleret animam aut corpus aut phantasmata sua aut horum aliqua duo coniuncta aut certe simul omn...; Enarr. in Ps. 80.14. For phantasmata in Augustine's epistemological framework—images arising from the imagination ("creative" imagination), rather than those derived directly from sense-perception ("reproductive" imagination)—see R. H. Nash, The Light of the Mind: St. Augustine's Theory of Knowledge (Lexington, KY, 1979), p. 55; G. O'Daly, Augustine's Philosophy of Mind (Berkeley/LA, 1987), pp. 106-11, who, however (p. 110 with n. 11), notes that Manichaean figments are sometimes called phantasiae, sometimes phantasmata.

47 Prümm, p. 69-70, thinks that Augustine, as he expresses himself generally at the outset of the quoted passage, has in mind primarily Balaam, then broadens his view to include, e.g., the Sibyl. Although Balaam, however, certainly would fit into the first category, that of prophetae non ipsius who are also involved with idolatry, nevertheless the fact that Balaam's prophecies are in fact included in the Hebrew Bible is rather a counter-example to Augustine's exposition than the prime example. Still, Prümm's emphasis (p. 70) on Augustine's use of etiam to introduce the Sibyl is well-taken; he rightly points out that ea...testimonia veritatis do not refer specifically to Sibylline prophecies but to the general phenomenon of truth in pagan writers—this, not Sibylline Oracles, is what Augustine thinks Paul was acquainted with.
similar to the characterization of the second kind of source (see infra, p. 388), except that then he adds that she in fact spoke against idolatry, a detail conspicuously absent here. At this point, arguably, Augustine is not yet truly familiar with the Jewish/Christian OrSib. Finally, the truths about Christ Augustine alleges for Virgil's poem are still general enough to be connected with Augustine's description of the first category of pagan prophets (aliquid, quod ad Christum pertinet) rather than that of the second (Christi nomen ostentat).

The source of inspiration for the Sibyl (and others like her) is not specified, but seems clearly to be demonic (pagan deities = demons), since prophets in the first group are emphatically not prophets of God, and (possibly) espouse idolatry. Even the second category is subject to error and explicitly contrasted with the Scriptures divinely entrusted (divinitus creditae) to the Hebrews—all the more so the first. From the present passage alone, on the other hand, one might argue that nothing supernatural is necessarily assumed to be responsible for the Sibyl's utterances. The other pagan source to which Augustine alludes recognizably, Aratus, is not oracular; and the words he applies to the Sibyl (among unspecified others) could be explained by reference to the spread of knowledge of the Hebrew Scriptures among pagans: aliqua...quae de Christo auditae cecinerunt. 48 In other early writings, Augustine does express approbation for the "plagiari­sm theory" in the case of Plato. 49 Nevertheless, the literary descriptions of frenzied Sibylline activity, most notably in Aen. 6, make it inherently unlikely that audita is to be taken literally. This is confirmed by a letter of Augustine (Ep. 258) to Marcianus—a letter to a Christian, and so not apologetic, except insofar as he is urging

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48 Prümm, p. 69, considers the choice of audita consciously to exclude (divine) supernatural origin: "Damit is schon die Annahme, daß alle außerhalb des Offenbarungsvolkes auftretenden messianischen Verkündigungen auf eine den Heiden verliehene Prophetengabe zurückgingen, ausgeschlossen"; however, the word need not be taken in a literal sense. Roessli, p. 265, seems also to take audita literally.

49 De Doct. Chr. 2.28.43; later, he revises his opinion about Plato's having learned from Jeremiah in Egypt on chronological grounds (Retract. 30.2).
him to be baptized\textsuperscript{50}—roughly contemporary with the unfinished commentary on Romans,\textsuperscript{51} which also quotes from the 4th Eclogue\textsuperscript{52} and gives a more detailed description of the Sibyl's presumptive experience:

\begin{quote}
\textit{quod si veraciter dixisti, sicut de te dubitare non debeo, iam profecto sic vivis, ut sis dignus baptismo salutari remissionem praeteritorum accipere peccatorum. nam omnino non est cui alteri praeter dominum Christum dicat genus humanum:}
\textit{Te duce, si qua manent sceleris vestigia nostri, inrita perpetua solvent formidine terras.}
\textit{quod ex Cymaeo, id est ex Sibyllino carmine se fassus est transtulisse Vergilius, quoniam fortassis etiam illa vates aliquid de unico salvatore in spiritu audierat, quod necesse habuit confitteri. (Ep. 258.5)}
\end{quote}

Here, Augustine uses the same verb (\textit{audire}) as in the commentary, but specifies \textit{in spiritu}, making it most likely that there as here, he has in mind supernatural revelation rather than natural transmission of information.\textsuperscript{53} The evocation of "necessity" tallies with the usual picture of mantic possession—or, possibly, the sort of necessity laid upon demons by the incarnate Christ—so that it need not imply divine rather than demonic inspiration. Augustine's explicit reinterpretation of the poem shows that he does not consider Virgil to have known anything about the Savior; and Augustine considers the Sibyl, whose prophecy was the basis of the Eclogue, to have enjoyed supernatural, but not necessarily divine, inspiration. His phraseology is in fact compatible with that of the unfinished Romans commentary, with the citation in the letter serving almost as ornament—a culturally resonant description of the purity to be attained by baptism—and thus neither necessarily endorsing nor denigrating the Sibyl's inspiration.

\textsuperscript{50} A catechumen: so Prümm, p. 68. See Mandouze, \textit{Prosopographie}, s.v. Marcianus 2: on the evidence of this section of this letter, it is clear that Marcianus is a recent adherent of Christianity, but not yet baptized; Augustine encourages him to be enrolled as a baptismal candidate. Mandouze thinks the identification (by \textit{PLRE} 1: 555-6) of this Marcianus with a homonymous proconsul of Africa, connected to the usurper Eugenius, is wrong.

\textsuperscript{51} \textit{Ep. 258 (ad Mart[cijam]), dating after 395, acc. to R. B. Eno, "Epistulae," in AttA, p. 304.}

\textsuperscript{52} With the "same application," as Prümm, p. 68, points out.

\textsuperscript{53} For the expression \textit{audire in spiritu}, see \textit{De Gen. ad litt.} 12.11; \textit{Adnot. in Iob} 37; \textit{Enarr. in Ps.} 109.7; \textit{cf. Enarr. in Ps.} 62.1; 96.1.
Arguably, Augustine's view of the Sibyl at this time is in theory exactly the same as that of Ambrosiaster, who more forcefully classes the Sibyl among deceptive and demonic oracular sources. Augustine's presentation in Exp. inch. epist. ad Rom. (not to mention Ep. 258), however, is gentler than Ambrosiaster's, presumably because his main intention is to discredit the attempt to add to or replace the Old Testament, not to argue that the texts in question are utterly worthless—and it is possible that he does not wish to engage in harsh polemic against a text considered useful for apologetic purposes by some. In fact, one source from which Augustine may well have learned something about the Sibyls was the Christian apologetic tradition. In particular, Augustine shows knowledge and appreciation of Lactantius quite close to the time of writing of Contra Faustum and the Exp. inch.: In his De Doctrina Christiana 2.40 (60-61), which dates to the mid-390s, he cites Cyprian, Lactantius, Victorinus, Optatus, and Hilarius as examples of the precept of "spoiling the Egyptians"—of using the "gold and silver" of pagan culture, thought, and education for Christian purposes. It seems likely that already at this early stage, then, he was likely cognizant of the use Lactantius had made of Oracula Sibyllina and other such "pagan authorities," although he does not say so explicitly. Reading DI 1.6 (Varro's list of 10 Sibyls), Lactantius' major scholarly notice on the Sibyls (and very early in the work) could have alerted him to the existence of

54 See supra, pp. 107-109. For Augustine's knowledge of Ambrosiaster, see Bastiaensen, "Augustin et ses prédécesseurs latins chrétiens," in J. den Boeft and J. van Oort (eds.), Augustiniana Traiectina (Paris, 1987), pp. 27-30. Bastiaensen marshals convincing evidence for Augustine's knowledge of the Pauline commentaries (of that on Romans specifically from the Exp. quarundam prop. ex ep. ad Rom.) as well as the Quaestiones, although it is not clear to whom Augustine attributed them—possibly Ambrose, possibly Hilary; contra, A. C. de Veer, "Saint Augustin et l'Ambrosiaster," in Bibliothèque Augustinienne: Œuvres de Saint Augustin 23 (Paris, 1974), pp. 817-21, who argues that there was no direct influence, and no certain evidence that Augustine knew Ambrosiaster's work. Fredriksen, Augustine's Early Interpretation, p. 116, notes that his knowledge of Ambrosiaster, though "evident during the Pelagian controversy," is uncertain for the period of the Inch. exp.


many Sibyls. It is less likely that he consulted Varro directly for this information, since although there are nine early references to Varro (387-400), including one from the *Antiquitatum libri*, Augustine never shows any independent interest in the first books, in which the treatment of the XVviri (and the Sibyls) was contained. Already Alexandre saw that Augustine owed much to Lactantius on Sibylline matters. Yet it should not be assumed that Augustine had read Lactantius with any particular interest in the precise character of *OrSib*; his description does not seem to have much to do with Lactantius' monotheistic Sibyls, although his references to prophecies of Christ might conceivably reflect Lactantius' exposition in *DI 4*.

A few years later, in his work *De Consensu Evangelistarum*, dated to 404/5, Augustine still shows no more knowledge of specific Sibylline texts than before, and he continues to assume that the Sibyl's inspiration came from pagan gods, not from the true God. The context is apologetic—the work as a whole aims to defend the gospels against those who point out contradictions; a large *excursus* attempts to vindicate the authority of the gospels against pagans who view Jesus as not divine. Not only pagan critics, moreover, but also Manichaeans exercised their faculties to identify contradictions between the different gospels, and it seems that Manichaeism is in mind throughout much of Augustine's argumentation. Nevertheless, the section (1.7.11-1.33.51) which contains Augustine's mentions of the Sibyl(s) is specifically directed at pagan views of

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59 Alexandre, *Augustine*, p. 284—"all his learning," however, is an exaggeration; e.g., Alexandre, 2: 285, thinks that Augustine's knowledge of pagan attacks on *OrSib* is also derived from Lactantius, but see below on *De cons. evang.*
62 See de Luis, pp. xxvii-xxx, for discussion and references. Against the general scholarly tendency to see Augustine's opponents in this work as primarily Neoplatonist pagans, de Luis argues that combating Manichaean attacks is also an important aspect—perhaps more important than the polemic against pagan views—of it.
Jesus. In *Retr. 2.16*, Augustine says that the first book of *De Cons. Ev.* was directed against those who honored Christ as a wise man, but not as divine. This description fits one tendency of Porphyry's attack on Christianity: Christ was wise, but his disciples and Christians in general were wrong to worship him as divine. A. Penna characterizes Augustine's opponents as part of a Neoplatonic assault on Christianity following in the footsteps of Porphyry. The objects of Augustine's polemic, therefore, now include Neoplatonic philosophers as well as Manichaeans, and he is combating different attitudes towards Sibylline prophecy.

In the context of arguing that the Jewish/Christian God should have been recognized by the Romans (but wasn't, because true worship of him would have involved rejecting other cults), Augustine contrasts pagan seers with Biblical prophets, in parallel with the respective gods that inspire them. The Sibyl appears as a paradigmatic pagan figure, whose predictions were of limited scope (containing the *fata Romanorum*, as opposed to the universality of Biblical predictions) and, more specifically, did not predict that the God of the Hebrews and his prophets would eventually be universally recognized, while cults of other gods would be destroyed (the fulfillment of which Biblical prediction Augustine saw in the contemporary imperial anti-pagan legislation):
(27 [19]): Si enim di sunt, quorum vates consulti ab hominibus ut non dicam fefellerunt, proxima tamen privatis negotiis responderunt, quomodo non est deus, cuitus vates...de universo genere humano adque omnibus gentibus ea tanto ante praelexerunt, quae nunc et legimus et videmus?  si deum dicunt, quo impleta Sibylla fata cecinit Romanorum, quomodo non est deus, qui...omnes nationes in se...creditur...exhibit? ... (28 [20]) Aut legant, si possunt, vel aliquam Sibyllarum vel quemlibet aliorum vatum suorum praedixisse hoc futurum, ut deus Hebraeorum deus Israhel ab omnibus gentibus coleretur, et quod eum cultores aliorum deorum recte antea respuissent, futuras etiam litteras prophetarum eius in auctoritate ita sublimit, ut his obtemperans etiam imperium Romanorum iuberet deleri simulacra, monuisse etiam, ne talibus praeceptis obtemperaretur: legant ista, si possunt, ex aliquibus libris vatum suorum.

Omitto enim dicere, quod ea quae in illorum libris leguntur pro nostra, hoc est christiana religione testimonium dicunt, quod a sanctis angelis et ab ipsis prophetis nostris audire potuerunt, sicut et praesentem in carne Christum etiam daemonia coacta sunt confiteri. Sed haec omitto, quae cum proferimus a nostris ficta esse contendunt: ipsi omnino, ipsi urgenderi sunt, ut proferant a vatibus deorum suorum contra deum Hebraeorum aliquid prophetatum... [De Cons. Evang. 1.27-28 (19-20)]

Nevertheless, Augustine brings up the idea that some of what the pagan seers said in fact supports Christianity. Furthermore, he suggests mechanisms whereby such support could be explained: just as demons were compelled to tell the truth when Christ was present on earth, so these pagan texts may contain some truth; the source of information would be the "holy angels" or "our prophets." The inclusion of ab ipsis prophetis nostris allows for the possibility that literal hearing is involved, but Augustine does not make it clear who the subject of audire is, the seers themselves or the spirits inspiring them. At first glance, it appears to be the seers, in which case he is imagining that they were informed by the angels or the prophets—in the latter case, an instance of the "plagiarism" theory, but in

namely, that even if there may be predictions by demons of their own destruction, pagans could nevertheless not adduce words spoken by their own gods against the God of Israel: nec unquam antea protulerunt, nec unquam postea, nisi forte confictum, proferre conabuntur, aliquid deos suos per vates suos contra Deum Israel ausos praedicere fuisse aut dicere (8.12). Cf. also the example of Hermes Trismegistus, cited in De Civ. Dei 8.23-24, who foretells the overthrow of the gods of Egypt (NB: "he seems to foretell the present time" [8.23])—and mourns. Hermes mixes true things with false: he knows something about the one God, specifically criticizing those who make material gods (Ascl. 37), but persists in his attachment to the false gods. Vide si non et vi divina maiorum suorum erorem praeteritum prodere, et vi diabolic a poenam daemonum futuram dolere compltellitur (De Civ. Dei 8.24). He mourned because he knew they would be destroyed, but tam inpudenter dolebat, quam inpudenter sciebat. Non enim haec ei revelaverat sanctus Spiritus, sicut prophetis sanctis... Huic autem Aegyptio illi spiritus indicaverant futura tempora perditionis suae (De Civ. Dei 8.23).
the former, Augustine would be leaving open the possibility that at some times, pagan seers may have been inspired by good angels—a strange idea. The other, more likely option is suggested by the comparison with Christ's career that follows: it was the demons/pagan gods, here implicitly characterized as evil angels, who intercepted the information either from good angels or prophets, and revealed it through their instruments. If that reading is correct, the activity of the pagan prophets remains squarely in the pagan sphere, with no intervention by the Christian God. For the Sibyl specifically, of course, there is no question: Augustine introduces her as "singing the Romans' fates" by the inspiration of the god Apollo.

It is difficult to determine how seriously Augustine means the reference to the agreement of some pagan oracular sources with Christian truth, however, since, in fact, it comes as a *praeteritio*: he forgoes adducing such sources because his opponents argue that they are forged by Christians. This passage, then, is the earliest that shows Augustine's awareness that pagans rejected Sibylline and other ostensibly pagan prooftexts cited by Christians, although his justification implies that he himself does not agree with the charges of forgery. Augustine's familiarity with pagan challenges of such sources is thus first manifest in the work in which he is attempting to combat neo-Platonic critique of Christianity, and hence can be assumed to know more about pagan discussion of the Sibyl, insofar as that may have appeared in anti-Christian writings. If the suggestion were true that Porphyry himself perhaps made disparaging remarks about texts like *OrSib* and Christian use of them (*supra*, pp. 217-218), this would make sense, although the charge of forgery is attested as early as Celsus, and would not have been difficult for others to formulate. There is no way of knowing whether, if Porphyry in fact turned his attention to *OrSib*, he treated them in any extended fashion or simply rejected such texts in an off-hand way. In any case, Augustine's mention of the pagan objections

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68 The example of Balaam and the ass comes to mind, but for Balaam this is not inspiration; contrast *De Civ. Dei* 18.47, where the possible sources of knowledge about Christ in the pagan world are true (divine) inspiration and instruction *per malos angelos.*
gives an important glimpse into the other side of the conversation about the Sibylline oracles quoted by Christians: at least one sector of pagan society (in the late 4th/early 5th century, and possibly earlier?), a sector which was, granted, intellectual and vocal in criticism of Christianity, simply dismissed Christian-leaning oracles out of hand as inauthentic, obvious forgeries.\(^{69}\) The Manichaean Faustus, on the other hand, for all his critical acumen, had not apparently acknowledged the objection that the supposedly helpful pagan oracles were patent counterfeits.

Although Augustine demonstrates an awareness of his opponents' critical attitude towards some Sibylline oracles, it should not necessarily be assumed that he knows any more about the contents of \(OrSib\). These in fact tally somewhat with Augustine's characterization of \(Biblical\) prophets here: the Jewish and Christian Sibyl does indeed vehemently denounce idolatry and predict the downfall of polytheism (see, e.g., \(OrSib\) 3.29-35, 556-7, 772-5; fr. 1.20-22). It seems difficult to believe that if Augustine really were familiar with any of the extant corpus of \(OrSib\), he would proceed as though, whatever predictions of Christ the Sibyl may have made, his opponents would surely not be able to find in Sibylline texts predictions directed against pagan gods. Thus, if Augustine had no real contact with \(OrSib\), his information is still derived from hearsay and traditional texts such as Virgil which mention the Sibyl.\(^{70}\) If, on the other hand, his primary knowledge of Sibylline texts was through the mediation of Virgil, he seems perhaps overly eager to defer the reference. That is to say, pagan doubts about authenticity could be readily disposed of by the fact that Virgil antedated Jesus, and with more conviction than Ps.-Justin's and Lactantius' appeals to pre-Christian mentions of the

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\(^{69}\) On the other hand, there is no evidence that pagans rejected Christian use of Hermes Trismegistus or Orpheus on the grounds that their texts were interpolated by Christians, except (perhaps) this passage.

\(^{70}\) In this sense, Roessli, p. 265, is certainly correct in saying that Augustine's conception of the Sibyl "découle de cette lecture chrétienne de la quatrième Églogue"—except that this is too restrictive, and it is not clear to what extent Augustine is convinced of a truly "Christian reading" of Virgil's poem. Roessli's position suffers from the common overestimation of Augustine's attraction to the figure of the Sibyl. On the other hand, he notes (p. 264) that there is a reference (i.e., \(fata Romanorum\)) in Augustine's treatment here to the \(Libri Sibyllini\), which (he says) must not be confused with \(OrSib\)—but Augustine himself does not make a clear distinction either.
Sibyl. Up to this point in his writings, Augustine has revealed only a single very specific idea about the content of Christianity-friendly Sibylline oracles: they were the basis of the 4th Eclogue. He would not, therefore, have the task of defending a more extensive corpus of oracles of the Sibyl, like his Christian predecessors. Yet Augustine still appears reluctant to show certainty about such sources.

Two letters from Augustine to cultured pagans a few years after De Cons. Ev. use the lines from Ecl. 4 quoted in Ep. 258, and show Augustine still appealing to the authority of Virgil's Sibylline poem. These are in fact the first examples of Augustine's positive use of "Sibylline" material in an apologetic context. Ep. 104 is addressed to the elderly noble pagan Nectarius, and dates to Mar./Apr. 409. The reason for writing was an anti-Christian riot at Calama (described in Ep. 111.8), for which Nectarius is asking Augustine to use his influence in securing clemency; but Augustine does not accede to the request—rather, he rebuts Nectarius' arguments, and goes so far as to urge Nectarius to embrace Christianity himself without delay, as a way of improving the morals of his fellow-citizens by example.

Inde praecisis omnibus dilationibus ad illius [sc. Dei or Christi] gratiam confugiendum est, cui verissime dici potest, quod carmine adulatorio cui nobili dixit, qui tamen ex Cumaeo tamquam ex prophetico carmine se accepisse confessus est:

Te duce si qua manent sceleris vestigia nostri,
Inrita perpetua solvent formidine terras.
Hoc enim duce solutis omnibus dimissisque peccatis hac via ad caelestem patriam pervenitur, cuius habitacione cum eam tibi amandam, quantum potui, commendarem, admodum delectatus es. (Ep. 104.11)

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71 R. B. Eno, “Epistulae,” in AttA, p. 301; note also Ep. 90 and 103, letters from Nectarius to Augustine, and 91, another letter of Augustine to Nectarius; Nectarius' son Paradoxus is described by Augustine as observans adolescens (Ep. 104.4); H. Huisman, Augustinus' briefwisseling met Nectarius (Amsterdam, 1956), 12-13, 145, suggests on the basis of Augustine's terms of address that Nectarius was not a decurion but in fact was a proconsul or vicar of Africa; PLRE 2: 774, s.v. Nectarius 1, suggests possibly defensor civitatis at Calama.

72 Augustine's first letter to Nectarius (Ep. 91.2, 10) expresses hope that Nectarius was in fact on the way to becoming a Christian, but Mandouze, Prosopographie, pp. 778-9 (s.v. Nectarius), suggests that this implication may be the result of Nectarius' rhetorically sympathetic self-presentation, not a sincere movement towards Christianity; note that Augustine recognizes this possibility at Ep. 104.3 (p. 589.4-8). Nectarius' father had already become a Christian, as Mandouze, p. 778, points out (from Ep. 91.2).
Unlike in *Ep.* 258, Augustine does not explicitly equate *Cumaeum* with *Sibyllinum*, but such an equation can be assumed. He does at least refer to Virgil's source as prophetic, or at least assumes that Virgil himself considered it prophetic—Augustine does not commit himself to that view explicitly. Virgil was not, however, intentionally disseminating prophecy, in Augustine's view; Augustine distinguishes between the occasional function of the poem—praise of Pollio—and its acknowledged origin in a "prophetic song."

Nevertheless, the poem's Sibylline origin presents the possibility that there might originally have been a "höheren Sinn," and thus in some sense Virgil's lines *really* refer to the Savior (or God).\(^{73}\) Thus Prümm, but it is important to observe that Augustine's phraseology can be read simply as applying the Virgilian poem to a new context—*cui verissime dici potest* may simply be saying that the words apply better to Christ than they did to their originally intended referent, not that the *Eclogue* as it stands has a higher meaning.

In 411,\(^{74}\) Augustine addressed *Ep.* 137 to the pagan senator Volusianus,\(^{75}\) in an attempt to resolve some of Volusianus' difficulties about Christianity. He refers to the teaching of Christ as confirmatory of truth proclaimed by the prophets, as well as by (pagan) poets and philosophers. Then, moving from Christ's teaching to his work of purification, he cites Virgil, but without reference to the purported Sibylline source of these lines:

\[ \textit{quod ergo ad magisterium eius [sc. Iesu] adtinet, quis nunc extremus idiota vel quae abiecta muliercula non credit animae inmortalitatem vitamque post mortem} \]

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\(^{73}\)Prümm, p. 68; at n. 1, he points out the ambiguity of *illius*, which could simply refer to *Deus* (line 26 in Goldbacher's edition), in which case Augustine's interpretation is not specifically Messianic.

\(^{74}\)R. B. Eno in *AttA*, p. 302.

\(^{75}\) For Volusianus (Rufius Antonius Agrypnius Volusianus), see *PLRE* vol. 2 s.v. Volusianus 6, pp. 1184-5; A. Chastagnol, *Les Fastes de la Préfecture de Rome au Bas-Empire* (Paris, 1962), pp. 276-9; id., "Le Sénateur Volusien et la conversion d'une famille de l'aristocratie romaine au Bas-Empire," *REA* 58 (1956), pp. 241-53, who suggests (pp. 252-3), following M. Rampolla, *Santa Melania Giuniore, senatrice romana* (Rome, 1905), pp. 130-33, that he should be identified with "Antonius," the addressee of (Ps.-) Paulinus of Nola, *Carm.* 32 (For this poem and its probable spuriousness see D. E. Trout, *Paulinus of Nola*, p. 272; Walsh in his translation of the poems, p. 419); shortly before his death in January 437 Volusianus was baptized, persuaded by his niece Melania the Younger. Volusianus was one of the "circle of Symmachus" in the analysis of Bloch, pp. 199-213.

The point of the allusion to Ecl. 4.25 is not entirely clear, but Augustine is obviously referring in some way to the spread of Christianity. Courcelle connects this interpretation with that of Constantine, who paraphrases the end of the line τὸ ὀμομον πλήθος τῶν θρησκευόντων. The note (of Henri de Valois) in Migne on Constantine's interpretation of this line (PG 20: 1295-6 n. 65) literalistically takes Augustine's use of amomum Assyrium as a reference to the doctrine of Pherecydes "Assyrius"—the immortality of the soul—and then criticizes this interpretation as inferior to Constantine's because since Pherecydes was from Syrus, and thus could be designated "Syrius," he could certainly not be called "Assyrius." This is certainly true; Augustine, however, could be punning, or, more likely, was himself led astray by the similarity of Syrus, Syrius and Assyrius, and the problem may lie originally in the mss. of his source.

That Augustine intends Syrius to be taken as equivalent to Assyrius is clear from the close proximity of the reference to "Pherecydes Syrius" and the Virgilian allusion. As for the quotation of Ecl. 4.13-14, Augustine applies these lines to the effect of Christ's grace, just

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77 The note justifies Constantine's reading by noting that Abraham, the "father of believers," could be called "Assyrius." Earlier editions of Augustine's Ep., including Migne (PL 33: 521), printed Pherecydes Assyrius. Hence S. Benko, "Virgil's Fourth Eclogue in Christian Interpretation," ANRW II.31.1 (1980), p. 675, similarly (depending on Migne and the NPNF translation) criticizes Augustine's characterization of Pherecydes as "Assyrian" and the implication that the immortality of the soul was an "originally Assyrian belief."

78 W. Parsons (FC 20: 28) in fact translates, confusedly, "the Syrian Pherecydes" (and then, n. 12 ad loc., makes Pherecydes' homeland the island of Scyros).

79 His source seems to have been Cicero, Tusc. Disp. 1.16.38 (noted in app. [CCSL]), where Pherecydes is identified as the first teacher of this idea, and the master of Pythagoras; Pherecydes is called Syrius (edd.: from Syrus), but the mss. give Syrus (Syrian), which was presumably also the reading of Augustine's copy—and therefore, probably the true reading in Ep. 137.

80 In C. Acad. 3.17 (37), moreover, he identifies Pherecydes as "Syrian" (Syrus) as opposed to "Greek"—and attributes to him the same idea, that human souls are eternal: Pythagoras autem Graecam philosophiam non contentus...postquam commotus Pherecydæ cuiusdam Syri disputationibus immortalem esse animum credidit, multis sapientes...peregrinatus audierat.
as he did before (cf. *ad illius gratiam confugiendum*, Ep. 104.11). He does not allude to Virgil's Sibylline source, but the text of the *Eclogue* itself is now treated as prophetic—as Virgil once said, the "Assyrian amomum" is now widespread—and, as before, is considered to have either a "deeper meaning" or at least a better, more appropriate application.

Augustine's citation of Virgil in these two letters is an example of the apologetic use of pagan authorities in favor of Christianity. Either Virgil alone (in *Ep.* 137) or his source, the Sibyl (in *Ep.* 104), is characterized as "prophetic," and Virgil's text is interpreted to include a reference to Christ. Nevertheless, the appeal to these authorities is not strong, and Augustine does not insist that Virgil (or the Sibyl) intended the prediction of Christ. Rather, it appears that using the 4th *Eclogue* was a display of classical learning, an appeal to common culture in the hope of convincing by manner rather than by the specific content of his Virgilian exegesis. Nevertheless, the classical references are far from "ornamental"; the contexts are too serious. Elsewhere in these and similar letters, Augustine quotes from traditional Latin authors to advance his argument, especially drawing the addressee toward Scripture by the use of a parallel pagan text. This practice is natural especially in the letter to the educated pagan

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81 Prümm, p. 67, emphasizes the seriousness of the situations of each exchange.
82 As opposed to the Epicureans, Augustine cites the philosophers which Cicero calls *consulares* because of their great authority, who think the soul survives death and goes to either beatitude or misery; immediately after the quotation, he refers to the Scriptures: *hoc congruit et litteris sacris, quorum me cupio litteratorem* (*Ep.* 104.3—see Hagendahl, *Augustine*, pp. 92, 518); a quotation from Terence shows the pernicious moral influence of pagan mythology (*Eun.* 584-91 at *Ep.* 91.4); another, more positively, shows that the same deed may be different morally for different people (*Ad.* 824-5 at *Ep.* 138.4—to Marcellinus, advising him how to answer pagan criticism); Rome's pre-Christian moral decline is indicated by quotations from Sallust (*Jug.* 35.10; *Cat.* 11.6) and Juvenal (*Sat.* 6.287-96) at *Ep.* 138.16; the virtue of clemency (a parallel to Jesus' teachings) is shown to be familiar to Sallust (*Cat.* 9.5 at *Ep.* 138.9) and Cicero (*Pro Lig.* 12.37 at *Ep.* 104.16); there follows a transition similar to that used with the *Eclogue* quotation: *quanto magis debet ea* [i.e., misericordia, mentioned in the quotation from Cicero] *in ecclesiis, quando eum sequuntur, qui dixit* [quotes *Joh.* 14.6]; examples of moral virtue are cited from Roman History (Cincinnatus and Fabricius at *Ep.* 104.6; cf. refs. to Cicero, *De re pub.* in *Ep.* 91.3-4). Cf. also the exchange between the grammarian Maximus and Augustine: Maximus defends pagan worship by quoting Virgil (*Ep.* 16.4); Augustine responds with Virgilian quotations to attack pagan worship (*Ep.* 17.3)—this is cited by M. E. Keenan, "Classical Writers in the Letters of Augustine," *CJ* 32 (1936), p. 36.
Volusianus, who quotes from Virgil's *Eclogues* himself. Augustine is thus simply defending Christianity by showing its compatibility with high-prestige Roman texts, but does not go so far as to use Sibylline material as prooftext.

*De Civitate Dei*

Meanwhile, over the course of Augustine's career thus far, oracles had figured in the conflicts between Christianity and paganism in the world at large, as has been sketched in the first chapter. *Inter alia*, an oracle of which Augustine was aware promised the end of Christianity after 365 years of existence; and anti-pagan measures included the destruction of the *Libri Sibyllini* by Stilicho. These conflicts were the background for Augustine's *magnum opus* of apologetic, *De Civitate Dei*. The immediate catalyst for it was the sack of Rome by the Goths in 410: pagan critics alleged that this confirmed their ideas that the fate of Rome was bound up with the maintenance of traditional religion, blaming Christianity for the disaster, while Augustine was moved to develop elaborately his opposing view, which denied the connection between divine favor and the success of the Roman state assumed by both pagan and Christian triumphalists. His ultimate aim was to "dissociate Rome's historical destiny from that

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83Ep. 135 quotes Ecl. 8.13 and 4.61—the latter in connection with Jesus' "gestation period"—Courcelle, "Les exégèses chrétiennes," p. 307, assumes that this indicates that Volusianus was aware of Christian use of the Eclogue.

of Christianity." The composition of Augustine's new work of Christian apologetics occupied the Father intermittently between 412 or 413 and 427, in the preparation for which he embarked on a careful examination of a great deal of pagan literature, giving this work a "unique position" in Augustine's works when it comes to the use of classical Latin sources: the preponderance of his quotations from antiquarian and historical sources such as Varro and Sallust come from De Civ. Dei, and a disproportionate percentage also of his quotations from writers such as Cicero and Virgil.

It is Augustine's remarks about the Sibyl in De Civ. Dei 18.23 which especially concern us here; they made a very great impression on posterity, and also mark a significant shift in Augustine's thinking about the Sibyl: he finally claims that she should be counted as part of the City of God. The scruples and cautions of his prior use do not entirely disappear, but his very positive treatment here stands in stark contrast to most of his earlier tentative, diffident, and allusive uses or mentions of Sibylline material. It is all the more impressive, coming as it does in the later period of his life, when the debate with Pelagianism had caused him to harden his position on the possibilities of salvation outside the nation of Israel before the incarnation. As will be seen, more intimate knowledge of more extensive Sibylline texts caused him to change his mind about the status of the Sibyl.

85 O'Daly, in Augustinus-Lexikon, 1: 972.
86 413: Fortin, "Civitate Dei, De," in AttA, p. 196; "not before 412": O'Daly, Augustine's City of God, p. 32; O'Daly in Augustinus-Lexikon, 1: 972.
87 Hagendahl, Augustine, p. 705; the percentages of quotations in De Civ. Dei (compared to totals in all Augustine's works) are 33% for Cicero, 44% for Virgil, 67% for Sallust, and 92% for Varro.
88 For the general question of salvation outside Israel before Christ, see K. Prümm, pp. 54-77; Bardy's note 54 in La Cité de Dieu, BA 36: 767-8; and for exhaustive treatment, Capéran.
Sibylline texts first come into the work, however, in their traditional Roman incarnation: the *Libri Sibyllini.* The first five books of *De Civ. Dei* challenge the idea that the pagan gods were ever acting providentially for Rome's welfare—one important assumption of the pagan critics of Christianity. The same types of disasters which Rome had suffered in the recent past had happened in earlier times as well, and the gods themselves provided no help. In fact, the Christian God himself was responsible for Roman success in building an empire, which was an earthly reward for their human virtues.

In the third book, the Sibylline Books are mentioned twice for their religious instructions at crises in the Roman Republic: during a plague (272 B.C.) affecting women at the time of the war with Pyrrhus, the Sibylline Books urged as remedy that a number of shrines which had been turned to private use be restored (*De Civ. Dei* 3.17); during the First Punic War (249 B.C.), the Secular Games were re-instituted at the behest of the Sibylline Books (3.18). These episodes present no discernible differences in treatment from that of other aspects of traditional pagan cult in these books. Just as Augustine mocks the oracle of Apollo, which equivocally promised that either Pyrrhus could defeat the Romans, or the Romans him (*Dico te, Pyrrhe, vincere posse Romanos*—*Civ. Dei* 3.17), so he belittles the instructions of the Sibylline Books: the shrines had rightly lost their religious functions because prayers had long been made there fruitlessly; and in the case of the *Ludi Saeculares,* Augustine grants sardonically that the *inferi,* in

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89 On which references, see Roessli, pp. 276-77.
90 See O'Daly, *Augustine's City of God,* pp. 74-100; O'Daly in *Augustinus-Lexikon,* 1: 983-7.
91 See, e.g., *De Civ. Dei* 5.21-22; 5.15 for the Empire as reward.
92 Cf. Orosius, *Hist.* 4.2.2.
93 Cf. Zosimus, *Nova Hist.* 2.4.1: νόσων καὶ πολέμων ἐνοχημαντῶν; Livy, *Perioch.* 49, treating the Games of 149 B.C.: *ludi Diti patri...qui ante annum centesimum primo Punico bello...facti erant.*
94 Cf. Cicero, *De Div.* 2.56.116, where the oracle to Pyrrhus is mentioned (in Ennius' version) in a context of general dismissal of oracles because of their ambiguities.
whose honor the games were held, were pleased and thus ready to celebrate, because of the large numbers of men dying (in the war).\textsuperscript{95} He explicitly characterizes the remedy of the second episode as ridiculous and useless: \textit{Tunc magno metu perturbata Romana civitas ad remedia vana et ridenda currebat.} He goes into more detail at the first mention of the Sibyl, citing Cicero's \textit{De Div.} for a cynical interpretation of the way in which the Sibylline Books could be manipulated: \textit{In quo genere oraculorum, sicut Cicero in libris de divinatione commemorat, magis interpretibus ut possunt seu volunt dubia coniectantibus credi solet.}\textsuperscript{96} It should further be noted that nearby in Cicero's text there is a reference to the existence of acrostics in Sibylline texts; (re)reading this in his research for \textit{De Civ. Dei} may well have made Augustine sensitive to the acrostic he eventually quotes in 18.23, although he does not cite Cicero to defend the authenticity of \textit{OrSib} as Constantine does. In general, then, Augustine's mentions of the Sibylline Books in \textit{De Civ. Dei} 3 show him falling back on the familiar: the Sibyl was one of the

\textsuperscript{95} Nimirum enim, quando renovati sunt, tanta copia morientium ditatos inferos etiam ludere delectabat, cum propecto miseri homines ipsa rabida bella et cruentas animositas funereasque hinc atque inde victorias magnos ludos daemonum et opimas epulas inferorum. The reference to the Secular Games could have added resonance in the early 5th century: Zosimus, who provides an extended excursus on them, considers that the beginning of the Empire's decline can be traced back to the failure by Constantine and Licinius to celebrate them at the beginning of the 4th century (\textit{Nova Hist.} 2.7). Cf. also 2.5.5: ἀλλα...ἐποίητο, ὅν ἐπετελουμένων διέμειν ἢ ἄργη Ἄρματων ἀπλόητος. Eunapius, therefore, is likely to have been of the same opinion (see F. Paschoud in Zosime: Histoire nouvelle, vol. 1 [Paris, 2000], p. 204. Claudian, celebrating the inauguration of Honorius' sixth consulship (404), alludes to the Secular Games as appropriate to be held, 200 years after Septimius Severus produced them (\textit{VI Cons. Hon.} 388-91); the celebratory games actually held he describes later in the poem (611-39). Augustine dwells on the bloodthirstiness of the demons in connection with the institution of the Secular Games.

\textsuperscript{96} Dyer's translation: "great faith is usually placed in interpreters, who make whatever conjectures they can or wish as to the meaning of obscure passages." The Ciceronian passage Augustine has in mind is probably \textit{De Div.} 2.54.112, according to Pease (\textit{ad loc.}): \textit{cum antistitibus [sc. the XVvirī] agamus ut quidvis potius ex illis libris quam regem proferant...} Pease points out the force of \textit{quidvis}—one might also consider the implications of the sentence as a whole—in showing that the quindecimviri had some latitude of interpretation. The "king" appears because of the story in section 2.54.110: \textit{Quorum [sc. versuum Sibylleae] interpres nuper falsa quadam hominum fama dicturus in senatu putabatur eum quem re vera regem habeabamus appellandum quoque esse regem, si salvi esse vellemus.} Here there is an explicit mention of an "interpreter." Hagendahl, \textit{Augustine}, p. 71, thinks rather that Augustine is recalling Cicero's passage about portents and dreams (rather than oracles), \textit{De Div.} 2.71.147: \textit{nil prorsus somnis tribuendum sit, praesertim cum...i qui interpretatur, coniecturam adhibeant...
traditional figures of Roman religion, to be treated in the same way as the rest of the pagan apparatus. His account specifically assimilates the Libri Sibyllini to (other) oracles, whose obscurity made them profitless, and includes the Sibyl as one target of his ethical criticism of pagan cult (De Civ. Dei 2.4-5).

Somewhat later in the work (De Civ. Dei 10.27), the Sibyl appears again, this time in another guise already seen in Augustine's writings: the poetry of Virgil. Augustine makes reference to Virgil's 4th Eclogue and to his putative source, the Cumaean Sibyl, in the midst of his own criticisms of Porphyry—including some words that have been taken as still more revealing. In a context arguing against the Neoplatonist theurgy and its promises of purification of the soul, Augustine addresses Porphyry, wishing that he might have acknowledged Christ, quem vestra, ut tu ipse scribis, oracula sanctum immortalemque confessa sunt. Prümm concludes, on the basis of this phrase and the fact that Augustine goes on to cite the 4th Eclogue, that the reference is to Sibylline oracles—that Porphyry himself therefore must have conceded that (authentic) Sibylline texts called Christ "holy and immortal." Courcelle argues, similarly, with reference to the Sibylline acrostic (see infra, p. 382), that the faulty translation of it that Augustine mentions at De Civ. Dei 18.23 might have come from a translation of Porphyry's Phil. ex orac.; he connects the description of a prose translation of oracles in Porphyry with

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97 Cf. the parallel attitude of Orosius in his Hist. c. paganos (supra, pp. 103-104).
98 For which, see, e.g., De Civ. Dei 2.4-5, 8.
99 For the contents of Book 10, see O'Daly, Augustine's City of God, pp. 122-34.
100 Mentioned by name at the beginning of 10.26, in the middle of which chapter the address to Porphyry begins. On Augustine's knowledge of Porphyry (but esp. of the Contra Christianos), see Pépin, Théologie cosmique et théologie chrétienne (Paris, 1964), pp. 458-61: his knowledge of the Contra Christianos was indirect and incomplete; Teselle, Augustine the Theologian (New York, 1970), pp. 237-52.
101 Prümm, p. 69; similarly, Kurfess, "Die Sibylle in Augustins Gottesstaat," pp. 532-3, takes the mention of oracula vestra as referring to Sibylline oracles, although he does not draw Prümm's further inference on Augustine's source.
102 Courcelle, Late Latin Writers and Their Greek Sources, tr. by H. E. Wedecks (Cambridge, MA, 1969), p. 190 (= Les lettres grecques en occident: De Macrobe à Cassiodore, BEFAR 159 [Paris, 1943], p. 177), cited with approbation by Bardy, in BA 36: 757. Later, Courcelle argues that Augustine depends on Constantine (see infra, n. 128).
103 De Civ. Dei 19.23: hos versus Apollinis, qui non stante metro Latine interpretati sunt...
that of the inept translation of the acrostic.\footnote{De Civ. Dei 18.23: versibus male Latinis et non stantibus...per nescio cuius interpretis imperitiam.} In either case, a very dramatic addition to the contents of Porphyry's work would have been made: the intellectual arch-enemy of Christianity might have included Jewish or Christian forgeries of Sibyline material in his work on oracles.

Courcelle's suggestion, however, is pure conjecture; the verbal echo he finds is coincidental and trivial. In the first case, there is no suggestion that the translation is imperfect, as there is in the second. Translations of Porphyry's Phil. ex orac. surely had no monopoly on non-metrical Latin versions of Greek verse. The oracula vestra mentioned in the present passage, furthermore, have no necessary connection with the quotation of Virgil, which is introduced, immediately following the words already quoted, in the following terms: \textit{de quo etiam poeta nobilissimus...dixit}; only after presenting his interpretation of the lines in reference to Christ does he expound their Sibylline origin, by reference to Ecl. 4.4, apparently in order to explain how it was that these lines could "really" be about Christ: \textit{Nam utique non hoc a se ipso se dixisse Vergilius...indicat, ubi ait: Ultima Cumaei venit iam carminis aetas; unde hoc a Cumaea Sibylla dictum esse incunctanter appareat.}\footnote{Taking Prümm's argument to its logical conclusion, Porphyry must have cited not just Sibyline texts, but the 4th Eclogue itself with reference to Christ—which of course is unthinkable.} Thus, in adducing Virgil, Augustine is simply citing another oracular endorsement of Christ, not specifically the oracles Porphyry writes about. The choice of quotation—not a generic approbation of Christ—is determined by the context of polemic against theurgy: as Augustine emphasizes before and after the quotation, Christ offers true purification. Virgil's words are apt for the theme as well as for their oracular origin:

\begin{quote}
\textit{Te duce, si qua manent sceleris vestigia nostri,}
\textit{Inrita perpetua solvent formidine terras.}
\end{quote}

The general words \textit{vestra...oracula} are, in fact, adequately explained by the later reference to Porphyry pointed out by Courcelle. At \textit{De Civ. Dei} 19.23, Augustine
discusses some oracles about Christ mentioned by Porphyry. In general terms, Apollo and Hecate being the named oracular deities in this context, Porphyry says: *Christum enim dìi piissimum pronuntiaverunt et immortalem factum...* There follows an oracle of Hecate, which mention's Christ's *immortalis anima*, and calls it the soul of a *vir pietate praestantissimus*; Porphyry explains as follows: *Piissimum igitur virum...eum dixit et eius animam, sicut et aliorum piorum, post obitum immortalitate dignatam...*\(^{106}\) This fits Augustine's wording ("holy and immortal") at 10.27 quite well,\(^ {107}\) and, given that Porphyry is not attested as quoting Sibyline Oracles elsewhere\(^ {108}\)—rather, as already mentioned, there is some reason to think he may have made disparaging remarks about them—it is more likely that Augustine has in mind oracles like that of Hecate.

Considered solely as a use of the *4th Eclogue*, however, this passage represents a slightly increased comfort with the Christological interpretation of that poem than Augustine has displayed before. At first, he clearly separates between the poet's intention and his own Christian interpretation: Virgil spoke *poetice quidem, quia in alterius adumbrata persona, veraciter tamen, si ad ipsum referas*. Prümm goes too far in arguing that Augustine's interpretation here represents an attempt to restore the "original" sense of Virgil's *Vorlage*; that Augustine claims the poem "should properly and truly be applied to Christ."

Rather, the Father says that the poet did speak truly, *if*, that is, one does in fact apply it to Christ. It is true that a few lines later, Augustine says without apology that the verse was uttered concerning Christ: *de quo iste versus expressus est*. After this, he defends his observation by noting Virgil's Sibyline source. At most, one can say that Augustine is wavering toward the view Prümm ascribes to him, but not that he insists on it—nevertheless, this is further than he has gone heretofore, although the fact that he

\(^{106}\) Porphyry, F 345 Smith; Greek *ap. Eus.*, *DE* 3.7.1.


\(^{108}\) Pizzani, "L'Acrostico cristologico della Sibilla," p. 386, evinces doubts about Courcelle's argument, precisely since the philosopher is not otherwise attested to have taken any of the extant *OrSib* into consideration.

\(^{109}\) Prümm, p. 69.
appeals to the underlying Sibylline oracle in parallel to an oracle plausibly ascribed to Hecate still allows for the possibility that Augustine was not strongly distinguishing Sibylline from other pagan material. As the final major passage in this work dealing with the Sibyl will show, however, the Bishop of Hippo made the acquaintance of material that could have justified a more confident use of Virgil's poem.

In the eighteenth book of the *De Civitate Dei*, Augustine finally delivers his most extensive discussion of the Sibyl (*De Civ. Dei* 18.23). Not only so, but this is also the only time he cites specific oracles entirely distinct from Virgil's *4th Eclogue*. The discussion appears in the review of the history of the profane world in the latter part of *De Civ. Dei* (especially Book 18). One intention of his treatment of pagan chronology in relation to Biblical chronology, and of his focus on prophets among the Hebrews in books 17-18, is to show the antiquity of Biblical "wise men" by comparison with the Greek philosophers. At the same time, Augustine is attempting to trace the progress of the City of God throughout human history; thus, at 16.10, investigating the post-diluvial world, he decides to follow the line of Shem, but notes that it is not possible to distinguish between the earthly and heavenly cities using outward criteria—hence, even before the Tower of Babel, *fortass... et in filiis duorum illorum* [Shem and Japheth] *iam tunc, antequam Babylonia coepisset institui, fuerunt contemptores Dei, et in filiis Cham cultores Dei*. He includes an account of the *theologi* Orpheus, Musaeus, and Linus, in

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110 Note the programmatic 18.1: *Nunc ego, quod intermiseram, video esse faciendum, ut ex Abraham temporibus quo modo etiam illa [sc. civitas saeculi] curret, quantum satis videtur, attingam, ut ambae inter se possint consideratione legentium comparari.*

111 O'Daly, *Augustine's City of God*, p. 188; cf. Roessli, p. 267.

112 Hence, Roessli, p. 267, is not quite right to say that the Sibyls have a place that is "tout à fait exceptionnelle."
which he acknowledges that sometimes they spoke truly about the one God, but also
continued to be involved in polytheism:

\[
si quid de uno vero Deo inter multa vana et falsa cecinerunt, colendo cum illo
alis, qui dii non sunt, eisque exhibendo famulatum, qui uni tantum debetur Deo,
non ei utique rite servierunt nec a fabuloso deorum suorum dedecore etiam ipsi se
abstinere potuerunt. (18.14)
\]

The contrast with the Sibyl will be clear.

At the appropriate point in the chronology—that is, making her a probable
contemporary of Romulus—Augustine introduces the Erythraean Sibyl:

\[
Eodem tempore nonnulli Sibyllam Erythraeam vaticinatam ferunt. Sibyllas autem
Varro prodit plures fuisse, non unam. Haec sane Erythraea Sibylla quaedam de
Christo manifesta conscripsit; quod etiam nos prius in Latina lingua \[5\] versibus
male Latinis et non stantibus legimus per nescio cuius interpretis imperiti,
sicut post cognovimus. Nam vir clarissimus Flaccianus, qui etiam proconsul fuit,
homo facillimae facundiae multaeque doctrinae, cum de Christo conloqueremur,
Graecum nobis codicem protulit, carmina \[10\] esse dicens Sibyllae Erythraeae, ubi
ostendit quodam loco in capitibus versuum ordinem litterarum ita se habentem,
tut haec in eo verba legerentur: Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς Θεοῦ υἱὸς σωτῆρ,
quod est Latine, Iesus Christus Dei filius salvator. Hi autem versus, quorum
primae litterae istum sensum, quem \[15\] diximus, reddunt, sicut eos quidam
Latinis et stantibus versibus est interpretatus, hoc continent:

\[
Iudicii signum tellus sudore madescet.
E caelo rex adveniet per saecla futurus,
Scilicet ut carnem praeens, ut iudicet orbem.
\[20\] Unde Deum cernent incredulus atque fidelis
Celsum cum sanctis aevi iam termino in ipso.
Sic animae cum carne aderunt, quas iudicat ipse,
Cum iacet incultus densis in vepribus orbis.
Reicient simulacra viri, cunctam quoque gazam,
\[25\] Exuret terras ignis pontumque polumque
Inquirens, taetri portas effringet Averni.
Sanctorum sed enim cunctae lux libera carni
Tradetur, sones aeterna flamma cremabit.
Occultos actus retegens tunc quisque loquitur
\[30\] Secreta, atque Deus reserabit pectora luci.
Tunc erit et lucitus, stridebunt dentibus omnes.
Eripitur solis iubar et chorus interit astris.
Volvetur caelum, lunaris splendor obibit;
\]

\[acr. 5\]
\[acr. 10\]
\[acr. 15\]

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113 Line numbers as in CCSL; but I have added line numbers for the acrostic alone.
Deiciet colles, valles extollet ab imo.

[35] Non erit in rebus hominum sublime vel altum. 
Iam aequantur campis montes et caerula ponti. 
Omnia cessabunt, tellus confracta peribit:
Sic pariter fontes torrentur fluminaque igni.
Sed tuba tum sonitum tristem demittet ab alto.

[40] Orbe, gemens facinus miserum variosque labores, 
Tartareumque chaos monstrabit terra dehiscens.
Et coram hic Domino reges sistentur ad unum.
Reccidet e caelo ignisque et sulphuris amnis. [OrSib 8.217-43]

In his Latinis versibus de Graeco utcunque translatis ibi [45] non potuit ille 
sensus occurrere, qui fit, cum litterae, quae sunt in eorum capitibus, conectuntur, 
ubi Y littera in Graeco posita est, quia non potuerunt Latina verba inveniri, quae 
ab eadem littera incipierent et sententiae convenirent. Hi autem sunt versus tres, 
quintus et octavus decimus et nonus [50] decimus. Denique si litteras quae sunt 
icum Graece hoc dicitur, non [55] Latine. Et sunt versus viginti et septem, qui 
numerus quadratum ternarium solidum reddit. Tria enim ter ducta fiunt novem; 
et ipsa novem si ter ducantur, ut ex lato in altum figura consurgat, ad viginti 
septem perveniunt. Horum autem Graecorum quinque verbi 
orum, quae sunt Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς Θεοῦ υἱὸς σωτῆρ, quod est Latine Iesus Christus Dei 
filius salvator, si primas litteras iungas, erit ἰχθύς, id est piscis, in quo nomine 
mystice intellegitur Christus, eo quod in huius mortalitatis abysso velut in 
aquarum profunditate vivus, hoc est sine peccato, esse potuerit.

[65] Haec autem Sibylla sive Erythraea sive, ut quidam magis credunt, 
Cumaea ita nihil habet in toto carmine suo, cuius exigua ista particula est, 
quod ad deorum falsorum sive factorum cultum pertineat, quin immo ita etiam 
contra eos et contra cultores eorum loquitur, ut in eorum numero depu-[70]-tanda 
videatur, qui pertinent ad civitatem Dei. Inserit etiam Lactantius [DI 4.18-19] 
operi suo quaedam de Christo vaticinia Sibyllae, quamvis non exprimat cuuis. 
Sed quae ipse singillatim posuit, ego arbitratus sum coniuncta esse ponenda, 
tamquam unum sit proluxim, quae ille plura commemoravit et brevia. "In [75] 
manus <iniquas>, inquit, infidelum postea veniet; dabunt autem Deo alapas 
manibus incestis et inpurato ore exspuent venenatos spitus; dabit vero ad 
verbera simpliciter sanctum dorum. [OrSib 8.287-90] Et colaphos accipiens 
tacebit, ne quis agnoscat, quod verbum vel unde venit, ut inferis loquitur et 
acetum dederunt; inhospitalitatis hanc monstrabunt mensam. [OrSib 8.303-4] 
Ipsa enim insipiens tuum Deum non intellexisti, ludentum mortalium mentibus, 
sed <et> spinis coronasti et horridum fel miscuisti. [OrSib 6.22-24] Templi vero 
velum scindetur; et medio die nox erit tenebrosa [85] nimis in tribus horis. 
[OrSib 8.305-6] Et morte morietur tribus diebus somno suscepto; et tunc ab

\[114\] CCSL has the misprint quindue.
\[115\] CCSL has the misprint tota.
inferis regressus ad lucem veniet primus resurrectionis principio revocatus ostendo [OrSib 8.312-14].” Ista Lactantius carptim per intervalla disputationis suae, sicut ea poscere videbantur, quae probare intenderat, adhibuit testimonia [90] Sibyllina, quae nos nihil interponentes, sed in unam seriem conexa ponentes solis capitis, si tamen scriptores deinceps ea servare non negligant, distinguenda curavimus. Nonnulli sane Erythraeam Sibyllam non Romuli, sed belli Troiani tempore fuisse scripserrunt.

The dating of the Erythraean Sibyl as a contemporary of Romulus is in line with, and undoubtedly based on, Eusebius' Chronicon (in Jerome's translation), on which he relies for synchronizations in Book 18 in general.116 Thus, besides Romulus, Augustine has mentioned the kings of Judah and Israel, Achaz and Osee respectively (De Civ. Dei 18.22); all these were reigning when Eumelus Corinthius versificator agnoscitur et Sibylla Erythraea (p. 89b Helm).117 This dependance is further demonstrated by the brief mention of the Sibylla Samia (with no further details except the synchronization with the reigns of Numa and Manasses) at the end of the following chapter (De Civ. Dei 18.24), since a few years later in the Chronicon, with the same synchronizations, appears the notice: Sibylla, quae et <H>erofila, in Samo insignis habetur (Helm, p. 91b). These chronographic notices provide the dating, but it is likely the list of Sibyls in Lactantius, in which the Samian figures sixth, between the Erythraean and the Cumaean Sibyls (DI 1.6.9-10), that licensed Augustine to refer simply to the "Samian Sibyl," rather than to say she was famous "in Samos." Lactantius also provides the most likely basis for Augustine's alternative dating of the Erythraean Sibyl to the time of the Trojan War,

116 O'Daly, Augustine's City of God, p. 263; for his familiarity with the Chronicon in general see Courcelle, Late Latin Writers, pp. 200-201 (= Les lettres grecques, p. 187).
117 Julius Africanus, on the other hand, synchronized the Erythraean Sibyl with Ezekias (Gelzer, p. 173). C. Frick, Die Quellen Augustins im XVIII Buche seiner Schrift de civitate dei (Höxter, 1886), p. 56, thinks this is why Augustine credits nonnulli with his first dating; rather, it is to be contrasted simply with the nonnulli who date the Erythraean Sibyl contemporary with the Trojan War.
mentioned at the end of the chapter. The fact that the alternate chronology is awkwardly added at the end of the chapter could be an indication that fresh consultation of Lactantius for the purpose of transcribing the Sibylline material in the second half of the chapter, after he had established his chronology on the basis of Eusebius and was considering the question of which Sibyl produced the acrostic, prompted Augustine to look again at the Varronian list of Sibyls, *DI* 1.6, which associates the Erythraean Sibyl with the Trojan war, and hence Augustine felt obliged to add the other dating.

Augustine says that, despite knowing a defective text of the acrostic earlier, he knows the material he includes thanks to Flaccianus, a former proconsul of Africa, who showed him a manuscript of the Erythraean Sibyl. Little is known about this Flaccianus: he appears also to be mentioned in *CTh* 1.12.4, dated Oct. 7, 393, which is addressed to him as proconsul of Africa, but gives no personal information. He may be identified with a Flaccianus, an associate of Augustine earlier, in Carthage, and possibly his student, who tried to test a famous (pagan) *divinus* named Albicerius in

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118 In Lactantius' presentation of Varro's information: *quintam Erythraeam...quam Apollodorus adfirmet...Grais Ilium petentibus vaticinatam et perituram esse Troiam et Homerum mendacia scripturum* (*DI* 1.6.9). Since Augustine mentions Varro explicitly, it might be argued that he has direct acquaintance with Varro's treatment of the Sibyls, but, as observed above in the discussion of *C. Faust.*, Augustine elsewhere shows no use of the relevant books of the *Ant. Rer. Div.*, and so a debt to Lactantius, who is in fact also used in this chapter, is much more likely. By contrast, Constantine puts the Erythraean Sibyl contemporary with the Flood (*Or. ad s. c.* 18) or roughly 3000 years in the past (*Letter to Arius*).

119 Beyond what is discussed in the text, there is also the attestation of letters (now lost) from Augustine to a Flaccianus in Possidius' *Indiculum* (edited by A. Wilmart in *Miscellanea Agostiniana*, 2: 185), but Bardy in *BA* 36: 759, notes that he is there described as *ex notario*, "qualification un peu humble" for our Flaccianus; a medieval apocryphon was attributed to him, obviously on the basis of this passage of *De Civ. Dei*, for which see B. Smalley, "Flaccianus, De visionibus Sibyllae," in *Mélanges offerts a Étienne Gilson* (Toronto/Paris, 1959), pp. 547-52.

120 But NB: his name appears there as a result of emendation based on this passage of Augustine.

121 Mandouze, *Prosopographie*, p. 461, argues for the identification. The characterization as student of Augustine depends on the assumption that Licentius continues to talk about Flaccianus when he mentions (after an example of Flaccianus’ questioning of Albicerius) an incident when Albicerius was able to produce a line of Virgil to *amicus noster, discipulus tuus*. Since Flaccianus is characterized here as *doctissimus*, and later (1.7.21) says he would be more impressed if Albicerius could teach grammar or other arts, the comparison with the feat of producing a single Virgilian verse seems implicit, and therefore *discipulus tuus* should in fact be identified with Flaccianus.
Carthage (C. Acad. 1.6.18), and whom he called clarissimus and doctissimus (1.6.18).

Augustine was accustomed to repeat his critique of Albicerius (1.7.21). Flaccianus was thus curious about esoteric claims, and interested in "de-bunking" them, if possible. Furthermore, his investigations had Augustine's respect. It would certainly not be out of character for him to find a Sibylline manuscript and show it to Augustine, and the word of an experienced and learned investigator such as Flaccianus was likely to carry considerable weight.

O'Meara argues that Augustine's acquaintance with Vindicianus, a proconsul of Africa (379-82; also a well-known physician) mentioned at Conf. 4.3.5 as attempting to turn Augustine away from his fascination with astrology, was the social link by which he initially made contact with Flaccianus; Courcelle sees allusions to Flaccianus' ideas in Conf. 4.3.4, which he takes to indicate that Augustine's connection with Flaccianus had already begun at the time. The time period is roughly contemporaneous with the period mentioned in C. Acad. Courcelle further considers that the "entretien" with Flaccianus (apparently the one mentioned in De Civ. Dei 18.23) also took place at that early period. There seems to be nothing to necessitate such a conclusion, and

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122 NB: Augustine's explanation of divination in De Div. Daem. and De Civ. Dei 9.22 is very similar to Flaccianus'.
123 See PLRE s.v. (Helvius) Vindicianus 2, 1: 967. O'Donnell, Augustine: Confessiones, 2: 215, suggests that Vindicianus was not a Christian; his arguments against astrology smack of Neo-Platonism (Solignac in BA 13: 416 n. 1, ad Conf. 4.3.5)
125 Recherches sur les "Confessions" de saint Augustin, 2nd ed. (Paris, 1968), p. 76 n. 3; see notes in M. Simonetti et al., p. 164. O'Meara, The Young Augustine, pp. 95-6, slightly differently argues that the proconsul and physician Vindicianus (mentioned at Conf. 4.3.5) was the link by which Augustine made Flaccianus' acquaintance; Mandouze, Prosopographie, p. 1217, notes the similarity between Vindicianus' views on astrology and Flaccianus' debunking of Albicerius.
126 Courcelle, Recherches, p. 76 n. 3, citing Late Latin Writers, p. 190 [= Les lettres grecques, p. 177], but this does not discuss the date of their meeting.
Mandouze notes that the meeting in question is undatable. The recent turnaround in Augustine's view of the Sibyl—as late as 404/5 (De cons. evang.), what he says about her reveals at best small acquaintance with OrSib—rather suggests that Flaccianus had only recently showed him the material when he wrote De Civ. Dei 18.23. Most revealing is the challenge at De cons. evang. 1.20 [28] to produce prophecies of the rise of Christianity and the widespread rejection of idolatry, whereas the acrostic does prophesy something of the sort (Reicient simulacra viri, acr. 8) and in De Civ. Dei 18.23, Augustine asserts the Sibyl's hostility to idolatrous worship. Although after the challenge, he mentions the fact that some texts contain pro...christiana religione testimonium, he immediately goes on to associate them with demonic activity. If he had known then what he says about the Sibylline text in De Civ.Dei 18.23, it seems difficult to believe that he would have included the Sibyl so prominently in his dismissal of pagan vates in De cons. evang. One might argue similarly that Augustine's acquaintance with the "faulty translation" must therefore also be late, that (e.g.) he came across it during his research for De Civ. Dei, but the small scale (and obscurity?) of such a text may not have sufficed to give Augustine the confidence he displays at De Civ. Dei 18.23 about the general characteristics of the Sibyl's prophecies.

What was the text that Flaccianus put into Augustine's hands? The exact identity of the codex is not determinable, but it should be noted how Augustine describes it in

127 Prosopographie, p. 461.
128 Augustine says that Flaccianus showed him a Greek codex containing the oracles (carmina) of the Erythraean Sibyl—or rather, that Flaccianus said they were the oracles of that Sibyl (lines 9-10). Because the acrostic was part of this text, some scholars have been too hasty in jumping to the conclusion that what Flaccianus showed Augustine must have been some form of OrSib 8, as Potter, Prophecy and History, p. 100 n. 15, has quite rightly pointed out; the assumption is shared by Altaner, p. 245; Bardy in BA 36: 758; other scholars, however, argue that the acrostic had a separate transmission—e.g., Kurfess, "Die Sibylle in Augustins Gottestaat," p. 535-6; Mancini, pp. 537-40. The acrostic almost certainly had some degree of independent transmission. Furthermore, Augustine does not notice that the bulk of the material he draws
general. To introduce the quotation, before describing his experience with the acrostic and the phrase about Christ formed from the initial letters, Augustine characterizes its contents as *quaedam de Christo manifesta*. The eschatological motifs of the surface text are of course recognizable and paralleled in Christian texts, but the clear and obvious connection with Christ is made specifically by the acrostic itself—this must be the reference of *manifesta*. Later, Augustine describes the Sibyline text more positively and specifically still: *nihil habet...quod ad deorum falsorum...cultum pertineat*. This Sibyl, at

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from Lactantius is contained in *OrSib* 8, all within a hundred lines of the beginning of the acrostic, in the extant form of Book 8. More than likely, he did not go through the "Erythraean Sibyl" of Flaccianus carefully because it was in Greek, and he may have been relying on Flaccianus' description of the rest (so Altaner, p. 245; cf. Roessli, p. 276). The other possible explanation, of course, is that Flaccianus' text was not a version of *OrSib* 8 at all, but simply contained the acrostic along with other Jewish-Christian Sibylline material. The implications for the textual state of this "Erythraean Sibyl" depend on one's interpretation of Augustine's degree of interest in the material in general: if he was very interested and likely to have tried to read the whole text, then it probably was not a form of *OrSib* 8; if he was not so concerned with it, but was content to transmit the most easily accessible forms of Sibylline material, then really nothing can be determined about Flaccianus' *codex* except the fact that it contained the Sibylline acrostic. Altaner, p. 246, for example, thinks the reversion to Lactantian material after the acrostic shows that Augustine did not use (copy?) the whole text of Flaccianus, but only the acrostic—all that the "faulty version" contained, in Altaner's view (pp. 246-7). At this point, then, we can be certain only of the fact that Flaccianus' text included the acrostic among other Jewish/Christian Sibylline material—as Augustine noted, there was nothing in that text which espoused idolatry; but this vague description cannot identify the material more closely. See Potter, *Prophecy and History*, pp. 83-87, in general on the difficulty of identifying and authenticating oracular texts. Lactantius' description (from Varro) says that the Erythraean Sibyl prophesied to the Greeks on their way to Troy, and that her book can be distinguished from the others because her true name is in it, along with the statement that she would be called Erythraean. For Lactantius, this seems to have identified *OrSib* 3 as the Erythraean's (*OrSib* 3.414-32 on the Trojan War, with a prediction of Homer; 3.809-14 on the Sibyl's origin, predicting that she would be said to come from Erythrae), and he is fairly scrupulous about ascribing material only from Book 3 to the Erythraean Sibyl. Could Flaccianus' text have included material from Book 3 identified by Lactantius as from the Erythraean Sibyl? It is quite another question, and obviously a tricky endeavor, to attempt to characterize the faulty text Augustine says he knew before Flaccianus showed him his *codex*. Bischoff and Kurfess argue that this may be the text extant in two 9th-cen. MSS., the original possibly being a translation of *OrSib* 8 in its entirety (Kurfess, "Die Sibylle in Augustins Gottesstaat," p. 537). This text, faulty in language and meter, contains the acrostic rendered well into Latin (and explicitly pointed out) and including the final CRUX (corresponding to the Greek ΣΤΑΥΡΟΣ); Augustine's comments seem to imply that the acrostic was not evident in the version he knew earlier, and he does not include the final stanza in *De Civ. Dei* 18.23 (cf. Roessli, p. 275). Courcelle, on the other hand, "Les exégèses chretiennes," pp. 311-15, arguing that Augustine depends on Constantine for interpretation of the 4th Eclogue, further suggests (p. 315 n. 2) that the "faulty" translation was in a Latin version of Constantine's *Oratio*. But his case for dependence on Constantine is weak, and Constantine also includes the ΣΤΑΥΡΟΣ-strophe. Despite Augustine's numerological considerations, a mention of the cross would have been difficult to leave out of a Sibylline prophecy on the incarnation of Christ. There is nothing to connect Augustine's "faulty" translation either to the texts published by Bischoff or to Constantine's *Oratio*. The translation, presumably a popularly circulated "leaflet," has doubtless disappeared without a trace.

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129 See Geffcken *ad Orb* 8.217-43.
least, by contrast with the *Libri Sibyllini* already cited from Roman history, has nothing to do with idolatry or polytheism, and rather speaks against the pagan gods and their worshippers: *contra eos et contra cultores eorum loquitur*. These characterizations should be compared with Augustine's words earlier (*C. Faust.* 13.15): some ancient pagan authorities reputed to have prophesied about Christ nevertheless taught idolatry; others did not dare to oppose it; the Hebrew prophets, on the other hand, did oppose it vociferously. Here, the first characterization of the Erythraean Sibyl admits that she does in fact give prophecies about Christ—but this could apply to those who knew something about Christ from demonic inspiration; the second, that she has nothing to do with idolatry; the third, that she actually spoke out against it. Each of these is an important component of the final, surprising conclusion: that she ought to be considered a member of the City of God. She has thus achieved, in Augustine's eyes, a personal status close to that of the Hebrew prophets.

Augustine is still careful not to express himself too positively, wavering on exactly which Sibyl was involved and when she lived. Flaccianus, in any case, identified the work as the Erythraean's. There is nothing in *OrSib* 8 as extant, let alone in the acrostic itself, that would connect it with the Erythraean Sibyl.\(^{130}\) Unlike Lactantius, whose mentions of the Erythraean Sibyl always refer to *OrSib* 3, Constantine also assumes that the acrostic belongs to the Erythraean Sibyl, presumably on the basis of her pre-eminence among Sibyls in fame.\(^ {131}\) Flaccianus (or a Christian *chresmologus*)? may have made the identification on the same basis. Flaccianus' attribution to the Erythraean Sibyl has the function of identifying a different Sibyl from the one most familiar to a

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\(^{130}\) Potter, *Prophecy and History*, p. 100 n. 15.

\(^{131}\) Cf. Lact., *DI* 1.6.14: *Erythraea, quae celebrior inter ceteras ac nobilior habetur*...; cf. *supra*, n. 128, for the possibility of dependence on Constantine.
Roman audience, the Cumaean. This other Sibyl, then, was not linked with the Sibylline Books whose association with traditional Roman religion was inescapable, and which had recently been consigned to the flames after frequent appeals by pagans to their authority. Augustine, however, advances the suggestion that it was the Cumaean rather than the Erythraean Sibyl who was responsible for the acrostic and the rest of Flaccianus' text (lines 65-66). Conspicuously, he makes no connection with Virgil—i.e., he establishes no link with his own previous references to the 4th Eclogue.132 Presumably nothing in the text before him was an obvious pattern for the Eclogue. This alternate identification, moreover, is introduced in suspicious terms: *ut quidam magis credunt*. There was, then, the possibility of doubt, so presumably nothing unequivocally identifying the manuscript was to be found, nothing matching Lactantius' account of the Erythraean Sibyl. In that case, the question in Augustine's mind seems rather to be: which Sibyl(s) delivered prophecies of Christ, and which was/were to be associated with paganism? His acquaintance with the 4th Eclogue may well have convinced Augustine himself that a prophecy of Christ in Sibylline form was likely to belong to the Cumaean Sibyl (*Cumaei...carminis*), although the Cumaean Sibyl's connection to pagan cult (both through the *Aeneid* and the *Libri Sibyllini*) was also clear. The provenance of the original and later *Libri Sibyllini* was debated, however, and it is in Augustine's interests here to leave the identification of the author of Flaccianus' text open. He may be drawn to the Cumaean Sibyl, but he would not want to connect a pure, non-idolatrous Sibyl with the *Libri* which had been prominent in pagan-Christian conflict in recent history. One way

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132 As Roessli, p. 268, points out, although he considers that the existence of the 4th Eclogue was an important motivation for Augustine's position—but the new text he has seen seems rather the decisive factor.
or the other, Augustine's equivocal presentation is intended to allow the author of the acrostic to avoid the charge of being involved in pagan cult.

The Lactantian material Augustine characterizes briefly as prophecies (vaticinia) about Christ. He further says that Lactantius did not specify which Sibyl promulgated these lines: non exprimat cuius. In fact, in the sections of DI (4.18-19) Lactantius does not mention a specific Sibyl; none of it comes from OrSib 3, and so Lactantius does not name the Erythraean Sibyl. The lines from OrSib 6, however, are distinguished from the others; for them, Lactantius refers to alia Sibylla (DI 4.18.20). Augustine is not, then, reading very carefully, since he could have discovered that the lines Lactantius quotes in these chapters derive from at least two different Sibyls. Here again, though, the value of deliberate ambiguity is still in force: Augustine does not wish to embark on a deeper antiquarian investigation to determine the exact identity of the Sibyl in question, and glossing over Lactantius' distinction allows him to retain the implication that there was a single Sibyl who received true knowledge.

Augustine shows a desire to avoid the possibly messy investigation necessary to establish clearly the identity of the unsullied Sibyl, but he is certainly enthusiastic about her existence. He assembles a fair amount of material to make concrete his claim that the Sibyl prophesied de Christo manifesta. Courcelle, remarking on the care with which Augustine has assembled the Lactantian material, and in his view translated both it and the acrostic itself, explains Augustine's motivation by recourse to the idea that Augustine "considers the pagan oracles relating to Christ much more adapted than the Jewish prophecies to lead pagan spirits toward the true faith." Nothing could be further from

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134 Late Latin Writers, pp. 191-2.
the truth. Courcelle notes Augustine's argument against exactly this sort of idea (C. Faust. 13.1) in a footnote, otherwise one would assume that unconscious reminiscence of just that passage had affected his interpretation. As we shall see, Augustine has not abandoned his reluctance to use such material. Alexandre, on the other hand, thinks that Augustine is providing the extensive citation because it was difficult to find Sibylline texts. It is certainly true that he is attempting to disseminate a reliable version of what he considers an important text; but the fact that he already knew a faulty version implies a certain amount of circulation—nothing Augustine says implies that Sibylline texts were difficult to come by.

Rather, his primary goal is to substantiate his claim that the Sibyl belongs to the Civitas Dei. To do this, he cites the acrostic, which provides the name and titles of Christ; also important for verbatim citation are the clear prophecies of the passion and resurrection of Christ which he found in Lactantius. In general terms, he asserts her hostility to idolatry, and one might expect direct citations; for the point that the whole carmen of this Sibyl has nothing to do with the worship of false gods (lines 66-68), of course, only a general statement can substitute for transcription of that entire carmen. He is most concerned, however, to adduce prophecies of Christ from the Sibyl, as opposed to any predictions whatsoever.

135 Alexandre, 2: 283, influenced by the appearance of the acrostic also in the Ps.-Augustinian sermon Contra Iudaeos, Paganos et Arianos (see Quodvultdeus infra).
136 Thereby possibly also suggesting a proof for their authenticity; Cicero, De Div. 2.54.112 (a passage used by Augustine in De Civ. Dei 3) mentions that acrostics were usual in Sibylline oracles.
137 Altaner, p. 246, points out the importance for Augustine of citing prophecy of Christ's suffering.
138 Line 24 of the acrostic does refer to the casting away of images: Reicient simulacra viri; but this is exiguous substantiation of the point.
139 Cf. the focus on prophecies of Christ in Augustine's treatment of Hebrew prophets in books 17-18 (O'Daly, Augustine's City of God, pp. 181-2, 188).
Augustine seems inordinately fixated on the details of the acrostic's form, to the point of ignoring the eschatological picture presented in the lines themselves. He first points out the words derived from the first letters of each line in the Greek acrostic (lines 10-13), then quotes the passage in Latin (lines 13-43, introducing the translation as proper Latin and metrical), then apologizes for the fact that the acrostic could not be adequately rendered into Latin, explaining that one must restore the Greek Υ in the fifth, eighteenth and nineteenth lines of the acrostic to restore it to the Greek form \(^{140}\) (lines 44-55). Next, he focuses on the number of lines in the acrostic, 27, a cube (lines 55-58).

Augustine, like most of his contemporaries, was especially attentive to numerical lore. He does not say why he finds 27 to be such an intriguing number, but since, as he explains, it is 3 to the 3\(^{rd}\) power, the obvious conclusion is that it represents the Trinity \(^{142}\)—and hence, implicitly asserts the divinity of Jesus, a further specification of

\(^{140}\) Not quite an adequate explanation, since then one would be left with the sequences IESU-Y-S and TEU-Y; the translator has represented the Greek diphthong OY with the phonetic equivalent in Latin, Pizzani, "L'acrostico cristologico," p. 387, considers this incongruity to show that Augustine was not himself the translator of the acrostic.


\(^{142}\) Cf. Pontet, p. 288; Roessli, p. 271 (citing *C. Faust. 12.19*). Pontet deals with many specific numbers, but not 27. For the cube as the intensification of the meaning of the base, cf. *De Civ. Dei 20.7* on the Millenium, representing, in one possibility, the complete extent of time: *si centum ipsa [10 x 10] pro universitate aliquando ponuntur...quanto magis mille pro universitate ponuntur, ubi est soliditas ipsius*
his status. Finally, he points out that the lines in fact form a double acrostic: the initials of the words formed from the first letters of the lines produce another significant word: ΙΧΘΥΣ (lines 58-61). It is astonishing to note that only at this point does he offer a substantive exegetical comment: the fish symbolizes Christ (mystice intellegitur), whereas the (implied) water symbolizes the world; the whole picture, then, is a reference to the sinless incarnation of Christ. In all this discussion, he has not said anything about the surface meaning of the lines. This may be partly because he takes them to be self-explanatory, rather than that he is uncomfortable with the eschatology per se—there are no expressions of chiliasm in the acrostic, and the details are in any case closely based on biblical motifs, and therefore interpretable in the same terms as Augustine does himself interpret those motifs in the final books of De Civ. Dei. A better explanation is that the eschatology is irrelevant for his immediate point, which is to show that the Sibyl prophesied Christ in plain terms. The acrostic does this, as does the inner acrostic, ΙΧΘΥΣ, in Augustine's view, but the surface does not.

Augustine goes into the question of non-Hebrew prophets of Christ and their chances for salvation more fully in De Civ. Dei 18.47, where their existence is confirmed by the Biblical example of Job, a member of the City of God although not an Israelite:

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denariae quadraturae? Cf. also H. Meyer and R. Suntrup, Lexikon der mittelalterlichen Zahlenbedeutungen (Munich, 1987), cols. 687-88. Augustine's delight in the discovery of a cubic number in the text may be resonating with the fact that the acrostic is double—extended, as it were, in two dimensions from the basic "line" ΙΧΘΥΣ; if a simple acrostic can be likened to a square, a double acrostic is the equivalent of a cube (as Roessli, p. 272, puts it, the word ΙΧΘΥΣ is "l'acrostiche de l'acrostiche," and so the content of the lines correspond to Augustine's "spéculations numérologiques et symboliques sur le nombre 27").

143 For the association of the sea and water with the present negative and worldly life, see L. H. Kant, The Interpretation of Religious Symbols in the Graeco-Roman World: A Case Study of Early Christian Fish Symbolism (Diss. Yale, 1993), pp. 452-60, 688-9; he further argues (pp. 497; cf. pp. 270-71) that is also associated with death and the underworld, as is reflected in Augustine's words abyssum and profunditas. The image of the sea was earlier used for Christians as fish "caught" by Christ or the preaching of the Gospel. So Clem. Alex., Paed. 3 epil. (hymn, 18-28): σῶτερ Ἰησοῦ...ἀλευτέρῳ μερόπων τῶν σωζομένων πελάγους καλίας, ἰχθύς ἀγνοῦς κώματός ἐχθροῦ γλυκερῇ ζωῆς δελεάζων; Kant, pp. 660-687, collects Patristic texts on this theme.
Divinitus autem provisum fuisse non dubito, ut ex hoc uno [sc. Job] sciremus etiam per alias gentes esse potuisse, qui secundum Deum vixerunt eique placuerunt, pertinentes ad spiritalem Hierusalem. (lines 27-30)

Prophecy of Christ by itself, however, although necessary, is not enough to establish membership in the City of God and salvation, since the predictions could be the result of demonic information rather than of divine grace. Salvation would be contingent on that grace, which would involve true inspiration from God concerning Christ.

Augustine has already conceded that the Sibyl should be considered part of the Civitas Dei; therefore, he must consider her inspiration to have been truly divine, by the criteria of 18.47, and his concern with establishing her specific references to Christ and his work, along with her hostility to idolatry, fit into place perfectly.

Conclusion

In all of Augustine's references to the Sibyl and to Sibylline oracles, he never loses the reticence and hesitation first evinced in the discussion with Faustus. This diffidence may be connected with his knowledge of pagan attacks on the authenticity of OrSib; on the other hand, it was open to him to argue sometimes, as did Lactantius and Constantine, that authorities writing earlier than the life of Christ confirmed the authenticity of Sibylline oracles, especially since he identifies them specifically as the source of Virgil's 4th Eclogue. As we have seen, Augustine also evinces reticence because of pagan elements that sully sources which might otherwise be used because of

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144 ...sive participes eiusdem gratiae fuerint sive expertes, sed per malos angelos docti sint, quos etiam praesentem Christum, quem Iudaei non agnoscebant, scimus fuisse confessos (lines 8-11).
145 Quod nemini concessum fuisse credendum est, nisi cui divinitus revelatus est unus mediator Dei et hominum, homo Christus Iesus, qui venturus in carne sic antiquis sanctis praenuntiabatur, quem ad modum nobis venisse nuntius est...(lines 30-34)
their purported prophecies of Christ. Nevertheless, even when he has the option of a
different Sibyl, untouched by the stain of idolatry, and of whose authenticity he is
personally convinced, he still holds back, showing that his reticence is of the nature of a
methodological scruple. Better to use texts which are guaranteed by being in the keeping
also of one's opponents (the Jews) than to use material like OrSib. This is a variation
on the commonplace rhetorical and apologetic practice of using one's opponents' words
or authorities against them. Against Faustus and Manichaean practice, and moreover,
against Lactantius' methodological stance—that of using the opponents' own
authorities—he reverts to the method Lactantius criticized in Cyprian: the use of the
Bible in attempting to convince pagans of the truth of Christianity.

When he does apply the Sibyl's oracles, in De Civ. Dei 18.23 where he presents
her as an example of a non-Israelite recipient of true revelation, his primary concern is to
make a case for that status, and so he is only interested in her prophecies of Christ's
incarnation, death, and resurrection, and in her attitude towards pagan cult. He blatantly
ignores any eschatological material. Previously, insofar as he allowed any content to
Sibylline prophecy, he expressed it in general terms: de Christo praesagia; pro
nostra...religione testimonium. One of his prime sources in the early period was certainly
Virgil, and he put forward his views that the purification spoken of by the poet (Ecl. 4.13-
14) would properly be found only in Christ, and that the amomum (Ecl. 4.25) refers to the
true belief (shared by the Christians) in the immortality of the soul; but his use of the 4th

146 As he argues at De Civ. Dei 18.47, after acknowledging the possibility of authentic extra-Israelite
prophecy: Ideo nihil est firmius ad convincendos quoslibet alienos, si de hac re contenderint [i.e. the
authenticity?], nostrosque faciendos, si recte sapuerint ["si leur esprit est sincère," translates Combès in BA
36], quam ut divina praedicta de Christo ea proferantur, quae in Iudaearum codicibus scripta sunt...
Eclogue is allusive, not dogmatic—he does not insist, or even think, that this is what
Virgil had in mind—as befits the conversation of cultured correspondents.

Until the surprise in Book 18 of De Civ. Dei, the Sibyl falls without much trouble
into the pagan sphere. Augustine knows that Christians (like Lactantius) have used her
testimony on behalf of their own religion, but he continues to assume that her inspiration,
such as it may have been, was demonic, no different from any other pagan oracle, and
explains whatever truth may have been found in her texts by comparing the fact that
demons are able to know certain truths and thus produce true oracles. When he has been
made aware of a different Sibyl, with a full text to peruse, his phraseology describing this
Sibyl does not change much, but his view of the inspiration is entirely different. Now,
in his view, she is one of those to whom divinitus revelatus est...Christus (De Civ. Dei
18.47), and as such, a member of the City of God, estranged—permanently, it appears—
by that revelation from the surrounding polytheism. Augustine is not contented by the
idea that the Sibyl might have enjoyed sporadic true inspiration, but rather insists (on the
basis of the text provided by Flaccianus) on her full prophetic status, even though his
apologetic strategy is opposed to relying on such non-Biblical prophecy overmuch.

147 NB vaticinia and vaticinari are used both before De Civ. Dei 18.23 and in that chapter. In 18.46, he
does add the terms prophetiae and prophetare, but note that he refers to the Sibyl's text as propheticum
carmen at Ep. 104.11; and cf. prophetia (vestra) at C. Faust. 13.3—scornful. The evocation of necessity
continues: compare necesse habuit confiteri (Ep. 258.5) and praedicere impulsi sunt (De Civ. Dei 18.46).
Chapter 7

Conclusion

In attempting to assess the importance of the Sibyl in early Christian literature, this study has taken a different tack from the more usual ones. Instead of being dazzled by the series of citations and mentions of the Sibyl, this study has begun by exploring the variety and scope of "negative" treatments of the Sibyl, which are in reality less surprising than the more positive treatments, and logically prior to them. Early Christians, in so far as they paid attention to the Sibyl at all, generally considered her to have been part of the world of traditional Greco-Roman religion, and therefore, despite texts congenial to a Christian point of view circulating under the Sibyl's name, she seemed to be an oracular figure easy to classify *prima facie* as comparable to other traditional oracles, such as the Pythian priestess of Apollo. Because of this classification, avoidance of any mention of the Sibyl and unwillingness to consider the more complicated idea that the Sibyl may have enjoyed some sort of true inspiration need no special explanation. Both intransigent opponents of pagan culture such as Tatian and Arnobius, as well as more accommodating writers such as Origen and Eusebius, demonstrate this "default" position—rejection of the Sibyl on the assumption that she is not substantially different from other pagan oracles—even though many of these writers were aware of more positive Christian treatment of the Sibyl. One striking quality of these "rejections," however, is their tacitness: none of these early writers *strongly* reject the Sibyl *per se*, nor do they allege (or admit) that texts circulating as Sibylline were not authentic; they simply assume the standard classification and treat the Sibyl accordingly.
Stronger rejections appear after Constantine, yet still no admissions of inauthenticity. The likelihood is that the authors of tacit rejections were aware of the possible benefits to Christianity, in terms of converts, from the texts alleged to be Sibylline, and they were unwilling to weaken apologetic attempts through an excessive scrupulousness.

During the late 4th and early 5th centuries in the Latin-speaking sphere, after some experience of Christian emperors but also after the threat of pagan revival under Julian and later aspirants to the purple, as more severe attempts to eradicate paganism were under way, a high frequency of rejectionist expressions vis-à-vis the Sibyl are extant, in the anonymous *Carmen contra paganos*, the poetical works of Prudentius and Paulinus of Nola, the histories of Orosius, the theological letter of Eutropius, and the exegetical work of Ambrosiaster. The uncompromising attitude toward the Sibyl here on display is, to repeat, simply an easy conclusion from the standard classification of the pagan prophetess. The concentration of references is noteworthy, but probably to be connected to the heightened pressure on the Christian side to suppress traditional paganism, and to the climactic destruction of the *Libri Sibyllini* themselves, c. 407 A.D. On the Greek side, Gregory of Nazianzus, although a conscious adapter of pagan poetic and rhetorical traditions in some respects, nevertheless still comes down on the rejectionist side in the assessment of the Sibyl in an apologetic context: any truth in her utterances does not change her overall status as pagan prophetess. On the other hand, as a poet and an apologist, Gregory finds it useful to adopt the Sibylline manner for himself, as he appeals for conversion to Christianity. The later Greek apologists Cyril of Alexandria and Theodoret show more reticence as regards the Sibyl than some of the earlier apologists: Cyril rejects Sibylline prophecy as no different from other traditional oracles (although he
repeats some of Eusebius' historical material on the Sibyl), and Theodoret avoids her entirely.

The salient fact about all these negative voices is a truth often glossed over: the majority of early Christian writers either ignore the Sibyl or reject the Sibyl as a potential authority. The striking aspect about early Christian use of the Sibyl is actually its rarity, not its high frequency. Yet even among those unwilling to use Sibylline material in a positive way, there is no attack on the authenticity of the purported oracles.

From time to time, early Christians are seen to use the Sibyl in a "neutral" way—not as a prophetess, but simply as a piece of evidence credible to pagans on various topics: as a witness to early history (Athenagoras and others), as an example of chastity (Jerome), or even as an authority parallel with Plato (CZA). What is conspicuous here, however, is the paucity of such "neutral" references. While the use of the Sibyl as evidence for euhemeristic arguments or for the Tower of Babel story is more frequent, being picked up also by those who have a higher view of the Sibyl, Athenagoras' carefully restricted historical use is not. Athenagoras, Jerome, and the CZA are the isolated examples of Christian writers citing the Sibyl in this subdued way, granting her no more or less status than the specific arguments require—that of an authentic witness belonging to the pagan sphere, but with no further endorsement of her prophecy implied, nor yet any rejection of her entirely on the basis of her traditional oracular role. It seems likely that oracular prophecy was such a prominent feature of the Sibyl's typical persona that referring to the Sibyl without at least implicitly taking a position for or against her as a prophetess was counter-intuitive for early Christians.
Meanwhile, of course, as texts of an anti-polytheist bent attributed to the Sibyl were being circulated and also newly composed throughout the early Christian era, other Christians were willing to accord more credence and status to the Sibyl. A range of appeals demonstrate that the Sibyl was widely considered a "standard" pagan authority to be cited in Christian anti-pagan apologetic, a familiar ally in the struggle against polytheism, whatever her precise status. Sometimes the Sibyl alone is the crucial authority; sometimes she is paired with one or more other "friendly" pagan sources, such as Heraclitus, Hystaspes, Hermes Trismegistus, or Plato; but the impression of many brief allusions is that the Sibyl is at least one of a very few congenial pagan authorities, one more well-known than others who are mentioned more sporadically. The Sibyl's apologetic reputation was even extended into the "barbarian" spheres of Syriac literature (through Pseudo-Melito, for example), as Junillus Africanus' Biblical introduction may also confirm.

The common reputation of the Sibyl is likely to have been enhanced by some kind of public appeal on the part of the imperial authorities to her purported prophecy in the context of the discovery of the "true cross" under Constantine: the one part of her general reputation that is specifically pro-Christian rather than monotheistic and anti-pagan. This endorsement must have given wider dissemination to the general idea that the Sibyl was a prophetess, valid in some sense as an authority for Christians, an idea that had been advanced by writers as early as Justin Martyr (and even earlier, perhaps, by Christians such as the opponents of Hermas and the nebulous "Sibyllistae" mentioned by Celsus, if the former really did espouse the Sibyl as Hermas' correction seems to assume, and if the
latter, whether a sect or not, were different from extant Sibylline endorsers such as Justin and Theophilus).

Through the later 2nd century, the picture of the Sibyl as prophetess took on more specificity and, indeed, audacity, as Theophilus made her strictly parallel to the Hebrew prophets, and Tertullian imagined a Sibyl more ancient than all Greco-Roman civilization. This process culminated in the view subtly introduced by Clement of Alexandria in his *Protrepticus* that the Sibyl actually was a Hebrew prophetess, *rather than* a gentile seer, and his rhetorically significant placement of quotations of her for maximum impact. Elsewhere, however, although Clement was clearly fascinated by the Sibyl, he typically still classifies her as a part of pagan religious culture, albeit one often assumed to be in tension with that culture—a picture harking back to Heraclitus' idea of the harsh-voiced prophetess.

Later Patristic writers never return to the suggestion of Clement's *Protrepticus*; instead, the pagan context of many of the details he cites elsewhere become the focus in the later 3rd century and early 4th, in writers such as Ps.-Justin (*Coh. ad Graecos*) and the emperor Constantine himself. The canonization process had rendered Clement's movement toward a fully Hebrew Sibyl less credible; and at the same time, the original usefulness of the Sibyl's pseudonymous voice returned to the fore—her status as a voice within paganism yet hostile to it, a pagan authority critical of paganism. The assumption behind this strongly emphasized pagan background seems to be that the Sibyl partook of a kind of temporary divine inspiration, much like that frequently asserted for Balaam, although none of these sources makes that direct comparison, and Constantine may assume a permanent change of status as a result of the divine incursion. The stress on a
pagan context is also the primary import of the Sibyl for Lactantius, although he does not
dwell so much on the details of cult and oracular consultation; but his explicit strategy is
to convince pagans through their own authority figures, not to establish such authorities
for Christians.

This renewed emphasis on the pagan context of the Sibyl in the late 3rd and early
4th centuries goes in tandem with a dramatic development of the prophecies her texts are
now said to contain: specific references to Christ, his incarnation and second coming.
The proclamation of such prophecies by the Christian Emperor must have spread far and
wide knowledge of this view of the Sibyl's words, especially if he was also behind the
promulgation of the Sibylline "macarism of the cross." At this stage too, however, the
necessity of defending the Sibyl by reference to other authorities, whether Plato (Ps.-
Justin), Cicero and implicitly Virgil (Constantine), or Cicero and Varro (Lactantius),
seems to be keenly felt. The time frame of Porphyry's attacks on Christianity, the Great
Persecution, and the reign of Constantine has clearly ramped up the pressure on Christian
apologists to use the Sibyl more convincingly—or, conceivably, to drop her, although
that position is more visible in the conflicts of the later 4th century. Lactantius' calculated
ambiguity seems to be an attempt in this complex rhetorical environment to have it both
ways: to achieve the greatest possible impact from extensive citation of the Sibyls, in the
important areas of monotheistic theology, the Incarnation, and eschatology, yet not to
commit himself irrevocably to any firm ideas about their status. He steers carefully
between the dangerous waters on all sides, not demonizing the Sibyl's inspiration, yet not
insisting on a true divine inspiration either; assimilating her to the class of pagan vates,
yet distancing her at the same time. It is this ambiguity in Lactantius' presentation that is
most important to notice and yet most frequently missed; his enthusiastic citation practice, justified as that is by his apologetic theory, is no proof that Lactantius was personally convinced of the divinely inspired status of the Sibyl. There is little if anything in his account of Christianity that he seems to owe to the Sibyl; rather, he attaches what he considers authoritative endorsements to a pre-constructed frame, regarding the subjects of the earthly life of Christ and the coming end of the world.

Augustine, by contrast with Lactantius, at the end of his career clearly confesses himself convinced of the Sibyl's truly prophetic status and truly divine inspiration, as he proclaims that she does seem to have been a part of the City of God, and includes extensive material in his text to substantiate that view. He has reached this point, however, only after a long path of reticence and diffidence about the possible value of sources like the Sibyl, and a limited, sporadic attempt to suggest higher, Christian significance in the Sibylline 4th Eclogue; he endorses the Sibyl in the end only reluctantly, after the evidence afforded by a lengthy text provided to him that seemed to have nothing to do with the standard associations of the Sibyl with pagan cult. Notably, even at the end of Augustine's process of learning more about the Sibyl, he retains his hesitancy about the apologetic usefulness of Sibylline oracles.

The use of the Sibyls and Sibylline material by early Christian writers was enthusiastic only by fits and starts. The assumed negative position toward pagan oracular sources was always a natural position, even while the Sibyl achieved a general reputation as one of the very few authoritative voices within paganism that spoke in favor of Christianity. One must postulate a certain amount of casual, uncritical circulation of Sibylline material for this reputation to have been sustained, but the enthusiastic period of
growing endorsement of the Sibyl as a prophetess truly comparable to Biblical prophets—a process better described as speculative Hebraization rather than Christianization of the Sibyl—culminated and largely ended with Clement of Alexandria. After him, the Sibyl had to be used (if at all) with more care: the Sibyl could still be apologetically useful if her *bona fides* as a pagan source was clearly established—if she was re-paganized—and the authenticity of her oracles defended; or if, as with Lactantius, a carefully ambiguous attitude was maintained. It is ironic that Augustine's final hearty endorsement became the most famous early Christian witness to the status of the Sibyl, and a lens through which the other uses of the Sibyl have been constantly refracted.
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**Abbreviations for Journals, Collections, Series, Reference Works**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
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<td><strong>ABAW</strong></td>
<td>Abhandlungen – Bayerische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philosophisch-historische Klasse</td>
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<td><strong>ACW</strong></td>
<td>Ancient Christian Writers</td>
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<td>Abhandlungen der Deutschen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin, Philosophisch-historische Klasse</td>
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<td><strong>ANF</strong></td>
<td>Ante-Nicene Fathers, ed. by A. Roberts and J. Donaldson, rev. by A. Cleveland Coxe (Buffalo, 1885-96; reprinted Peabody, MA, 1994)</td>
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<td>C. Mayer (ed.), Augustinus-Lexikon (Basel, 1986 - )</td>
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<td><strong>BKV</strong></td>
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<td><strong>CAH</strong></td>
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SC Sources Chrétienes
S. Cent. Second Century
St. Patr. Studia Patristica
Stud. Theol Studia Theologica
TAPA Transactions of the American Philological Association
TDNT Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, ed. by G. Friedrich, tr. and ed. by G. W. Bromiley
ThQ Theologische Quartalschrift
TRE Theologische Realenzyklopädie, ed. by G. Krause and G. Müller (Berlin/New York, 1977-)
TU Texte und Untersuchungen
VChr Vigiliae Christianae
WüJbb Würzburger Jahrbücher für die Altertumswissenschaft
ZNW Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft
ZRGG Zeitschrift für die Religions- und Geistesgeschichte
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**OrSib**


***

**Ambrosiaster**

Comm.


**Quaestiones**


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*Epistulae* 104, 258


*De Civ. Dei*

*Exp. inch. epist. ad Rom.*

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*De Ira Dei*


**DMP**


**DI**


**Epitome**


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## APPENDIX A

### INDEX OF SIBYLLINE REFERENCES IN EARLY CHRISTIAN SOURCES

[Boldface indicates citation of Sibylline material; underlining indicates hostile reference.]

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APPENDIX C

ALLEGED ALLUSIONS TO OrSib

See also discussion supra on Lactantius (Chap. 5) and Constantine (Chap. 4); and also Gregory of Nazianzus (Chap. 2).

Abbreviated references in this appendix: In what follows, "Thompson" here refers to the tabulation provided in Thompson, pp. 130-36; "Rzach" refers to the appendix to Rzach's edition of OrSib; "Geffcken" (unless otherwise specified) to the apparatus of Geffcken's edition of OrSib.

[NON-CHRISTIAN]
Ps.-Orphic material may use OrSib1
Philo—possible knowledge of Sibylline eschatological material (OrSib 3)2
Josephus, BJ 6.109—possible ref. to OrSib 4.115-27.3
Chaldaean Oracles 107 (ed. des Places) [OrSib 3.221-30]—so Geffcken (cf. Kroll, De orac. Chald. p. 64f.)

[NT APOCRYPHA]
Actus Petri cum Simone 24 [OrSib 8.456ff.].4
Acta Pauli (PH p. 8)5 [OrSib fr. 1.27].
Apoc. Pauli (p. 51 Tischendorf) [OrSib 2.338]; (p. 53 Ti.) [OrSib 2.245f.]; (p. 60 Ti.) [OrSib 2.280-82]; (p. 68 Ti.) [OrSib 1.171]—all these are Geffcken's suggestions; the section numbers appear to be 22 (Lake Acherusia), 25-27 ("Paul" sees prophets and patriarchs), 39-40 (punishment of unfaithful virgins and procurers of abortion or exposers of children), and 50 (Noah).6

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1 See Holladay, Orphica, p. 87 n. 96; Goodenough, By Light, Light: The Mystic Gospel of Hellenistic Judaism (New Haven, 1935), pp. 282-9; on OrSib 1.46 and 137-40, Geffcken compares the Ps.-Orphic poem quoted by Eusebius (PE 13.12.5), line 13 and 30-32 respectively; see also Geffcken ad OrSib 3.223 (etc.).
3 So Barton, Oracles of God, pp. 181-2.
4 R. A. Lispius, Acta Apost. Apocr., 1: 72, and Die apokryphen Apostelgeschichten und Apostellegenden (Amsterdam, 1976), 2: 269-70, suggests a connection--but there is little to commend this. Peter, quoting alius profeta as saying: In novissimis temporibus nascitur puer de spiritu sancto: mater ipsius virum nescit, nec dicit aliquis patrem se esse eius. Apart from the general resemblance in subject matter, only ὕστατίοις...χρόνοις (OrSib 8.456) is comparable
5 My suggestion--compare ἀπολέστε τὸ σκότος, λάβετε τὸ φῶς with the Sibylline καὶ λάβετε σκοτίην νυκτός, φωτὸς δὲ λάβετε, quoted by Theophilus and Clement of Alexandria. For the Acta Pauli, see C. Schmidt, Acta Pauli aus der Heidelberger koptischen Papyrusshandschrift Nr. 1, 2nd ed. (Leipzig, 1905); id., Πηδάζεως Παύλου/Acta Pauli. Nach dem Papyrus der Hamburger staats- und universitäts-bibliothek (Glückstadt and Hamburg, 1936) [= PH].
6 Some of these parallels, however, are equally parallels with the Apocalypse of Peter, which is a likely source of OrSib 2; see J. K. Elliott, The Apocryphal New Testament (Oxford, 1993), pp. 593-5.
Apost. Joh. (p. 89 Tischendorf) [OrSib 2.248f.]—Geffcken.  
Acta Thomae 55 (52) [OrSib 2.295: πῦρινος τρόφος]—Geffcken.

[PATRISTIC]
Clement of Rome, Ep. (1 Clem.) 7 [OrSib 1.128-9 (or an earlier version)]; 9 [OrSib 1.195; cf. 7.11]; 55 and 64.  
Ps.-Clem., Hom. 2.43.1, 3.2.2-3 [Clementina ed. Lagarde III 2.33, 37, cited by Geffcken], 3.59.2 [OrSib 3.35]; Recogn. 5.20 [OrSib 5.79]—on Egyptian gods: quae pudet etiam nominare.  
Aristides, Apol. 2.5 (a brief quotation) [OrSib 8.390]—so Geffcken; also, perhaps, Apol. 15 [OrSib 3.234-46—Geffcken ad loc.].  
Justin, 1 Apol. 61 [OrSib 1.399—“illumination” in baptism; misprint for lines 339-40]—so Thompson; 1 Apol. 9 [OrSib 8.379f.]—so Alexandre, 2: 262; 2 Apol. 12 [OrSib Proem, line 4]—so Alexandre, 2: 262, although he recognizes the appearance of the term πανεπόπτης also in Clem. Rom.; Dial. 11—Alexandre, 2: 263, acknowledging that this is perhaps from Scripture.  
Theophilus, Ad Autol. 1.5.5 [OrSib fr. 1.9-13]—(Geffcken ad OrSib fr. 1.10-13 cites Theoph. 1.5.4 among others for this common idea); 2.31.11 [OrSib 3.154]—cited by Geffcken ad loc.; some less likely passages noted by Alexandre (p. 265): 1.9 [cf. OrSib 8.46]; 2.18, 22 [cf. OrSib 8.264].  
Athenagoras, Leg. 6. 19 show similar argumentation as OrSib Proem, line 39, and he seems to have had them in mind; similarly on Leg. 13, though similar to Scripture, cf. OrSib 8.320f. (Alexandre, 2: 264)  
Ep. ad Diogn. 2.7 [OrSib 5.495]—so Geffcken ad loc.  
Clement of Alexandria, Paed. 2.74.2 [OrSib 8.294-5].

7 This is the first of the apocalypses of John noted by Hennecke et al., New Testament Apocrypha, rev. ed. (Cambridge, 1992), 2: 693; and Elliott, p. 684.  
9 J. B. Lightfoot, The Apostolic Fathers (repr. Peabody, MA, 1989), I.2: 37-8; 42-3; 162. The first is more likely than the second, since it enjoys the favor of close verbal parallel to OrSib 1.128-9 on Noah’s “announcing repentance,” but the force of the parallel is mitigated somewhat by the admission that OrSib 1 is probably “late” (yet possibly based on an earlier version of OrSib 3); Lightfoot identifies further possible echoes of the Sibylline text in Theoph., Ad Autol. 3.19; Josephus, AJ 1.3.1. The third and fourth (the word πανεπόπτης), involves a word not found in LXX or NT, but which does appear in OrSib fr. 1.4 (and some other early Christian texts).  
10 B. Rehm, Die Pseudoklementinen, vol. 1, GCS 42 (Berlin, 1953), pp. 52, 57, 78. The phrase describing God’s creation of heaven and earth is identical in each passage. Lagarde, however, only refers to Gen. 14.19. Hom. 10.3.3 and 16.5.2 also allude to this verse, according to both Rehm and Lagarde, but the wording differs from the passages mentioned supra.  
11 Geffcken ad OrSib 5.79.  
12 Zwei griechische Apologeten, p. 41 (and see text, p. 5).  
13 On the other hand, Justin is the first certain witness for this idea (see Wlosok, Laktanz und die philosophische Gnosis, p. 249; for the idea, see also Odes of Solomon 11, and Daniélov, Theology of Jewish Christianity, pp. 368-9.  
14 Here, the combination of “stone” and “clay” idols is somewhat striking and rare; but cf. also Ps.-Clem., Hom. 10.8; Hipp., Comm. in Dan. 2.27.  
15 So Geffcken’s note on the Sibylline passage; the parallel is rough, however, and it is not clear that Clement has this passage specifically in mind.
Ps.-Melito—see Chap. 3.

Minucius Felix, *Octav.* 24.4 [OrSib fr. 2].

Hippolytus, *De Christo et Antichr.* 52 [OrSib 5.222 (Thompson; following him, McGinn, p. 13 n. 38)--221f., acc. to Alexandre; *De consumm. mundi* 23 [OrSib 3.63ff., 66f., 67f.]; 27 [OrSib 2.190f.]; 34 [OrSib 3.77-78]; 37 [OrSib 3.84]; 40 [OrSib 2.248f.]--Geffcken further cites *de consumm. mundi* 8 [OrSib 2.6-14]; etc.

Commodian, *Instr.* and *Carm. apol.* (various passages). The most convincing parallels are a set pointed out by H. Brewer, *Kommodian von Gaza: Ein Arelatensischer Laiendichter aus der Mitte des fünften Jahrhunderts* (Paderborn, 1906), pp. 306-13, as passages in which Commodian's text parallels Lactantius, and alleged by Révay, *Commodianus élète, müvei és kora* (Budapest, 1909) [known to me only through F. Láng's review, *Philologische Wochenschrift* 31 (1911), pp. 1429-31] to have a Sibylline origin; J. Martin notes the parallels in his 1960 edition of Commodian (CCSL 78). These passages are:

*Instr.* I.5.7 [OrSib 3.138ff. (cf. Lact., *DI* 1.11)]
*Carm. apol.* 192-3 [OrSib 3.252-3 (cf. Lact., *DI* 4.10.6)]
*Carm. apol.* 235-6 [OrSib 8.267 (cf. Lact., *DI* 4.15.9)]

The possibility of Sibylline (rather than Lactantian) influence depends on one's view of Commodian's chronology. Other parallels have also been noted by Geffcken (in his edition of OrSib—abbreviated here [G]) and Martin (in his edition of Commodian—abbreviated here [M]) and Salvatore (in his editions of Commodian's works: *Commodiano: Instructiones, Libro primo* [Naples, 1966]; *Commodiano: Instructiones, Libro secondo* [Naples, 1968]; *Commodiano: Carme apologetico* [Turin, 1977]—all abbreviated here [S]):

*Instr.* I.2.6 [OrSib 3.722-3 [M]]
*Instr.* I.41.8, 16 [OrSib 2.167-8, 189 [M]]
*Instr.* I.42.30-35 [OrSib 2.168 [M]]
*Instr.* I.43.1 [OrSib 8.158 [M]]
*Instr.* I.43.8 [OrSib 2.190-91. [M]]
*Instr.* I.43.10-11, 15 [OrSib 2.210 [M]]
*Instr.* I.44.1 [OrSib 2.319ff.; 3.744ff., 750 [M]]
*Instr.* I.44.1 [OrSib 3.744ff., 750 [M]]
*Carm. apol.* 91 [OrSib 3.11-12; 8.429; fr. 1.15-17 [S—"cf."]]
*Carm. apol.* 807-14 [OrSib 4.137-9 [S]]
*Carm. apol.* 813 [OrSib 1.340 [M]]

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17 Alexandre, too, considers Hippolytus to have taken much from OrSib, at least in these two passages, but concedes that they could also be from Scripture. A more recent editor of the first text, E. Novelli, *Ippolito: L'Anticristo*, Biblioteca Patristica (Florence, 1987), does not cite the Sibyl.
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**Diliporis Inscription** (3rd cen.)—appears to follow *OrSib* 1.141-6

**Ps.-Justin**, *Coh. ad Gr.* 23 [*OrSib* fr. 3.1-2]—so Thompson, 19 Alexandre, 2: 262, suggests that *Or. ad Gr.* 5.2 was taken from a Sibylline oracle, possibly from the lacuna in the Proem.

**Eusebius**, *HE* 1.2.20-24; *PE* "IX.14.xvii" [*OrSib* 3.97-294]—so Thompson; *V. Const.* 1.33 (2.16.2) 22—Heim, p. 100; but cf. *Triak.* 8 (p. 216.20), 9 (p. 219.7), 10 (p. 222.12) —"une expression...stéréotypée" (Heim, p. 84 n. 202).

**Const. Ap.** (p. 131.4 Lagarde [= 5.7: all will be resurrected even if they died at sea, or their bodies were eaten by birds or beasts])—cited by Geffcken *ad OrSib* 2.233-37.

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19 Thompson refers to *Coh. ad Gr.* 23.6, which seems to have no sense (he is using the ANCL translation, which does not divide the chapters into sections; line 6 of the translation has no special significance). Presumably he sees a connection between Ps.-Justin's πάν γάρ τὸ γενόμενον φθαρτόν (and variations thereof) and the Sibylline passage; Ps.-Justin says Plato asserted this earlier and is now (*Tim.* 41b2-5) contradicting himself. Marcovich adduces *Tim.* 41a8: τὸ μὲν οὖν δὴ δεθὲν πάν λυτόν. Note, as Marcovich points out, that Ps.-Justin makes almost the same allegation also at 7.1 and 20.2

20 As he says, the words θείῳ λόγῳ παιδεύθητε...βασιλέα ἀφθαρτόν may reflect hexameters beginning παιδεύθητε λόγῳ and ἀφθαρτόν βασιλέα. He considers poetic origin certain, Sibylline only suspected—note τῷπον εὐμορφίας (sic; Marcovich's ed.: -ίαν), for which cf. *OrSib* 3.27, cited by Lactantius, possibly from the Proem.

21 This appears to be a misprint for *PE* 9.15, the citation of Josephus' paraphrase of *OrSib* 3.97-104; on this see Chap. 2.

22 νεκρῶν εἴδωλα καμότων; cf., however, Homer, *Od.* 11.476.
Firmicus Maternus, *De Errore Prof. Rel.* 15.4—so Alexandre, 2: 283, who thinks that Firmicus "seems to have read the acrostic (with τὸ πῦρ τὸ ἱχνεύον) since he writes *Ignis iste scrutatur abdita*"; the reading of *OrSib* 8.225-6 ( Ἐκκαύσει δὲ τὸ πῦρ γῆν οὐρανὸν ἀδὲ θάλασσαν / Ἐκκαύσει...), however, does not strongly support this supposition.


Ps.-Apollinaris, *Paraphrase of the Psalms*.23

Socrates Scholasticus, *HE* 1.17.3; Rufinus, *HE* 10.8 [see Chap. 3]

Dracontius, *Carmen de Deo* 2.386 [*OrSib* 3.823-7]—so note in Migne (tenuous).

Boethius, *Cons. Phil.* Lib. V, metrum II [*OrSib* fr. 1.8]—so note in Migne (tenuous).


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23 J. Golega, *Der homerische Psalter*, Studia Patristica et Byzantina 6 (Ettal, 1960), pp. 66-68 (also 65), suggests some parallels with *OrSib*; "nicht alle werden auf 'Zufall' beruhen."