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Knowledge, Pedagogy, and Initiation

Classical and Christian Precedents for Catechesis

To appreciate the connections between knowledge and pedagogy in early Christian catechesis, we will first need a map of the educational landscape in antiquity. This chapter cannot but provide a rough sketch, but it will hopefully serve to outline the key elements of the terrain. Critical aspects include the role of memory and the use of *regula* or "canons" of truth. I will also note some of the important dynamics of Second Temple Judaism and early Christian traditions, as well as the phenomenon of teachers and "school-churches" in second-century Rome. In highlighting these elemental practices and learning institutions, we discover key precedents for the origins of Christian catechesis.

TEACHING AND KNOWLEDGE IN GRAECO-ROMAN EDUCATION

While it was once common to study ancient philosophy in terms of divergent theories about metaphysics, logic, and ethics, it is no longer tenable to separate theoretical knowledge from the practices that generate and sustain knowledge. Stemming from the influential work of scholars like Pierre Hadot, Julia Annas, and Martha Nussbaum, ancient philosophy is now understood more as a series of exercises for healing the soul – a comprehensive "way of life" aimed at *eudaimonia* and spiritual transformation.[1] Meanwhile, the study of rhetorical education is also viewed

[1] Pierre Hadot, *Philosophy as a Way of Life*, trans. Michael Chase (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 1995); Julia Annas, *The Morality of Happiness* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993); Martha Nussbaum, *The Therapy of Desire: Theory and Practice in Hellenistic Ethics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994). While Hadot has been criticized for

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now more in terms of its relation to ancient religious and wisdom traditions. Classical education (*paideia*) curated moral as well as aesthetic sensibilities in its students; it too aimed at a comprehensive way of life.[2] These new conceptions of ancient philosophy and education have sparked re-readings of patristic theology and, as I hope to show, can also be applied to the study of Christian catechesis.[3]

The debates between Socrates and the sophists that emerged in fifth-century Greece raised fundamental questions about the relation between knowledge and teaching. A central question arose: Could virtue (ἀρετή) be taught? And if so, by whom? The sophist Protogoras thought it could. But by virtue, he primarily meant political virtue – managing one's affairs, running a city – all of which could be taught, if only for the right price.[4] Other sophists, such as Gorgias, rejected the pretention to teach virtue and claimed instead only to teach the "art of rhetoric." Whether or not

homogenizing all of philosophy within a therapeutic mode, his writing has opened up fruitful avenues not only for ancient philosophy but also for early Christianity. For discussion and critiques of Hadot, see Maria Antonaccio, "Contemporary Forms of *Askesis* and the Return of Spiritual Exercises," *Annual of the Society of Christian Ethics* 18 (1998): 69–92; John M. Cooper, *Pursuits of Wisdom: Six Ways of Life in Ancient Philosophy from Socrates to Plotinus* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012).

[2] For major works, see George A. Kennedy, *The Art of Rhetoric in the Roman World, 300 BC–AD 300* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972); Stanley F. Bonner, *Education in Ancient Rome: From the Elder Cato to the Younger Pliny* (London: Routledge, 1977); Robert A. Kaster, *Guardians of Language: The Grammarian and Society in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988); Peter Brown, *Power and Persuasion in Late Antiquity: Towards a Christian Empire* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1992); H. Gregory Snyder, *Teachers and Texts in the Ancient World* (London: Routledge, 2000); Yun Lee Too, ed., *Education in Greek and Roman Antiquity* (Leiden: Brill, 2001); Raffaella Cribiore, *Gymnastics of the Mind: Greek Education in Hellenistic and Roman Egypt* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001); W. Martin Bloomer, *The School of Rome: Latin Studies and the Origins of Liberal Education* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011).

[3] For the use of Hadot in early Christian studies, see Lewis Ayres, "The Christological Context of Augustine's *De Trinitate* XIII: Toward Relocating Books VIII–XV," *AugStud* 29, no. 1 (1998): 111–39; Thomas F. Martin, "Augustine's *Confessions* as Pedagogy: Exercises in Transformation," in *Augustine and Liberal Education*, ed. Kim Paffenroth and Kevin L. Hughes (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000), 25–51; Nicole Kelley, "Philosophy as Training for Death: Reading the Ancient Christian Martyr Acts as Spiritual Exercises," *Church History* 75, no. 4 (2006): 723–47; Brian Stock, *Augustine's Inner Dialogue: The Philosophical Soliloquy in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010); Daniel Becerra, "Origen, the Stoics, and the Rhetoric of Recitation: Spiritual Exercise and the *Exhortation to Martyrdom*," *SP* 94 (2017): 85–98.

[4] Plato, *Prot.* 319a. The debate about payment was a point of divergence between Socrates and the sophists. See, e.g., Plato, *Men.* 91b; *Prot.* 310d, 313c; *Gorg.* 519c–d. Cf. the evaluation of such evidence in David Corey, "The Case against Teaching Virtue for Pay: Socrates and the Sophists," *History of Political Thought* 23, no. 2 (2002): 189–210.

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the sophists held to the kind of relativism epitomized in Protagoras's famous dictum that "man is the measure of things," we can observe the way their opponents exposed their pedagogies as based upon an epistemological indifference. The sophists employed a range of disciplines, such as music, poetry, gymnastics, and geometry.[5] Yet Plato critiqued certain pedagogical techniques, such as the exercise known as "eristic" argumentation, as teaching students to win or refute arguments regardless of the truth of the position held.[6] Such exercises, in Plato's mind at least, instructed the very moral and metaphysical relativism that was antithetical to the pursuit of virtue.

Plato, meanwhile, developed his own account of knowledge, which was matched with a corresponding pedagogy of dialogue. For Plato, knowledge (ἐπιστήμη), as opposed to opinion (δόξα), entailed knowing not only that a thing is such but also knowing its causes and purposes. Since sensory perception could not provide such knowledge, Plato rejected the idea that true knowledge can be taught; it only comes by divine illumination and participation in a non-material, eternal reality – the Form of the Good.[7] As the sun is required to see particular things in the world, so knowledge of particulars only comes by the vision of the Good.[8] Given that knowledge comes not by the testimony of others or through sense perception, Plato articulated the pedagogy of knowledge in terms of his famous theory of recollection or anamnesis. In the *Meno*, Plato shows how Socrates, by a process of dialogue, could elicit from even a slave boy true knowledge.[9] Socrates does not teach him this truth; he only guides the boy through a series of questions and prompts to recollect what he "already" knows. Elsewhere, Plato has Socrates refrain from

[5] Most of the evidence, of course, comes from Plato: As evidence of some sophists' teaching these disciplines, see, *Prot.* 312a–b, 318a–319a. This comes in the context of Protagoras saying that he would not teach prospective students such disciplines but only what they desire to learn.

[6] See Plato's depiction of the sophists Euthydemus and Dionysodorus in Plato, *Euthyd.* 272b.

[7] Key works for understanding Plato's epistemology would include primarily the *Theaetetus*, *Meno*, and *Phaedo*. In the first, Plato outlines three forms of knowledge – knowledge by perception, knowledge as true judgment, and knowledge as true judgment with a logical account – though he leaves the conclusion aporetic. On Plato's epistemology, see C. C. W. Taylor, "Plato's Epistemology," in *Oxford Handbook of Plato*, ed. Gail Fine (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 165–90; Lloyd Gerson, *Ancient Epistemology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 27–61; Gail Fine, *Essays in Ancient Epistemology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021).

[8] Plato, *rep.* 507b–509c.

[9] The classic depiction is Plato, *Men.* 81e–85d. See also *Phaedo* 72e–73.

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even calling himself a teacher; he refers to those whom he is "teaching" simply as those who spent time with him.[10] Through dialogue among such peers, Socrates enabled students to rediscover the perception of the Forms that provided true knowledge.

In the centuries that followed, pedagogy and knowledge became increasingly connected. Rejecting Plato's doctrine of the Forms, Aristotle's approach to epistemology and pedagogy differed from Plato's, though he still followed his master's basic approach to dialogical reasoning. In the sixth book of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle discusses knowledge among several "virtues of thought," including craft (τέχνη), knowledge (ἐπιστήμη), prudence (φρόνησις), wisdom (σοφία), and understanding (νοῦς).[11] Like Plato, Aristotle thinks of knowledge (ἐπιστήμη) as a state of knowing non-contingent universals – those things that exist necessarily and eternally. Such knowledge, for Aristotle (unlike Plato), is learnable and teachable. Aristotle's categories thus allow him to distinguish between "knowledge" (ἐπιστήμη), which can be learned by deductive reasoning, and "understanding" (νοῦς), which is knowledge of a priori principles that cannot be discovered by deduction but that do constitute the necessary first principles of knowledge.[12] Aristotle's high estimation of deductive logic engendered a different pedagogical form than Plato's, one that approached truth through demonstration and reasoning more than dialogue. This should not be pressed too hard, however, as Aristotle's epistemology also remained wedded to dialectical modes of reasoning.[13]

The division between "rhetoric" and "philosophy" also impacted rhetorical education in the Hellenistic period. In ancient rhetorical education, school exercises like progymnasmata and declamation taught students not only to prepare speeches but also to absorb the linguistic and moral tastes incumbent upon the governing elite. As Martin Bloomer puts it, this education was a process of "persona building" in which instructors

[10] Plato, *Theaet.* 150d.

[11] Aristotle, *Nic.* 1139a–1141b (*LCL* 73:324–41).

[12] See the discussion in Aristotle, *post. an.* 71b–72a.

[13] As several scholars have argued, Aristotle's political treatises are not simply attempts to provide a universal charter of governance but to enable young Greek men to reflect philosophically about the goods of politics. For two examples, see Thomas W. Smith, *Revaluing Ethics: Aristotle's Dialectical Pedagogy* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2001); Stephen Salkever, "Teaching the Questions: Aristotle's Philosophical Pedagogy in the *Nicomachean Ethics* and the *Politics*," *Review of Politics* 69 (2007): 192–214.

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"produced a definite subjectivity in its elite participants."[14] Teachers deployed the language of the mystery cults to present learning as an initiation into sacred mysteries.[15] Through developing the skills of reading and speaking, students literally learned to talk and imagine themselves as another kind of person. The mastery of speech demonstrated a mastery of the body and of the passions.[16] Instructors taught not only the elements of speech but also vocal and bodily modulation, which instilled a "kind of eloquence of the body" (*quasi corporis … eloquentia*), as Cicero called it.[17] They also taught moral virtues, especially the control of anger.[18] Among Latin moralists like Cicero and Quintilian, rhetorical education was also impacted by the philosophical critique. Instructive here is Quintilian's final chapter of the *Institutio Oratio*, which is devoted to what he considered the most important issue of rhetoric – that the orator be "a good man."[19] Eloquence meant little if it was not expressed and informed by a genuine search for goodness and truth.

We could include other related issues and schools of antique philosophy and education. Pyrrhonian Skepticism, for example, raised serious questions about the limits of knowledge. The schools of Epicureanism and Stoicism, which I will consider in more detail in the following section, did as well. My aim here, again, is not to provide a comprehensive

[14] Martin Bloomer, "Schooling in Persona: Imagination and Subordination in Roman Education," *Classical Antiquity* 16, no. 1 (1997): 57–78 (at 57).

[15] Hippocrates, *Laws* 2; Ps.-Plutarch, *lib. ed.* 14.1 (10e); Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *lit. comp.* 25; Quintilian, *or.* 5.13–14. These references owe to Andrew Ballard, "The Mysteries of Paideia: 'Mystery' and Education in Plato's *Symposium*, 4QInstruction, and 1 Corinthians," in *Pedagogy in Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity*, ed. Karina Martin Hogan, Matthew Goff, and Emma Wasserman (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2017), 243–82.

[16] Brown, *Power and Persuasion*, 48.

[17] Cicero, *or.* 17.55 (*LCL* 342:346–47); see also Quintilian, *inst.* 11.3. The way in which bodily gestures signified and indicated mental and spiritual states drew on the science of physiognomy in antiquity. For a good recent overview, see Laetitia Marcucci, "Physiognomic Roots in the Rhetoric of Cicero and Quintilian: The Application and Transformation of Traditional Physiognomics," in *Visualizing the Invisible with the Human Body: Physiognomy and Ekphrasis in the Ancient World*, ed. J. Cale Johnson and Alessandro Stavru (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2019), 183–202.

[18] Aristotle treats the pathos of anger as an aspect of rhetoric in detail in Book 2 of *De rhetorica*. See also the remarks in Ps.-Plutarch, *lib. ed.* 14.1;10c–e (*LCL* 197:48–49). For a good overview, see William Harris, *Restraining Rage: The Ideology of Anger Control in Classical Antiquity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001).

[19] Quintilian, *inst.* 12.1.2 (*LCL* 494:354–55). See also Cicero, *De or.* 1.46.202; 3.15.56–58; *or.* 4.14–15. The latter two sections especially convey the importance of studying philosophy for oratory.

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analysis of ancient epistemology but to chart some of the primary ways that knowledge and pedagogy were related. Many Christian leaders in the patristic era continued to receive a classical education – albeit with varying degrees of appreciation and appropriation.[20] With notable exceptions, Christians did not reject or replace classical *paideia* but sought to utilize this cultural inheritance for Christian aims.[21]

MEMORY AND REGULA IN ANCIENT PHILOSOPHY

From this more global consideration of teaching and knowledge in antiquity, we can now focus more concretely on some of the key elements from ancient philosophy that would feature prominently in Christian catechesis. Especially important here is the role of memory and the use of short, credal-like formulas. Both of these topics were prominent in Epicurean and Stoic philosophy, though they were discussed in other schools as well.

The topic of memory was a major feature of both rhetorical and philosophical education.[22] In rhetoric, memory was one of five central elements of good speech-making, along with invention, arrangement, style, and delivery.[23] Memory was understood not simply as the ability to recall information but also as the foundation of creative thought and action. It was, as Mary Carruthers puts it, a "compositional art . . . among the arts of thinking, especially involved with fostering the qualities we

[20] On Christian leaders' continued participation in classical education, see Neil McLynn, "Disciplines of Discipleship in Late Antique Education: Augustine and Gregory Nazianzen," in *Augustine and the Disciplines: From Cassiciacum to Confessions*, ed. Karla Pollman and Mark Vessey (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 25–48; Raffaela Cribiore, "Why Did Christians Compete with Pagans for Greek Paideia?" in Hogan, Goff, and Wasserman, *Pedagogy in Ancient Judaism*, 359–74.

[21] The most famous exception being the elder and younger Apollinarii, in Laodicea, who were reported to have formed a Christian school modeled on classical schools (*Socrates*, *HE* 3.16.1–5). Julian's edict in 361, banning Christians from teaching education, would also serve to heighten the degree of tension between Christian and pagan education.

[22] Some of the most influential treatments include Aristotle, *mem. et rem.*; Cicero, *de or.* 2.86.350–88.359; Quintilian, *inst.* 11.2.17–22; (Ps.-)Cicero, *Herenn.* 10. On the importance of memory in medieval culture though, which also covers memory in antiquity, see Mary Carruthers, *The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990); Mary Carruthers, *The Craft of Thought: Meditation, Rhetoric, and the Making of Images, 400–1200* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

[23] Teachers could divide the topics differently; this fivefold arrangement comes from (Ps.-) Cicero, *Herenn.* 1.2.3.

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now revere as 'imagination' and 'creativity.'"[24] As the influential Latin textbook *Ad Herennium* described it, memory was the "storehouse of inventions (*thesaurum inuentorum*) and the custodian of all parts of rhetoric."[25] The well-trained memory not only allowed the orator to adapt and shape his discourse to a particular audience. It provided the cognitive structure in which the mind could reach new heights.

While teachers debated the extent to which memory was natural or artificial, all agreed that artificial memory could be strengthened by certain exercises. Among them were the establishment of what Aristotle called "common places" and the twin activities of *diuisio* and *compositio*.[26] One first developed a series of ordered and organized mental "places" (Gk., τόποι; Lt., *loci*), portrayed as an architectural structure. Into these structures one could store a potentially unlimited amount of information. Images acquired through sense perception were understood quite literally to be imprinted or stamped upon the soul, like wax on a tablet – a metaphor that comes from Plato and would become ubiquitous in the *ars memorandi* literature.[27] A major key for training memory was organization and brevity. The more organized one's mind, the stronger memory would be. As Cicero put it, "The best aid to clearness of memory consists in orderly arrangement."[28]

It is within the domain of mnemonic education that we can locate the importance of memorizing short formulas or precepts and, relatedly, the application of certain canons or criteria of truth.[29] If memory was understood in architectural terms – as a storehouse of the soul – then the "canon" of truth was a measuring device for building a strong memory structure. Without a good *regula*, the building would be unstable.[30] For such rules to be useful, however, they needed to be internalized through

[24] Carruthers, *Craft of Thought*, 9.

[25] (Ps.-)Cicero, *Herenn.* 3.16.28 (*LCL* 403:205).

[26] For a detailed discussion of Aristotle's conception of memory, see Richard Sorabji, *Aristotle on Memory*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004); David Bloch, ed. and trans., *Aristotle on Memory and Recollection: Text: Translation, Interpretation, and Reception in Western Scholasticism* (Leiden: Brill, 2007).

[27] Plato, *Theaet.* 191d–e; see Carruthers, *Book of Memory*, 24.

[28] Cicero, *de or.* 2.136 (*LCL* 348:467).

[29] See Gisela Striker, "Κριτήριον τῆς ἀληθείας," in *Essays on Hellenistic Epistemology and Ethics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 22–76.

[30] For an ancient author who makes just such a comparison, see Lucretius, *rer. nat.* 4.511–21. For the history of the term, see Herbert Oppel, *Κανών. Zur Bedeutungsgeschichte des Wortes und seiner lateinischen Entsprechungen (Regula-Norma)* (Leipzig: Dieterich'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1937).

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memory and frequently recalled and applied in daily life. Rules needed to be meditated upon frequently so they could be ready at hand. As Pierre Hadot comments, the rule is to be formulated in "the most striking and concrete way. We must keep life's events 'before our eyes,' and see them in the light of the fundamental rule. This is known as the exercise of memorization (*mneme*) and meditation (*meletē*) on the rule of life."[31] Hadot went on to speak of the use of such "rules of life" as especially conducive to developing "attention" (προσοχή): "We are to steep ourselves in a rule of life (*kanon*), by mentally applying it to all of life's possible different situations, just as we assimilate a grammatical or mathematical rule through practice, by applying it to individual cases."[32] The exercises of memorization and meditation on a rule of life were not simply for acquiring knowledge of things but for transforming one's mode of being in the world. Hence meditation was closely connected to affective and visual pedagogies, such as the use of amplification and repetition. By memorizing a rule, one acquired a new lens for perceiving the world.

While the quest for ascertaining the correct criteria of truth appeared in several schools, it was especially prominent in Stoic and Epicurean schools.[33] One of the dividing lines between Skeptics, on the one hand, and Stoics and Epicureans, on the other, was that whereas the former rejected the use of a criterion altogether, the latter concurred about its legitimacy but disagreed about its contents and application.[34] Epicurus expressed the importance of canon/criterion for philosophy and might have been partly responsible for its importance in philosophical discussions.[35] For Epicurus, establishing a canon of truth referred primarily to

[31] Hadot, *Way of Life*, 85.

[32] Hadot, *Way of Life*, 85.

[33] In Plato and Aristotle, the term functioned minimally and meant something like a legal standard of judgment. In the second century (AD), however, Ptolemy of Alexandria wrote a treatise *On the Criterion and Commanding Faculty* (περὶ κριτηρίου καὶ ἡγεμονικοῦ), which entered the Hellenistic debates in a way that both disregarded skepticism and also hearkened to a more Platonic and Aristotelian position. See Mark J. Schiefsky "The Epistemology of Ptolemy's *On the Criterion*," in *Strategies of Argument: Essays in Ancient Ethics, Epistemology, and Logic*, ed. Mi-Kyoung Lee (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 301–31.

[34] Striker, "Κριτήριον τῆς ἀληθείας," 22. Diogenes affirms the use of "criterion or canon of truth" among Stoics in *uitae* 7.42.

[35] Epicurus may have even been responsible for the prominence of deploying "criteria of truth" as a philosophical category (Striker, "Κριτήριον τῆς ἀληθείας," 29). Diogenes Laertius lists as one of Epicurus's writings a work titled Περὶ κριτηρίου ἢ Κανών (*vitae* 10.27), and then later refers to the three parts of his philosophy as "canonic," physics, and ethics, the first being contained in the book titled Κανών, though it is usually paired

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two basic principles: that words could be understood according to ordinary usage; and that sense perceptions could be trusted to make inferences about what lies beyond the senses.[36] Diogenes reports that Epicurus's main criteria are the senses (αἰσθήσεις), preconceptions (προλήψεις), and affections (πάθη), though elsewhere he could also include "perceptions of mental standards" (φανταστικὰς ἐπιβολὰς τῆς διανοίας).[37] Much has been made of these terms and to what extent they qualify as "criteria" for measuring truth. But the more general point, observed by Eric Osborn, can be well taken: namely, that Epicurus is less concerned with an abstract epistemology than with "a theory of knowledge which can move from the known to further knowledge."[38] His appeal to criteria served to stimulate a constructive form of reasoning in which objects observed through the senses could be trusted to lead to true knowledge and so avoid becoming lost in infinite regress.

Stoics employed the language of canon and criteria similarly. While some Stoics admitted several criteria – the Stoic Boethius included intellect, perception, desire, and knowledge, for example – most considered the main criterion to be "cognitive impressions," or impressions arising from existent things.[39] Stoics distinguished between cognitive impressions, which contain an exact impression of the existing thing in the mind, and "incognitive impressions," which either do not correspond with being or contain distorted images.[40] This language recalls the basic psychology of antique memory, exercising attention to the sense impressions "stamped" upon the soul.[41] It goes in a slightly different direction,

with the physics and concerns "the standard and the first principle, or the elementary part of philosophy" (περὶ κριτηρίου καὶ ἀρχῆς, καὶ στοιχειωτικόν). See Diogenes, *uitae* 10.27–30 (*LCL* 185:556–59).

[36] Epicurus, Letter to Herodotus, *apud* Diogenes, *uitae* 10.37–38. This way of framing the matter owes to Elizabeth Asmis, "Basic Education in Epicureanism," in Too, *Education in Greek and Roman Antiquity*, 209–39 (at 217).

[37] Diogenes, *uitae* 10.31 (*LCL* 185:560–61): ἐν τοίνυν τῷ Κανόνι λέγων ἐστὶν ὁ Ἐπίκουρος κριτήρια τῆς ἀληθείας εἶναι τὰς αἰσθήσεις καὶ προλήψεις καὶ τὰ πάθη, οἱ δ' Ἐπικούρειοι καὶ τὰς φανταστικὰς ἐπιβολὰς τῆς διανοίας.

[38] Eric Osborn, "Reason and the Rule of Faith in the Second Century," in *The Making of Orthodoxy: Essays in Honour of Henry Chadwick*, ed. Rowan Williams (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 40–61 (at 41).

[39] Diogenes, *uitae* 7.54.

[40] Diogenes, *uitae* 7.46.

[41] For the comparison with cognitive impressions that uses the ring-impression upon wax imagery, see Sextus Empiricus, *prof.* 7.247–52 (A. A. Long and D. N. Sedley, eds., *The Hellenistic Philosophers*, vol. 1: *Translations of the Principal Sources, with Philosophical Commentary* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987], 40).

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however, by focusing on whether or not one's impressions correspond with being, and not only whether the image proved more useful for remaining fixed in memory.

In addition to establishing criteria of truth, both Stoics and Epicureans emphasized the importance of memory for training cognition. Exhortations to remember or meditate upon precepts occur throughout Stoic writers like Epictetus, Seneca, and Marcus Aurelius.[42] Seneca, for example, explains that the beginner should "hold fast" to elemental precepts "with both hands" and daily meditate upon them so they occur to him readily:

> These are the precepts that he must never let go, nay, must cling fast to, and make a part of himself, and by daily meditation reach the point where these wholesome maxims occur to him of their own accord, and are promptly at hand whenever they are desired, and the great distinction between base and honorable action presents itself without any delay.[43]

The goal of frequent meditation was for the precepts to become internal to the student, insinuated in heart and mind and available for use in any given situation. In correspondence with another Stoic on the relevance of precepts (*praecepta*) versus doctrines (*decreta*), Seneca stressed the importance of precepts especially for those who were "making progress" in philosophy, in distinction from both the rank beginner and the advanced student.[44] For the student in this stage, memorizing short precepts was the most important task for making good progress in the philosophical life.

The training of memory was especially important in Epicurean philosophy. As Elizabeth Asmis observes, for Epicureans, memorization was not simply a rote exercise subservient to dialogue (as it might be considered in Platonism) but as itself a "process of philosophical

[42] Robert Newman, "*Cotidie Meditare*: Theory and Practice of *Meditatio* in Imperial Stoicism," in *Philosophie, Wissenschaften, Technik. Philosophie (Stoizismus)*, ed. Wolfgang Haase, *ANRW* 36/3 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1987), 1473–516; Mateusz Stróżyński, "Rhetoric and Spiritual Exercises in Marcus Aurelius' *Meditations*," *Eos* 104, no. 2 (2017): 285–301. On daily meditation and the *examen conscientiae* in Epictetus, see B. L. Hijmans, *Ἄσκησις: Notes on Epictetus' Educational System* (Assen, NL: Van Gorcum, 1959), 88.

[43] Seneca, *ben.* 7.2.1 (*LCL* 310:458–59): Haec Demetrius noster utraque manu tenere proficientem iubet, haec nusquam dimittere, immo adfigere et partem sui facere eoque cotidiana meditatione perduci, ut sua sponte occurrant salutaria et ubique ac statim desiderata praesto sint et sine ulla mora ueniat illa turpis honestique distinctio.

[44] See Seneca, *ep.* 94–95, and the discussion in John Sellars, "Stoic Practical Philosophy in the Imperial Period," *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies* 94 (2007): 115–40.

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discovery."[45] Epicurus included an *epitome* of his teaching so that students could memorize the core principles that would enable a comprehensive understanding of physics and, subsequently, ethics. Those who could not study his treatises in detail were to "preserve in memory" the principle points so they could recall them on any occasion; they were to memorize "the principal headings of an elementary outline of the whole treatment of the subject," for a "grasp of the whole" will be more important than particular details.[46] He explains that this is because "it is impossible to gather up the results of continuous diligent study of the entirety of things, unless we can embrace in short formulas and hold in mind all that might have been accurately expressed even to the minutest detail."[47] The student who grasps the comprehensive vision in outline form, even if lacking knowledge of specific parts, will be much better equipped than his peers, for he or she will be able "in silent fashion and as quick as thought run over the doctrines most important for their peace of mind."[48]

Martha Nussbaum has suggested three reasons for the importance of memory in Epicurean philosophy.[49] First, memory enabled the student to internalize key doctrines in a way that would strengthen the mind and produce within the student a dynamic power that helped combat falsehood. Second, memory provided a "comprehensive grasp of the structure of the whole system." This allowed the student not only to see how the various parts of a philosophical system fit together but also to acquire trust in the system itself. Memorizing the canons enabled the student to see the whole at a glance, and then to move around, as it were, among

[45] See Asmis, "Basic Education in Epicureanism," 217. See also Erlend D. MacGillivray, "Epitomizing Philosophy and the Critique of Epicurean Popularizers," *Journal of Ancient History* 3, no. 1 (2015): 22–54.

[46] Epicurus, Letter to Herodotus, *apud* Diogenes, *uitae* 10.35 (*LCL* 185:564–67): Τοῖς μὴ δυναμένοις, ὦ Ἡρόδοτε, ἕκαστα τῶν περὶ φύσεως ἀναγεγραμμένων ἡμῖν ἐξακριβοῦν μηδὲ τὰς μείζους τῶν συντεταγμένων βίβλους διαθρεῖν ἐπιτομὴν τῆς ὅλης πραγματείας εἰς τὸ κατασχεῖν τῶν ὁλοσχερωτάτων γε δοξῶν τὴν μνήμην ἱκανῶς αὐτὸς παρεσκεύασα, ἵνα παρ᾽ ἑκάστους τῶν καιρῶν ἐν τοῖς κυριωτάτοις βοηθεῖν αὑτοῖς δύνωνται, καθ᾽ ὅσον ἂν ἐφάπτωνται τῆς περὶ φύσεως θεωρίας. καὶ τοὺς προβεβηκότας δὲ ἱκανῶς ἐν τῇ τῶν ὅλων ἐπιβλέψει τὸν τύπον τῆς ὅλης πραγματείας τὸν κατεστοιχειωμένον δεῖ μνημονεύειν. τῆς γὰρ ἀθρόας ἐπιβολῆς πυκνὸν δεόμεθα, τῆς δὲ κατὰ μέρος οὐχ ὁμοίως.

[47] Epicurus, Letter to Herodotus, *apud* Diogenes, *uitae* 10.36 (*LCL* 185:566–67): οὐ γὰρ οἷόν τε τὸ πύκνωμα τῆς συνεχοῦς τῶν ὅλων περιοδείας εἰδέναι3 μὴ δυνάμενον διὰ βραχεῶν φωνῶν ἅπαν ἐμπεριλαβεῖν ἐν αὑτῷ τὸ καὶ κατὰ μέρος ἂν ἐξακριβωθέν.

[48] Epicurus, Letter to Herodotus, *apud* Diogenes, *uitae* 10.83 (*LCL* 185:612–13): ἐκ τούτων καὶ κατὰ τὸν ἄνευ φθόγγων τρόπον τὴν ἅμα νοήματι περίοδον τῶν κυριωτάτων πρὸς γαληνισμὸν ποιοῦνται.

[49] Nussbaum, *Therapy of Desire*, 132–33.

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different topics while remaining oriented. This form of learning was more beneficial than merely working through each argument piecemeal. Third, memory helped the student understand truth at an internal, immediate level, not merely remaining on the surface. Here, Nussbaum finds Epicurus at his most psychologically astute, and in distinction from Aristotelian methods: "The false beliefs that cause disturbance in life do not all lie on the surface of the self, ready for critical and dialectical scrutiny, as the Aristotelian seems to think. They lie deep in the soul, exercising their baneful influence, often beneath the level of consciousness."[50] Memory work, in other words, enabled the Epicurean philosopher to perform the therapeutic surgery that uprooted whatever spiritual maladies afflicted the soul and then to transplant a new thought system that would be more conducive to obtaining wisdom.

Memory, and particularly the memorization of short summative statements, were vital components of philosophical and classical pedagogy. Combined with reflection on establishing certain canons or criteria of truth, the training of memory was crucial for training the mind to know and grasp truth. Especially for the beginning student, the discovery of truth was premised upon a memory habituated through daily meditation on certain basic principles and rules of life. With a well-trained memory, the philosopher could dispense with obstructive thought patterns and begin to construct a new mental storehouse of the soul that would enable genuine progress in the quest for wisdom.

EDUCATION IN EARLY CHRISTIANITY

Graeco-Roman education played an unquestionably formative role in early Christian as well as Jewish teaching. While von Harnack presented sharply contrastive pictures of Hebraism and Hellenism, it is now more common to see Christian education emerging from within a Second Temple Judaism that was already conditioned by similar assumptions and questions as their Greek and Roman neighbors.[51]

[50] Nussbaum, *Therapy of Desire*, 133.

[51] See the major studies of Averil Cameron, *Christianity and the Rhetoric of Empire: The Development of Christian Discourse* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991) and Brown, *Power and Persuasion*, and the more recent studies in Peter Gemeinhardt, Lieve Van Hoof, and Peter Van Nuffelen, eds., *Education and Religion in Late Antique Christianity: Reflections, Social Contexts and Genres* (London: Routledge, 2019). While Philo is often seen as the epitome of Alexandrian Judaism, that view is now broadening to include a wide range of approaches in the production of wisdom literature,

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And while it is less plausible today to speak of a New Testament "catechism,"[52] we do find traces in early Christian literature of catechetical terminology, which had been largely absent in the Septuagint and in Hellenistic Jewish literature. The Greek term *katēcheō* (κατηχέω) and its cognates appear in several Christian texts during this period, though with a broadly didactic meaning and not necessarily related to baptismal instruction (Luke 1:4; Acts 18:25; 21:21, 24; 1 Cor. 14:19; Gal. 6:6; Rom. 2:18).[53] But it is not in terminological formula that we should look for the origins of catechesis. Rather, several features of early Christian pedagogy are more instructive – for example, Christian uses of non-Christian styles of producing, transmitting, and commenting on texts,[54] the use of classical genres,[55] and even the use of *paideia* language to depict

such as one finds in Ben Sira, Ecclesiasticus, 4QInstruction, and the Hodayot. See Hogan, Goff, and Wasserman, *Pedagogy in Ancient Judaism*; Jason Zurawski and Gabriele Boccaccini, eds., *Second Temple Jewish "Paideia" in Context* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2017).

[52] For the arguments against seeing a direct line of continuity between New Testament education and the catechumenate, see Benjamin Edsall, *The Reception of Paul and Early Christian Initiation: History and Hermeneutics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 23–25; see also Benjamin Edsall, "Kergyma, Catechesis and Other Things We Used to Find: Twentieth-Century Research on Early Christian Teaching since Alfred Seeberg (1903)," *Currents in Biblical Research* 10, no. 3 (2012): 410–41.

[53] Another early appearance is 2 *Clem* 17.1, which mentions catechesis in the context of a discussion on fasting and almsgiving.

[54] An early attempt to describe early Christians as a "scholastic community" came from Edwin A. Judge, "The Early Christians as a Scholastic Community," *Journal of Religious History* 1 (1960): 4–15. Judge was followed by Krister Stendahl, Raymond Brown, and others who developed an account of the scholastic character of early Christian textual production. For a good analysis of the Johannine school as a species of antique "schools," see R. Alan Culpepper, *The Johannine School: An Evaluation of the Johannine-School Hypothesis Based on an Investigation of the Nature of Ancient Schools* (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1975). On Pauline "schools," see Claire S. Smith, *Pauline Communities as "Scholastic Communities": A Study of the Vocabulary of "Teaching" in 1 Corinthians, 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012); Devin L. White, *Teacher of the Nations: Ancient Educational Traditions and Paul's Arguments in 1 Corinthians 1–4* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2017).

[55] Examples here are numerous. For a sampling from recent works, see Benjamin Edsall, *Paul's Witness to Formative Early Christian Instruction* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014); Troels Engberg-Pedersen, *John and Philosophy: A New Reading of the Fourth Gospel* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017). For the use of rhetorical categories, see David Aune, "The Gospels as Hellenistic Biography," *Mosaic: A Journal for the Interdisciplinary Study of Literature* 20, no. 4 (1987): 1–10; Richard A. Burridge, *What are the Gospels? A Comparison with Graeco-Roman Biography* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004); Mikeal C. Parsons and Michael Wade Martin, *Ancient Rhetoric and the New Testament: The Influence of Elementary Greek Composition* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2018).

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God's relation to his people.[56] Especially of interest is the organization of knowledge into stages or progressive patterns, distinguishing certain kinds of teaching as appropriate for beginners and others for the more advanced – milk and meat, for instance.[57] Paul's preaching and especially moral instruction, as Abraham Malherbe has argued, especially drew on pedagogical techniques from classical education and moral philosophy in the Hellenistic age.[58] One finds evidence for this in Paul's use of diatribal language to refute his opponents, for example, or his self-representation to the Thessalonians as a "gentle nurse" (1 Thess. 2:27).[59] Another is Paul's use of *phronēsis* language in Romans 12:2–3, which may have been inspired by the practical wisdom tradition set out in Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*.[60] In many ways, New Testament literature evidences a great deal of debt to ancient Graeco-Roman rhetorical and philosophical pedagogy.

Another important precursor to organizing catechetical knowledge is the famous "two ways" formula.[61] This image has been an important

[56] The use of the language of *paideia* in Heb. 12:3–11 is especially interesting. In this passage, *paideia* echoes not only Graeco-Roman education but also the Jewish wisdom tradition of reflection on Israel's wilderness wanderings and the divine discipline of Prov. 3:11–12, which speaks of the *paideia* of the Lord (παιδείας κυρίου). See the discussion in Chad Spellman, "The Drama of Discipline: Toward an Intertextual Profile of *Paideia* in Hebrews 12," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 59, no. 3 (2016): 487–506.

[57] See especially 1 Cor. 3:1–3; Heb. 5:11–6:8; 7:1–10:18. In Heb. 5:12, we read of a "beginning discourse about Christ" (ὁ τῆς ἀρχῆς τοῦ Χριστοῦ λόγος), which seems to refer to repentance, faith, and baptism, and which is differentiated – from secretive teaching, such as teaching on the nature of Christ, which is reserved for the mature (Heb. 5:11–6:8; 7:1–10:18). Stroumsa notes, in addition to the secret teachings of Jesus (e.g., Mark 4), Paul's allusion to divine "wisdom" only available to the "perfect" or "spiritual" ones (2 Cor. 2:6,13), as well as his deliberately mysterious presentation of being caught up into paradise (2 Cor. 12:27). Guy Stroumsa, *Hidden Wisdom: Esoteric Traditions and the Roots of Christian Mysticism*, 2nd ed. (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 70.

[58] See, for example, Abraham Malherbe, *Paul and the Popular Philosophers* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989). For a specific study of Paul's relation to the rhetorical traditions of psychagogy, see Clarence E. Glad, *Paul and Philodemus: Adaptability in Epicurean and Early Christian Psychagogy* (Leiden: Brill, 2014).

[59] These two examples are considered at length in Malherbe, *Paul and the Philosophers*, 25–48.

[60] See Luke Timothy Johnson, "Transformation of the Mind and Moral Discernment in Paul," in *Early Christianity and Classical Culture, Comparative Studies in Honor of Abraham J. Malherbe*, ed. John Fitzgerald, Thomas Olbricht, and L. Michael White (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 215–36.

[61] Once again, there is a massive body of literature here, but see M. Jack Suggs, "The Christian Two Ways Tradition: Its Antiquity, Form and Function," in *Studies in New Testament and Early Christian Literature: Essays in Honor of Allen Wikgren*, ed. David Edward Aune (Leiden: Brill, 1972), 60–74; G. W. E. Nickelsburg, "Seeking the Origins of

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theme in studies of catechesis, as it charts the clear presentation, ostensibly for newcomers, of what Christian initiation entailed.[62] Indications of this image appear in several early Christian texts, such as Hebrews 6:1–6, 1 Peter 3, and the *Epistle of Barnabas*, but it is especially prominent in the *Didache* and the *Shepherd of Hermas* – two texts that came to be specifically associated in the fourth century with baptismal catechesis.[63] Such language should be judged carefully when attributing it to the formation of catechesis. While the *Didache* seems to indicate the use of the two ways formula as a kind of catechetical instruction, a text like the *Shepherd of Hermas* concerns repentance within a post-baptismal setting, and so does not appear to have been cast originally as a catechetical work.[64]

From this survey, we can identify several key themes in early Christian education that led to the emergence of catechesis. Early Christian

the Two Ways Traditions in Jewish and Christian Ethical Texts," in *A Multiform Heritage: Studies on Early Judaism and Christianity in Honor of Robert A. Kraft*, ed. Benjamin Wright (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1999), 95–108; Robert E. Aldridge, "Peter and the 'Two Ways,'" *VC* 53 (1999): 233–64; Matthew Larsen and Michael Svigel, "The First Century Two Ways Catechesis and Hebrews 6:1–6," in *The Didache: A Missing Piece to the Puzzle* (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2015), 477–96.

[62] Not all would agree that the *Didache* represents baptismal catechesis. For the most cogent statement that it did, see William Varner, "How did the 'Teaching' Teach? The *Didache* as Catechesis," in *Ancient Education and Early Christianity*, ed. Matthew Hauge and Andrew Pitts (London: T&T Clark, 2016), 179–202. Varner draws especially on Willy Rordorf, "An Aspect of Judeo-Christian Ethic: The Two Ways," in *The Didache in Modern Research*, ed. Jonathan A. Draper (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 248–64.

[63] For fourth-century depictions of the *Didache* and *Shepherd of Hermas* texts as catechetical writings, see Athanasius, *39th Paschal Letter*; as well as references in Didymus, *Ps.* 227.26, *Zech.* 86.24–27, *Eccl.* 78.22, cited in Varner, "How did the 'Teaching' Teach," 183. The two-ways theme also appears in the description of initiation in *Constitutiones Apostolorum* 8. For more on this topic, see Aaron Milavec, ed., *The Didache: Text, Translation, Analysis, and Commentary* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2003).

[64] Carolyn Osiek summarizes well the *Shepherd*'s use of the two-ways formula in *Mandate* 6 in relation to catechesis: "Though there is no suggestion of a baptismal context here, the whole chapter is reminiscent of later baptismal instructions and renunciation formulas, especially the structure of doing good and avoiding evil, with examples of each. They differ decisively from this passage, however, in their assumption that the evil spirits resident in the nonbaptized are driven away by exorcism, baptism, and renunciation, while for Hermas they continue to hover, harass, and potentially invade the baptized." Carolyn Osiesk, ed. and trans., *Shepherd of Hermas* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1999), 125. For another consideration of the relationship between conversion and baptism, see Mark Grundeken, "Baptism and Μετάνοια in the Shepherd of Hermas," in *Early Christian Communities between Ideal and Reality*, ed. Mark Grundeken and Joseph Verheyden (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2015), 127–42.

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approaches to education were highly diverse and could vary in the use of texts, models, and social structures. But amid these variations, we find important emphases on moral formation, divine knowledge, and progressive stages of growth in virtue. The purposes of education in this period were concerned with forming persons who could know God through being assimilated into a community of instruction and worship. In this context, we see some of the primary outlines for the ways in which catechesis developed as an educational institution for shaping knowledge of God.

TEACHERS, STUDENTS, AND SCHOOLS IN SECOND-CENTURY ROME

Surveying the landscape of education and knowledge in antiquity allows us to sketch a more detailed outline of the phenomenon of independent teachers and "schools-churches" in second-century Rome, which serves as another key precedent for the emergence of catechesis.[65] This context, I suggest, is especially helpful for understanding the correlation between social and ritual aspects of knowledge in early Christianity, as we observe a heightened focus on the need to demarcate the boundaries of orthodoxy and heterodoxy in attaining genuine knowledge of God.

The school model of second-century Roman Christianity, exemplified by Marcion, Valentinus, Justin, and others, operated in many ways like other ancient schools, even when they did not explicitly describe themselves that way. These school-churches were characterized by fellowship around a teacher, textual analysis, biblical commentary, a rigorous pattern of discipleship, and a shared way of life. They typically met in homes and were supported financially by patrons. Each church was normally headed by a bishop, but we also hear of presbyters or lay teachers serving in leadership roles. While we find hints of formal catechesis in these school-churches, we cannot identify any of these writings as catechetical

[65] On the school-church model, see Allen Brent, *Hippolytus and the Roman Church in the Third Century: Communities in Tension before the Emergence of a Monarch-Bishop* (Leiden: Brill, 1995); Peter Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus: Christians at Rome in the First Two Centuries*, trans. Michael Steinhauser (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003); Einar Thomassen, "Orthodoxy and Heresy in Second-Century Rome," *HTR* 97, no. 3 (2004): 241–56; John Behr, *Irenaeus of Lyons: Identifying Christianity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), chap. 1. See also the recent collection of essays in Gregory H. Snyder, ed., *Christian Teachers in Second-Century Rome* (Leiden: Brill, 2020).

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in the delimited sense of peri-baptismal education.[66] Nonetheless, these schools illuminate the institutionalizing character of early Christian epistemology and pedagogy in the context of ritual initiation.

Valentinus and the Valentinians

Valentinus and those associated with him are especially helpful for understanding the emergence of Christian catechesis – particularly given the way that issues of knowledge and soteriology became linked with initiation into these school-like churches.[67] To be sure, one can question the extent to which Valentinianism can be called a "school."[68] According to Christoph Markschies, Valentinus was an unremarkable figure in the mid second century, and stood at a distance from his followers who interpreted Scripture within a more complex mythology.[69] Einar Thomassen, by contrast, sees much more continuity between Valentinus and later Valentinians based on common "family resemblances."[70] Regardless, the divergent streams of Valentinian Christianity should be seen as operating within the intellectual and social currents that governed other school-like church groups in second-century Rome, and we do well to locate Valentinian texts within this milieu.

[66] Possible exceptions are the Valentinian *Gospel of Philip* and *Excerpta ex Theodoto*, discussed below, which have been linked with initiation, though that is not unanimously agreed upon.

[67] On Valentinian initiation, see John D. Turner, "Ritual in Gnosticism," in *Gnosticism and Later Platonism: Themes, Figures, and Texts*, ed. John D. Turner and Ruth Majercik (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2000), 83–140; Einar Thomassen, *The Spiritual Seed: The Church of the "Valentinians"* (Leiden: Brill, 2006); Ismo Dunderberg, *Beyond Gnosticism: Myth, Lifestyle, and Society in the School of Valentinus* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008); Everett Ferguson, *Baptism in the Early Church: History, Theology, and Liturgy in the First Five Centuries* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 278–90; Einar Thomassen, "Baptism among the Valentinians," in *Ablution, Initiation, and Baptism: Late Antiquity, Early Judaism, and Early Christianity*, ed. David Hellholm et al. (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2011), 2:895–915; Edsall, *Reception of Paul*, 48–53.

[68] Against the idea that Valentinianism constituted a "school," see Thomassen, *Spiritual Seed*, 491.

[69] Christoph Markschies, *Valentinus Gnosticus? Untersuchungen zur valentinianischen Gnosis mit einem Kommentar zu den Fragmenten Valentins* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1992).

[70] It is mostly from Tertullian and Hippolytus that we hear of two "schools" of Valentinians, which Hippolytus describes as being based on different christologies. Tertullian, *Val.* 11.2; Hippolytus, *haer.* 6.35.5–7. Thomassen depicts Eastern and Western Valentinian groups – the Eastern being earlier. For a critique of these divisions, see Joel Kalvesmaki, "Italian versus Eastern Valentinianism?" *VC* 62, no. 1 (2008): 79–89.

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The concept of "redemption" (ἀπολύτρωσις) was central to Valentinian Christianity, comprising a mutually interpreting set of baptismal, protological, and soteriological elements.[71] And yet, because Valentinian baptismal rituals were formally indistinct from other Christian communities' rituals, it became imperative in the interpretation and explication of these rituals – presumably in some kind of catechetical instruction – to distinguish Valentinian identity based on theological issues.[72] Sociologically, we can also highlight the importance of reform in Valentinian Christianity. Thomassen has argued that, because of conflicting tensions between "decentralization" and "centralization" in the second- and third-century emergence of the monepiscopacy, figures like Valentinus pursued a model of reform based on a kind of pure church ideology.[73] However, rather than instilling an unbridgeable gap between the pure church and other Christians, Valentinian reform seems to have allowed for multiple levels of participation, corresponding with different levels of knowledge in which the perfected gnostic, or "spiritual" Christian, occupied a higher state of being than did the "psychic" Christian.[74] This kind of multi-layered structure, which perhaps set precedents for later distinctions between catechumen and baptized, generated new questions. How could rituals distinguish various levels of knowledge? And what educational practices would facilitate progression from one level to another?

In Valentinian baptismal initiation, we find several ways of dealing with these questions. We should be cautious with the heresiologists' presentation of the varieties of the Valentinian ritual of redemption (ἀπολύτρωσις), such as Irenaeus's in *Aduersus haereses* 1.21, which likely depicts Western derivatives of a more primitive Eastern Valentinianism.[75] He describes at least six groups differentiated by ritual: one group who understood baptism as preparing the "bridal chamber,"[76] three groups who baptized in water but did so with different rituals, a fifth group who replaced water baptism with a water-oil anointing, and a sixth group who

[71] This way of understanding Valentinianism owes much to Thomassen's portrayal in *Spiritual Seed*.
[72] Thomassen, "Baptism among the Valentinians," 912.
[73] Thomassen, "Orthodoxy and Heresy," 253–55.
[74] Thomassen, "Orthodoxy and Heresy," 255.
[75] For Eastern and Western Valentinianism, see Thomassen, *Spiritual Seed*, 39–45.
[76] It is often supposed that Irenaeus's reference to the "bridal chamber" corresponds with the practice laid out in the *Gospel of Philip* (mentioned below), but several divergences suggest that Irenaeus is either confused about certain aspects or witnesses to another form of the practice. Thomassen, "Baptism Among the Valentinians," 899.

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rejected material elements altogether.[77] For Irenaeus, this latter group represents the most consistent form of Valentinianism, since it fits with his portrait of Valentinian redemption as a matter of pure *gnosis*; more likely, however, they were a marginal group within broader Valentinian currents.[78] When we turn to extant texts, most of which come from Eastern settings, we see not a wholesale rejection of material elements but rather a focus on the relation between the materiality of the rites and the spiritual symbolism they convey. Key texts include the *Tripartite Tractate*, the *Excerpta ex Theodoto,* and the *Gospel of Philip* – texts that come from Greek and Coptic sources from the second and third centuries, yet which helpfully indicate trajectories of Valentinian practice more generally.[79]

The Coptic *Tripartite Tractate* shows an interest in questions of spiritual knowledge and metaphysics in ways that correspond with ancient philosophy more broadly, especially Middle Platonism.[80] The text also evidences use of a trinitarian confession in baptism and speaks of the baptizand's participation in the "Totalities" or "Entireties" that descend upon the waters.[81] It also speaks of baptismal initiates needing to believe "what was said to them," which seems to suggest some form of

[77] Irenaeus, *haer.* 1.21.2–5.

[78] Irenaeus, *haer.* 1.21.4 (SC 264:302; ANF 1:346): Alii autem haec omnia recusantes, dicunt non oportere inenarrabilis et inuisibilis uirtutis mysterium per uisibiles et corruptibiles perfici creaturas, et ea quae mente concipi non possunt et incorporalia et insensibilia, per sensibilia et corporalia. Esse autem perfectam redemptionem ipsam agnitionem inenarrabilis magnitudinis. Redimi enim per agnitionem interiorem hominem spiritalem et sufficere eis uniuersorum agnitionem: et hanc esse redemptionem ueram.

[79] For critical editions and translations, I have used Geoffrey S. Smith, ed. and trans., *Valentinian Christianity: Texts and Translations* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2020).

[80] For a good discussion of this text within the context of ancient philosophical discourses of knowledge and free will, see Paul Linjamaa, *The Ethics of 'The Tripartite Tractate' (NHC I, 5): A Study of Determinism and Early Christian Philosophy of Ethics* (Leiden: Brill, 2019), 47–70. Linjamaa points to key passages in which knowledge is associated with God and equivalent to salvation (55:27–40; 126.9–27); passages that point to the Son as the means through which the Father is made known (*Tri. Tract.* 67.12–13, 87.15); and passages in which knowledge is transmitted from the Son to the Eons, the youngest of which is the Logos who creates the world in three stages (material, psychical, and pneumatic). See Linjamaa, *Ethics of the Tripartite Tractate*, 47–48.

[81] *Tri. Tract.* 127.25–128.2 (Smith, *Valentinian Christianity*, 245): "The baptism that exists properly, to which the entireties will descend and within which they will be, there is no other baptism outside of this one alone, which is the redemption into God the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, when the confession occurs out of faith in those names, [which] are a single name of the gospel, when they believe what has been said to them, namely, that they exist."

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catechetical instruction.[82] In the *Excerpta ex Theodoto*, baptism is described in conjunction with Christ's baptism as a liberation from fate and the passions. The author makes clear, however, that it is not a transformation of the body (σῶμα) but of the soul (ψυχήν),[83] and that "it is not only washing that sets one free, but also the knowledge of who we were, what we have become, where we were, where we were placed, where we are going, from what we are ransomed, what birth is, what rebirth is."[84] The text emphasizes purity of soul as the condition in which initiates proceed into the water; they are encouraged to "fast, petition, pray, [raise up] hands, kneel, because a soul is saved 'from the world' and 'from the mouth of lions.'"[85] Benjamin Edsall has qualified Thomassen's strong claim that this section evidences a Valentinian "catechism."[86] Nonetheless, the interrogatory format, the protological and soteriological narrativizing, and the emphasis on liberating *gnosis* make clear some of the directions that theological instruction around initiation rituals could take.

The *Gospel of Philip*, dating from perhaps the late second or early third century, is another key text associated with Valentinianism, and has even been identified as a series of notes for baptismal catechesis.[87] It situates various rituals and sacraments within a broader discourse

[82] *Tri. Tract*. 128.1–2 (Smith, *Valentinian Christianity*, 245). The texts do not indicate whether the difference between psychics and spirituals maps onto a catechumen-baptized distinction. Linjamaa argues that this work envisions a two-group Christian community comprising pneumatic and psychic members, with the more specific term *ecclesia* reserved only for the pneumatics who "will receive a higher order of salvation in the end-time." The pedagogical purpose of this work is to help psychics become pneumatics. Linjamaa, *Ethics of the Tripartite Tractate*, 186. Thomassen, by contrast, sees *Tri. Tract*. as presenting *ecclesia* in broader terms, perhaps inclusive of psychics (or at least good psychics). Thomassen, "Saved by Nature: The Question of Human Races and Soteriological Determinism in Valentinianism," in *Zugänge sur Gnosis*, ed. Christoph Markschies and Johannes van Oort (Leuven: Peeters, 2013), 129–50 (at 147–50).

[83] *Exc. Theo*. 77 (Smith, *Valentinian Christianity*, 102–3): Ἡ δύναμις δὲ τῆς μεταβολῆς τοῦ βαπτισθέντος οὐ περὶ τὸ σῶμα, ὁ αὐτὸς γὰρναβαίνει, αλλὰ περὶ ψυχήν.

[84] *Exc. Theo*. 78 (Smith, *Valentinian Christianity*, 104–5): Ἔστιν δὲ οὐ τὸ λουτρὸν μόνον τὸ ἐλευθεροῦν, αλλὰ καὶ ἡ γνῶσις τίνες ἦμεν, τί γεγόναμεν, ποῦ ἦμεν, ποῦ ἐνεβλήθημεν, ποῦ σπεύδομεν, πόθεν λυτρούμεθα, τί γέννησις, τί αναγέννησις.

[85] *Exc*. Theo. 84 (Smith, *Valentinian Christianity*, 106–7).

[86] Edsall, *Reception of Paul*, 48–49, Thomassen, *Spiritual Seed*, 338.

[87] For the *Gospel of Philip* as baptismal catechesis, see Bas van Os, "Baptism in the Bridal Chamber: The Gospel of Philip as a Valentinian Baptismal Instruction" (PhD diss. University of Gronigen, 2007); Os, "The *Gospel of Philip* as Gnostic Initiatory Discourse," in *Practicing Gnosis: Ritual Magic, Theurgy, and Liturgy in Nag Hammadi, Manichaean, and Other Ancient Literature. Essays in Honor of Birger*

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about the nature of material and immaterial reality that characterizes the philosophical mood of this period.[88] Since "truth did not come into the world naked" but "in types and images," so also human redemption occurs through images that reflect transcendent realities.[89] To depict the mystery of salvation, the *Gospel of Philip* develops an image of progressive entrance into three shrines: baptism is the "holy"; redemption is the "holy of holy"; and spiritual marriage is the "holy of holies."[90] Mystery language here does not simply refer to the performance of rituals; it also entails deeper reflection on the relation between physical and spiritual realities – about "thinking sacrally," as April DeConick puts it, about the way "mundane activities [are] infused with sacrosanct meanings."[91] In this regard, the *Gospel of Philip* shows certain patterns we will see in later catechetical literature – especially teaching around baptismal initiation that focuses on how divine knowledge occurs through reflection on the materiality of the ritual and the invisible and spiritual divine powers in which they partake.

Valentinian teaching and initiation helps us understand later Christian catechesis as emerging amid discourses about metaphysics and epistemology. Both for Valentinians and those who opposed them, a key imperative of instruction was reflection on the relationship between rituals and the kinds of spiritual knowledge they induced. Precisely because common rituals were shared among opposing groups, teachers were compelled to distinguish themselves by articulating different visions of how true knowledge of God could emerge in such practices.

A. Pearson (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 91–112. This thesis was originally proposed by Wesley Isenberg, "The Coptic Gospel of according to Philip" (PhD diss. University of Chicago, 1968). Cf., however, Herbert Schmid's rejection of this thesis (it is too complex and its purposes are otherwise); instead, Schmid argues, its function was to convince "spirituals" of the ongoing need for participation in the church's sacraments, against more radical spiritual Christians who rejected them. Herbert Schmid, *Die Eucharistie ist Jesus: Anfänge einer Theorie des Sakraments im koptischen Philippusevangelium (NHC II 3)* (Leiden: Brill, 2007).

[88] For the view that the *Gospel of Philip* did not emerge from a Valentinian "sect" in conflict with "mainstream" churches but from "networks of schools, teachers, groups and writings with many similarities and some differences" to other second- and third-century schools, see Minna Heimola, *Christian Identity in the Gospel of Philip* (Helsinki: Finnish Exegetical Society, 2011), 313.

[89] *GPhil* 67.9–12 (Smith, *Valentinian Christianity*, 275).

[90] *GPhil* 69.15–36 (Smith, *Valentinian Christianity*, 277).

[91] April D. DeConick, "The True Mysteries: Sacramentalism in the *Gospel of Philip*," *VC* 55, no. 3 (2001): 225–61 (at 230).

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Marcion and the Marcionites

Marcion and those associated with him are also instructive for understanding the school-Christian context of the second century. Marcion, too, was concerned for reform and communal purity. After coming to Rome from Sinope in the 140s, his debate with certain "presbyters and teachers" left him frustrated and ready to lead a separate group.[92] While none of his writings survive, and we are dependent on the writings of his opponents and later heresiologists, the response to his work provides insight into the variety of early Christian engagements with education and initiation.

In terms of educational models, there is good reason to see Marcion as fitting well within the fluid and dynamic scene of second-century school Christianity. Despite the frequent accusations that he rejected or excised Jewish Scripture,[93] it is plausible that he simply did not know these Scriptures until he came to Rome, and thus his editorial agenda was perhaps less directly tied to theological concerns.[94] Christoph Markschies considers Marcion's work as a scholar-teacher within the Alexandrian school model; while lacking the intellectual skills of a Clement or Origen, the institutional setting, Markschies thinks, was roughly the same.[95] Regardless of the ambiguity of Marcion's own

[92] For this episode, see Epiphanius, *Pan.* 42.1–2; Tertullian, *Marc.* 1.19. Contra Tertullian's claim that he was "thrown out" by the church (*praescr.* 30.2), Epiphanius suggests that Marcion himself decided to leave (*Pan.* 42.1). For this view, see Thomassen, "Orthodoxy and Heresy," 243. Lampe is undecided (*From Paul to Valentinus*, 393).

[93] Tertullian, *praescr.* 38.9; Irenaeus, *haer.* 1.27.2; Epiphanius, *Pan.* 42.9.1.

[94] For a helpful overview, see David Wilhite, "Is Jesus YHWH? Two De-Judaizing Trajectories of Marcion and Justin," *Forum* 9, no. 1 (2020): 29–56. For the view that Marcion did not edit Luke but knew a version of the gospel that predated Luke, see Joseph Tyson, *Marcion and Luke-Acts: A Defining Struggle* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2006), 38–48; Matthias Klinghardt, "The Marcionite Gospel and the Synoptic Problem: A New Suggestion," *Novum Testamentum* 50, no. 1 (2008): 1–27; Matthias Klinghardt, *Das älteste Evangelium und die Entstehung der kanonischen Evangelien*, 2 vols. (Tübingen: Francke, 2015); Judith Lieu, *Marcion and the Making of a Heretic: God and Scripture in the Second Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015). Markus Vinzent argues that Marcion himself wrote the first gospel, on which the others were based. See Vinzent, *Marcion and the Dating of the Synoptic Gospels* (Leuven: Peeters 2014). Wilhite views Marcion as editing the Gospel of Luke, though for missiological and not specifically theological reasons; the need to proclaim the gospel in regions like Pontus, far removed from Jewish centers, would demand this kind of activity. Wilhite, "Is Jesus YHWH," 51.

[95] Christoph Markschies, *Christian Theology and Its Institutions in the Early Roman Empire: Prolegomena to a History of Early Christian Theology*, trans. Wayne Coppins (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2015), 231.

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relation to text-critical questions, his students and the communities they formed do seem invested in such questions. Apelles, for instance, produced a substantial literary output, including the massive *Syllogisms*, which exposed the Old Testament contradictions that emerged in the disputes with Marcion.[96] His followers also produced their own editions of Scripture, which sought to expound in a more philologically sophisticated manner what their teacher intimated in broad strokes.[97] In this light, it becomes clearer how Marcionite communities fit within the broad ambit of second-century school Christianity.

Marcionite churches, too, seem to have employed similar rituals as other Christian groups. Tertullian's polemical account, as others have noted, was directed not against their use of rituals but against the inconsistency of their use of material elements and the supposedly anti-creation theology they espoused.[98] It is unlikely, however, that Marcionite communities in fact taught the kind of anti-creation theology of which they were accused.[99] Recent scholarship has observed that Marcion was not concerned with the goodness of matter per se but, more precisely, with the disparity between the true God and the Demiurge responsible for the chaotic ordering of the cosmos.[100] Early critics like Justin take issue with Marcion's theological dualism – that he proclaimed "another God" – but

[96] Lampe (*From Paul to Valentinus*, 414) suggests that where Marcion's critique of the Jewish Scriptures was theological, Apelles's criticism was based on rational and logical grounds and "corresponds to that of educated Greeks." On Apelles, see Rhodon, *apud* Eusebius, *HE* 5.13.2–7; Tertullian, *Praescr.* 30.

[97] Geoffrey Hahneman, *The Muratorian Fragment and the Development of the Canon* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1992), 90–91.

[98] Ferguson, *Baptism*, 276–78. See also Adolf von Harnack, *Marcion: Das Evangelium vom Fremden Gott*, 2nd ed. (Leipzek: J. C. Hinrichs, 1924), 144–45. While Epiphanius claims that Marcionites allowed up to three baptisms, Tertullian does not, which suggests it was possibly a later attribution (Epiphanius, *Pan.* 3.42.3.6–10). Other later references in Cyprian and Augustine suggest that Marcionites baptized in the triune name, which further gives credence to the notion that the heresiologists were forced to find theological differences where practical or ritual differences could not be found (Cyprian, *ep.* 73.4; Augustine, *bapt.* 3.15.20). Tertullian's critique appears in *Marc.* 1.14.3 (CCSL 1:455): Sed ille quidem usque nunc nec aquam reprobauit creatoris, qua suos abluit, nec oleum, quo suos unguit, nec mellis et lactis societatem qua, suos infantat, nec panem quo ipsum corpus suum repraesentat, etiam in sacramentis propriis egens mendicitatibus creatoris.

[99] Contra Sebastian Moll, *The Arch-Heretic Marcion* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 159. Moll's interpretation of Marcion's "fanatical hatred of the world" lacks a critical reading of the heresiologists.

[100] Wilhite, "Is Jesus YHWH," 55–57; Andrew McGowan, "Marcion's Love of Creation," *JECS* 9, no. 3 (2001): 295–311.

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not that he viewed materiality (ὑλη) as inherently problematic.[101] It is only among later critics, such as Tertullian, that we find Marcion accused of teaching an anti-creation theology.[102]

In terms of our understanding of the emerging catechumenate, this set of arguments points yet again to the growing need to correlate initiation rituals with theological epistemology. While Marcion has not often been considered a philosophical theologian, more recent assessments view his approach as broadly conversant with the Middle Platonism of second-century Christianity, in which a chief concern was ordering the relationship between the Supreme God and the organizing principles of the world.[103] Marcion's view was certainly distinctive in the strong distance it placed between the Supreme God and the Demiurge, but the kind of questions he raised were standard for the academic context of second-century Rome.

Justin Martyr

The nature of Justin's "school," located above the baths of Myrtinus, has been the source of much scholarly interest.[104] It was likely not a

[101] Justin, *1 Apol.* 26.5 (ed. and trans. Denis Minns and Paul Parvis, *Justin, Philosopher and Martyr: Apologies* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009], 148–51): "And there is someone called Marcion, from Pontus, who even now is still teaching those he can persuade to consider some other, greater than the creator God (δημιουργοῦ θεοῦ). And with the help of the demons, he has persuaded many from every race of humankind to utter blasphemies, and he has made them deny God the Maker of this universe (ἀρνεῖσθεαι τὸν ποιητὴν τοῦδε τοῦ παντὸς θεόν) and confess some other who is greater, beyond him."

[102] See, respectively, Tertullian, *Marc.* 1.14.3 and 1.28.1–4.

[103] The issue of first principles is also apparent in Rhodon's critique of Apelles (*apud* Eusebius *HE* 5.13). On the view of Marcion as "philosophical" (contra von Harnack), see John G. Gager, "Marcion and Philosophy," *VC* 26 (1972): 53–59; Gerhard May, "Marcion in Contemporary Views: Results and Open Questions," *Second Century* 6 (1987): 129–51 (143–48); Enrico Norelli, "Marcion: ein christlicher Philosoph oder ein Christ gegen die Philosophie?" in *Marcion und seine kirchengeschichtliche Wirkung*, ed. Gerhard May and Katharina Greschat (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2002), 112–30; Clifton Ward, "Marcion and his Critics," in *The Oxford Handbook of Early Christian Biblical Interpretation*, ed. Paul Blowers and Peter Martens (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 366–79. May, e.g., resists the characterization of Marcion as "Epicurean" (Gager's view) but does see resonance with the Middle Platonic philosophy of Numenius. Norelli views his approach as taking up philosophical themes but coming to unphilosophical conclusions. Certainly, Rhodon's critique of Apelles (*apud* Eusebius *HE* 5.13.2) suggests that a chief issue was the particular number of first principles, about which Apelles maintained that there was ultimately one, whereas others among Marcion's students, Potitus and Basilicus, maintained two principles.

[104] Mentioned at *Acta Iustini* 3. The three recensions diverge about the nature of this description. Recension A, which is earliest, has "above the baths of Myrtinus" (Ἐγὼ

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catechetical school in the vein of Origen's schools in Alexandria and Caesarea, though nor was it a distinct ecclesial subset that focused on instructing new believers.[105] Justin's style resembles that of the "popular" or "salon" philosopher – open to broader audiences while still maintaining rituals that could preserve the Christian's sacred meal for the initiated.[106] Though Justin's extant writings are not explicitly catechetical in nature, they do suggest and perhaps assume an emerging catechetical institution.[107]

The most important example is Justin's well-known description of the requirements for baptism in the *First Apology*.[108] He explains that baptism was for Christians who had "dedicated [them]selves to God when [they] were made new through Christ."[109] The scenario is one of persuasion and instruction, followed by commitment to living the Christian way of life, and culminating in a ritual procedure that comprised fasting, prayer, and baptism:

> All those who are persuaded and believe that these things that we teach and say are true, and who give an undertaking that they are able so to live, are taught to pray and ask with fasting for forgiveness from God for their past sins, and we pray and fast for them.[110]

ἐπάνω μένω του Μυρτίνου βαλανείο). Recension B has "above the bath of a certain Martinos son of Timiotinos" (Ἐγὼ επάνω μένω τινὸς Μαρτίνου τοῦ Τιμιοτίνου βαλανείου). Recension C does not mention a location. For these, see Herbert Musurillo, ed., *The Acts of the Christian Martyrs* (Clarendon: Oxford Press, 1972), 44, 48. For discussion, see Harlow Gregory Snyder, "'Above the Bath of Myrtinus': Justin Martyr's School in the City of Rome," *HTR* 100, no. 3 (2007): 335–62. On Justin's school more generally, see Jörg Ulrich, "What Do We Know about Justin's 'School' in Rome?" *ZAC* 16, no. 1 (2012): 62–74; Tobias Georges, "Justin's School in Rome: Reflections on Early Christian 'Schools,'" *ZAC* 16, no. 1 (2012): 75–87.

[105] Georges, "Justin's School in Rome," 75–87; Brent, *Hippolytus and the Roman Church*, 401; Peter Gemeinhardt, "In Search of Christian *paideia*: Education and Conversion in Early Christian Biography," *ZAC* 16, no. 1 (2012): 88–98 (at 90); D. H. Williams, *Defending and Defining the Faith: An Introduction to Early Christian Apologetic Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 138.

[106] Markschies, *Christian Theology*, 72–74; Williams, *Defending and Defining*, 137–38.

[107] Edsall, *Reception of Paul*, 29–32.

[108] Everett Ferguson, "Catechesis and Initiation," in *The Early Church at Work and Worship*, vol. 2: *Catechesis, Eschatology, and Martyrdom* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2014), 18–51 (at 22).

[109] Justin, *1 Apol.* 61.1 (Minns and Parvis, *Justin, Philosopher and Martyr*, 236–37).

[110] Justin, *1 Apol.* 61.2 (Minns and Parvis, *Justin, Philosopher and Martyr*, 236–39): ὅσοι ἂν πεισθῶσι καὶ πιστεύωσιν ἀληθῆ ταῦτα τὰ ὑφ' ἡμῶν διδασκόμενα καὶ λεγόμενα εἶναι, καὶ βιοῦν οὕτως δύνασθαι ὑπισχνῶνται, εὔχεσθαί τε καὶ αἰτεῖν νηστεύοντες παρὰ τοῦ θεοῦ τῶν προημαρτημένων ἄφεσιν διδάσκονται, ἡμῶν συνευχομένων καὶ συννηστευόντων αὐτοῖς.

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Several key themes are of interest here. Justin characterizes baptism by emphasizing the necessity of repentance and the benefits of regeneration and illumination. But mainly, he assumes that some kind of teaching and persuasion has taken place in advance of baptism, and that on the basis of this instruction, new members can now be considered for baptism, but only after they undergo an additional period of repentance and fasting. Baptism is permitted only to those who have been persuaded and who believe – those who have faith that Christian teachings are true (πιστεύωσιν ἀληθῆ ταῦτα). Justin's report of the strictures placed upon the recipients of baptism and eucharist suggests that there is a concern to organize rules for the instruction of baptismal candidates.

More generally, Justin's well-known rhetorical presentation of Christianity as "true philosophy" is worth noting in this context. Donning not only the philosopher's pallium but also certain literary styles, such as the dialogue, Justin presented Christianity as a comprehensive philosophy – a coherent system of intellectual and moral rectitude – to offer an apologetic account of the faith.[111] In his doctrinal commitments, Justin drew on Stoic and Middle Platonic thought, pitching Christianity as a superior form of transcendental monotheism and stressing the ultimate primacy of the one God who implants the *logoi spermatikoi* in human beings.[112] Justin's presentation of Christianity thus capitalized on ideas pervasive in the Platonic philosophical monotheism of his day, which Justin deployed to position Christianity as a superior way of life.

The schools associated with Valentinus, Marcion, and Justin reveal some of the key links between Christian teaching practices in the context of baptism, and thus the way in which theological epistemology was

[111] Justin, *Dial.* 1.2, 9.2. See Mark Edwards, "On the Platonic Schooling of Justin Martyr," *JTS* n.s. 42, no. 1 (1991): 17–34; Stuart R. Thomson, "The Philosopher's Journey: Philosophical and Christian Conversions in the Second Century," *SP* 93 (2017): 123–40. In addition to literary forms, he also used certain terminology to describe the community's leadership, such as "presider" (ὁ προεστὼς), which echoed philosophical discourse. Justin, *1 Apol.* 67.4 (Minns and Parvis, *Justin, Philosopher and Martyr*, 258). Brent (*Hippolytus and the Roman Church*, 404) notes that Diogenes uses this term to refer to the head of philosophical school.

[112] On the role of *logos* in Justin's apologetic strategy in relation to philosophy, see Mark Edwards, "Justin's Logos and the Word of God," *JECS* 3, no. 3 (1995): 261–80; Wendy Elgersma Helleman, "Justin Martyr and the *Logos*: An Apologetical Strategy," *Philosophia Reformata* 67 (2002): 128–47; David E. Nyström, *The Apology of Justin Martyr: Literary Strategies and the Defence of Christianity* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2018).

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beginning to be mapped onto Christian initiation. They are occupied, on the one hand, with articulating Christian doctrine within a broadly Stoic-Platonist philosophical milieu, concerned with questions about the relation between spiritual and material being. They are also interested, on the other hand, in expressing how the knowledge of God is transmitted through rituals that employ physical, material signs. These issues would become key features of early Christian catechesis.

CONCLUSION

The classical and early Christian teaching practices sketched here, incomplete as they must remain, allow us to perceive the important lines giving shape to the formation of Christian catechesis as a distinctive epistemological practice in early Christianity. Several features are especially noteworthy: the impulse to draw together aspects of pedagogy and knowledge within a ritual process of initiation, the focus on memory and credal formula to provide initial guidance to the formation of knowledge, the description of theological instruction as a form of moral and spiritual therapy, and the appearance of multi-stage levels of initiation that correspond with graded levels of knowledge. These features constitute key aspects of basic education in classical antiquity and early Christianity, and they received a more detailed composition in second-century Christianity in Rome.

As catechesis came to assume a more visible place in the landscape of early Christianity in the third and fourth century, many of these features endured. In the following chapters, we will return to these themes at several junctures. For now, we will see how these developments informed the emergence of the catechumenate in the writings of the late second-century bishop, Irenaeus of Lyons.

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