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Introduction

Justin Martyr's varied use of Greco-Roman myth within his writings has led to conflicting opinions regarding the apologist's overall attitude to these primeval stories. As such, scholars have had difficulty reconciling how Justin could allude to these "marvellous fables" in a positive light when throughout his writings he categorically denounced them on the grounds of their diabolical origin and purpose.[1] The solutions that have been proffered to resolve this dilemma range from viewing these troublesome allusions as only ostensibly positive in nature to declaring that the contradiction in his approach to myth is the unfortunate result of Justin's rambling prose.

THESIS AND PROBLEM

Unlike previous scholarly assessments of Justin Martyr's use of Greco-Roman mythology, I will contend that his varied use of myth as seen in *1 Apology* reveals a form of pedagogy in which the apologist intentionally incorporated certain aspects of these popular religious narratives and yet was able to declare Christianity's separation from the ancient tradition. Although Justin perceived in these mythical pre-figurations a wealthy resource of images that could serve the purpose of illuminating Christian dogma in the minds of recent converts still feeling out their newfound faith, his critical assessment of these myths (e.g., that a majority were demonically

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1. In their critical edition of *1 Apology*, Minns and Parvis translate τερατολογίαν as "marvellous fables" (*1 Apol.* 54.2)—a colorful way in which Justin described the nature of the μυθοποιηθέντα or "myths invented by the poets" (*Justin, Philosopher and Martyr*, 218–19).

inspired) begged of his audience to hasten their abandonment of these corrupted pre-figurations in favor of the pure, unadulterated ones found within Moses and the Prophets.

This dynamic form of pedagogy is confirmed by the structural flow of *1 Apology* (Table 1.1) itself where Justin's first sustained treatment of myth (§21–22) is primarily in the vein of *ad similia* with the apologist's incorporating myth to illuminate his description of Christ. This is then followed by a section (§23–29) where Justin focused solely upon separation from myth so to signal his readers that they must transfer their trust from the narratives of the ancestral religion to Moses and the Prophets—even if elements within these myths hinted at the eventual arrival of the Logos. This shift begins in chapter 30 where Justin devoted a massive block of material (§30–53) to demonstrate how the anticipation of Christ's incarnation was most visibly apparent within the writings of Moses and the Prophets. Although mythical allusions are altogether sparse within this section, it is my contention that there exists a typological interaction between the pagan foreshadowings that Justin previously established in the first section (§21–22) with this section (§30–53) thereby demonstrating a subtle form of incorporation of myth at work. Finally, Justin concluded his strategy by employing a decisive separation from myth altogether in chapters 54 through 66. In this last movement, Justin repeated the montage of mythical analogies he established in chapters 21 and 22 but this time went at great lengths to expose the diabolical origin behind these Greco-Roman religious narratives.[2]

Table 1.1
Flow of Myth Related to Christology in 1 Apology

chapters	flow of myth
§ 1- 20	NONE
§ 21- 22	Incorporation & Partial Separation
§ 23- 29	Full Separation
§ 30- 53	Incorporation & Partial Separation
§ 54- 66	Full Separation

2. Prigent, *Justin et l'Ancien Testamente*, 160: "Dans le chapitre 21 Justin veut montrer que les grandes affirmations de la foi chrétienne (la naissance virginale du Christ, se crucifixion, sa mort, se résurection et son ascension) ne demandent aux païens aucun sacrificium intellectus: leurs dieux ne connaissent-ils pas des destinées souvent comparables? Par exemple : 1)Hermès; 2) Asclépios; 3) Dionysos; 4) Héraclès; 5) Les Dioscures; 6) Persée; 7) Bellérophon . . . Les mêmes matériaux sont encore repris ultérieurement dans la première Apologie (chapitre 54), mais Justin leur fait server une intention différente: Il s'agit cette fois de montrer que les mythes grecs sont les imitations, diaboliques et faslifées, des prophéties christologiques."

Furthermore, in order to show how Justin's diverse use of myth reveals a pattern of pedagogy, I am departing from the traditional historiography that assumes Justin wrote *1 Apology* for an external pagan audience either pleading for benevolence on behalf of Christians or making a case for educated pagans to convert to Christianity.[3] Rather, I am adopting the newer theory that Justin wrote *1 Apology* for the purpose of educating an internal Christian audience.[4] In this framework, Justin strategically utilized myth as a form of *paidea* to strengthen the nascent faith of his once mythologizing students so as to arm them with arguments they could then utilize later when confronted by their pagan detractors.[5] Although the fully developed theory that *1 Apology* was a document primarily meant for internal Christian consumption has been around for more than a decade now, there has been no work to date that explores the didactic possibilities of Justin's usage of myth when this newly proposed audience is taken into account.

Utilizing myth as a form of *paidea* was not unique to Justin. His Christian predecessors provided a model to incorporate mythical allusions

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3. In terms of the time period this project is covering, I am aware that the use of the word *pagan* (from Latin *paganus*, meaning "country dweller") is anachronistic, as it was a pejorative term coined much later during the reign of Christendom to call superstitious those who continued to hold on to the practices of the ancient, Greco-Roman polytheistic religion. I am, therefore, using the term "pagan" as a convenient adjective to describe followers of the ancient polytheistic religion during Justin's time that certainly were considered within the norm of society.

4. What gives this theory even greater support is that scholars like Tcherikover have argued that the apologies of ancient Jewish thinkers like Artapanus, Aristobulus, and Philo (which came to strongly influence later Christian apologists) should not be understood as propaganda aimed at Greeks and Romans but rather texts that were meant to be posed to Alexandrian Jews thinking about leaving their ancient faith: "This tendency to extol Judaism resulted from an inner need so characteristic of educated Jewish circles in Egypt. Those Jews who approached Hellenistic civilization by all possible ways and were influenced by it in their way of life and thought, found it easier to cling to Judaism as long as they knew that Judaism stood on an equal level with Hellenism" ("Jewish Apologetic Literature," 180).

5. In Andresen's groundbreaking work, *Logos und Nomos,* he argues that the entirety of Celsus famous diatribe, *The True Logos,* was a direct response to Justin's *Apologies* although Celsus never mentions the apologist by name. Andresen argues that Celsus not mentioning Justin's name was an intentional move on the part of the pagan critic meant to insult the memory of the Christian apologist as a form of *damnatio memoriae*; that is, Justin's arguments were so ridiculous to Celsus that his name was not even worthy of being mentioned (q.v., *Logos und Nomos*, 363). On the other hand, Osborn argues that Justin's arguments rapidly became "the common property of all Christians through whom it would be disseminated far and wide" and were so popular by the time they reached Celsus that they had most likely lost their attribution (*Justin Martyr*, 170). It is interesting to note that Osborn's theory fits well with the premise that *1 Apology* was intended for an internal audience who then in turn freely promulgated their master's arguments in their own encounters with educated pagans.

for the purpose of strengthening the faith of new believers. For instance, Mark Edwards argues that Luke deliberately brought up Paul's numerous encounters with paganism in *Acts of the Apostles* (e.g., being mistaken as Zeus in Lystra [Acts 14], his preaching in the Aeropagus [Acts 17]) for the purpose of assuaging the anxiety recent converts naturally began to experience because they had left the ancient religion. By orienting the Pauline theme of Christian supercession as it relates to paganism, Luke exemplified to his internal audience how Christian belief was superior to belief in the pagan gods.[6] I will demonstrate in this study that Justin's use of myth in *1 Apology* was driven by a similar impulse to that of the apostolic writer, Luke: to prevent recent Christian converts from reverting back to the ancient religion. He would do so in a much more advanced manner than his predecessor through his extensive as well as dynamic interaction with the wealthy resource of mythical symbols replete in the collective memory of his followers.[7]

By virtue of reinforcing his new converts of the supremacy of Christian belief over and against the ancient religion they had just freshly renounced, Justin would also go on to surpass Luke's use of these pagan narratives by laying down a model to his students of how to share their newfound faith in the language and symbols of ancient myth in which their culture was immersed.

Regarding the intent behind the creation of these myths, Justin Martyr's candor in declaring their demonic origin and purpose cannot be denied. At least once in each of his three extant treatises, Justin explicitly reckoned them as pernicious inventions of demons meant to lead humankind astray from the eventual incarnation of the Logos.[8] The following, for example, serves as a worthy representative of such an assessment:

6. Edwards, "Introduction: Apologetics," 5–6: "[A]s writers of texts intended for insiders inevitably have to wrestle with doubts and uncertainties felt by members, simply because they too reflect the values and assumptions of society at large."

7. While there were Christian thinkers who preceded Justin in mentioning myth within their works (e.g., Luke [Paul's sermon at the Areopagus], Clement of Rome [the Phoenix], and Aristides the Apologist), he was the first Christian writer who displayed the willingness to name the poet (i.e., Homer) to which a myth belonged, "so führen uns nun die Werke Justins erneut um einen erheblichen Schritt weiter: Zum ersten Mal in der christlichen Literatur begegnen hier sowohl der Name des Dichters als auch Zitate aus seiner Dichtung" (Glockmann, *Homer in der frühchristlichen Literatur*, 115). The passages in Justin's works that mention Homer are *1 Apol.* 18.5 and *2 Apol.* 10.6.

8. This assessment is found in *2 Apology* 4.5–6, where Justin connects the proliferation of pagan myth to the Jewish Enochic tradition surrounding Genesis 6: "Hence it is that poets and storytellers, not knowing that the things which they have recorded were done to men and women and cities and nations by the angels and the demons they begot, attributed these things to the god himself and to the sons who were begotten

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> For when [the demons] heard through the prophets that the future coming of Christ was proclaimed and that the impious among human beings were going to be punished by fire, they threw many so-called sons of Zeus into the discussion, considering that they would be able to bring it about that human beings would consider the things said about Christ to be a marvellous fable, and similar to the things said by the poets.[9]

Refrains similar to the example cited here appear on six different occasions in the *1 Apology* alone. Hence, Justin's constant repetition of the harmful function behind the myths in his initial apology has played no small part in having convinced scholars such as Henry Chadwick to conclude that Justin possessed a "sharply negative" attitude towards Greco-Roman myth.[10]

Yet in contrasting fashion, we also see instances where the apologist seemed to place myth in a positive light. A textbook example of this is seen in chapters 21 and 22 of *1 Apology* where Justin brings to the reader's attention characteristics the so-called sons of Zeus shared with that of Christ: extraordinary births, the rendering of benevolent service towards humanity, dying, and eventually rising to the heavens.

Scholars have sought to explain such variability in Justin's overall approach to myth. Carlos Contreras asserts that the apologist was just being "flagrantly inconsistent" in his overall stance towards myth—clearly violating his own explicit disavowal of mythology.[11] Therefore, Contreras dismisses this phenomenon as simply the unfortunate byproduct of a disorganized writing style that has been characteristic of Justin's works.[12] Chadwick, on the other hand, harmonizes this dissonance by stating, "Justin is not afraid of these analogies. He can even use them to argue that Christianity is so

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as if from him by the sowing of seed and from those who were called his brothers and their children as well. For they—that is, the poets and storytellers—called them by the names which each of the angels gave to himself and to his children." This assessment is also found in *Dialogue with Trypho* 69.1 where Justin responds to Trypho's objection that certain Christian doctrines resemble pagan myth: "My knowledge of the Scriptures and my faith in them have been well confirmed by the things which he who is called the Devil counterfeited in the fictions circulated among the Greeks." In *1 Apology*, this theme is repeated on six different occasions by Justin: 21.4, 23.3, 25.3, 54.1–10, 56.1, and 64.1–10.

9. *1 Apology* 54.2

10. Chadwick, *Early Christian Thought*, 11.

11. Contreras, "Christian Views of Paganism," 978–79.

12. Examples of this critique of Justin's writing style can be detected in Quasten and Barnard. For instance, Quasten states, "The style of [Justin's] works is far from pleasant. Not accustomed to adhere to a well-defined plan, Justin follows the inspiration of the moment" (*Patrology*, 197). Barnard laments, "Justin is a somewhat rambling writer and does not systematize his material carefully" (*First and Second Apologies*, 133n166).

nearly indistinguishable from the myths of paganism that it is inexplicable that it should be singled out for persecution by the government."[13] In other words, Chadwick argues that Justin never had the illumination of Christian doctrine in mind when establishing these analogies; rather, these contrived parallels served as mere "*ad hominem* debating points" aimed at disarming a pagan audience accustomed to persecuting Christians on the charge that their religion was a mere novelty.[14]

Although Contreras and Chadwick provide straightforward explanations that make Justin's diverse handling of myth comprehensible to the modern reader, it is my contention that both these solutions are somewhat inadequate. With regards to Contreras' stance, what the modern eye may perceive as a disjointed approach towards myth—have been deemed as such by Justin's ancient readers? No, as Justin's varied approach to myth should not be understood as inconsistent as Contreras has proposed; rather, Justin was merely tapping into an established pagan hermeneutic of ancient poetry where simultaneous suspicion yet reverence of these primeval stories was already in vogue (this phenomenon will be dealt with at further length later in this chapter).

With regards to Chadwick's stance, did Justin actually view these discernible parallels between the "so-called" sons of Zeus and the Christian Son of God analogies of his own making as Chadwick seems to contend? Here, too, I argue in the negative for revisiting *1 Apol.*54.2 Justin announced that these perceptible similarities were of diabolical origin, "For when [the demons] heard through the prophets that the future coming of Christ was proclaimed . . . they threw many so-called sons of Zeus into the discussion." So in the apologist's estimation, he was not responsible for thinking up these parallels between the sons of Zeus and the Christian Son of God but rather he was in the business of observing where and when they occurred.

But going back to the objection of Contreras, were there any conventions within the classical world that shared a comparable "simultaneous receptivity and hostility" or incorporation yet separation towards the work of the Poets?[15] I offer below a brief preview of three such cases that I will be

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13. Chadwick, "Justin Martyr's Defence of Christianity," 284–85.

14 Martindale is also in agreement with Chadwick that Justin has only *ad hominem* in mind when making these analogies: "[Justin] argued purely *ad hominem*. He said: You ought not to accuse us of telling incredible stories about Christ, such as His Virgin Birth, because you tell quite as strange things about your own heroes and gods; moreover, said he, you place these miraculous episodes in atrocious settings, and, even in the actual episode, immortality of hideous and unnatural sorts is often in-woven" (*St. Justin the Martyr*, 125–26).

15. Norris, *God and World*, 43.

building upon throughout this work: (1) the ancient response to the inspiration of the Muses, (2) the typological tendencies within pagan literature, and (3) the ancient expectations placed on philosophers regarding the poets. It is my hope that by establishing these parallels, I can demonstrate that Justin's diverse approach to myth was not considered an unusual phenomenon to his ancient audience and thereby opening up a fresh reconsideration of what Justin was attempting to accomplish in his interactions with these ancient stories.

ANCIENT RESPONSE TO INSPIRATION OF THE MUSES

It was commonly held in the pagan world that the source of inspiration behind the work of the poets were the Muses, the nine daughters of Zeus and Mnemosyne (Memory) who were the patronesses of poetry and music.[16] While revered as the divine impetus behind the creative genius of the likes of Homer and Hesiod, it was also paradoxically understood that these goddesses often fed well-crafted mistruths to the poets. The classic proof-text demonstrating such a sentiment within the ancient world is found in Hesiod's proem of the *Theogony*.[17] In it, Hesiod recalled that upon their initiation of him into the role of poet on Mt. Helicon the Muses openly boasted about the whimsical nature by which they would transmit their revelations, "We know how to say many lies that are similar to the true things, and we know how to speak true things, when we wish."[18]

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16. Macpherson, *Four Ages of Man*, 187. Macpherson points out that while the Greeks viewed that all nine muses collectively inspired the entirety of the arts without distinction, it was the Romans who would assign definitive artistic roles to each: Calliope (epic poetry), Clio (history), Euterpe (flute-music), Terpsichore (dance), Erato (lyric poetry), Melpomene (tragedy), Thalia (comedy), Polyhymnia (rhetoric), and Urania (astronomy).

17. Thalmann, *Conventions of Form and Thought in Early Greek Epic Poetry*, 149–52.

18. Hesiod, *Theogony, Works and Days, Testimonia*, 27–8. Lantana theorizes that Hesiod was referring to the works of Homer as containing "lies that are similar to the true things" while his own work upheld truth: "Si ammette in genere che l'espressione 'menzogne simili alla verità' vada riferita alla poesia omerica : di fronte allo splendido quadro omerico della vita della società cavalleresca nel medioevo ionico, che contrastava cosi duramente con l'esperienza quotidiana di una vita tanto più misera ed angusta, legata a valori profondamente diversi, Esiodo avrebbe sentito e condannato la poesia omerica come menzogna, investendo se stesso della divina missione di annunciatore della 'verità,' e mostrendosi così come il prime sostenitore di una concezione 'didascalica' della poesia" (*Poetica Pre-Platonica*, 24). On the other hand, Pietro Pucci argues that Hesiod's firsthand knowledge of the Muses' operations did not preclude him from experiencing their notorious deception: "It is indeed a remarkable proof of his faith that, having exposed the doubleness of the Muses' *logos*, Hesiod feels neither

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There was, thus, a wide spectrum of how the philosophers in the ancient world accounted for this acknowledged co-mixture of truth and falsehood within poetry[19] ranging from outright rejection (e.g., Xenocrates and Zoilus of Amphipolis) to toleration by viewing these false mythical elements within poetry as clever teaching devices that helped proliferate truthful ideas (e.g., Strabo and Aristotle).[20] Yet according to the classical scholar Pietro Pucci, the common person in the ancient world resigned themselves to embracing this "doubleness" within poetry as the inherent risk that came with receiving this gift from the gods, "The odd nature of the divine gift deserves our attention because it constitutes the 'mythical' foundation and explanation for the ambiguous quality of the Muses' *logos* . . . In contrast to human gifts—which are desirable, precious, and generally dispensable—the gift of the gods assumes a curiously paradoxical quality."[21] As it was understood that Zeus' gifts paradoxically brought forth benefit as well as harm to its recipients (e.g., the creation of Pandora), his daughters' gift of poetry were of similar "mixed value" combining both true and mythical accounts the difference of which humanity could not ironically discern without the aid of the Muses themselves.[22]

Building upon Pucci's divine gift theory, classical scholars William Thalmann and George Walsh provide two additional insights stemming from ancient poetry's accepted "doubleness" that can aid us in deciphering Justin's own murky approach to myth. Thalmann states that the false,

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excessive alarm nor wariness. Only the Muses can know if their discourse is truth of a lie disguised as truth, but Hesiod does not seem apprehensive. Yet he should. For the reader perceives that the doubleness of the Muses' *logos* affects even the song of Hesiod" (*Hesiod and the Language of Poetry*, 1).

19. An excellent, succinct outline of ancient philosophers who argued for and against the mythic elements within poetry can be found in a chapter of Feeney's *Gods in Epic* called "The Critics: Beginnings, and a Synthesis" (q.v., Feeney, *The Gods in Epic*, 5–56).

20. Strabo the historian argued that because the *Odyssey* was ultimately a geographical lesson that, "Homer must be excused . . . if he mixed fantastic elements in his stories because they are meant to inform and instruct" (*Geography*, 1.73). While the Stoic philosophers argued that deep, spiritual truths could be mined from these spectacular accounts via the allegorical method, Aristotle in his *Poetics* felt that a criteria of truth and falsehood was altogether irrelevant when it came to these poems due to a télos or purpose stating that "it is all right if the poem thereby achieves what it aims at, that is, if in this way the surprise produced either by that particular passage or by another is striking. An example is the pursuit of Hector" (Feeney, *Gods in Epic*, 28–9).

21. Pucci, *Hesiod and the Language of Poetry*, 3.

22. Ibid., 8–13. Another classical scholar, Thalmann, also remarks, "Poetry is presented as a divine gift, with the mixed value typical of all such gifts. The Muses, as we have seen, are no different after all from other divinities; they deal out their favors arbitrarily" (*Conventions of Form and Thought in Early Greek Epic Poetry*, 149).

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mythical elements the Muses infused within poetry were deemed acceptable within ancient Greco-Roman society because without this gift of "mixed value" it was conceded that humanity would be deprived of an, "act of mediation between man and god, by which man is granted knowledge that would normally be denied him."[23] In other words, the ancients believed receiving this form of divine revelation, notwithstanding its deceptive elements, was better than receiving nothing at all from the gods. Therefore, Justin's varied approach to myth should not be understood as inconsistent as Contreras has proposed; rather, Justin was merely tapping into an established pagan hermeneutic of ancient poetry where simultaneous reverence and suspicion of these primeval stories was in vogue.

But according to Walsh, even the false, mythical elements were never categorically discounted by the ancients, "If lies are like 'real things,' and if these things are the subject of the song, it seems possible that an audience can learn something from the Muses' lies since the likeness of lies and facts suggest that lies are only partly deceptive."[24] Such an example of this propensity can be seen in the unique approach specifically employed by the poet Stesichorus (640—555 BC) that may shed some light on what Justin was attempting to do in his own interaction with myth.[25] According to Plato's *Phaedrus* (243a), Stesichorus wrote a poem that followed the traditional Homeric narrative explaining Helen's presence in Troy the result of her misdeeds as an adulteress and husband-deserter. But shortly after penning this account, Stesichorus was struck with blindness of which he believed was Helen's punishment for his complicity in passing on the erroneous Homeric narrative regarding her life.

In a desire to recover his sight as well as set the record straight, Stesichorus composed a *palinode* or recantation that honored Helen by declaring she never went to Troy but rather an "image" (εἴδωλον) of her did so instead,

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23. Ibid., 151.

24. Walsh, *The Varieties of Enchantment*, 26–27.

25. My primary argument here is not that Justin was directly influenced by Stesichorus but rather that there was a classical precedent that corroborates his movement of separation and incorporation of myth thereby giving weight to the notion that Justin's audience would have not found his approach a novelty. Still, there are several clues in Justin's works that betray that he probably was aware of this revisionist tactic of Stesichorus: (1) Justin brings up a woman named Helen that was considered the first thought that emanated from the Gnostic Simon (*1 Apol.* 26.3). Although Justin's allusion does not tell us much about this Helen, Irenaeus in *Against the Heretics* 1.23.2 elaborates in more detail regarding this same Helen stating that the Gnostics believed that she was a reincarnation of the same Helen who struck Stesichorus blind. (2) Justin demonstrates an extensive firsthand knowledge of Plato's *Phaedrus*, which is incidentally the source from which the legendary story of Stesichorus is originally recorded.

"That story is not true, you did not go in the well-decked ships, nor did you come to the citadel of Troy."[26] After the composition of the *palinode* to Helen, Stesichorus sight was miraculously restored, which was taken as a sign of Helen's vindication.

If one closely inspects Stesichorus' revisionism of the life of Helen, one can pick up a movement of separation from the ancient tradition resembling that of Justin Martyr's. Classical scholar Denis Feeney describes the explicit, as well as, implicit claims at work within this approach to Greco-Roman poetry:

> Stesichorus, then, surveys his (already multivocal) tradition, and not only disassociates himself from this tradition, but also from an early production of his own which the tradition had led him to compose. He explicitly denounces that 'version' or 'story' (logoς) as not 'true' (etumoς), thereby implicitly asserting that his new version *is* 'true.'[27]

As Stesichorus explicitly exposed what in his estimation were lies originally transmitted by the Muses to tarnish the reputation of the virtuous queen of Sparta, Justin in similar fashion declared that the stories of the Greek gods were deceptive imitations fabricated to dishonor the Logos. But the deconstruction of the traditional account is only one part of the equation for both Stesichorus and Justin. As Feeney so insightfully points out, Stesichorus' approach is also reconstructive in nature as he ended up implicitly affirming that his version of Helen's story (although at first glance a novelty) was actually the older and truer account that the Muses in their arbitrariness initially decided to withhold. According to Feeney, Stesichorus' prayer at the beginning of his *palinode* is most likely a beckoning to the Muses to divinely assist him in his revisionist project, "Hither, again, goddess, lover of song."[28] If this be the case as Feeney suggests, then "Stesichorus is indulging in a feat of tremendous panache, calling upon the Muse, the guarantor of poets' 'truth,' to collaborate with him in setting right the version which the two of them had earlier given the world."[29]

It helps our thesis to see how Justin shared a similar outlook to the pagan world regarding the inherent "doubleness" of truth and falsehood contained within the writing of the poets. But he would, of course, abandon the classical notion that the Muses were those responsible for this phenomenon (in fact, he never once mentioned the Muses in his writings) by recasting

26. Page, *Poetae melici Graeci*, 192.

27. Feeney, *Gods in Epic*, 15.

28. Page, *Poetae melici Graeci*, 193.

29. Feeney, *Gods in Epic*, 15–16.

whom he believed to be the two actual sources at work behind the poets: (1) the Logos and (2) the Demons. For Justin, all that was considered truthful within the poets was promulgated by the Logos (*2 Apol.* 13.2–3) while all the deceptive elements contained therein he attributed to the demons (*1 Apol.* 54.2). So unlike Stesichorus who believed that the Muses had to be persuaded to rectify false accounts they originally set into motion, Justin argued that the Logos was sent to remedy lies as well (i.e., the stories of mythical gods) the propagation of which it was not responsible for.

In another sense, though, even the myths fashioned by the demons could be understood as the property of the Logos, albeit stolen and then perversely re-shaped. I contend that while Stesichorus simply substituted the previous Homeric account of Helen's life with his own rendition, Justin's act of replacement was far more sophisticated. The Christian apologist actually sought to reverse myth's deceitful effects by exploiting the very parallels meant to hinder Christian belief: unveiling the truth regarding these demonic imitations and then, in turn, using this exposé as a form of corroborating evidence to argue that an ancient anticipation of the incarnation of the Logos indeed existed within pagan literature (albeit demonic). Jean Daniélou describes how Justin sought to reverse the effects of myth by transforming a stumbling block to faith into a stepping stone for it, "Mythology may be the work of demons, but the Fathers [Justin especially] still see it as the perversion of a primitive revelation, traces of which are preserved within it, in particular in the form of borrowings from the Bible, which represents the authentic version."[30]

TYPOLOGICAL TENDENCIES WITHIN PAGAN LITERATURE

It has been a common misconception that typology was a hermeneutical exercise developed exclusively within Christian circles as they attempted to establish continuity between the emerging New Testament as well as its predecessor, the Hebrew Scriptures. While it would be accurate to state that the Church's pursuit to connect these two sacred texts was a successful one, it would be inaccurate to say that the Christian tradition held a monopoly on this form of intertextual interpretation.[31]

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30. Daniélou, *Gospel Message and Hellenistic Culture*, 75.

31. Frye, *The Great Code*, 80–90. Frye demonstrates the pervasiveness of the typological method arguing for its application even within non-Christian ideological histories such as Marxism and Judaism.

In fact, just a generation prior to the arrival of Christ (between 29 to 19 BC) Virgil penned the Roman epic poem, the *Aeneid*, which classical scholars have identified as possessing a remarkable typological correspondence with that of Homer's *Illiad* and *Odyssey*. John Taylor remarks, "Virgil is to Homer as the New Testament is to the Old. Authoritative texts from the past are reworked in a different language, and with a different message. These are our two supreme examples of intertextuality, the new texts empowered by the prolonged allusion to great predecessors."[32] In other words, as the New Testament writers sought to demonstrate the resemblance between their Lord with the venerable Old Testament figures such as Abraham, Moses, and David, Virgil did the same by comparing the great Trojan patron of the Julian household, Aeneas, to the Greek heroes such as Odysseus, Achilles, and Heracles.[33]

Virgil's *Aeneid* was a widespread text by the time Justin arrived on the scene, demonstrating to all Roman citizens how vanquished, "Greece . . . was for the Romans both a subservient colony and the ancient source of their own culture, with all the hierarchical implications of this dual identity."[34] As one can guess, the *Aeneid* accomplished what can be characterized as an incorporation and separation from Greek culture through the use of a typology possessing the twofold movement of (1) incorporation when Virgil linked characters or themes in his epic poem with that of Homer [*argumentum ad similia*] as well as a (2) separation when he then portrayed the character or theme in the *Aeneid* as surpassing its Greek predecessor [*argumentum a fortiori*] both in glory and honor.[35]

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32. Taylor, *Classics and the Bible*, 85.

33. An exhaustive summary of the various typological connections between Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* and Virgil's *Aeneid* can be found in a chapter of Leithart's *Heroes of the City of Man* called "*Patria* and *Pietas*: Virgil, *The Aeneid*" (q.v. *Heroes of the City of Man*, 213–272). A few of the more intriguing typological connections Leithart elaborates upon are: (1) the *Aeneid* is a retelling of the Homeric epics in reverse order with books 1–6 alluding to the *Odyssey* and books 7–12 alluding to the *Iliad*—a rhetorical move to signal similarity yet difference between these epics; (2) Aeneas' journey surpasses that of Odysseus in greatness because his is not a return, but a journey to an unknown place; (3) Virgil used the same Homeric description of Odysseus' Ithaca (*Odyssey* 13.109–117) to describe Dido's Carthage (*Aeneid* 1.217–233)—again, another rhetorical move by the poet to assert the greatness of Rome above both cities; (5) while Achilles and Odysseus motivations were solely for their personal glory and reputation, Aeneas emulates the noble attitude of the Trojan prince, Hector, being more concerned with protecting and preserving his community than with the attainment of personal glory.

34. Manguel, *Homer's the Illiad and the Odyssey*, 51–2.

35. Taylor, *Classics and the Bible*, 87–92.

The importance of the *Aeneid* is not so much that it prepared Justin's future audience to read texts typologically (the Jewish heritage had much to contribute here also)[36] but that Virgil's epic poem did so in relation *to myth*, thus forcing the reader to compare and contrast distinctive Roman stories of gods and heroes with that of their ancient Greek counterparts found in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. This is a crucial point because one of my fundamental arguments is that Justin employed typological exegesis to compare and contrast Greek myth with the narrative of the emerging New Testament (i.e., the Old Testament being read Christologically). Since Justin's learned Roman audience would have been familiar with Virgil's triumphalistic methodology towards Greek culture, I contend that they would have seen precisely how Justin, too, employed a typological framework akin to that of the great Latin poet.[37]

So while Christians and pagans concurrently exercised this form of intertexual exegesis with respect to their sacred writings (i.e., New Testament with Old Testament, Virgil with Homer), on what grounds can we posit that Justin crossed-over the religious divide by establishing typological correspondence between biblical teaching and pagan poetry? Is there any evidence from the 2nd century demonstrating that such a convention was at work within Justin's intellectual context? Such attestation does indeed exist in the form of Irenaeus' critique of the Gnostics whom this early church father accused of crafting *centos* or literary devices that weaved together disparate verses "plucked" (κέντρων) from Homer's poems to express a heretical Christian message.[38] Below is the cento that Irenaeus reproduced in *Against the Heretics* 1.9.4 (with Homeric references inserted)[39]:

36. Shotwell, *The Biblical Exegesis of Justin Martyr*, 12–20.

37. While I am arguing that Virgil's *Aeneid* played a pivotal role in preparing Justin's audience to typologically interact with Greek myth, it is interesting to note that there is not a single instance within Justin's writings where the apologist made a clear allusion to this renowned Roman poet. This is despite the fact that the *Aeneid* had been long translated into the Greek by Polybius, the freedman of Emperor Claudius according to Seneca (*To Polybius* 8.2; 10.2) and that many first- and second-century "Greek-speakers not only were familiar with Virgil, they held his works in high regard" (MacDonald, *Does the New Testament Imitate Homer?*, 9). Finally, the fact that Justin's headquarters was based in Rome in accordance to his testimony in the *Martyrdom of the Holy Martyrs* makes Justin's omission of Virgil's great epic to legitimate the Roman empire (a work he and his students in Rome would have been familiar) a glaring one. A hypothesis I would like to propose for this omission is that Justin deliberately ignored the great Roman epic as a discursive stratagem, forcing his reader to exchange this national antitype to Homer's writings that they had been raised upon (i.e., *Aeneid*) for an entirely new one (i.e., the Christian Scriptures).

38. Wilken, "The Homeric Cento in Irenaeus, 'Adversus Haereses' I, 9,4," 26.

39. It is important to note that the construction of centos did not originate from

Thus speaking, he sent forth from the house, deeply groaning
(*Odyssey* 10.76)
The man Hercules, conversant with mighty deeds (*Odyssey* 21.26)
Eurystheus, son of Sthenelos, of the seed of Perseus (*Iliad* 19.123)
To bring from Erebus the dog of hateful Pluto (*Iliad* 7.368)
And he came forth like a mountain lion, haughty in his strength (*Odyssey*
6.130)
Rapidly going through the city, while all his friends followed
(*Iliad* 24.327)
Both maidens and youth, and patient old men (*Odyssey* 11.38)
Lamenting him with pity as destined for death (*Iliad* 24.328)
But Mercury and gleaming-eyed Minerva escorted him
(*Iliad* 11.626)
For she knew well in her own mind the cares of her brother
(*Iliad* 2.409)[40]

Although Irenaeus never disclosed the cento's meaning, Daniélou theorizes that the poem was perhaps an attempt by the Gnostic Valentinus to illuminate the Christian teaching of the Father sending the Son to the depths of Hell in order to defeat death, an immense task that resembled the perilous missions of King Priam to the tent of Achilles and, even more similarly, Heracles and Odysseus' own expeditions into the realm of the dead.[41]

Intertexual cross-over, as demonstrated above, should therefore not come as a surprise given that an emerging Christian society in the second century, made up primarily of converts from paganism, would have been naturally inclined to perceive connections between the sacred texts on which they had been raised and the sacred texts they had just recently come to accept. So it is within the Gnostic centos such as the example furnished by Irenaeus that we get the first clear-cut expressions of Homeric poetry

Gnosticism, but were in existence early on within the classical tradition: "The preserved centos by Aristophanes and Petronius evidence that centos are likely appear in literature as soon as there exists a suitable prototext (indeed Homer may be regarded as the first ever prototext), and an educated reader (or even, as in the case of Aristophanes, listener-viewer)" (q.v. Stehlikova, "Centones Christiani as a Means of Reception.," 11).

40. Irenaeus, *Against the Heresies*, trans. Unger, 47–8.

41. Daniélou, *Gospel Message and Hellenistic Culture*, 85–6. There is differing opinions over the origin of this *cento* furnished by Irenaeus. Wilken argues that although it is certainly Gnostic in authorship that there is no way for us to know who exactly composed (q.v. "The Homeric Cento in Irenaeus," 29), while Heinrich Ziegler came to the conclusion that Irenaeus composed it by himself to provide an example of a Gnostic cento (q.v. *Irenaeus der Bischof von Lyon*, 17).

interacting typologically with Christian thought, though in an aberrant way according to the bishop of Lyon.

Although not explicitly labeling the cento as an exercise in typology, David Meconi provides an explanation of this literary device that supports the notion that it should be understood as such: "The cento is a curious construct of antiquity and contemporaneity: ancient in that it is formed wholly by canonical words of the revered past, contemporary because it meets its readers as an entirely new theme manipulated for current concerns and purposes never intended by the original author."[42] While it seems that the Gnostics were using these literary devices in full force by the second century, Meconi states that it took awhile for the first truly Christian *cento* to arrive upon the scene—not until the fourth century when a wealthy aristocratic woman, Faltonia Proba, (c. 320–370) composed one.[43]

This should immediately beg the question of why it took so long for the Christian community to incorporate the use of the *cento*. I contend that much of their reluctance probably stemmed from the early Gnostic use, or better yet abuse, of this literary device that perpetuated their notorious syncretistic tendencies towards paganism. Valentinus, for example, was known for calling Homer a Christian prophet—a proclamation that certainly drew the ire of ecclesiastical leaders of that time.[44] Therefore for a Christian to employ this form of poetry in the early centuries would have put them at risk of probably being considered a Gnostic. More germane to our discussion is to what degree did the prevalence of these Gnostic *centos* during Justin's time play a part in shaping his varied approach to myth? Although somewhat of a speculation, Justin's desire to combat the Gnostic tendency that fluidly merged pagan and Christian belief as demonstrated in their centos would be a plausible explanation behind why he so quickly followed up his incorporation of myth with a bold proclamation of his separation from it as well.

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42 Meconi, "The Christian Cento and the Early Church's Appropriation of Prophet and Muse." Using the helpful categories previously established by Stehliková (i.e., prototext, metatext), Meconi further asserts that centos were read on "two separate but ever-interpenetrating planes" (a trademark of typological exegesis), with the first plane, the *prototext*, the reader encountering Homeric phrases with which they would have been familiar followed by the second plane of the *metatext* that the reader's new literary tradition (i.e., Scripture) informed them how to newly understand these texts.

43. Meconi, "The Christian Cento and the Evangelization of Christian Culture," 109–32. Meconi asserts that the emergence of the centonic method within Christian circles was largely due to the rising Christian aristocracy's response to Emperor Julian's project to reinstitute paganism in the Roman Empire.

44. Daniélou, *Gospel Message and Hellenistic Culture*, 82.