Text Networks

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Semel locutus est Deus duo haec audivi
quia potestas Dei et tibi Domine misericordia
quia tu reddes unicuique iuxta opera sua.

Unum locutus est Deus duo haec audivi
quia imperium Dei est
et tibi Domine misericordia
quia tu reddes unicuique secundum opus suum.

Jerome, Psalmi 61

Students of Late Antique letters might profitably revisit Augustine's remarks on the advantages that conflicting versions of the Bible afforded Roman readers in the early centuries C.E. "While we can enumerate those who have turned (*verterunt*) the Scriptures from Hebrew into Greek," Augustine observes, "those who have rendered them into Latin are innumerable. In the early times of the faith when anyone found a Greek codex, and he thought that he had some facility in both languages, he attempted to translate it (*ausus est interpretari*)."[1] Rather than castigate this embarrassment of codicological riches, however, Augustine—writing *de doctrina Christiana*—goes on to affirm such diversity in Scripture as fundamental to the constitution of the Catholic faith:

> The situation helps rather than impedes the understanding (*intelligentiam*), so long as readers (*legentes*) are not remiss (*negligentes*). For inspection of the sense in several codices has often clarified passages that

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[1] Augustine, *De doctrina Christiana* 2.11. For recent discussions of Augustine's scriptural preoccupations, see Arnold and Bright 1995.

are obscure. For example, one translator (*interpres*) renders a verse from the prophet Isaia: *Et **domesticos seminis tui** ne despexeris*; but another says: *Et **carnem tuam** ne despexeris*. Either bears witness to the other in turn (*uterque sibimet invicem adtestatus est*), for by means of one the other is explained (*alter ex altero exponitur*). Thus, *caro* can be taken literally, such that each may find himself admonished not to despise his body; while *domestici seminis* can be understood figuratively as "Christians" born spiritually with us from the common seed of the Word. Moreover, by collating the sense of the translations, the most appropriate meaning presents itself (*occurrit*), namely, a literal precept that we should not despise those of our own blood. For when we refer *domesticos seminis* to *carnem*, blood relations come particularly to mind. Whence, I think, comes the statement of the Apostle: *Si quo modo ad aemulationem adducere potuero carnem meam, ut salvos faciam aliquos ex illis*, that is, by emulating those who have believed, they too might believe. He calls the Jews *carnem suam* on account of their consanguinity.[2]

Augustine's aim, then, in collating the diverse renderings of Isaia 58:7 is not—as it would be for Lachmann—to produce a normative text.[3] Augustine both allows the discrepancies to stand and deliberately validates the meaning peculiar to each one, singly as well as together. The Itala refers metonymically to the body, the Vulgate metaphorically to the spiritual community of Christ, while in conjunction the two renditions metaleptically reference the Jews.[4] Oblivious of fidelity to any original—*exemplaria praecedentis linguae*—Augustine concludes: "Both [versions] contain something of value for the discerning reader (*ex utroque magnum aliquid insinuatur scienter legentibus*); overall, it is difficult for translators (*interpretes*) to so differ from each other that they do not show commonality in some area of meaning (*ut non se aliqua vicinitate contingant*)." Since the root *leg-, on which this passage repeatedly puns,[5] denotes in Augustine's Latin not only "to read" but also "to assemble", "to bring together", "to recruit",[6] lection is by implication here less a process of reduction than a collational and comparative

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[2] Augustine, *De doctrina Christiana* 2.12.
[3] See Timpanaro 1981; Weigel 1989. Cf. G. Nagy, "Editing the Homeric Text: Different Methods, Ancient and Modern" in: Nagy 2004, 75-109.
[4] On the Old Latin versions of the Bible, see Rönsch 1875; Ziegler 1879; Burkitt 1896.
[5] See Ernout and Meillet 1959, 348-50. See also P. Chantraine 1968, s.v. λέγω.
[6] So the famous admonition in *Confessiones* 8.12: *tolle, lege*. On the conventional and multiple significances of the phrase, Courcelle 1968.

enterprise in which all available transcriptions remain in play. For Augustine, then, multiformity in the Latin renderings of Isaia constitutes neither a historical curiosity nor sheer coincidence: rather, *it is what creates the possibility of understanding in the first place*: "each [reading] bears witness to the other, so that by one the other is explained."[7] Accordingly, no variant, for Augustine, signifies positively in isolation, but only insofar as it constitutes part of a larger textual field in which both the *vicinitas* and *divorsitas* of the several γραπτά serve—for, as well as against, one another—to converge collectively on what Paul called the πνεῦμα of the sense.[8] To paraphrase the Apostle from a related context:[9] when it comes to multiple witnesses, there is for Augustine neither accurate nor inaccurate, orthodox nor unorthodox, authentic nor spurious, but "all are one in Christ Jesus"—*omnes enim vos unum estis in Christo Iesu*.[10]

Although *De doctrina Christiana* itself constitutes a fixed work—at least relatively speaking[11]—Augustine reminds us through this programmatic example of the degree to which Roman Imperial readers had, athwart incongruous and often contradictory forces of canonization,[12] repeatedly to confront, both within and across languages, texts that circulated in a bewildering number of differing exemplars,[13] many of which—beyond the vagaries of scribal error—possessed equal claims to authority and few of which could *a priori* be dismissed.[14] After all, what was true of the divergences between the Itala and Vulgate stood compounded in the different versions of the *Vetus*

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[7] Cf. the admonition at *De doctrina Christiana* 4.21: *si quis in eis non superficie contentus altitudinem quaerat*.

[8] The play of similarity and difference that Augustine stresses indicates that we are well within the field of metaphor or allegory. On the hermeneutic implications, see Boyarin 1994.

[9] Paul, *Ad Galatas* 3:28: *non est Iudaeus neque Graecus, not est servus neque liber, non est masculus neque femina, omnes enim vos unum estis in Christo Iesu*; cf. Πρὸς Ῥωμαίους 10:12: οὐ γὰρ ἐστιν διαστολὴ Ἰουδαίου τε καὶ ῞Ελληνος. It thus runs counter to Augustine's own critical principles to decide between the two variant readings that trouble the climactic moment of his *Confessions* (cf. O'Donnell 1992, 3:62-63): et ecce audio vocem *de domo vicina / de domo divina*; for manifestly here the one is explained by the other.

[10] Cf. *De doctrina Christiana* 4.29: *quasi copia dicendi forma vivendi*.

[11] There are significant textual variants. See also n. 88 below.

[12] See, inter alia, Metzger 1977; Auwers and de Jonge 2003.

[13] Thomas 2003, an important case study of "multiples", centered on the *Acts of Peter*. Her divergent framework broaches issues that are nevertheless key for the problematics treated here; cf. nn. 49, 99.

[14] Metzger 1987. The first reference to τὰ κανονικά occurs in the canons of the synod held at Laodicea *c.* 363 CE. For a well presented case study, see Trobisch 1994.

Testamentum that passed translinguistically throughout the Late Antique Mediterranean world across cultural lines: Tanakh, the Targumim, Septuagint and Peshīṭṭā, Coptic, Samaritan, Armenian, and Old Ethiopic Bibles[15]—to name only the most prominent—all circulated within the borders of the Roman state, each less a neutral translation of its *Vorlage*, than an appropriation apposite to ethnically divergent contexts, which brought matters of local dominance, assertion, and resistance unequivocally to the fore.[16] Consider, for example, three renderings of *Shir ha-Shirim* 1:5,[17] which polemically convey differing cultural assumptions about skin color:

Septuagint: Μέλαινά εἰμι <u>καὶ</u> καλή, θυγατέρες ᾿Ιερουσαλεμ
              [var.: ᾿Ισραηλ].

Vulgate: Nigra sum <u>sed</u> formonsa filiae Hierusalem.

Ethiopic: **ጸላም ፡ አነ ፡ ወሠናይት ፡ አምአዋልደ ፡ ኢየሩሳሌም ።**

              ṣallām ’ana <u>wa</u>-śannāyt <u>’em</u>-’awāleda ’iyarusālēm.

              Black am I *and* **more** beautiful **than** the daughters of Jerusalem.

Not only, then, as Origen's *Hexapla* made clear,[18] did the contents of these various *Testamenta* differ: all incorporated nonidentical doublings—in some cases treblings —within and between their various canonical books.[19] תנ״ך,[20]

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[15] Metzger 1987, 218-28.

[16] See, for example, Nida 1975; Schogt 1988; Beck 2000; Apter 2005. Of the increasingly numerous anthologies on translation theory, particularly to be recommended are Venuti 2000; Tymoczko and Gentzler 2002; and Berman and Wood 2005.

[17] Masoretic Text (MT): שחורה אני ונאוה בנות ירושלם. The titles of the "translations" vary: LXX. Ασμα; Vulg. Canticum Canticorum; Eth. *Maḥāləya maḥāləy*. The ensuing example shows why it is best to preserve the distinctions between the different texts—for which their original superscriptions are the most lapidary index—rather than conflate them into some putatively homogenous work called "Song of Songs". On the ideological stakes in fictions of uniformity, see Derrida 1972. Texts—MT: Elliger and Rudolph 1966; LXX: Rahlfs 1935; Vulg.: Weber 1994; Eth. Gleave 1951.

[18] Text: Origen, Field 1875.

[19] See Davies 1998. For lucid summarization, see Friedman 1997.

[20] The English term "Bible"—in the singular—conceals the fact that for Late Antique communities the scriptures were consistently designated as plural—the Greek Βιβλία, for example, means "scrolls", not necessarily all collected. Up through the present day, in fact, Jewish communities still employ no omnibus term to designated their sacred corpus

for example, includes the two disparate accounts of creation which open בראשית;[21] the deuteronomic recapitulation of the commandments—already redacted twice in שמות[22]—modified in דברים;[23] and the recasting of the David narrative from מלכים in דברי הימים.[24] Similarly, the Septuagint expands Ιερεμιας with the Ἐπιστολὴ Ιερεμιου, followed by Βαρουχ,[25] which the Peshīṭṭā further extends with its ܣܘܠܩܐ ܕ ܒܪܘܟ ‮ܕܒܘܟ‬.[26] Nor are such generative phenomena restricted to the Old Testament: undoubtedly the most stunning and influential set of narrative variants were the four "indispensable" Gospels[27]—τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τετράμορφον, as Irenaeus called them[28]—alongside the *Gospel of the Hebrews* and the *Gospel of the Egyptians*, whose col-

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of written scripture; rather, what English speakers refer to as "the Hebrew Bible", Hebrew itself designates as תנ״ך (*Tanakh*), an acronym formed from the first letters of the titles respectively assigned to the three traditional divisions of the collection: Torāh ("Law"), Nəvi'im ("Prophets"), Kətuvim ("Writings") > **Tanakh**".

[21] LXX. Γένεσις; Vulg. Bresith. The Hebrew title of this book exemplifies the reasons why it is ultimately undesirable to vocalize the various Semitic syllabaries, or even to break up the consonantal text. Depending on how one vocalizes בראשית, it could mean either "In *a* beginning" (*bərēshit*) or "in *the* beginning (*bārēshit*)"—two openings whose philosophical implications are clearly very different. The LXX gives the somewhat hesitant Ἐν ἀρχῇ; Latin allows the Vulg. to obviate the issue entirely with "In principio"; but the Coptic (Bohairic) Pentateuch reads unequivocally "in *a* beginning" (ϧⲉⲛ ⲟⲩⲁⲣⲭⲏ)," clear evidence for the antiquity of the ambivalence (de Lagarde 1967, 1). Qabbalistic writers, moreover, divide the consonantal sequence up into two words: בְּרָא שִׁית ("[He] created six"), so as to make the title refer to the six days of creation. In the spirit of Augustine, for Late Antique readers it was less a matter of deciding which of these renderings of the title was "correct"—though different rabbis certainly had different opinions—but rather of recognizing the differences and, within the hermeneutics of the era, demonstrating how each the possible readings reveals a different layer of meaning immanent within the text; cf. *Zohar* 3:152a. Turning to the translations, one should also note that Grk. Γένεσις and Lat. Bresith do not cover precisely the same semantic field; while Γένεσις is colloquial in Greek, Bresith is in Latin not only exotic, but actually a nonsense word—the two titles thus make very different sorts of appeals to the reader. Cf. Seidman 2006.

[22] MT. *Shmōt* ("Names") > LXX. Εξοδος.

[23] MT. *Dəvārim* ("Words") > LXX. Δευτερονόμιον.

[24] MT. *Məlākhim* ("Kings") / *Divrei ha-Yomim* ("Words of the Days") > LXX Βασιλεῖς / Παραλιπόμενον. In the Vulgate, the full *incipit* for the latter exemplifies one way that translators reminded Late Antique readers of the multiformity of the texts, though the equivalency given to the titles also serves to conceal the discrepancies in matter between the diverse renditions: "Liber Dabreiamin, id est Verba Dierum qui Graece dicitur Paralipomenon."

[25] See further Tov 1976.

[26] "The Ascension of Baruch"; Text: de Boer 1972- .

[27] Origen, cited in Eusebius, *Historia ecclesiastica* 6.25.3.

[28] Irenaeus, *Adversus haereses* 3.11.8.

lective burden, Melito of Sardis argued, was to realize through "analogy" the "provisional draft" that the Judaic Law and the Prophets represented.[29] These six gospels, translated into the eight principal languages of early Christendom—Aramaic, Greek, Coptic, Latin, Armenian, Gothic, Georgian, and Geʿez[30]—yielded over fifty competing versions of the mission of Christ, none identical in wording, but all of which—even before entering into the niceties of alternatives within one language[31]—retained parallel authority under the High Empire,[32] even though doctrinally the communities who produced and selectively deployed them differed.[33] Among Rabbinica, moreover, the Mishnāh ("repetition"), compiled *c*. 200 C.E.,[34] likewise redoubles the Torāh which, supplemented by the Gemārā ("completion"), yielded before 500 the two coincident though largely autonomous Talmudim.[35] Nor were such parallel compositions necessarily commensurate in length. The Vulgate, for example, reduces the life of Enoch to a single sentence [Gen. 5:21-24]—*ambulavit Enoch cum Deo ... et non apparuit quia tulit eum Deus*—yet no less than five pamphlets and two books of independent provenance, attested in as many languages,[36] plus a mass of Aggadic material from the Rabbis,[37] flesh out the details of Enoch's apocalyptical career.

   Scriptural systems such as the apostolic Gospels, the Enochic corpus, or the Lives of Pachomius—whose Coptic, Arabic, and Greek recensions all

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[29] Text: Melito of Sardis, Hall 1979. Melito takes his cue principally from John and Paul's Letter to the Galatians; Augustine works out the scheme in its entirety in *De civitate Dei*. See also, in this connection, Crawford 2008.

[30] Metzger and Ehrman 2005, 52-134.

[31] There were six translations into Syriac alone, at least five into Greek; notoriously, Italic recensions did not offer a consistent text: for Luke 24:4-5 alone, at least 27 variant readings in Old Latin manuscripts survive, bearing out Jerome's complaint to Pope Damasus that there were almost as many versions as there were manuscripts: "tot enim sunt exemplaria paene quot codices" (*Novum opus*). See Burton 2001.

[32] For example, Trobisch (1994) notes: "Approximately eight hundred early copies of the letters of Paul have survived to the current day. No two copies are completely identical… [T]he result is that there probably is not a single verse of the letters of Paul that has the same wording in all surviving manuscripts" (1 and 4).

[33] The best introduction remains Pagels 1979. Of the increasingly large bibliography, particularly useful are Layton 1987; Bloom and Meyer 1992. The two best general surveys are Rudolph 1977, and Filoramo 1983.

[34] For a concise and perceptive introduction, see Neusner 1983. At greater length there is Albeck 1971.

[35] The best overview is Akenson 1998. For a critical reading, see Ouaknin 1986.

[36] Overview: Vanderkam 1995. See also Nickelsburg 2001.

[37] For references, see Ginzberg 1998, 7:132-66.
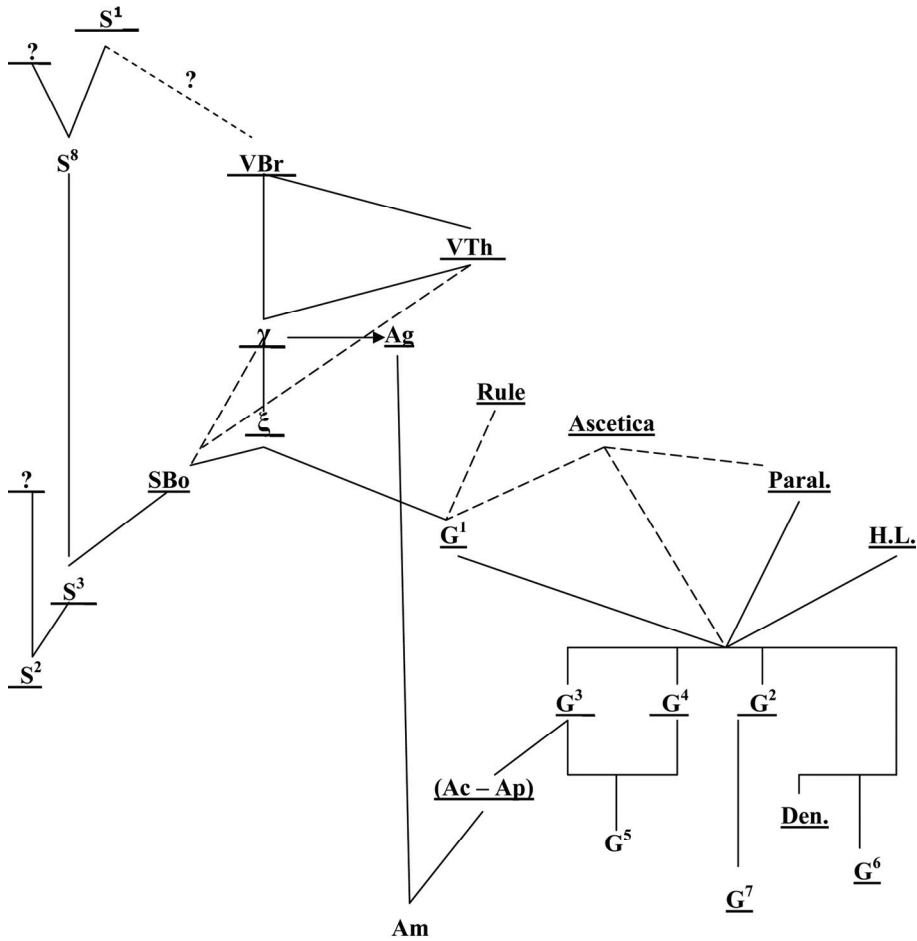
S	Sahidic	A(a-m)	Arabic	VBr	Vita Brevis
Sbo	Bohairic	Den.	Latin	VTh	Vita Theodori
G	Greek	Paral.	Paralipomena Pachomii	H.L.	Lausiac History

Fig. 1. Lives of Pachomius. Stemma codicum [after Veilleux 1980-82].

derive from different sources [Fig.1]—constitute what we might profitably call discrete, if ultimately also overlapping—"text networks", autopoietic bodies of related compositions whose origins largely escape us and whose evolution, in the second and third centuries C.E., remained far from complete. Within such self-organizing fields, however, neither origin nor termi-

nus was much at issue: so the Rabbinic Bible opens emblematically with ב,
the second letter of the Hebrew alphabet,[38] and breaks off open-endedly with
the exhortation *Vəyāʿal* ("May he go up").[39] In fact, what most typified the
scriptural networks of the High Empire was not their stability, but rather
their set (*Einstellung*) towards proliferation, where entropy increased in the
course of each new (re)inscription.[40] Hence the vast majority of such wri-
tings were not only pseudepigraphic—so among the *Amorāʾim* the verb כתב
does not mean "he composed", but rather "he transcribed":[41] such protocols
tended to accrete either seriatim, like the variant reworkings of Estēr,[42] or cu-
mulate rhizomatically around a core set of tales,[43] in the way that the later
Acts of the Apostles constitute spin-offs of the Πράξεις of Luke.[44] In fact, as
late as the fifth century C.E., Jerome was still actively rendering ἀκονόνιστα
βιβλία into both Latin and Greek,[45] to be read—as Filaster put it—*morum
causā a perfectis*.[46] Like the variant verses from Isaia, then, which *De doctri-
na Christiana* glosses, each member of the text network figured—so Augus-
tine puts it elsewhere—*in regione dissimilitudinis*,[47] that is, by way of simi-
larity to and difference from the other works that concomitantly comprised
the field—in effect a transtextual projection of Saussure's synchronic notion
of linguistic "value".[48] Thus, al-Suhrawardī's version of *Risālat al-Ṭayr*
acquires its historical significance less singularly or diachronically—that is,
through an anarchic "fluidity in [its] narrative trajectory"[49]—than associa-

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[38] Cf., inter alia, Genesis Rabbah 1.10f.

[39] II Chronicles 36:23.

[40] *Pace* Steiner 1998.

[41] Wyrick 2004, 51-58.

[42] See Gruen 1998, 177-88.

[43] Cf. Deleuze and Guattari 1980. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari use the term "rhizome"
to designate phenomena that allow for multiple, non-hierarchical entry and exit points in
data, representation, and interpretation. They oppose the rhizomatic model to arborescent
forms of ordering, which work with dualist categories and binary choices. A rhizome
works with horizontal and trans-species connections, while an arborescent model works
with vertical and linear connections.

[44] For the complexities of the corpus and translations of the texts, see Schneemelcher 1992,
2:75-482. See, further, Pervo 1986 and 2006; Bavon 1999; Molinari 2000; Klauck 2005.

[45] Jerome, *De viris illustribus* 2.

[46] Filaster, *Liber de haeresibus* 88.

[47] Augustine, *Confessiones* 7.10; for the history of the phrase, see Courcelle 1963.

[48] De Saussure 1980, 155-69; Trubetzkoy 1939; Todorov 1971; Jakobson 1987. Cf. Lalle-
man 1998.

[49] So Thomas 2003, 40-71, who accordingly—though not unusefully—stresses the "per-
formative tendency" of multiform texts ("Multiforms … result from oral circulation, or
from a usage of texts that views them as resources for retelling the story in another per-

tively in relation both to the earlier Arabic renditions credited to Ibn Sīnā and al-Ghazālī, as well as to Farīd al-Dīn ʿAṭṭār's formidable Persian recasting of the tale as *Manṭiq al-Ṭayr*, written several decades later.[50] On the horizon of sixth-century Islām (A.H.), all of these divergent renderings explicitly held—as T.S. Eliot maintained—"a simultaneous existence and compose[d] a simultaneous order,"[51] which, insofar as the complex was autopoietic,[52] also remained dynamically tensive.

Or such, at all events, is the scriptural disposition that the Apocryphon of Iōhannēs stages in its opening plot frame:

It happened one day, when Iōhannēs … had gone up to the temple (Ⲣ̄Ⲡ̄Ⲉ < M. Eg. ⟨r-pr⟩ [*r-pr*]), that a Pharisee named Arimanios approached him

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formance" [59]). She conceives this performativity, however, as external to, rather than immanent within, the text; see below p. 12. It thus seems overhasty to conclude "that it was the general line of the story, rather than the specific text at any give point [i.e., *fabula* divorced not only from *sjužet*, but from any textual embodiment whatsoever], which was the significant aspect of these works" (41); for *fabula* and *sjužet*, see Thomas 1998, 74-75.

[50] For the texts, see Corbin 1954; Razavi 1997; Avery 1998, 551-59; Thackston 1999. This set makes clear that the self-organization of the text network does not coincide with genre; cf. Goldhill 2008.

[51] Eliot 1975, 38. Cf. Guillén 1971: "Literature is characterized not so much by the operation of full systems as by a tendency toward system or structuration. Thus it appears that the historian is led to evaluate, for every century or phase in the history of his subject, a persistent, profound "will to order" within the slowly but constantly changing domain of literature as a whole … The structures of this order are no more alien to the [narratives that the redactor] produces than the linguistic code is to the utterances of his speech" (376 and 390).

[52] On autopoietic or self-organizing systems, see particularly Maturana and Varela 1975, and Luhmann 1997. Contemporary systems theory provides among the most useful models for the study of text networks insofar as it recognizes both the openness of all self-constituting systems, as well as their recursive tendency towards closure—cf. Pankow 1976, 16: "All living systems and all supersystems which are built from living systems are open systems. They are open with respect to the matter, energy, and information which they exchange with their environment"; Jantsch 1979, 65: "Autopoiesis has been called a kind of system dynamic through which the system regenerates its own components and thus itself. It implies closure." Literary text networks can thus be seen as autopoietic insofar as they remain open, yet constitute themselves through a closed (i.e., circular) organization of scribal processes created through the recursive interaction of its own products; see also Altmann and Koch 1998, an excellent collection of articles on autopoietic systems in language, literature, and culture. For the "exorbitance" which is concomitantly endemic to such forms of structuration, see Derrida 1967, Barthes 1973, de Man 1979, Austin 1975 (on "perlocutionary" effects), Luhmann 2001. Also useful, in this connection, for a poetics of the multiform are Starobinski 1971 and Riffaterre 1978.

and said, "Where is your master (ⲤⲀⲒ < M. Eg. 𓈖𓌟 [sš]), whom you used to follow?" He said to him, "He has gone back to the place from which he came." The Pharisee said, "With deception (ⲠⲖⲀⲚⲎ [< πλανή]) this Nazarene deceived you (ⲀϤ-ⲠⲖⲀⲚⲀ [< πλανᾶν] ⲘⲘⲰⲦⲚ [pl.]), and he filled your ears with lies, and closed your hearts, and turned you from the traditions (ⲠⲀⲢⲀⲆⲞⲤⲒⲤ [<παράδοσις]) of your fathers." When I heard these things, I turned away from the temple (ⲒⲈⲢⲞⲚ [< ἱερόν]) to the mountain, a desert place (ⲦⲞⲞⲨ ⲚϪⲀⲈⲒⲈ). And I grieved greatly in myself, saying, "How was the savior appointed, why was he sent into the world. . . and who is his father, and of what sort is the aeon to which we shall go?"[53]

The Coptic ⲤⲀⲒ, literally "scribe", in conjunction with the Greek derivative ⲠⲀⲢⲀⲆⲞⲤⲒⲤ, a written document or, in a more technical parlance, Rabbinic interpretation,[54] suggests that what the Apocryphon stages here is an allegory of its own textual divarication. In his ascent to the tabernacle, Iōhannēs encounters a Pharisee—that is, a strict adherent to the doctrine of the dual Torāh[55] [< Heb. *pārush*, "separated" (i.e., unto a life of purity)]—who, bearing the ominous Zoroastrian sobriquet "Arimanios",[56] taunts him for having swerved (ⲀϤ-ⲠⲖⲀⲚⲀ) from the "accounts of his Fathers,"[57] at which point Iōhannēs turns away from the House of YHWH to stake his ground in unoccupied territory on the margins of the cultivated fields (ⲦⲞⲞⲨ ⲚϪⲀⲈⲒⲈ).[58] In the code-switching between Egyptian and Greek that typifies the Coptic idiom,[59] the scriptural repository that Iōhannēs first approached under native nomenclature as ⲢⲠⲈ, he leaves behind him as the now alien ἱερόν. When at this point the heavens open, the Savior appears to Iōhannēs, and recounts to him a complex variant of the classic Gnostic myth,[60] the text proceeds the-

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[53] Waldstein and Wisse 1995, 12-15.

[54] See Lampe 1961, s.v. παράδοσις.

[55] See Neusner 1995-2000, 1:117-216, and 2:35-62; Neusner and Chilton 2007.

[56] Phiroze Vasunia has suggested to me in personal communication a potential pun on πέρσης behind ⲫⲀⲢⲒⲤⲀⲒⲞⲤ, a possibility not to be ruled out considering the wild syncretisms found in contemporary *voces magicae*; see, for example, Versnel 2002. There is a comparable pun, derived from Old Persian, in the Coptic *Cambyses Romance*; see Kammerzell 1987.

[57] Cf. The chapter "*Clinamen*, or Poetic Misprision" in Bloom 1973, 19-45. For further details see Bloom 2003.

[58] On the geographic symbolism in the Egyptian context, see inter alia Assmann 2000, 217-42; O'Connor and Quirke 2003.

[59] See Reintges 2001.

[60] Layton 1987, 5-22.

matically to enact the narrative deviation from Hebrew scripture that its frame has just described. Likewise, when we read at the conclusion that "[Iōhannēs] went to his fellow disciples (*mathētēs*) and began to tell them what the Savior told him," it becomes clear that the Apocryphon's transmission from Aramaic[61] through Greek into Coptic is again part and parcel of the scriptural wandering that only "Arimanios", i.e., the man of Aŋgra Mainyu—Avestan for "destructive in mind"[62]—denounces as ⲠⲖⲀⲚⲎ / πλανή.

It is of clear significance, then, that the account which Iōhannēs receives is personal, but delivered over to a collective for dissemination. Likewise, in the Gospel of Mirihamm, Andreas objects, "As for me, I do not believe that the Savior said this. These narratives (ⲤⲂⲞⲞⲨⲈ) differ greatly from those we know." To which Leuei responds: "If the Savior held [Mirihamm] worthy, who are you to reject her?," and with this admonishment, we read, "all went forth to tell and to scatter abroad (ⲱⲈⲞⲒⲈⲱ)."[63] What such Gnostic tractates self-reflexively represent, then, is both individual inspiration—e.g., "The secret discourse (ⲖⲞⲅⲞⲤ) that Jesus spoke in conversation with Judas Iscariot"—and the multiplex transmission of his account: "Then the apostles split up (ⲠⲰⲢⳘ), [and] he sent them forth to pre[ach]."[64] While the Roman East clearly recognized distinctive authors (συγγραφεῖς, *auctores singuli*) who produced fixed texts, this does not appear *a priori* to have constituted the norm:[65] whatever the merits of Porphyry's arguments *Against the Christians*,[66] his book afforded no diffusional competition for the Pauline corpus. The pattern is particularly clear, Stephen Emmel notes, in Roman Egypt: "Coptic literature," Emmel writes, "knows only one truly remarkable indi-

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[61] On the Aramaic (and Hebrew) substrata to the Apocryphon of John, see Pearson 1990, 29-38.

[62] For Aŋgra Mainyu (Ahriman), see *Yasna* 45:2. For references in Greek and Roman writers, see Vasunia 2007, 236-44; on "Arimanios" in particular, see pp. 209, 215, 314, 374, 474. The influence of Zoroastrianism in Egypt is covered by Boyce and Grenet 1991.

[63] Parrott, et al., 1979, 453-71. For ⲤⲂⲞⲞⲨⲈ = διήγησις , see Crum 1939, s.v.

[64] Kasser and Wurst, et al. 2007, 185 and 109. As with Herodotus invariably "oral" sources, it would be naïve to take the orality of the transmission represented here as anything more than a grounding fiction. In the same way that Iōhannēs' turning away from the temple employs geography to trope the textual relation of the Apocryphon to Hebraic scripture, so orality here figures what is clearly a scribal tradition considerably removed from any possible *ipsissima verba* that the tractates, perhaps entirely imaginarily, posit. Cf. Nagy 1990.

[65] On the "author function", see Foucault 2001. The scribe here is nonetheless an *auctor* in the root sense of the word, a *nomen agentis* for *augeo*, "to increase".

[66] See Hoffmann 1994.

vidual author, a late antique monastic leader named Shenoute,"[67] whose originality, Tito Orlandi stresses, effectively "involved a rejection of 'literature' as such,"[68] since up until that point, Demotic compositions were anonymous and "the Coptic language … had been used [principally] for translation."[69] What Coptologists increasingly contest, however, is the traditional view that it is the translator's *Vorlage* which constitutes the primary object of scholarly interest. Instead, as Emmel points out, "translation literature can and should be understood in its [cultural] context. In other words, the interest of a piece of … translation literature should not end once its [source] has been identified. Rather, one must still ask when, where, and why it was translated, and how and why it was altered during its transmission."[70] This was not only a function of how different individuals refigured what they heard or read; more importantly, as such accounts crossed cultural lines, they required recontextualization, not only to make sense in terms of other cultural categories, but also to appeal to ethnic constituencies that differed.[71] Thus, in the millennial recasting of the Balavariani, as it passed from India across the Hindu Kush, through Persia and the Caucasus, down into Syria, and thence to Europe,[72] the hero, who begins life as a *bodhisattva*, becomes by turns a Manichee, a Muslim, a Jewish prince, and ultimately a Christian saint—all of which different versions of the tale persisted simultaneously in circulation.

Whatever the literary merits of Apuleius, Loukian, or Hēliodōros, these were not the most popular fiction writers of their period, and their romances achieved nothing like the geohistorical currency of text networks as extensive as the Life of Aḥiqar, the Fables of Bidpai, or the Alexander Romance.[73] The latter, which Ken Dowden has characterized as "antiquity's most

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[67] Emmel 2007, 87.

[68] Orlandi 1986, 63. For recent discussion of Coptic compositional technique, see also Sheridan 2007.

[69] Orlandi 1998, 134.

[70] Emmel 2007, 93.

[71] Cf. Selden 1994 and 1998; Hägg and Utas 2003. The problem is also familiar from Plautus' Romanizations of Menander; cf. Lape 2003 and Fraenkel 2007.

[72] The best survey of the major recensions is Ikegami 1999, 13-65.

[73] For a succinct summary of the peregrinations of such texts, see Boyle 1977. To cite one set of statistics, Kharitōn survives complete in one Greek codex and four papyrus fragments; see Reardon 2004. By contrast, *Joseph and Aseneth* is represented by seventy manuscripts in Classical Greek, Armenian, Latin, Serbian Slavonic, Modern Greek, Rumanian, and Ethiopic, which fall into four different recensions; see Thomas 2003, 78. Prima facie this suggests that *Joseph and Aseneth* stands closer to the center of both

successful novel,"[74] retained its popularity for well over a millennium, translated into virtually every language of culture from India to Spain and Ethiopia to Iceland. Virgil's *Aeneis* may have bequeathed to Medieval and Modern Europe its basic myth for the Westering of culture, but the Alexander Romance successfully united readers across the better part of the Eurasian and North African land mass from the Hellenistic period through the fall of Constantinople.[75] Richard Stoneman, whose work on the text continues to be fundamental,[76] nonetheless expresses puzzlement regarding its dissemination: "It is hard to identify the appeal and the reasons for the endurance of the artless farrago that is the Alexander Romance. It is without doubt one of the most enduring legacies of Greek antiquity to the medieval world[, yet] with the invention of the printed book it disappears almost instantly from view."[77] An adequate explanation of this historical trajectory must issue from at least three observations: First, we must recognize that the Alexander Romance is not an aberrant or "fringe" phenomenon that flourished in "the hinterland, … in [some] dim prehistory of narrative fiction,"[78] but rather conforms to what is arguably the most common type of diffusional patterning—the text network—in the Roman East. Secondly, all such narratives explicitly thematize their own dissemination, which suggests that their cross-cultural transmission is less an arbitrary matter dependent upon taste, than structurally encoded in the works themselves.[79] Thus, the Balavariani thematizes the conversion from one faith to another. Alternatively, the Life of Aḥiqar, which concerns the vicissitudes of a foreign counselor at court, concludes with a set of adages that distill the distinctive plotting of the narrative into a set of ideological propositions that appear, as Louis Althusser has put

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writerly and readerly interest in the ancient novel compared to Kharitōn who appears somewhere on the "margins"; cf. Holzberg 2003.

[74] Dowden in Reardon (ed.) 1989, 650.

[75] For evidence of a Demotic Egyptian recension, see Jasnow 1997.

[76] Stoneman 2007- .

[77] Stoneman 2003, 612; condensed and edited. There is currently no survey or index to all known manuscripts of the Romance. Some of the versions are pseudepigraphic (Callisthenes, Aristotle), others penned by well-known writers (Ferdawsī, Neẓāmī, Yaʿqūḇ Srūḡāyā, Gautier de Châtillon, Alexandre de Bernay).

[78] Reardon 1991, 143.

[79] In this same connection, ʿAṭṭār writes, *Manṭiq al-Ṭayr* 4476 and 4479: "My verse has a wonderful property: at every moment it affords additional boons … I am indeed, from the Ocean of Truth, scattering pearls. By me speech has been brought to completion." Translation: Avery 1998, modified. On this aspect of reception theory, see Iser 1972 and 1994.

it, "to have no history,"[80] and so allow the tale to circulate across Eurasia as a parable, ubiquitously valid irrespective of time and place.[81] Or again, the Alexander Romance narrates Alexander's serial conquest of every nation in the world, one after the other; thus, the Γ-recension of the Greek text states: "All nations became his servants … Not one of them resisted, for they all feared him. He crossed all the land beneath the sun; no habitable portion remained there over."[82] Third, and finally, the abrupt disappearance of all such romance networks, at least in the West, in the fifteenth century C.E., suggests that we are dealing with a historical break—in this case the incipient shift from the tributary polities that were the legacy of Persia, through the increasing penetration of the commodity form into the work of art, to the modalities of standardization that condition all production—literary and otherwise—under the modern capitalist nation state.[83]

It would not be difficult, though it would take more time than space allows, to show that tributary empires such as the Hellenistic monarchies or the Roman Principate generated as their dominant ideology metaphysics and as their most characteristic form of fiction the text network, in particular the romance. The Elder Pliny, for example, provides a characteristic structural description of the tributary state, for which Plotinus subsequently supplies a Neoplatonic gloss:

> In the whole world (*in toto orbe*), wherever the vault of heaven turns, Italy is the most beautiful of all lands, endowed with all that wins the principate of Nature (*quae merito principatum naturae optinent*). Italy is the ruler and second mother of the world (*rectrix parensque mundi altera*)—with her men, women, generals, soldiers, and slaves, her outstanding position in arts and crafts, her abundance of brilliant talent, her geographical location and healthy, temperate climate, her easy accessibilities for all other peoples (*accessu cunctarum gentium facili*), and her shores with their many harbors and the kindly winds that blow towards her. All these advantages ensue from Italy's situation—for the landmass juts out in the most advantageous direction, midway between East and West (*quod contingit positione procurrentis in partem utilissimam et inter ortus occasusque mediam*). No place is more distinguished with regard to

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[80] Althusser 1971, 159-62.
[81] See Marinčič 2003; Contini and Grottanelli 2005.
[82] von Lauenstein, et al. 1962-1969, 2:232.
[83] For the historical break, see Abu-Lughod 1989; Wallerstein 1974-89. On the commodification of art, see Adorno 1952; Baudrillard 1981; Alpers 1995.

those things that man ought not to lack: … idle for no land and pregnant within (*inter se gravida*), she bestows for her dowry on all many different juices and crops and fruits with varying flavors (*varios sucos et frugum pomorumque sapores*).

After Italy—leaving aside the marvels of India (*exceptis Indiae fabulosis*)—I would put Spain, or at least the coastal regions (*quacumque ambitur mari*). For although Spain is partly rough country (*squalidam ex parte*), where it is productive, it is rich in crops, oil, wine, horses, and every kind of ore. Thus far Gaul is the equal of Spain, but Spain has the edge (*vincit*) because of her deserts with their esparto grass and selenite, as well as luxury in pigments. Here there is a stimulus to work, a place where slaves can be trained, where men's bodies are tough and their hearts eager (*laborum excitatione, servorum exercitio, corporum humanorum duritia, vehementia cordis*) … [Among nature's products], of coats and hides the most expensive are those that the Chinese dye, and the beard of the Arabian she-goat that we call ladanum … Birds make no outstanding contribution, except plumes for use in war, and grease from the geese of Commagene.[84]

Pliny's notion of imperium sustains itself through two mutually contradictory political impulses: on the one hand, a symmetrically unified world centered fantasmatically on Italy—*rectrix parensque*—from which all bounty flows (*fundit*); on the other, an eclectic enumeration of discrete provincial resources that persist as irregular, arbitrary, and potentially refractory components (e.g., *servorum exercitio* < *exercere*, "to exercise, agitate, disturb") of an always as yet untotalized empire. This, then, is the structural incongruity that Plotinus attempts to ground:

What is the comprehensive principle of coordination? … All things must be enchained (συνηρτῆσθαι δὴ δεῖ ἀλλήλοις τὰ πάντα); and the sympathy and correspondence obtained in any one closely knit organism must exist, first and most intensely, in the All. There must be one principle constituting this unity of many forms of life and enclosing the several members within the unity (ἐκ πάντων ἕν), while at the same time, precisely as in each thing of detail the parts too have each a definite function (καὶ τὰ ἐν τῷ παντὶ ἕκαστα ἔργα ἕκαστον ἔχειν), so in the All … each several member must have its own task … Thus each entity takes its origin from one principle and, therefore, while executing its own

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[84] Pliny the Elder, *Naturalis historia* 37.201-204.

function, works in with every other member of that All from which its distinct task has by no means cut it off (συμβάλλει δὲ ἄλλο ἄλλῳ· οὐ γὰρ ἀπήλλακται τοῦ ὅλου): each performs its act, each receives something from the others, every one has its own moment bringing its touch of sweet or bitter.[85]

One has only to replace "All" here with "Roman Empire" or "the ʿAbbasid Caliphate" to see that whatever his philosophical pretensions, Plotinus provides an idealized description of the non-homogenized agglomeration of the tributary state,[86] in which every subject people contributed diversely to the imperium at large—each according to its local resources in money, manpower, or kind—without abrogating the particularities of local practice.[87] It is also, as Plotinus' discussion of transcription (μίμημα) makes clear elsewhere, an apt description both of the internal structure of such seemingly "artless farragos" as the Alexander Romance and the rhizomatic network in which each ectype of the narrative retains its specificity while still contributing to the overriding unity of the corpus as a whole.[88] That compositions of this character—situated, as Plotinus puts it, ἐν τῷ τῆς ἀνομοιότητος τόπῳ[89]—should disappear with the advent of mechanical reproduction—specifically the printing press, through which, beyond the idiosyncrasies of incunabula, all exemplars effectively become identical (ταὐτόν)[90]—only confirms the structural logic that Pliny no less than Plotinus ascribes to the antecedent era of the imperial, tributary states.[91]

In fact, Pliny and Plotinus, in their description of the simultaneous centripetal and centrifugal forces that propelled their world, account both for the

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[85] Plotinus, *Enneads* II, 3.7. Translation: MacKenna 1992, modified.

[86] On this matter in general, see Jameson 1981.

[87] See, in this connection, Millar 1977. For ideological constructions of *imperium* in the Roman tributary states see, Price 1984 and Ando 2000.

[88] Cf. Plotinus, *Enneads* I, 2.2: "Let us examine those qualities by which we hold Likeness (ὁμοιοῦσθαι) comes, and seek to establish what is this thing that we possess in transcription (μίμημα) … We must first distinguish two modes of Likeness (ὁμοίωσις). There is the likeness demanding an identical nature (ταὐτόν) in the objects, … and there is the case in which B resembles A, but A is a Primal (τὸ δὲ ἕτερόν ἐστι πρῶτον), not concerned about B and not said to resemble B. In this case, likeness is understood in a distinct sense: we no longer look for identity of nature, but on the contrary, for divergence, since the likeness has come about by the mode of difference (κατὰ τὸν ἕτερον τρόπον ὁμοίωται)." Translation: MacKenna 1992, modified.

[89] Plotinus, *Enneads* I, 8.13.

[90] The basic study remains Benjamin 1977.

[91] See Anderson 1974.

increasing drive towards literary canonization under the High Empire, as well as the eccentric drift of the text network.[92] The limited success of Tatian's Διατεσσάρων, however, supplies proof that Roman Imperial readers were not disposed to accept the reduction of their textual options entirely.[93] A remapping of the ancient novel which focuses, however, not on those texts that most influenced modern fiction, and therefore inevitably appeal more to contemporary readers, but rather on antiquity's most successful—and I would add consequential—romances has yet to be written. Post-Enlightenment aesthetic ideology, which still prevails in Classical Studies today, provides us with few tools for talking critically either about texts that do not allege post-Miltonic notions of authorial invention,[94] or acephalous corpora whose disparate transcripts (μιμήματα) stand mutually "enchained" (συνηρτημένα). In this regard, however, it is worth noting that the individual Greek novelists—Kharitōn, Xenophōn of Ephesus, Akhilleus Tatios, Longos, and Hēliodōros—all hailed, if we are to believe the texts and colophons, from the Near East.[95] When Mikhail Bakhtin, no less than Bryan Reardon, describes them chronotopically as variants of one ideal form,[96] the question we must ask is whether Imperial readers would not have considered them together—like the stories that show up concurrently in variant retellings as part of the Greek Aesopica, the Syriac *Kalīlah wa-Dimnah*, and the Demotic *Myth of the Eye of the Sun*[97]—not as a conventional genre (such as epos, elegy, or lyric),[98] but effectively another autopoietic network realized in a centripetal, though characteristically entropic form?[99] That Hellenized Pales-

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[92] See G. Nagy, "The Homeric Text and Problems of Multiformity", in Nagy 2004, 25-39. For imperial moves in this direction, cf. Quintilian, *Institutio oratoria*, Bk. 10; and Suetonius, *De poetis*, particularly the "Life of Virgil", ad finem. On indigenous Italic dialectics of authorship, see Selden 2007.

[93] Petersen 1994.

[94] On Milton's role in the rise of the modern ideology of authorial originality, see Selden 2006.

[95] For the cultural climate, see Sartre 1991; Millar 1993.

[96] Bakhtin 1981, 86-110. Reardon 1991.

[97] See, most recently, de Cenival 1988.

[98] For contemporary discussions of genre, see particularly Tynjanov 1929; Frye 1957; Todorov 1970.

[99] Cf. Thomas 2003, 78: "Works such as Esther, Daniel, *Joseph and Aseneth*, the *Acts of Peter*, and the Alexander romance … show a degree of textual instability that, when compared with the five late Greek erotic novels, is a difference in degree *constituting a difference in kind*" (emphasis added). This does not necessarily follow. The notorious instability of the manuscripts of Arnaut Daniel or Jaufré Rudel did not lead Occitan audiences—nor does it lead scholars today—to see Troubadour lyric, which evidently varied with each performance, as categorically different in kind from Dante's more highly uni-

tinians and Egyptians of this period polemically resisted the Roman concept of the *auctor*[100]—what Josephus called καινῶν εὑρετὰς λόγων[101]—to speak instead of "textualizers" (Heb. *kotvim* / Dem. *sẖ.w*), with respect to both canonical and para-canonical scriptures,[102] points—at least as regards significant portions of the Empire's audience—affirmatively in this direction.

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form *Rime Petrose*, or Petrarch's *Canzoniere*; cf. Nagy 1996. Film also supplies a contemporary counter-example: the multiple cuts of Oliver Stone's *Alexander* currently in release (2004, 2005, 2007), or the twelve variations on *Friday the 13th* (1980-2009) do not put these films in a different category than such relatively uniform works as *Citizen Kane* (1941) or *L'Avventura* (1960).

[100] See Dumézil 1986. Note, however, Seneca, *Epistulae Morales* 120.22: Magnam rem puta unum hominem agere. Praeter sapientem autem nemo unum agit, ceteri multiformes sumus; cf. Gill 2006.

[101] Josephus, *Against Apion* 2.182.

[102] Wyrick 2004, 111-35.

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