

Daemonic Trickery, Platonic Mimicry: the Discourse of Daemonic Sacrifice in Porphyry's *De Abstinencia*

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ABSTRACT

TRAVIS W. PROCTOR: Daemonic Trickery, Platonic Mimicry: the Discourse of Daemonic Sacrifice in Porphyry's *De Abstinencia*

Porphyry of Tyre's discussion of daemons and animal sacrifice in his *De Abstinencia* strays from traditional Graeco-Roman formulations of daemonic benevolence and physiology. As a result, past studies have struggled to identify the intellectual lineage for Porphyry's daemonology. By contrast, I propose that Porphyry draws his daemonology from Christian Platonic sources, best represented in the writings of Origen of Alexandria. I provide an extensive survey of early Christian views on daemonic physiology and encroachment upon sacrificial ritual, with a special section devoted to a comparison with the daemonology of Origen. There are notable similarities between the daemonologies of Porphyry and early Christian writers, likely occasioned by Porphyry's familiarity with Christian daemonological discourses. Porphyry attributes his daemonological discussion, moreover, to "certain Platonists," a claim which, when read in light of Porphyry's *Vita Plotini*, places Origen (and other Christians) squarely within the intellectual circles from which Porphyry was drawing his daemonological discourse.

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οὐ τὰ αὐτὰ οὖν ἡμεῖς ἄλλοις δοξάζομεν,
ἀλλ' οἱ πάντες τὰ ἡμέτερα μιμούμενοι λέγουσι

Therefore it is not that we hold the same doctrines as others,
but that all speak in imitation of ours.
-Justin Martyr, *1 Apol.* 60.10

μηδὲν δὲ καινὸν...διδάσκεσθαι...Χριστιανούς

“Christians teach nothing new.”
-Celsus, ap. Origen, *Contra Celsum* II.5

Chapter One

INTRODUCTION

In the intellectual atmosphere of the Roman Empire, antiquity was a virtue, novelty a vice. For intellectuals such as Justin and Celsus, therefore, it was imperative that they establish and bolster the ancient lineage of their respective traditions, while simultaneously exposing the purported novelty of competing ideologies. Hence, the extant literature from this period serves witness to the numerous calumnies exchanged among competing intellectual traditions, often hinging on debates over primacy, plagiarism, and paternity. “The Greeks have imitated Moses and the prophets,” Justin contends. “The Jews and Christians have done nothing more than plagiarize the Greek philosophers,” Celsus retorts.

Despite the polemical charge of these accusations, scholars have typically taken the side of Celsus. That is, past studies have often assumed that Christians, as a cultic minority

and marginalized community, were dependent upon Hellenic¹ thinkers for their intellectual advancements, but not vice-versa. Thus, by this understanding, it is Christians who have “mimicked” Hellenic thinkers, a reconstruction that renders Christian intellectualism secondary and derivative. Scholars of antiquity, however, have begun to question the solidity of the categorical distinction between “pagan” and “Christian” in antiquity, and scrutinize the discursive manner in which intellectual communities were formulated and identities negotiated. The blurring of the “borderlines” between Hellenic and Christian intellectuals, therefore, forces a reconsideration of the unidirectional model of intellectual influence in Late Antiquity. That is, if the very identities of “pagan” and “Christian” were relatively unstable, then can we assume that there was an unwavering, consistent manner in which these intellectuals influenced one other? In what follows, I demonstrate the need for a more diverse model of intellectual influence by arguing that Justin’s contention, despite its polemical formulation, held equal merit to that of Celsus, in that Hellenic intellectuals likewise “mimicked” the ideology of their Christian counterparts.

As part of such an endeavor, I turn to the *De Abstinencia* of Porphyry of Tyre, the famed Neo-Platonic philosopher, and propose that Porphyry’s daemonology draws upon and

¹I use “Hellenic” throughout for non-Christian Graeco-Roman intellectuals who were self-styled participants in the wider attempt at the “restoration” of ancient Greek *paideia*, often known as the “Second Sophistic.” I prefer this term not only because it lacks the negative undertones of its traditional counterpart, “pagan,” but also because it accounts better for these intellectuals’ construction of their own identities as “Greek” intellectual revivalists. In such usage I follow the approach of Elizabeth DePalma Digeser, who notes that members of Platonic philosophical circles began to use the term as a self-identifying moniker as early as the 3rd century CE. For discussion, see Elizabeth DePalma Digeser, *A Threat to Public Piety: Christians, Platonists, and the Great Persecution* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2012), 2 n. 4; Polymnia Athanassiadi, “The Oecumenism of Iamblichus: Latent Knowledge and Its Awakening,” *Journal of Roman Studies* 85 (1995), 249; Anthony Kaldellis, *Hellenism in Byzantium: The Transformation of Greek Identity and the Reception of the Classical Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 160-61.

participates within a larger *Christian* daemonological discourse.² More specifically, Porphyry's portrayal of daemonic participation in animal sacrifice, and the attendant daemonic pollution that endangers its participants, builds upon the Christian Platonic daemonology as espoused by and contained within the writings of Origen of Alexandria, the prominent 3rd century church father.

In order to provide an introduction to the concepts that constitute Porphyry's daemonological system, Chapter II, "'They want to be gods': The Daemonology of Porphyry's *De Abstinencia*," surveys the portrayal of daemons within Porphyry's literature, with particular attention to how Porphyry's daemonology functions within his larger of program of convincing his wayward philosophical acquaintance, Castrius, to return to his vegetarian lifestyle. As part of this program, Porphyry presents daemons as a species subdivided into "benevolent daemons," who act as kindly cosmic administrators and assistants to humans, and "maleficent daemons," who enjoy nothing more than ambushing humans, enacting earthly calamities, and, most importantly for my purposes, fattening their pneumatic bodies by absorbing the "vapors and steam" from animal sacrifice.

While Porphyry's benevolent daemons are rather at home in Hellenic intellectual circles, Chapter III, "'Between God and Mortals': Daemonic Sacrifice in Hellenic Literature," demonstrates the ways in which Porphyry's malevolent daemonology diverges from his Hellenic, and especially Platonic, predecessors. In order to do so, I provide a representative survey of the associations between daemons and sacrifice in ancient and early

² I here use "discourse" as a generalized equivalent to the spoken "conversation," though attending to more widespread modes of communication (written, oral, physiological, etc.).

imperial Hellenic literature. Ultimately, this survey demonstrates that there is little evidence for daemonologies that anticipated Porphyry's idiosyncrasies.

By contrast, Chapter IV, “‘The Table of Daemons’: Early Christian Literature and Daemoniac Sacrifice,” explores the plethora of early Christian witnesses that, in a similar manner to Porphyry, espouse discourses of daemoniac sacrifice and pollution. Such an examination will be an important first step in reconstructing the Christian Platonist intellectual lineage for Origen's daemonological discourse. Most importantly, gluttonous and polluting daemons are found among several Christian witnesses, ranging across both time period and geographical locale.

Chapter V, “‘Above the Bath of Myrtinus: Christian Platonism and Early Imperial Daemonological Discourses,” continues the task of tracing this Christian lineage by shifting focus to Christian Platonists of the 2nd and 3rd century. Important for this endeavor will be a reconsideration of the so-called Christian “Apologists,” who have long been known for their incorporation of Greek *paideia* in their defenses and expositions of Christian doctrine. These Christian Apologists, moreover, demonstrate the way in which the Christian discourses of daemoniac sacrifice and pollution were incorporated into the frameworks of Hellenic, and particularly Platonist, cosmologies, anthropologies, and psychologies. The chapter concludes by stressing the discursive atmosphere within which these Christian Platonists operated, a recognition which has significant implications for understanding their potential influences upon Hellenic contemporaries.

In order to finalize the case for Christian influence upon the daemonology of Porphyry, Chapter VI, “‘Certain Platonists’: Origen, Porphyry, and Discourses of Daemoniac

Sacrifice,” presents evidence that Porphyry draws upon and participates within discourses of daemonic sacrifice and corruption that he shares with Origen of Alexandria, a fellow Platonic philosopher and near-contemporary. Important for this consideration will be Porphyry’s own witness to his supposed sources, namely, “certain Platonists,” as well as the extensive literary and conceptual links between the daemonology of Origen and that of Porphyry. Finally, I conclude by offering reflections on the implications of the study’s findings, with a particular focus on its significance for understanding ancient ritual, imperial politics, and intellectual history.

Chapter Two

‘THEY WANT TO BE GODS’: THE DAEMONOLGY OF PORPHYRY’S DE ABSTINENTIA

In an essay that otherwise stresses Porphyry’s distinctive daemonology, it should be made clear at the outset that many elements of Porphyry’s daemonology fall in line with that of the Hellenic intellectuals who preceded and succeeded him.³ Porphyry claims, for example, that there are “*daimōns* that guard nature” and who can communicate with humans “in the form of dreams or waking visions.”⁴ Porphyry explains that such daemons exert a kind of ambiguous influence over humans:

They use ambiguous language, and signify different things through different fictions, revealing images endowed with form as likenesses of things having no form at all, and still other things through analogous figures. Sacred ceremonies and acts of initiation are full of these things, which actually draw their efficacy from this secrecy and concealment among the initiated.⁵

Elsewhere, Porphyry references the *agathos daimōn*, a domestic protective spirit that often received votive offerings (*Sententia* 31.7), and refers to a righteous person as a “daemonic man” (31.6), a likely allusion to the pervasive concept that one’s daemon (meaning soul, or guiding spirit) determined disposition and morality. In his interpretation of the *daimōnion* tradition of Plato, Porphyry states that the *daimōnion* is assigned based on the virtue of one’s previous life, and that “the *daimōn* attends to it, each *daimōn* serving, as it were, as a guard

³For a discussion of Porphyry’s daemonology as represented in the *De Abstinencia*, see Andre Nance, “Porphyry: The Man and His Demons,” *Hirundo: The McGill Journal of Classical Studies* 2 (2002), 37-57.

⁴Porphyry, *Commentary on Plato’s Republic*, Fr. 182F. Translation from Porphyry, *To Gaurus on how Embryos are Ensouled, and on what is in our Power*, ed. James Wilberding (London: Bristol Classical Press, 2011), 136.

⁵*Ibid.*

and watcher over each life, binding each soul to abide in its chosen life and not to abandon it.”⁶ What is more, even in the *De Abstinencia*, where Porphyry’s malevolent daemonology typically demands scholarly attention, Porphyry ascribes rather traditional roles to the benevolent daemons, including the administration of the cosmos and the guarding of noble humans.⁷ Such commonalities, however, have often lacked scholarly scrutiny due to the idiosyncratic elements of Porphyry’s daemonology, including his view that daemons have a “chief,”⁸ that daemons cause disease,⁹ and that daemons effected earthly calamities.¹⁰ While such peculiarities are notable, there are two interrelated elements of Porphyry’s daemonology in *De Abstinencia* that deserve particular attention: daemonic sacrifice and pollution.

While Porphyry’s stated goal in the *De Abstinencia* is to restore the vegetarian lifestyle of his former classmate, Castrius, his exhortation to abstinence from meat-eating inevitably encounters a problem: the pervasive influence of the sacrificial cult. As has become a scholarly truism, the ritual killing and consumption of domestic herd animals was one of the most pervasive and widespread cultic practices in the ancient Mediterranean basin, and the Roman Empire was no exception. These sacrificial rituals not only reaffirmed the relationship between the divine and the mundane, but reified socio-cultural and political relationships, and thus served as an essential undergirding for the machinations of society at

⁶Porphyry, *On What is in Our Power*, Fr. 268F. Translation from Wilberding, *To Gaurus*, 143.

⁷*DA* 2.38.2-3.

⁸*DA* 2.41.5, 2.42.2.

⁹*DA* 2.41.5. The association between daemons and disease is sometimes found in Greek mythology, but typically rejected by Hellenic intellectuals. Porphyry’s teacher Plotinus, for example, explicitly rejects this idea in his denunciation of Gnostic daemonologies (Plotinus, *Enneads* II.9.14). This is all the more surprising when one considers that Porphyry was the editor of the *Enneads*. Hence, Porphyry was well aware of his teacher’s stance against attributing disease to demonic corruption, yet still reproduced the idea in his own writings.

¹⁰*DA* 2.41.5.

large. For Porphyry, of course, the problem with this pervasive practice was not only its ritual slaughter of “rational” creatures,¹¹ but its attendant dining practices. The consumption of sacrificial meat was part and parcel of ancient Hellenic animal sacrifice, and sacrificial often entailed a communal meal consisting of roasted sacrificial meat.

Porphyry’s solution to this vexing problem is *not* to recommend the complete abolition of sacrifice in its various modes. Rather, as part of his broader program of constructing the ideal life of the philosopher, to which he hoped Castrius would adhere, Porphyry fashioned a tripartite hierarchy of sacrifices which correlates to the cosmological recipients of the offerings.¹² To the “god who rules over all,” Porphyry prescribed an immaterial sacrifice of “pure silence” and “pure thoughts.”¹³ To the “intelligible gods,” Porphyry suggested “hymn-singing in words.”¹⁴ After summarizing the first two forms of sacrifice for the highest realms of the divine hierarchy, Porphyry offers the justification for his system: “Sacrifice is an offering to each god from what he has given, with which he sustains us and maintains our essence in being.”¹⁵ Porphyry explains, moreover, that both

¹¹In book three of the *DA*, Porphyry argues that the consumption of meat is wrong because it involves the slaughtering of a (semi-)rational being, a charge that likewise condemns traditional Graeco-Roman sacrifice. Porphyry condemns meat consumption because it is unnecessary for human sustenance (Bk. 1), it is not original to primordial Greek cultic practice (Bk. 1), it involves an act of harm which might lead to further violent acts against humans (Bk. 1), it restricts human psychological scent (Bk. 2), the preparation of meat is time-consuming and distracting, and it has been eschewed by past holy men (Bk. 4).

¹²Porphyry is pessimistic, however, that non-philosophers would be able to adhere to such a program, and thus seems to limit his recommendations to fellow intellectuals (*DA* 1.27.1, 1.52.4, 2.31).

¹³*DA* 2.34.2. Translation from Gillian Clark, ed., trans., *On Abstinence from Killing Animals* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2000), 69. This builds upon Plotinian anthropology which distinguishes classes of humans. Plotinus bifurcates humanity into “good and wise” people and “the more human sort” (*Enn* 2.9.8-9). In similar fashion to Porphyry, Plotinus envisions that these two groups of people will have corresponding levels of intellectual activity, ability, and ritual practice. Cf. *DA* 1.29.1-6.

¹⁴*DA* 2.34.4. Clark, *On Abstinence*, 69.

¹⁵*Ibid.*

parties, human and divine, are “fed” in this process: “We offer fine thoughts about them, giving thanks for what they have given us to contemplate, *and for feeding us with true food of seeing them.*”¹⁶ For Porphyry, then, sacrifice is ultimately a reciprocal exchange of gifts, with humans offering back to the gods the intellectual or material “food” which they had received.

But what of the remainder of humanity, who lacked the gift of philosophical insight? Porphyry held that the remainder of humanity, stunted in their intellectual capacities, should still make offerings to lower deities in accordance with traditional Hellenic practice. As part of his vegetarian dietary restrictions, however, Porphyry argued that offerings should not include the meat of animals, which Porphyry claims are “ensouled” beings. Instead, non-philosophers should supplicate the gods with offerings of “barley-grains and honey and the fruits of the earth, including flowers.”¹⁷ Porphyry warns Castricius, however, that animal sacrifices should be avoided at all costs, as such offerings are directed at unworthy recipients: “Someone concerned for piety knows that no animate creature is sacrificed to the gods, but to other *daimōns*, either good or bad.”¹⁸ While Porphyry does concede that civic governments may need to appease these misanthropic beings, he states this is only necessary because in cities, “riches and external and corporeal things are thought to be good, and their opposites bad, and the soul is the least of their concerns.”¹⁹ For fellow philosophers, however, whose primary concern was the edification of the soul, all comingling with daemons should be avoided.

¹⁶Ibid. Emphasis mine.

¹⁷DA 2.36.4. Clark, *On Abstinence*, 70.

¹⁸DA 2.36.5. Clark, *On Abstinence*, 69.

¹⁹DA 2.43.2. Clark, *On Abstinence*, 73.

But who are these beings that lurked behind the sacrificial altars? According to Porphyry, there are two classes of daemons, distinguished based on their varying levels of benevolence. ‘Good daemons’ are “all the souls which, having issued from the universal soul, administer large parts of the regions below the moon, resting on their pneuma but controlling it by reason.”²⁰ As the governors of the intelligible cosmos, benevolent daemons tend to earthly matters such as weather, seasons, agriculture, education, medicine, and physical training.²¹ Porphyry includes among benign daemons the Platonic ‘transmitter’ daemon, as described in the *Symposium*.²² These good daemons typically assist humans with healings and other matters, though Porphyry notes that assistance from benevolent daemons can be slower due to their “gentile and consistent” nature.²³ Finally, good daemons help mortals to thwart the machinations of evil daemons: “[Good daemons] forewarn, so far as they are able, of the dangers impending from the maleficent *daimōns*, by revelation in dreams, or through an inspired soul, or in many other ways.”²⁴

Porphyry’s depiction of evil daemons, by contrast, is quite morose. According to Porphyry, “there is no evil” that malevolent daemons “do not attempt to do to the regions around the earth.”²⁵ Hence, evil daemons are responsible for “plagues, crop failures,

²⁰DA 2.38.2. Clark, *On Abstinence*, 70.

²¹DA 2.38.2.

²²DA 2.38.3: “Among them must be numbered the ‘transmitters,’ as Plato calls them, who report ‘what comes from people to the gods and what comes from the gods to people,’ carrying up our prayers to the gods as if to judges, and carrying back to us their advice and warnings through oracles” (DA 2.38.3, Clark, *On Abstinence*, 71).

²³DA 2.39.4. Clark, *On Abstinence*, 71.

²⁴DA 2.41.3. Clark, *On Abstinence*, 72.

²⁵DA 2.39.3. Clark, *On Abstinence*, 71.

earthquakes, droughts, and the like.”²⁶ The character of these daemons is “wholly violent and deceptive,” wherefrom they attempt “sudden intense onslaughts, like ambushes,” using either deception or brute force.²⁷ What is more, evil daemons

rejoice in everything that is likewise inconsistent and incompatible; slipping on (as it were) the masks of other gods, they profit from our lack of sense, winning over the masses because they inflame people’s appetites with lust and longing for wealth and power and pleasure, and also with empty ambition from which arises civil conflicts.²⁸

Porphyry attributes even more disreputable things to the activity of daemons, including sorcery, magic, love-potions, self-indulgence, aspirations for wealth and fame, and lies.²⁹

Both good and evil daemons, Porphyry claims, were originally souls which had issued forth from the world soul.³⁰ The distinguishing characteristics between good and evil daemons stems from the respective degrees to which they maintained control over their pneumatic vessel. Good daemons, for instance, continue to rest on their *pneuma* and “control it by reason,” whereas evil daemons “do not control the *pneuma* adjacent to them, but are mostly controlled by it,” and thus “are...too much carried away, when the angers and appetites of the *pneuma* lead to impulse.”³¹

Porphyry gives a detailed explanation of the daemonic body, worth quoting at length here:

All [daemons]...are unseen and absolutely imperceptible to the human sense. For they are not clad in a solid body, nor do they all have one shape, but they take many forms, the shapes which imprint and are

²⁶DA 2.40.1. Clark, *On Abstinence*, 71-2.

²⁷DA 2.39.3. Clark, *On Abstinence*, 71.

²⁸DA 2.40.3. Clark, *On Abstinence*, 72.

²⁹DA 2.42.1.

³⁰DA 2.38.2.

³¹DA 2.38.4. Clark, *On Abstinence*, 71.

stamped upon their *pneuma* are sometimes manifest and sometimes invisible, and the worse ones sometimes change their shape. The *pneuma*, insofar as it is corporeal, is passible and corruptible...it is reasonable to suppose that something continuously flows from them and that they are fed.³²

For Porphyry, the daemonic body is an essential indicator of the relative benevolence of daemons: “in the good *daimōns* this is in balance, as in the bodies of those that are visible, but in the maleficent it is out of balance; they allot more to their passible element.”³³ The resulting distinction between good and evil daemons is a dissimilarity which Porphyry repeatedly emphasizes; he calls the thought that a daemon could be of mixed good and bad nature “the worst of absurdities.”³⁴ Porphyry’s insistent distinction is based on the Platonic notion of divine benevolence:

But one must be firmly convinced that the good never harms and the bad never benefits. As Plato says, ‘cooling is not done by heat but by its opposite,’ and similarly ‘harm is not done by the just man.’ Now the divine power must by nature be most just of all, or it would not be divine. So this [harmful] power, and this role, must be separated from the beneficent *daimōns*, for the power which is naturally and deliberately harmful is the opposite of the beneficent, and opposites can never occur in the same.³⁵

Thus, Porphyry marshals the support of Plato’s *Republic* in positing the ultimate goodness of the divine, yet ostensibly extrapolates the existence of earthly misfortune as definite evidence for semi-divine malevolent powers. In doing so, Porphyry constructs a rigidly bifurcated daemonology which, as will be shown, directly corresponds to earthly cultic activity.

Porphyry’s insistence on the sharp distinction between good and malevolent daemons is essential for his understanding of sacrifice and its relation to the divine. By constructing a vast gulf in morality between the benevolent deity and the base, pernicious daemons, Porphyry can simultaneously create distance between the High Deity and the materiality of

³²DA 2.39.1-2. Clark, *On Abstinence*, 71.

³³DA 2.39.3. Clark, *On Abstinence*, 71.

³⁴DA 2.39.5. Clark, *On Abstinence*, 71.

³⁵DA 2.41.1-2. Clark, *On Abstinence*, 72. Porphyry here cites Plato, *Republic* 335D.

earthly affairs.³⁶ Thus, rather than imputing higher deities with involvement in the filth of the mundane,³⁷ Porphyry claims that it is only (evil) daemons that “prompt us to supplications and sacrifices, as if the beneficent gods were angry.”³⁸ Daemons convince people that the sacrifices are actually directed at the gods, and furthermore impute their own malicious activities to the mythologies which surround the Greek pantheon: “They do such things because they want to dislodge us from a correct concept of the gods and convert us to themselves.”³⁹ This, according to Porphyry, is one of the more regrettable activities of evil daemons: “Most terrible of all, they move on from there to persuade people that the same applies even to the greatest gods, to the extent that even the best god is made liable to these accusations, for they say it is by him that everything has been thrown topsy-turvy into confusion.”⁴⁰

Theological confusion, however, is not the primary danger of evil daemons. Rather, Porphyry warns Castrius that participation in sacrifice will result in the pollution of the philosophical body with evil daemons. The daemons are drawn to the sacrifices, Porphyry

³⁶While the distancing of the High God from earthly materiality is a trend that runs throughout ancient Platonism, it became particularly prevalent in the tenets of “Middle” and “Neo-” Platonism. On this development, see John M. Dillon, *The Middle Platonists, 80 B.C. to A.D. 220* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1977 (1996)).

³⁷This caricature was particularly prevalent in satirical portrayals of animal sacrifice. See esp. Lucian’s *On Sacrifices*, which mocks sacrificial practice by portraying the gods as “peering over” the firmament and pining for humans to offer up “smoke” and “vapors” for their consumption.

³⁸DA 2.40.2. Clark, *On Abstinence*, 72.

³⁹DA 2.40.2. Clark, *On Abstinence*, 72.

⁴⁰DA 2.40.4. Clark, *On Abstinence*, 72. Interestingly, Porphyry accuses his philosophical counterparts of falling victim to this daemonic mimicry: “It is not only lay people who are victims of this, but even some of those who study philosophy; and each is responsible for the other, for among the students of philosophy those who do not stand clear of the general opinion come to agree with the masses, whereas the masses, hearing from those with a reputation for wisdom opinions which agree with their own, are confirmed in holding even more strongly such beliefs about the gods” (DA 2.40.5, Clark, *On Abstinence*, 72).

states, because “they rejoice in the ‘drink-offerings and smoking meat.’”⁴¹ This desire is intimately tied to the physiological make-up of the daemons, since their “pneumatic part grows fat” from the inhalation of the sacrificial materials, “for [their *pneuma*] lives on vapours and exhalations...and it draws power from the smoke that rises from blood and flesh.”⁴² The concept of exhalations is closely connected with broader concepts of nourishment and cosmological placement. In his *On the Cave of the Nymphs*, for example, Porphyry states that “some maintain that the bodies in the air and those in the heavens also are nourished by vapors from streams and rivers and other sources of exhalation.”⁴³ Participants in animal sacrifice, by providing the smoky “vapors” that are necessary for sustaining the daemonic body, are complicit in empowering these misanthropic beings.

What is more, animal sacrifice endangers participants by drawing daemons nearer to the realm of humanity, and thus allowing daemonic infiltration into the community. Porphyry states that “an intelligent, temperate man will be wary of making sacrifices through which he will draw such beings to himself.”⁴⁴ James Rives has explored the ideology which undergirds Porphyry’s fear of daemonic corruption, and explains that Porphyry “assumes a correspondence between sacrificial ritual and the structure of the cosmos; his objection to

⁴¹DA 2.42.3. Clark, *On Abstinence*, 73.

⁴²DA 2.42.3. Clark, *On Abstinence*, 73. Such an image draws an interesting parallel in the writings of the mid-2nd century satirist Lucian, who lampoons the hungry gods who “gaze about in every direction, leaning down to see if they can see fire being lighted anywhere, or steam drifting up to them ‘about the smoke entwined.’ If anybody sacrifices, they all have a feast, opening their mouths for the smoke and drinking the blood that is spilt at the altars, just like flies; but if they dine at home, their meal is nectar and ambrosia” (*De Sacr.* 9). For discussion, see Laura Nasrallah, “The Embarrassment of Blood,” Ch. 7 in Jennifer Wright Knust and Zsuzsanna Várhelyi, eds., *Ancient Mediterranean Sacrifice* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 150.

⁴³Porphyry, *On the Cave of the Nymphs* 11. Translation from Porphyre, *The Cave of the Nymphs in the Odyssey* (New York: Arethusa, 1969), 13.

⁴⁴DA 2.43.1. Clark, *On Abstinence*, 73.

animal sacrifice is that by its very nature it establishes a connection between the person who performs it and a particular segment of the cosmos, namely, the maleficent *daimōns*.⁴⁵

Rives furthermore notes that, according to Porphyry, “these *daimōns* work against the proper goal of the philosopher, which is to ascend upward into the realm of the intelligible, by involving us more deeply in the world of matter and the passions.”⁴⁶ Indeed, Porphyry’s ideal philosopher “works to purify his soul in every way,” a task which can be complicated by daemonic corruption.⁴⁷ Porphyry continues:

We make every effort, drawing on the soul and on external things, to become like God and those who accompany him – and this happens through dispassion, through carefully articulated concepts about what reality is, and through a life which is directed to those realities – and to become *unlike wicked people and daimōns* and anything else that delights in things mortal and material.⁴⁸

Porphyry warns Castrius, moreover, that one who deserts such a program will inevitably become polluted with daemonic materiality: “the more we neglect the removal of passions from the soul, the more we are linked to the evil power, and it will be necessary to appease that too...those who are bound by external things and are not yet in control of passions must avert that power too, for if they do not, their troubles will not cease.”⁴⁹ Elsewhere, Porphyry explains the significance of the “exhalations” which emanate from sacrifice and their effect on the psychological (and daemonic) body: “For this reason the souls of the dead are evoked by an infusion of bile and blood, while body-loving souls drag along their spirit full of moisture and condense it like a cloud, for moisture condensed in air forms a cloud; and when

⁴⁵James Rives, “The Theology of Animal Sacrifice,” Ch. 9 in Knust and Várhelyi, *Ancient Mediterranean Sacrifice* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 189.

⁴⁶Ibid.

⁴⁷DA 2.43.1. Clark, *On Abstinence*, 73.

⁴⁸DA 2.43.3. Clark, *On Abstinence*, 73. Emphasis mine.

⁴⁹DA 2.43.4-5. Clark, *On Abstinence*, 73.

the spirit is condensed within them by an excess of moisture they become visible.”⁵⁰ “Pure souls,” Porphyry continues, “are averse to genesis,” and thereafter, quoting Heraclitus: “The dry soul is wisest.”⁵¹ Thus, daemonic corruption is particularly harmful for the human soul because it would involve the inevitable pollution of the soul with moisture, the weighty element that spoils the soul’s dryness and chains it to materiality. In his *Letter to Marcella*, Porphyry explains the cosmic warfare that lurks behind human piety: “God strengthens the man who does noble deeds. But an evil spirit (*daimōn*) is the instigator of evil deeds.”⁵² Thus, as seen here, Porphyry positions God and evil daemons as two cosmic entities competing for the loyalty of the soul – those who succeed in offering a rational “sacrifice” will gain God as an advisor, but those who offer animal sacrifice will become corrupt with daemons and mired in materiality.⁵³

In sum, Porphyry exhibits a sharply-bifurcated daemonology, wherein good daemons function as cosmological administrators and personal assistants to virtuous humans, while evil daemons appease their passions and serve the evil power in the world. Porphyry’s lengthy diversion into such a complex daemonology is an essential element in attempting to persuade Castrius to avoid animal sacrifice and resume his vegetarian lifestyle. By participating in animal sacrifice and thereafter consuming the meat, Hellenic cultic participants inevitably draw daemons to themselves and prevent their pursuit of the

⁵⁰*On the Cave of the Nymphs*, 11. Translation from Porphyre, *The Cave of the Nymphs*, 15.

⁵¹*Ibid.*

⁵²*Letter to Marcella*, 16. Translation from Porphyry, *Porphyry's Letter to His Wife Marcella*, trans. Alice Zimmern (Grand Rapids: Phanes Press, 1986), 49.

⁵³In the same letter, Porphyry states that “the wise man honours God even in his silence, while the fool dishonours Him even while praying and offering sacrifice. Thus the wise man only is a priest; he only is beloved by God, and knows how to pray” (*Letter to Marcella* 16; translation from Zimmern, *Porphyry's Letter*, 49).

philosophical life. Porphyry's daemonological system is significant, in that it provides insights not only into his philosophical concerns, but also for its distinctive place within the Hellenic intellectual tradition. Indeed, as will be explored in Chapter III, Porphyry's intellectual predecessors offer little precedent for his brand of daemonology. It will be important, then, to explore the Hellenic daemonological tradition in order to draw out the distinctive elements of Porphyry's system, a task to which I now turn.

Chapter Three

‘BETWEEN GOD AND MORTALS: DAEMONIC SACRIFICE IN HELLENIC LITERATURE

Porphyry’s contention that daemons interact closely with this cosmos is rather unremarkable. Hellenic literature, whether philosophical, historical or literary, offer numerous examples of daemons impeding on the lives of humanity in various forms. What is distinctive, however, is the manner in which Porphyry closely connects malevolent daemons with animal sacrifice. In what follows, then, I explore the way in which Hellenic intellectuals conceived of the daemoniac participation in sacrificial cult. As will be shown, Porphyry’s daemonology both builds upon and diverges from this lengthy tradition in important ways.

HELLENIC DAEMONS AND SACRIFICE

The sacrificial altar is a rather strange abode for the daemoniac. John Rexine states, for example, that the term *daimōn* “is a word of literature rather than cult. It is a word that is more generalized and less personalized than *Theos*.”⁵⁴ Hellenic literature *does* provide, however, ample witness to the purported intervention of the daemoniac in other manners. The daemoniac took on a host of roles in ancient literature, including that of anonymous or

⁵⁴J.E. Rexine, “Daimon in Classical Greek Literature, *Platon* XXXVII (1985), 35. For discussion, see also Jon D. Mikalson, *Greek Popular Religion in Greek Philosophy* (Oxford ;New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 23. For daemonology nearer to Porphyry, see F.E. Brenk, “In the Light of the Moon. Demonology in the Early Imperial Period,” *Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt* II.16.3 (1986), 2068-2145.

unknown deity/divine force,⁵⁵ cosmic administrator,⁵⁶ personified Fate,⁵⁷ divine avenger,⁵⁸ and (benevolent) personal guide.⁵⁹ The daemonic, in sum, is “quelque chose d’autre que le dieu et l’homme, quelque chose qui est moins que l’un et plus que l’autre.”⁶⁰ Despite their intermediate position, daemons were not often associated with cultic practice,⁶¹ a fact which underscores the uniqueness of Porphyry’s connection between animal sacrifice and daemons.

That is not to say, of course, that Porphyry’s particular brand of daemonic sacrifice is without analogue in the Hellenic literary tradition. Narrative traditions concerning evil daemons, for example, often asserted that capricious spirits could be warded off through cultic offerings of animals (or humans). These “apotropaic” rites are found sporadically in

⁵⁵Homer, *Iliad* III.420; I.922; Hesiod, *Theogony* 984-91, *Theogony* I.655. Sophocles, *Oedipus Tyrannus* II.707-715; Euripides, *Hippolytos* 99; Plato, *Phdr.* 274c5-7, 240a9-b1; *Plt.* 271d6-7 and 272e6-8, *Tim.* 40d6-e4; *Lg.* 9.877a2-b2.

⁵⁶Pindar, *Pythian* X.10, *Olympian* IX.28.

⁵⁷Homer, *Il.* XII.103-105; Hesiod, *Works and Days* 314; Theognis, II.149-50; Pindar, *Isthmian* Vi.11.40-45.

⁵⁸Aeschylus *Agamemnon* 1569, 1660; *Persians* 158, 472, 345; *Seven* 705. Sophocles, *Philoktetes* li.1464-68, *Oedipus Tyrannus* II.1478-79. Euripides, *Trojan Women* 103, *Alkestis* 561, 931.

⁵⁹Plato, *Phd.* 107d5-e4 and 108a2-3, b2-3; *Rep.* 10.617e1-2, 620.d7-e1.

⁶⁰Marcel Detienne, *De La Pensée Religieuse à la pensée philosophique: la notion de daimôn dans le pythagorisme ancien* (Paris: Les belles lettres, 1963), 135.

⁶¹The *agathos daimôn*, a protective domestic spirit, did receive cultic libation offerings (Aristoph. *Equites* 85; *Vespae* 525; Plut. *Symp.* 655e., Porph., *Sententia* 31.7), but this practice is clearly not in view in Porphyry’s discussion of animal sacrifice. In Platonic literature, daemons were often conceptualized as intermediary transmitters between gods and humans, though this concept depicted daemons as couriers, rather than recipients, of cultic offerings (Plato, *Symposium* 202d-203a). Porphyry approvingly cites the “transmitter daemon,” but clearly sees this role as exclusive to benevolent daemons, and separate from the activity of the evil daemons who greedily partake of animal sacrifice. For discussion, cf. Rexine J. E., “Daimon in Classical Greek Literature,” *Platon XXXVII* (1985), 35. Mikalson, *Greek Popular Religion in Greek Philosophy* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 23. For daemonology nearer to Porphyry, see Brenk, “In the Light of the Moon,” 2068-2145. For Platonic daemonology more broadly, see Motte, André. “La Catégorie platonicienne du démonique,” in Julien Ries, ed., *Anges et démons. Actes du colloque de Liège et de Louvain-la-Neuve, 25-26 novembre 1987* (Louvain-la-Neuve : Centre d’histoire des religions, 1989), 205-221.

Hellenic literature, including Aeschylus' *Persians*,⁶² several Hellenic novels,⁶³ and even the writings of philosophers like Xenocrates and Plutarch.⁶⁴ By positioning evil daemons as the recipients of apotropaic offerings, these writings anticipate Porphyry's *De Abstinencia* in closely connecting malevolent spirits with the reception and consumption of animal sacrifice.

It is unlikely, nevertheless, that apotropaic sacrifices served as the ideological inspiration for Porphyry's conceptualization of daemonic sacrifice. Apotropaic rites were classified among *thysiai ageustoi*, "sacrifices not tasted," since these rites did not entail the consumption of sacrificial meat.⁶⁵ Porphyry even refers to this practice in book two of *De Abstinencia*: "All the theologians agreed that in apotropaic sacrifices one must not partake of the victims."⁶⁶ When Porphyry discusses animal sacrifice elsewhere, by contrast, he assumes that cultic practitioners will consume the meat they sacrifice to evil daemons; he seems to have in mind, therefore, traditional animal sacrifice, rather than the *thysia ageustoi* of

⁶²*Persians* II.628-46. Here, the ghost of the deceased Darius haunts the title characters, who are then required to pour libations to appease both their former general and "chthonic daemons." Cf. Hippocrates, *Regimen*, 4.89; Pausanias, 2.11.1. For discussion, cf. J.E. Rexine, "Daimon in Classical Greek Literature," 29-52; Gunnel Ekroth, *The Sacrificial Rituals of Greek Hero-Cults in the Archaic to the Early Hellenistic Periods* (Liège: Centre international d'étude de la religion grecque antique, 2002), 43.

⁶³On this, see Arthur Darby Nock, "Greek Novels and Egyptian Religion," in Nock, *Essays on Religion and the Ancient World*. Vol. 1 Ed. Zeph Stewart. Oxford, Clarendon, pp. 169-75; Jack Winkler, "Lollianos and the Desperadoes," *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 100 (1980), pp. 155-181. In his work *Evil Incarnate*, David Frankfurter discusses the function of these scenes of human sacrifice: "Novelists like Achilles Tatius and Lollianos offer lurid scenes of human sacrifice to demonstrate the religious Otherness of the bandit gangs into whose clutches heroines tended to fall" (David Frankfurter, *Evil Incarnate : Rumors of Demonic Conspiracy and Ritual Abuse in History* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2006), 77 n. 9.). Frankfurter continues: "These deliberately fantastic scenarios from Roman antiquity, using bandits as countercultures, paralleled a tendency among historical writers of the same period also to impute sacrifice and ritual cannibalism to cultures deemed disorderly or subhuman - especially nomads. The boundaries of humanity that might be apparent in such cultures' different economic and domestic lifestyle are revealed and epitomized in ritual acts that are fundamentally atrocious" (*Evil Incarnate*, 78).

⁶⁴Apud Plutarch, *De Iside et Osiride*, 361b; Celsus apud Origen, *Contra Celsum* VIII.60; "A Certain Pythagorean" apud Origen, *Contra Celsum* VII.6; Plutarch, *De Defectu Oraculorum* 417d-e.

⁶⁵F.T. van Straten, *Hiera Kalá: Images of Animal Sacrifice in Archaic and Classical Greece* (Leiden; New York: E.J. Brill, 1995), 3-5.

⁶⁶DA 2.44.2. Clark, *On Abstinence*, 73.

apotropaic ceremonies. Apotropaic sacrifices, moreover, are designed to “ward off” the assaults of evil daemons, whereas Porphyry’s “daemonic sacrifice” inevitably invited, rather than thwarted, daemonic attack and cohabitation.

Additionally, Porphyry elsewhere explicitly rejects the efficacy of apotropaic sacrifices. In the beginning of his discussion of daemons in *De Abstinencia*, Porphyry acknowledges the wider belief in the practice:

There is a conviction about all [daemons] that they can do harm if they are angered by being neglected and not receiving the accustomed worship, and on the other hand that they can do good to those who make them well-disposed by prayer and supplication and sacrifices and all that goes with them.⁶⁷

Porphyry here is discussing the idea that all daemons are capricious, but can be swayed by various offerings, the very concept that underlies the logic of apotropaic rites. Porphyry rejects this idea, however, as “confused” and an instance of “serious misrepresentation.”⁶⁸ Porphyry goes on to explain that benevolent daemons *always* do good in their respective spheres of influence (crops, weather, transmitting offerings), whereas evil daemons *always* behave maliciously. Porphyry explains that “the worst of absurdities” is to think that “there is bad in the good ones and good in the bad ones.”⁶⁹ Thus, Porphyry explicitly undermines the belief in daemonic fickleness, and thus repudiates the ideological underpinning of apotropaic sacrifice.

While apotropaic rites serve as partial precedents for Porphyry’s brand of daemonic sacrifice, there remain other instances where Hellenic intellectuals anticipated Porphyry’s formulation. The 2nd century writer Celsus states: “For perhaps we ought not to disbelieve

⁶⁷DA 2.37.5. Clark, *On Abstinence*, 70.

⁶⁸DA 2.38.1. Clark, *On Abstinence*, 70.

⁶⁹DA 2.39.5. Clark, *On Abstinence*, 71.

wise men who say that most of the earthly daemons are absorbed with created things, and *riveted to blood and burnt-offerings and magical enchantments.*”⁷⁰ Celsus ultimately dismisses this view – he states that “we ought rather to think that the daemons do not long for anything and need nothing, but are pleased with people who perform acts of devotion to them”⁷¹ – but his testimony confirms that at least some 2nd century intellectuals (“wise men”) asserted that daemons consumed the emissions of animal sacrifices. What is more, Origen of Alexandria claims that “a certain Pythagorean” cited the example of the priest Chryses (*Iliad* I.34-53) as proof that “evil daemons...delight in burnt-offerings and sacrifices.”⁷² Celsus’ “wise men” and Origen’s “Pythagorean,” therefore, serve as important witnesses to discourses of daemonic sacrifice, similar to Porphyry’s, among Hellenic intellectuals of the 2nd and 3rd centuries.

The sporadic support for the concept of daemonic sacrifice, however, is outweighed by the marginalization and rejection of daemonic sacrifice among Hellenic intellectuals. It is important to note, for example, that not a single extant Hellenic work prior to the *De Abstinencia* explicitly endorses the idea that traditional Graeco-Roman sacrifice is dedicated to evil daemons. On the contrary, all of our evidence for pre-Porphyrian daemonic sacrifice is found in second-hand testimonies dating from the 2nd century and later (and thus postdating the rise and possible influence of Christian intellectuals). What is more, there are numerous

⁷⁰Apud Origen, *Contra Celsum* VIII.60. Translation from Origen, *Contra Celsum*, trans. Henry Chadwick (Cambridge Eng.: University Press, 1965), 497. Emphasis mine.

⁷¹Apud Origen, *Contra Celsum* VIII.63. Translation from Chadwick, *Contra Celsum*, 500.

⁷²*Contra Celsum* VII.6. K.S. Guthrie and F. Thedinga have attributed this fragment to Numenius of Apamea, though Chadwick notes that this would be a break from Origen’s typical practice of explicitly citing Numenius (Chadwick, *Contra Celsum*, 400 n. 2); cf. K.S. Guthrie, *Numenius of Apamea* (Grantwood, N.J., 1917), 50; F. Thedinga, *De Numenio philosopho Platonico* (Bonn, 1875)). This fragment is included neither in the critical edition of E.-A. Leemans (*Studie Over Den Wijsgeer Numenius Van Apamea met Uitgave der Fragmenten*. Bruxelles: Palais des Académies, 1937), nor in that of Édouard des Places (*Numenius, of Apamea: Fragments*. Paris: Les Belles lettres, 1973).

indications that Hellenic thinkers rejected association between evil daemons and animal sacrifice. The majority of the *dramatis personae* in Plutarch's dialogues, including Plutarch's favored mouthpiece Lamprias, dismiss Cleombrotus' assertion of daemonic desire for sacrifice as "extraordinary and presumptuous."⁷³ Celsus, as noted earlier, rejects the opinions of the "wise men" who believe that daemons take delight in sacrifices and burnt offerings.⁷⁴ As a final example, the Neo-Platonist Iamblichus dismisses Porphyry's assertion that the daemonic body receives nourishment from the exhalations of sacrifice.⁷⁵

The explicit rejection of daemonic sacrifice by intellectuals such as Plutarch, Celsus and Iamblichus, therefore, helps explain the relative lack of support for the position in the Hellenic literary tradition: daemonic sacrifice remained an unpopular, marginalized ideological position among Hellenic intellectuals up until and during the time of Porphyry. Hellenic literature, therefore, as traditionally construed, provides an insufficient ideological lineage for Porphyry's particular variety of malevolent daemonology. In sum, it is necessary to widen the evidentiary purview and consult sources that have traditionally been excluded from consideration within Porphyrian studies.

SURVEY OF PREVIOUS RESEARCH

Due in part to Porphyry's claim that daemons consume the emanations of animal sacrifice, scholars have long asserted that Porphyry's daemonology stands at variance with his

⁷³*De Defectu Oraculorum* 418d. For discussion, cf. F. E. Brenk, "« A most Strange Doctrine ». Daimon in Plutarch," *The Classical Journal (Classical Association of the Middle West and South)* 69 (1973), 1-11.

⁷⁴Apud Origen, *Contra Celsum* VIII.60-63.

⁷⁵Iamblichus, *De Mysteriis* 5.4.

philosophical predecessors and contemporaries. C.D.G. Müller, for example, as part of his lexicographical entry on “Geister (Dämonen)” for the *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum*, described Porphyry’s daemonology as a “primitive relic.”⁷⁶ M.P. Nilsson likewise denounced Porphyry’s daemonology as “atrocious.”⁷⁷ André Nance, in his 2002 article “Porphyry: The Man and His Demons,” avoided such moralistic judgment in his treatment of Porphyrian idiosyncrasies, but nonetheless offered only vague intellectual lineages for the Neo-Platonist’s daemonology; Nance concluded that Porphyry draws upon both Platonic and “pre-Platonic” (Homeric) daemonologies, as well as concepts from “the larger Greek cultural tradition.”⁷⁸ Dale Martin offered a more thoroughgoing assessment in his 2004 monograph, *Inventing Superstition*, which included a chapter entitled “The Philosophers Turn: Philosophical Daimons in Late Antiquity.” Martin asserted that the increasing prevalence of evil daemons in the writings of Neo-Platonists like Plotinus, Porphyry and Iamblichus was not the result of Christian intellectual influence (as might be

⁷⁶C.D.G. Müller, “Geister (Dämonen),” in *Reallexikon Für Antike Und Christentum*, ed. Theodor Klauser, Vol. IX (Stuttgart: Anton Hiersemann, 1976), 655.

⁷⁷M.P. Nilsson, *Geschichte der griechischen Religion*. Bd. 2: Die hellenistische und romische Zeit 4. Aufl (München: Beck 1988. Handbuck der Altertumswissenschaft), 438.

⁷⁸Nance, “Porphyry: The Man and His Demons,” 44.

presumed),⁷⁹ but instead the creeping infiltration of “popular opinion” into the philosophical schools of Late Antiquity.⁸⁰

Two recent studies, however, have indirectly questioned Martin’s dismissal of Christian influence upon Neo-Platonic daemonologies, particularly in the case of Porphyry. Gregory Smith, for example, noted that Porphyry’s description of daemonic physiology closely parallels those found in early Christian writings, especially that of Origen.⁸¹ Heidi Marx-Wolf similarly argued, as part of her 2009 PhD dissertation, that the daemonologies of Minucius Felix, the Pseudo-Clementine *Homilies*, and Origen prefigured and possibly influenced the daemonology of Porphyry.⁸² Marx-Wolf presented these insights at the 2007 Oxford Patristics Conference (later published in the 2010 *Studia Patristica*), where she noted that Porphyry “agreed with his Christian contemporaries and their predecessors on a number of key positions concerning evil *daimones*,” including their desire for bloody sacrifices.⁸³ In

⁷⁹Martin, *Inventing Superstition*, 205: “I think we may quickly dismiss one possible explanation [for the Neo-Platonic shift to belief in malevolent daemons]. Someone might suggest that the late antique philosophers were themselves influenced in their notion of daimons by Christianity, say by coming into contact with the learned writings of someone like Origen. This seems to me not likely.” Martin gives two reasons for rejecting the Christian provenance of Neo-Platonic malevolent daemons: (1) the existence of malevolent daemons in the writings of earlier Graeco-Roman intellectuals, such as Xenocrates, Plutarch and Celsus, and (2) the fact that earlier Greek intellectuals did not fall under the influence of Christian daemonologies (Martin, *Inventing Superstition*, 205).

⁸⁰Martin, *Inventing Superstition*, 206. Martin attributes the Neo-Platonists’ susceptibility to popular influence to the disintegration in the intellectual adherence to political concept of *isonomia*, a breakdown that occurred due to the proliferation of monarchical governments which destroyed the illusion of “equality before the law.” It was *isonomia*, Martin contends, that originally provided the undergirding for the intellectual construction of the “Optimal Universe,” which itself was the foundation for the consistent belief in exclusively-benevolent daemons.

⁸¹Gregory A. Smith, “How Thin is a Demon?” *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 16, no. 4 (12/01, 2008), 485-6.

⁸²Heidi Marx-Wolf, “Platonists and High Priests: Daemonology, Ritual and Social Order in the Third Century CE” (Ph.D., University of California, Santa Barbara), 99-108.

⁸³Heidi Marx-Wolf, “Third-Century Daimonologies and the Via Universalis: Origen, Porphyry and Iamblichus on Daimones and Other Angels,” *Studia Patristica* 46 (2010), 208.

a 2010 adaptation of her research, Marx-Wolf concluded that Origen himself was a likely influence upon the *De Abstinencia* of Porphyry.⁸⁴

In the pages to follow, I build upon Smith's and Marx-Wolf's observations by providing two analyses that have thus far evaded scholarly treatment: (1) a detailed comparison of Porphyry's daemonology with both Hellenic and Christian predecessors, and (2) a fresh exploration of the setting for Porphyry's major daemonological discussion in *De Abstinencia* II.36-43. In sum, I contend that Porphyry, as part of his anti-sacrifice program, draws upon and participates in a *Christian* discourse which ridiculed the Hellenic cult by associating it with carnivorous, gluttonous daemons. Such a hypothesis does not reinstitute past scholarly slanders that asserted the "primitive," "barbarian," or "non-philosophical" nature of Porphyry's daemonology. On the contrary, it was primarily through philosophical circles, and especially that of the Alexandrian philosopher Ammonius Saccas and his pupil Origen of Alexandria, that Christian daemonologies came to exert influence on their Hellenic counterparts. Porphyry's daemonology emerges not as a barbaric outlier, therefore, but as a philosophical product fully explicable within its intellectual milieu.

⁸⁴Heidi Marx-Wolf, "A Strange Consensus: Daemonological Discourse in Origen, Porphyry and Iamblichus," ch. 10 in Robert M. Frakes, Elizabeth DePalma Digeser, & Justin Stephenes, eds., *The Rhetoric of Power in Late Antiquity* (London/New York: Tauris Academic Studies, 2010), 225. Marx-Wolf here interprets the findings of Hans Lewy, who claimed that Porphyry relied upon Origen the Neo-Platonist's treatise *On Daemons*, through the lens of the work of Elizabeth DePalma Digeser, who insists that Origen the Christian theologian and Origen the Neo-Platonist are one and the same. As will be discussed below, Marx-Wolf's reliance upon the "one Origen" hypothesis differs from my own position, and leads to varying approaches to Porphyry's sources.

Chapter Four
***‘THE TABLE OF DAEMONS’: EARLY CHRISTIAN LITERATURE
& DAEMONIC SACRIFICE***

Jewish and Christian writings share a lengthy tradition of associating sacrifice with daemoniac spirits. These texts build upon anti-foreign-cult motifs which often ridiculed rival cults as ceremonies dedicated to daemons.⁸⁵ Early Christian sources adapted this daemonological discourse for their own polemical purposes. As will be demonstrated by the following survey, many of these early Christian texts exhibit notable similarities with the daemonological tenets of Porphyry of Tyre

EARLY CHRISTIAN DAEMONS AND SACRIFICE

In perhaps the most famous example, Paul of Tarsus exhorts his Corinthian readers not to partake of meat sacrificed to idols: “I imply that what pagans sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons and not to God. I do not want you to be partners with demons. You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons. You cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons” (1 Cor 10:20-21, NRSV). Paul is not the only Christian writer, of course, to condemn Hellenic cultic practice by associating it with gluttonous daemons. The *Book of Revelation*, for example, similarly equates the gods of Hellenic cult with daemons:

The rest of humankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands or give up worshiping demons and idols of gold and silver and bronze and stone and wood, which cannot see or hear or walk (9:20, NRSV).

⁸⁵Cf. Exod 32:17; Ps 105 (LXX 106); *Jubilees* 11:3-6, 22:16-19; *1 Maccabees* 1:11-51; *4 Maccabees* 5:1-4, *Joseph and Aseneth* 10:16-17; 4QD 12:9-11; 1QS 5.13.16, *War Scroll* 2.143.

We find another example in the *Didache*, an early church order treatise, which exhorts its readers to “especially abstain from food sacrificed to idols, for this is a ministry to dead gods” (6:3).⁸⁶ The Christian *Sibylline Oracles*, moreover, contain a lengthy *ex eventu* prophecy of the apostasy of Jews in the diaspora:

For I alone am God, and other god there is none. They seek oracles of my image, wrought from wood, and shaping with their hands a speechless idol. They honour it with prayers and unholy ritual. Forsaking the Creator, they render service to wantonness; worthless the gifts men have, to useless beings they give them, And as it were for my honour they think all these useful, Celebrating a steaming banquet, as for their own dead. *For they burn flesh, and bones full of marrow, Sacrificing on their altars, and to the demons pour out blood...* I need no sacrifice or libation at your hand, no foul reek of fat, no hateful blood. *For these things will they do in memory of kings and tyrants, for dead demons, as if they were heavenly, performing a ritual godless and destructive.*⁸⁷

The witness of the *Sibylline Oracles* is significant, in that it encapsulates many of the disparate motifs often found in Christian anti-sacrifice rhetoric. As seen in the passage above, Christian literature often connected the association of meat with the purported need of daemons to partake in the bloody ritual. In short, the prevalence of meat within Hellenic cultic practice, in tandem with the equation of the pagan pantheon with daemonic spirits, led to the construction of the daemonic body as one that was in need of food for sustenance, and/or, perhaps more frequently, one that took a sadistic pleasure in soaking up the fumes which emanated from the bloody and fleshy sacrifices characteristic of Hellenic cult.

We find a similar invocation of the sacrificial sustenance of daemons in the *Acts of Thomas*, where a recently-exorcised daemon explains to the Apostle Thomas: “And as thou art refreshed by thy prayer and good works and spiritual hymns, so am I refreshed by murder

⁸⁶Translation from Bart D. Ehrman, ed., *The Apostolic Fathers* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2003), I.427.

⁸⁷*Sib. Or.* VIII.377-395. Translation from Wilhelm Schneemelcher and R. McL Wilson, eds., *New Testament Apocrypha* (Cambridge, England: J. Clarke & Co, 2003), I.677-78. Emphasis mine.

and adulteries and *sacrifices wrought with wine at the altars*.⁸⁸ Thus, the *Acts of Thomas* position sacrifices as at least one earthly event that leads to the sustenance of the daemonic body. What is more, when the Apostle Thomas demands that the daemon no longer dwell among humanity, the evil spirit replies: “A hard command hast thou given us<...>For those who have wrought...the images rejoice in them more than thee, and the many worship them<.>and do their will, sacrificing to them and bringing food and libations <of> wine and water.”⁸⁹ Thus, as seen here, the daemon contends that the sacrifices keep it riveted to the human realm, and thus unable to heed Thomas’ command to flee.

According to another Apocryphal Acts, the *Acts of Andrew*, the nutrition of sacrifice provides daemons their much-needed physiological fuel:

So long as the demonic nature does not have its blood-red nourishment, nor draws in the sustenance that comes from it, since animals are not slain, it is weak and comes to nothing, being wholly dead. But when it has what it desires, it becomes strong and expands and rises up, enlarged by things it delights in (53).⁹⁰

This text, then, contains many of themes familiar to us from Porphyry, including sacrificial sustenance, the fattening of the daemonic body, and the sadistic delight inherent in the daemonic partaking of animal sacrifice.

We find another instance of just such types of daemonic physiology in Pseudo-Clementine literature. In the *Homilies*, for example, the author explicitly equates food sacrificed to idols with the “table of daemons,” an interpretation that builds upon Paul’s

⁸⁸*Acts of Thomas* 76. Translation from Hans J.W. Drijvers (Trans.), “The Acts of Thomas,” in Wilhelm Schneemelcher and R. McL Wilson, eds., *New Testament Apocrypha* (Cambridge, England: J. Clarke & Co, 2003), 369. Emphasis mine. For discussion on the Apocryphal Acts, daemonic sacrifice, and Christian asceticism, see Andrew B. McGowan, *Ascetic Eucharists : Food and Drink in Early Christian Ritual Meals* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999), 183-93.

⁸⁹*Acts of Thomas*, 77. Translation from Drijvers, “The Acts of Thomas,” 370.

⁹⁰Jean-Marc Prieur and Wilhelm Schneemelcher (Trans.), “The Acts of Andrew,” in Schneemelcher & Wilson, *New Testament Apocrypha*, II.148.

statements in 1 Corinthians.⁹¹ Within the same text, the Apostle Peter explains that daemons have no power over humans unless they have first sat down at the “table of daemons” and partaken of things sacrificed to idols.⁹² Hence, Peter urges his listeners to eschew the “table of daemons” by avoiding the consumption of flesh and blood.⁹³

As a final example, Cyprian of Carthage, a North African Christian who was a contemporary of Origen and Porphyry, elaborates on daemonic pollution and its significance for Christian ritual practice. According to Cyprian, Christians who participate in Hellenic cult inevitably contract Satanic (=daemonic) pollution, and thus inhibit their ability to participate properly in Christian ritual:

People coming back from the altars of Satan approach Our Lord’s sacred body, their hands still foul and reeking; while still belching, one may say, from the poisonous food of the idols – their breath even yet charged with the foulness of their crime and with the stench of their repulsive death-feast – they desecrate the body of the Lord.⁹⁴

Cyprian then reproves such lapsed Christians for polluting the community with the “table of daemons,” an overt reference to Paul’s 1 Corinthians 10:21.⁹⁵ In such a way, Cyprian demonstrates the way in which some Christians imagined the embodied state of daemonic pollution and its accompanying incompatibility with Christian ritual.

⁹¹*Homilies* 7.8.1.

⁹²*Ibid.*, 7.3.1.

⁹³*Ibid.*, 7.4.2.

⁹⁴Cyprian, *On the Lapsed* 15. Translation from Cyprian of Carthage, *The Lapsed. the Unity of the Catholic Church*, trans. Maurice Bévenot (Ramsey, N.J./New York: Newman Press, 1957), 25.

⁹⁵*Ibid.*

PORPHYRY AND EARLY CHRISTIAN LITERATURE

The foregoing survey of the discourse of daemonic sacrifice and pollution in early Christian literature showcases the way in which early Christian literature shared many daemonological motifs with Porphyry. First, early Christian authors and Porphyry agree that daemons are the ultimate recipients of animal sacrifice, rather than intermediate transmitters, as was more prominent among Hellenic intellectuals. Second, Porphyry agrees with Christian writers that sacrifice actually does provide physiological sustenance for its recipients, a position that finds little support among Hellenic writers, and receives scorn from cultic suppliant and satirist alike.⁹⁶ Third, several Christian texts contend that sacrifice is the material link which binds daemons to the earthly realm, a position that likewise finds support in Porphyry's oeuvre.

Fourth, in contradistinction to common satires and critiques of sacrifice, Porphyry and Christian writers see more danger in animal sacrifice than merely the performance of futile ritual praxis. In previous Hellenic "critiques" of sacrifice, most intellectuals had simply mocked the supposed ineffectiveness of animal sacrifice. In Christian and Porphyrian rhetoric, however, the danger lies not only in the ritual's ineffectiveness, but in attracting the presence of evil daemons into one's personal sphere, and even into one's own body. The discourse of daemonic pollution, then, prevalent within Christian sources yet sparse in pagan, becomes a prominent feature in Porphyry's anti-sacrifice rhetoric.

While such connections are highly suggestive of Christian influence on Porphyry's daemonological discourse, an immediate problem prevents such a simple conclusion:

⁹⁶ See, for example, Lucian's *On Sacrifices*, which ridicules the idea that sacrifices nourish the gods. Iamblichus explicitly rejects the idea that sacrificial vapors provide sustenance for the daemons (*De Myst.* 5.4).

Porphyry's reputation as an avid critic of Christianity. Augustine once referred to Porphyry as the *accerrimus inimicus* of the Christians, while Eusebius noted that Porphyry "is celebrated for his false accusations against us."⁹⁷ It is likely that Porphyry began writing anti-Christian treatises in 268CE, and continued through the turn of the century, though the precise contours of his anti-Christian oeuvre remain obscure.⁹⁸ What is more, it's quite possible that Porphyry served as one of the court lecturers against the Christians in the court of Galerius during the winter of 302-3 CE, a role that might have catalyzed the ensuing 'Great Persecution.'⁹⁹ Because of Porphyry's extensive opposition to Christianity, he became *persona non grata* among Christian intellectual elites, a situation which led to the destruction of his work soon after Constantine took power,¹⁰⁰ as well as the use of his name as a polemical barb in intra-Christian debates.¹⁰¹ The question arises, therefore: how could the *accerrimus inimicus* of Christianity have utilized Christian ideology in his philosophical literature?

⁹⁷ Augustine, *De. Civ.* 19.22; cf. *Sermon 241*. Eusebius, *Praeparatio Evangelica* IV.6. Translation from Eusebius of Caesarea, *Preparation for the Gospel*, trans. Edwin Hamilton Gifford (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1981), 156.

⁹⁸ Digeser, *A Threat to Public Piety*, 266-68. For a discussion of Porphyry's anti-Christian literature, see Mark Edwards, "Porphyry and the Christians," in George E. Karamanolis and Anne D. R. Sheppard, eds., *Studies on Porphyry* (London: Institute of Classical Studies, School of Advanced Study, University of London, 2007), 111-126.

⁹⁹ Lactantius, *Divine Institutes* 5.2; *Mort.* 16. Lactantius does not explicitly tie Porphyry to the role of court lecturer, though circumstantial evidence has led many scholars to conclude that he indeed played some role in instigating the Great Persecution. For discussion, see Digeser, *A Threat to Public Piety*, 5.

¹⁰⁰ Socrates of Constantinople, *Historia Ecclesiastica* 1.9.30; *Codex Theodosianus* 15.5.66. For discussion, see Arieh Kofsky, *Eusebius of Caesarea Against Paganism* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2000), 18.

¹⁰¹ According to Socrates of Constantinople, Constantine wished to call his Arian opponents by the moniker "Porphyrians" (Socrates, *Historia Ecclesiastica* 1.9.30). On this, cf. Kofsky, *Eusebius of Caesarea against Paganism*, 18 n. 67; see also Mark Edwards, "Porphyry and the Christians," 119: "in his chastisement of Arius the arch-heretic, he reveals by his malicious use of the epithet 'Porphyrian' that Porphyry was a bugbear even to the Church triumphant."

In response to this query, Elizabeth DePalma Digeser has cautioned scholars not to reinscribe the boundaries which ancient polemicists sought to create by correlating literary hostility to socio-historical remoteness. On the contrary, Digeser contends that pagan antipathy towards Christians stemmed from the fact that these respective groups' "beliefs were becoming increasingly similar."¹⁰² Due to such ideological confluences, as well as increasing social interaction, Hellenic philosophers like Porphyry "struck back by distinguishing themselves as very different and superior to Christians."¹⁰³ Robert Markus, moreover, notes that Christian intellectuals likewise engaged in boundary-drawing: "the image of a society neatly divided into 'Christian' and 'pagan' is the creation of late fourth-century Christians, and has been taken at face value by modern historians."¹⁰⁴ Jeremy Schott, therefore, contends that Porphyry's anti-Christian endeavors should not be read as markers of absolute dissimilarity, but instead "as a dispute between remarkably similar yet competing attempts to negotiate cultural and religious difference."¹⁰⁵ Thus, Porphyry's hostility towards his Christian counterparts should alert us to the possibility of obscured commonalities, rather than complete Christian/Hellenic divergence.

Porphyry, in fact, presents a particularly interesting case for possible connections between Hellenic and Christian interpretive communities, in that his literary oeuvre betrays personal familiarity with the valued texts of Jewish and Christian communities. Porphyry

¹⁰²Digeser, *A Threat to Public Piety*, 14.

¹⁰³*Ibid.*

¹⁰⁴R. A. Markus, *The End of Ancient Christianity* (Cambridge, England; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 28.

¹⁰⁵Jeremy M. Schott, *Christianity, Empire, and the Making of Religion in Late Antiquity* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), 54.

argues for the pseudepigraphical nature of the *Book of Daniel*, for instance, based on a detailed textual analysis.¹⁰⁶ Porphyry critiques the Gospels of Mark and Matthew, moreover, for producing faulty quotations and citations of the Hebrew Bible,¹⁰⁷ and similarly points to the narrative dissonance between the birth stories of Matthew and Luke.¹⁰⁸ Finally, Porphyry uses Paul's troubles in Galatians as evidence of Christian discord.¹⁰⁹ Such extensive interaction with Christian texts makes it all the more plausible that Porphyry would be engaging with Christian ideologies and discourses, including Christian daemonologies. In fact, Socrates of Constantinople alleges, based on a lost fragment of Eusebius, that Porphyry himself was a Christian in his youth.¹¹⁰ This datum remains rather dubious, but would nonetheless help explain several facets of Porphyry's philosophical career, including his extensive knowledge of and interest in Christian literature, as well as his ostensible familiarity with and tutelage under Origen.¹¹¹

In sum, Porphyry's social connections with Christians, intimate knowledge of Christian literature, and possible Christian background all suggest paths by which Christian daemonological discourse may have wielded influence upon Porphyry's own ideology. Thus, based on these suggestive contacts, the extensive conceptual commonalities heretofore

¹⁰⁶Porphyry, *Against the Christians*, Harnack, fr. 43A. On the wider phenomenon of Graeco-Roman criticism of the Bible, see John Granger Cook, *The Interpretation of the New Testament in Greco-Roman Paganism* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000).

¹⁰⁷Ibid, Harnack Fr. 9, 10

¹⁰⁸Ibid, Harnack, Fr. 12.

¹⁰⁹Ibid, Harnack Fr. 21.

¹¹⁰Socrates of Constantinople, *Ecclesiastical History*, 3.23.37-39.

¹¹¹Porphyry claims to have met Origen in his youth, but his precise interaction with the theologian remains obscure. Athanasius Syrius, a 7th century Syriac Orthodox Patriarch, makes the claim that Porphyry was the student of Origen in his preface to Porphyry's *Isagoge*.

surveyed between Porphyry and his Christian opponents should not be dismissed, but investigated as a possible case of intellectual cross-pollination. In the following chapter, therefore, I forward an argument that further strengthens the ties between Porphyry's discursive spheres and that of Christian intellectuals, through the emergence of Christian Platonism in the 2nd and 3rd centuries.

Chapter Five

‘ABOVE THE BATH OF MYRTINUS’: CHRISTIAN PLATONISM AND EARLY IMPERIAL DAEMONOLOGICAL DISCOURSES

When read in light of Porphyry’s larger exegetical and interpretive endeavors, the proposal that the Neo-Platonist would incorporate concepts from outside the traditional Hellenic literary canon is rather uncontroversial. Jeremy Schott, for example, has noted the ways in which Porphyry incorporates insights from the regional cultures in the provinces of the Roman empire as part of his formulation of a *via universalis*.¹¹² Porphyry did not typically take over these epistemic systems whole-cloth, however. Schott notes, for instance, that while “Porphyry is immersed in foreign wisdom...nothing from Egypt, Syria, or any other province is valuable unless it can be filtered through a Greek lens.”¹¹³ Building upon Schott’s insights, I contend in the following chapter that, in keeping with his typical historiographical practice, Porphyry appropriates the “barbarian” wisdom contained in the Christian discourse of daemonic corruption, but “filtered” through the lens of 3rd century Christian Platonism. That is, I seek to demonstrate that within Hellenic intellectual circles, such as the ones in which Porphyry was educated and ultimately spent his career, there emerged certain intellectuals who adapted the discourse of daemonic pollution as part of a

¹¹²Jeremy M. Schott, "Porphyry on Christians and Others: "Barbarian Wisdom," Identity Politics, and Anti-Christian Polemics on the Eve of the Great Persecution," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 13, no. 3 (09/01, 2005), 61.

¹¹³Schott, *Christianity, Empire, and the Making of Religion in Late Antiquity* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), 61. Schott calls this a kind of “armchair ethnography,” and notes that Porphyry garnered his knowledge of Jewish history through Josephus, Egyptian traditions through Chaeremon of Alexandria and Plutarch, and “barbarian” traditions through Herodotus.

synthesis of Christian biblical thought and Platonic philosophy. Such a hypothesis receives confirmation from two interrelated pieces of evidence. First, beginning with the so-called Christian ‘Apologists’ of the 2nd and 3rd centuries, extant literary evidence demonstrates the degree to which Christian intellectuals were engaging in intensive discussions concerning the tenets of Hellenic philosophy and their relative compatibility with Christian theology. Second, as part of this discursive sphere, Christian Platonists began to integrate former Christian idiosyncrasies, such as apocalyptic daemonology and its discourse of daemonic pollution, into complex philosophical systems that attempted to garner the intellectual respect of their Hellenic peers. The numerous critiques of Hellenic intellectuals such as Fronto, Celsus, Plotinus, and Porphyry demonstrate that this fusing was not always well-received among Hellenic interlocutors, but nonetheless serves witness to the fact that Christian doctrines, such as the danger of daemonic pollution inherent in Hellenic sacrifice, were gaining an audience among Hellenic intellectuals.

CHRISTIAN PLATONISTS AND DAEMONIC CORRUPTION

Ever since the work of the 19th century scholar Johann Karl von Otto,¹¹⁴ biblical studies has long been fascinated with the group of Christian intellectuals of the 2nd and 3rd centuries who attempted to mount various intellectual defenses of the Christian faith against their “cultured despisers.” Von Otto coined the term “Apologists” for this group of Christian intellectuals due to their presentation of *apologia* on behalf of Christian theologies and

¹¹⁴Johann Karl von Otto was the first to coin term “Apologists” (Ibid, *Corpus apologetarum christianorum saeculi secundi*. IX Vols. (1861)). Membership among this group has shifted according to scholarly preference, but often includes the writings of Quadratus, Aristides of Athens, Justin Martyr, Tatian of Syria, Athenagoras of Athens, the anonymous *Epistle to Diognetus*, Theophilus of Antioch, Tertullian of Carthage, Minucius Felix, and Origen of Alexandria.

communities. Past research on the Apologists has often focused on the oppositional nature of these writings, a fruitful endeavor that nonetheless obscures the extent to which they productively engage with Hellenic *paideia*. As Werner Jaeger has so fruitfully shown, early Christian apologists did not simply oppose Hellenic culture, but simultaneously “die griechische Kultur und Tradition...sich mit ihrem Leben und ihrer Lehre verbanden.”¹¹⁵ Laura Nasrallah has demonstrated, moreover, that “in the study of Christian apologists, the traditional divisions of pagan-Jew-Christian have obscured possible alliances between those of high status who engaged in culture wars about the value of Greek *paideia* in the high Roman Empire.”¹¹⁶

The opening addresses of many Christian apologies demonstrate their ambitious goal of reaching the upper echelons of the Roman intellectual and political elite. Apologists such as Quadratus, Aristides, Justin Martyr, and Athenagoras, for example, dedicated their written defenses to Roman emperors.¹¹⁷ There are indications within these apologies, moreover, that the Christian intellectuals were aware of the philosophical training of their valued audience.

Justin Martyr, for example, addresses his *I Apology* to the Emperor Antoninus Pius and “and

¹¹⁵Werner Jaeger, *Das Frühe Christentum Und Die Griechische Bildung* (Berlin: W. De Gruyter, 1963), 26. On this topic, see also Laura S. Nasrallah, *Christian Responses to Roman Art and Architecture : The Second-Century Church Amid the Spaces of Empire* (Cambridge ;New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 21-50.

¹¹⁶Nasrallah, *Christian Responses to Roman Art and Architecture*, 6. Nasrallah notes that the terminology of “apologia” and its concordant tones of defensive do not seem to stem so much from the primary sources themselves, but rather from their secondary collectors. She states: “apologetic literature as a set of texts emerges in the taxonomic impulses of eighteenth-century European scholars who struggled in such contexts as the rise of Protestantism, the force of the Enlightenment, and the clash of religion and science.” Nasrallah concludes, therefore, that we should not impute the post-facto generic designation “apology” with any explanatory value, but see it rather as a convenient contemporary moniker for texts that shared some similar concerns and traits (Ibid, 26-27).

¹¹⁷Scholars have long debated whether such appeals would have reached the courts of the emperor. For a summary of proposals and a compelling case for at least the possibility of these texts reaching the emperor, see Fergus Millar, *The Emperor in the Roman World (31 BC-AD 337)* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1992), 498. Millar builds his case based on an analogy to other written appeals to the emperor from antiquity, such as Dio of Prusa’s *Kingship Orations*, which claim to have been delivered to the Emperor Trajan.

to his *philosopher* son Verissimus, and Lucius *the philosopher*.”¹¹⁸ Athenagoras of Athens likewise addresses his *Legatio* to “Marcus Aurelius Antoninus and Lucius Aurelius Commodus, conquerors of Armenia and Sarmatia, *and, above all, philosophers*.”¹¹⁹ Such awareness provides at least one explanation for the prevalence of Hellenic philosophical concepts within the writings of these Apologists: in order to ingratiate their cause to their detractors, the Apologists used the conceptual apparatus with which they knew their audience would be familiar.

These Apologists’ writings, therefore, exhibit a complex interweaving of Christian principles and philosophical concepts.¹²⁰ Most notably for our purposes, Platonism, the intellectual tradition within which Porphyry stood, was often the favored philosophical system of these Christian thinkers. Justin Martyr, for example, situates Platonism as a philosophical system second only to Christianity, and insists that the doctrines of these respective systems do not differ.¹²¹ Furthermore, Christian philosophers such as Valentinus, Justin, Tatian, and Origen are said to have operated philosophical schools which, as noted by Winrich Löhr, mimicked the curricula of their Hellenic counterparts.¹²² This conceptual and

¹¹⁸ *I Apology* 1. Saint Justin Martyr, *The First and Second Apologies*, ed. Leslie W. (Leslie William) Barnard (New York: Paulist Press, 1997), 23. Emphasis mine. The reference is to the Emperor Antoninus Pius (r. 137-161 CE), and his two adopted sons, Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus. The fact that Justin would address his Apology to the two philosopher-sons is particularly interesting, considering the fact that they both received education from the famed rhetorician Marcus Cornelius Fronto, to whom Minucius Felix attributed a discourse critiquing the Christians (*Octavius* 8-9).

¹¹⁹ Athenagoras, *Legatio*, Pref. Emphasis mine. Translation from Athenagoras, *Legatio and De Resurrectione*, trans. William R. Schoedel (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), 3.

¹²⁰ On this, see Harry Austryn Wolfson, *The Philosophy of the Church Fathers* (3rd Ed.: Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1970).

¹²¹ On this, see *2 Apology* 13, *I Apology* 8, *Dialogue with Trypho* 8.1.

¹²² Winrich A. Löhr, "Christianity as Philosophy: Problems and Perspectives of an Ancient Intellectual Project," *Vigiliae Christianae* 64, no. 2 (2010), 160-188.

organizational interaction is significant, in that it provides a possible avenue through which Christian daemonologies and their attendant discourses on the danger of daemonic pollution may have come to influence the daemonological debates of early imperial philosophy, and, eventually, the daemonology of Porphyry's *De Abstinentia*. It will be important then, as a final step in tracing the "pre-history" of Porphyry's daemonology, to explore the instances of daemonic pollution within the early Christian Apologists. In doing so, I hope to demonstrate the way in which a formerly-"barbarian" daemonology, as filtered through the lens of Christian Platonism, ultimately informed Porphyrian daemonology.

Justin Martyr provides our first significant example of the adaptation of apocalyptic daemonology for use in a philosophically-inclined apologetic treatise. Justin traces the origin of these demons to the primordial illicit union of wicked angels and mortal women, drawing on the interpretive tradition of the *Book of the Watchers*:

These evil demons manifested themselves, both defiled women and corrupted boys, and showed terrifying sights to people, that those who did not use their reason in judging the acts that were done, were filled with terror; and being taken captive by fear, and not knowing that these were demons, they called them gods, and gave to each the name which each of the demons had chosen for himself.¹²³

Justin explains further that the demons thereafter demanded sacrifice from humans:

They enslaved the human race to themselves, partly by magical writings, and partly by fears and punishments which they occasioned, and *partly by teaching them to offer sacrifices and incense and libations, which they needed after they were enslaved with lustful passions*.¹²⁴

Thus, the "lustful passion" which first attracted the demons downward into sexual unions with mortal women now enslaves them to the material world, wherein they require

¹²³ *I Apol.* 5. Translation from Justin Saint Justin Martyr, *The First and Second Apologies*, ed. Barnard (New York: Paulist Press, 1997), 25-6. On the reception of the *Myth of the Watchers* within early Christian writers, see Annette Yoshiko Reed, *Fallen Angels and the History of Judaism and Christianity: The Reception of Enochic Literature* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005). On the function of demons in Justin's *Apologies*, see Jennifer Wright Knust, "Enslaved to Demons: Sex, Violence and the Apologies of Justin Martyr," In *Mapping Gender in Ancient Religious Discourses*, edited by Todd Penner and Caroline Vander Stichele (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2007), 431-455.

¹²⁴ *2 Apol.* 5. Translation from Barnard, *The First and Second Apologies*, 77. Emphasis mine.

“sacrifices and incense and libations” to satisfy their lusts. These evil daemons are still active in his day, Justin asserts, and “demand sacrifices and service from people who live irrationally.”¹²⁵ Christians do not sacrifice to such daemons, however, as Justin insists:

But neither do we honor with many sacrifices and garlands of flowers the objects that people have formed and set in temples and named gods; since we know that they are lifeless and dead and have not the form of God...but have the name and shapes of those evil demons which have appeared.”¹²⁶

Justin Martyr, therefore, represents the first instance in what will become a long line of Christian philosophers who incorporate Christian daemonology, and its attendant association of daemonic pollution with Hellenic sacrifice, into literature which participates within Hellenic philosophical discourse.

Tatian of Syria is said to have attended Justin’s school in Rome, and likely encountered there Justin’s unique fusing of Platonic philosophy and Christian teaching. Much like his purported philosophical mentor, moreover, Tatian often appealed to the danger of daemonic corruption as one reason that Christians abstained from traditional cultic practices such as animal sacrifice. Tatian states, for example, that daemons are limited to the lower, material realm whose attractions they freely chose, a system that, in similar ways to both Justin and Porphyry, correlates ethical demeanor to relative materiality and cosmological position.¹²⁷ Tatian attributes the daemons’ infatuation with materiality to a primordial fall, where the angels of God fell away due to their leader’s rebellion: “Because of his transgression and rebellion the first-born was appointed a demon, along with those who had followed his example. Demonic apparitions formed his army, and in consequence of

¹²⁵*I Apol.* 12. Translation from Barnard, *The First and Second Apologies*, 29.

¹²⁶*I Apol.* 9. Translation from Barnard, *The First and Second Apologies*, 27. Cf. *Dialogue with Trypho*, 27.2.

¹²⁷*Oratio ad Graecos*, 16.1. Translation from Tatian, *Oratio Ad Graecos and Fragments*, trans. Molly Whittaker (Oxford; New York: Clarendon Press, 1982), 33.

their own free will were given up to their own stupid folly.”¹²⁸ Tatian expands upon the moral failing of the evil daemons: “Nevertheless the demons too, as you call them, who were compacted from matter and possess a spirit derived from it, became profligate and greedy, some of them turning to what is purer, others to what is inferior to matter and behaving like it.”¹²⁹ Hence, in similar ways to other Platonic philosophers such as Porphyry, Tatian associates the malevolence of daemons with an increased association with materiality.

One of the more significant areas where Platonic philosophical concepts seem to have influenced Christian daemonology is in psychology. Rather than beings who attempt to inhabit bodies of flesh, as is the case in early Christian exorcism narratives,¹³⁰ evil daemons are often portrayed as pneumatic entities that attempt to restrict the soul from rising above material existence. Such a belief relies heavily on the Platonic concept of psychological ascent, prevalent in philosophical literature and one of the major tenets that undergirds Porphyry’s *De Abstinencia*. Tatian, for example, states that “the demons in their own malignity rage against men, and by various false machinations pervert their thoughts when they incline downwards, in order that they might not have the power to rise aloft for the

¹²⁸*Oratio* 7.3. Translation from Whittaker, *Oratio*, 15.

¹²⁹*Oratio* 12.3-4. Translation from Whittaker, *Oratio*, 25. Tatian’s characterization is interesting here because, unlike many of his Christian contemporaries, he is willing to acknowledge varying degrees of moral rectitude among daemons. Typically, Christian authors will restrict the role of benevolent semi-divine intermediary to “angels,” and reserve “daemon” as a moniker for their exclusively-evil counterparts. Tatian, on the other hand, seems here to leave open the possibility that a daemon could “incline upwards” and thus be superior in cosmological position and morality to evil, material daemons.

¹³⁰On this, see Eric Sorensen, *Possession and Exorcism in the New Testament and Early Christianity* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2002).

heavenly journey.”¹³¹ Tatian expands upon the deleterious effect of the primordial fall and its implications for the soul:

The soul's wings are the perfect spirit, but the soul cast it away because of sin, fluttered like a nestling and fell to the ground, and once removed from heavenly company yearned for association with inferiors. The demons had to move house, and those created first were banished, the former were cast down from heaven, the latter from not this earth, but one better ordered than here.¹³²

Elsewhere, Tatian explicitly equates the recipients of Hellenic cult with evil daemons:

These [daemons], men of Greece, you worship, though they are generated from matter and have been found to be far from orderly in their conduct; for through their own folly they turned to conceit, rebelled, and were determined to steal divine status. The lord of the universe gave license to their frolics until the world comes to an end and is dissolved, and the judge arrives; then all mankind, who through the demons' revolt long for knowledge of the perfect God, win through their struggles a more perfect commendation on the day of judgment.¹³³

Thus, Hellenic cultic practice is actually dedicated to evil, material daemons, who limit the ascent of the human soul by clouding the intellect. Animal sacrifice, therefore, as part and parcel of the cultic system, exposes its participants to the danger of daemoniac corruption.

One possible result from such daemoniac intercourse is the contraction of disease, which Tatian proposes based on the teachings of his mentor:

The most admirable Justin [Martyr] was right in pronouncing that demons are like bandits, for just as bandits are in the habit of taking men prisoner and then releasing them to their families on payment, so too those supposed gods visit men's bodies, and then in dreams create an impression of their presence and order their victims to come forward in sight of all. When they have enjoyed the eulogies they fly away from the sick, terminate the disease they have contrived, and restore the men to their previous state.¹³⁴

¹³¹*Oratio* 16.1. Translation from Whittaker, *Oratio*, 33.

¹³²*Oratio* 20.1. Translation from Whittaker, *Oratio*, 41.

¹³³*Oratio* 12.4. Translation from Whittaker, *Oratio*, 25. On the mimicry of the divine, see also the *Gospel of Philip*, a Nag Hammadi text which claims that the recipients of pagan sacrifice were not gods, but animals themselves (63:5). The text furthermore claims that participation in animal sacrifice will inhibit salvation (54:32-55:1).

¹³⁴*Oratio* 18.2-3. Translation from Whittaker, *Oratio*, 37.

Tatian implies, therefore, that Hellenic cultic practice is not only futile due to its dedication to lesser beings, but also dangerous because it attracts the presence of spirits whose primary activity is the debilitation of humans.

We find a similar such daemonology, with several connections to Porphyry's, in Athenagoras of Athens' *Legatio*. This 2nd century Christian Apologist and intellectual is particularly noteworthy for exhibiting elements typically associated with both Christian daemonology and Hellenic philosophical daemonologies.¹³⁵ For example, Athenagoras transmits the typical mythology of a primordial fall which resulted in the genesis of evil daemons:

Others violated both their own nature and their office. These include the prince over matter and material things and others who are of those stationed at the first firmament...the latter are the angels, who fell to lusting after maidens and let themselves be conquered by the flesh, the former failed his responsibility and operated wickedly in the administration of what had been entrusted to him.¹³⁶

This mythology, building upon the *Book of the Watchers* and its Christian elaboration, provides a genealogy for intermediate beings and explains their permanent existence in the air: "These angels...busy themselves about the air and the earth and are no longer able to rise to the realms above the heavens. The souls of the giants are the demons who wander about the world."¹³⁷ Thus, in this respect, Athenagoras' daemonology combines the myth of the angelic "fall" with Platonic cosmological discourses, which placed beings on a sliding scale of cosmic position based on their relative levels of divinity and/or morality. What is more, Athenagoras reproduces the popular Hellenic concept that daemons are cosmic

¹³⁵On Athenagoras' daemonology and its connection with Graeco-Roman psychology, see Dragos-Andrei Giulean, "The Watchers' Whispers: Athenagoras's Legation 25, 1-3 and the Book of the Watchers," *Vigiliae Christianae* 61, no. 3 (2007), 258-281.

¹³⁶*Legatio* 25.1. Translation from Schoedel, *Legatio*, 61.

¹³⁷*Legatio* 25.1. Translation from Schoedel, *Legatio*, 61.

administrators: “These angels were called into being by God to exercise providence over the things set in order by him, so that God would have universal and general providence over all things whereas the angels would be set over particular things.”¹³⁸ Moreover, Athenagoras cites the Greek author Euripides in support of the following:

Both angels and demons produce movements - demons movements which are akin to the natures they received, and angels movements which are akin to the lusts with which they were possessed. The prince of matter, as may be seen from what happens, directs and administers things in a manner opposed to God's goodness.¹³⁹

Athenagoras, then, bifurcates the realm of semi-divine intermediates into “angels” and “daemons,” and distinguishes the two based on their fidelity to God’s benevolence and corresponding susceptibility to lustful desires.

It is the impious nature of daemons, moreover, which leads them to seek out “the steam and odor of sacrifices.”¹⁴⁰ In fact, the daemons spend most of their time deluding men into making bloody sacrifices at the images:

It is these demons who drag men to the images. They engross themselves in the blood from the sacrifices and lick all around them. The gods that satisfy the crowd and give their names to the images, as you can learn from their history, were once men. The activity associated with each of them is your assurance that it is the demons who usurp their names.¹⁴¹

Thus, here we see Athenagoras combine several elements of Platonic daemonological speculation with Christian motifs of daemoniac corruption. For example, Athenagoras claims that the images of the pagan pantheon were once famous men, a “Euhemeristic” interpretation that was popular among Greek intellectuals from the early Hellenistic period

¹³⁸*Legatio* 24.3. Translation from Schoedel, *Legatio*, 59.

¹³⁹*Legatio* 25.1. Translation from Schoedel, *Legatio*, 61. Athenagoras cites Euripides, Frag. 901 (Nauck): “Oft into my heart has come this thought:/That either chance or demon rules men’s lives/Against hope and against justice/It casts some forth from homes/Apart from God, and others it makes prosper.”

¹⁴⁰*Legatio* 27.2.

¹⁴¹*Legatio* 26.1. Translation from Schoedel, *Legatio*, 61. Emphasis mine.

onwards.¹⁴² Athenagoras contends, however, that the energizing force behind the images is daemonic, a motif found primarily in early Christian anti-sacrifice polemic. What is more, Athenagoras anticipates Porphyry's daemonological statements in claiming that daemons desire the "blood" and "steam" of the offerings, a statement which imputes a gross immorality and gluttony to the entire ceremony.

Again, as with Justin and Tatian, the danger of sacrifice for Athenagoras lies not only in its futility, but in its psychological corruption and harm. In fact, someone who sacrifices to the material daemons puts their soul in jeopardy of losing its unique attributes: "A soul experiences this especially when it attaches itself to the spirit of matter and blends with it, when it does not look up to heavenly things and their Maker but down to earthly things, or, in general terms, when it becomes mere blood and flesh and is no longer pure spirit."¹⁴³ Thus, daemonic intercourse will inevitably result in psychological putrefaction, where the spiritual attributes of the divine soul became engrossed with the materiality of the beings to which it has offered sacrifice. Athenagoras furthermore explains that participation in this daemonic sacrifice results in a vicious cycle of daemonic temptation and psychological deterioration:

These movements of the soul not directed by reason but by fantasy give birth to illusory images, which bring with them a mad passion for idols. When the soul is weak and docile, ignorant and unacquainted with sound teachings, unable to contemplate the truth, unable to understand who the Father and Maker of all things is - when such a soul had impressed upon it false opinions concerning itself, the demons associated with matter, because they are greedy for the savour of fat and the blood of sacrifices, and because their business is to delude them, take hold of these deceitful movements in the soul of the many and by invading their thoughts flood them with illusory images which seem to come from the idols and statues.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴²For a useful summary of Euhemerism and its reception with the Christian Apologetic tradition, see Harry Y. Gamble, "Euhemerism and Christology in Origen: "Contra Celsum" III 22-43," *Vigiliae Christianae* 33.1 (Mar., 1979), 12-29.

¹⁴³*Legatio* 27.1. Translation from Schoedel, *Legatio*, 67.

¹⁴⁴*Legatio* 27.2. Translation from Schoedel, *Legatio*, 67.

Hence, Athenagoras exhibits the combination of a discourse of daemonic corruption, where daemons feast on the steam and odor of sacrifices out of gluttony, with the Platonic discourse of psychological ascent, where the return of the soul can only be accomplished through the divorcing of its pneumatic part from this material world.

Many early Christian texts, in fact, echo Athenagoras' framing of daemonic pollution in terms of psychological constriction. Tertullian of Carthage, for example, argues that daemons and pagan gods are one and the same beings, and that these evil spirits attempt to trick the human soul into offering sacrifice, because the cultic practice "serves to secure for themselves their peculiar diet of smell and blood, offered to their likenesses and images."¹⁴⁵ Participation in such sacrifice, moreover, holds grave danger for humanity, as it is through sacrifice that "the breath of demons and angels achieves the corruption of the mind in foul bursts of fury and insanity...along with every kind of delusion."¹⁴⁶ In line with other Apologists, Tertullian explains that sacrifice to daemons stems from the primordial trickery of the fallen angels:

Already earlier Enoch had prophesied that the demons and spirits, that is the apostate angels, would employ all elements, everything belonging to the world, everything that the heaven, the sea and the earth contain, for idolatrous purposes, so that they were hallowed, instead of God, against God.¹⁴⁷

In doing so, Tertullian explicitly invokes the mythology of the *Book of Watchers*, already utilized by authors such as Justin and Athenagoras. The daemonic origin of sacrifice is not the only danger, however, for Tertullian. Elsewhere in *On Idolatry*, Tertullian emphasizes that Christians who participate in any aspect of the daemon-idol cultic apparatus put

¹⁴⁵*Apology* 22.6. Translation from T. R. Glover and Gerald H. Rendall, eds., *Tertullian, Apology, De Spectaculis/Minucius Felix, Octavius* (Cambridge, M.A.: Harvard University Press, 1931), 119.

¹⁴⁶*Ibid.*

¹⁴⁷*De Idol* 4.2. Translation from Tertullian, *De Idololatria*, eds. J. H. Waszink and J. C. M. van Winden (Leiden ;New York: E.J. Brill, 1987), 27-29.

themselves in danger of contracting daemonic pollution: “we know that, though [the names of the pagan gods] are empty and fictitious names, nevertheless, when they are used for superstition, they draw to themselves the demons and every impure spirit by means of the bond brought about by consecration.”¹⁴⁸ Hence, while Tertullian believes that the names and mythologies of the pagan gods themselves are powerless, he asserts that the demons, who are the ultimate recipients of Hellenic sacrifice, present an impending danger to Christians who might participate in the cultic activities of their pagan neighbors. Tertullian, furthermore, complains that Christians who help manufacture idols “apply to the Lord’s body those hands which give a body to the demons,”¹⁴⁹ and warns that individual daemonic pollution can easily corrupt others within the community.¹⁵⁰

Tertullian’s fellow Latin Apologist, Minucius Felix, likewise offers copious evidence for the Christian discourse of daemonic sacrifice and corruption. In his apologetic discourse *Octavius*, Minucius launches a scathing critique of “magicians” and “soothsayers” by claiming that their works of wonder actually stem from the power of “unclean and wandering spirits.”¹⁵¹ These spirits have come to roam about the earth because their “heavenly vigour has been overlaid by earthly soils and lusts.”¹⁵² Hence, these spirits have sunk down to the earth, far away from their original abode, and now conspire to bring calamity upon the human race. The sites of Hellenic sacrifice are the particular haunts of these unclean

¹⁴⁸*De Idol* 15.5. Tertullian, *De Idololatria*, eds. J. H. Waszink and J. C. M. van Winden (Leiden ;New York: E.J. Brill, 1987), 53. See also Lactantius, *Divine Institutes*, 2.17, where it is stated that the demons hide in temples and attend sacrifices in order to attach themselves to people.

¹⁴⁹*De Idol* 7.1. Tertullian, *De Idololatria*, eds. J. H. Waszink and J. C. M. van Winden (Leiden ;New York: E.J. Brill, 1987), 33.

¹⁵⁰*De Idol*. 7.2.

¹⁵¹*Octavius* 26.8.

¹⁵²*Ibid.* Translation from Glover & Rendall, *Tertullian*, 395.

daemons: “these unclean spirits, or demons...find a lurking place under statues and consecrated images, and by their breath exercise influence as of a present God.”¹⁵³ This kind of daemonic trickery is in fact an elaborate ruse, designed to manipulate men to cater to the daemons’ lustful desires:

Thus they drag men downwards from Heaven, call them away from the true God to material things, perturb their life, disquiet their slumbers, creep into their bodies covertly, as impalpable spirits, produce diseases, strike terror into minds, distort the limbs, thus driving men to do them worship, in order that, when glutted with the reek of altars or with victim beasts, they may loosen the tightened bonds and claim to have effected a cure.¹⁵⁴

Encapsulated within this passage are several of the themes prevalent among the Christian discourses of sacrifice, and also found in the writings of Porphyry. Minucius Felix claims, for example, that the daemons endeavor to “drag men downwards,” language that builds upon the assumption that one should aim to accomplish psychological escape from the material cosmos. Moreover, Minucius warns that daemons use the cultic system to “creep into bodies covertly,” thus stating explicitly the dangers of daemonic corruption that are inherent in sacrificial participation. Finally, Minucius highlights the “fattening” process by which the “gluttony” of the daemons is satisfied, a physiological insight already seen in Athenagoras, and which precipitates similar motifs in Origen and Porphyry. Thus, the process of animal sacrifice is reduced to the mere placation of evil daemons, and the Hellenic cultic practitioner is put in immediate danger of bodily infiltration by gluttonous daemons.

As a final example, we turn to a Christian who is particularly notorious for his utilization and incorporation of Hellenic intellectual currents into theological literature:

¹⁵³*Octavius* 27.1. Translation from Glover and Rendall, *Tertullian*, 397.

¹⁵⁴*Octavius* 27.2. Translation from Glover and Rendall, *Tertullian*, 397-99.

Clement of Alexandria.¹⁵⁵ Although Clement is perhaps overshadowed by a fellow Alexandrian churchman (Origen), Clement made significant contributions to the blurring of the boundaries between “religion” and “philosophy,” between “Platonism” and “Christianity.”¹⁵⁶ Clement operated in a cultural space, the ancient city of Alexandria, which has been termed by scholars as a kind of Platonist-Christian “contact sphere” – where Platonic interpreters and diverse Christian thinkers were operating in close proximity.¹⁵⁷ Hence, Clement’s daemonology is significant not only for its probable influence upon Origen, but also for its potential impact upon Platonic daemonological discourse.

A thorough reading of Clement’s rich corpus uncovers a vast array of daemonological speculation.¹⁵⁸ In line with many fellow Christian apologists, Clement regards the Hellenic gods as mere “indigenous daemons” who have usurped the names of the gods in order to garner worship.¹⁵⁹ Clement closely links these daemons to the sacrificial acts that are performed at their sanctuaries, and even claims, based upon Hellenic mythology, that these daemons take delight in human sacrifice: “Your gods are inhuman and man-hating daemons, who not only exult over the insanity of men, but go so far as to enjoy human slaughter.”¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁵On this, see Salvatore Romano Clemente Lilla, *Clement of Alexandria: A Study in Christian Platonism and Gnosticism*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1971).

¹⁵⁶Clement was likely born ca. 150CE, perhaps in Athens. Tradition relates that he helped to operate the catechetical school in Alexandria, though there has been considerable debate among scholars whether Clement’s instructional activity was in any way associated with the church apparatus. Clement remained in Alexandria until ca. 202-03 CE, when the persecution of Septimus Severus forced him into exile.

¹⁵⁷On this, see Digeser, *A Threat to Public Piety*, 2-3.

¹⁵⁸On Clement’s daemonology, see Friedrich Andres, *Die Engel- Und Dämonenlehre Des Klemens Von Alexandrien* (Freiburg, Breisgau: Herder, 1926).

¹⁵⁹*Protrepticus* 2.

¹⁶⁰*Protrepticus* 3. Translation from Clement of Alexandria, *Exhortation to the Greeks*, trans. G. W. Butterworth (Cambridge, M.A.: Harvard University Press, 1919), 91. Clement explains elsewhere his source for accusations

Part of the reason, it seems, that daemons delight in such gore is that they endeavor to partake of the resultant sacrificial fumes: “[Daemons] beset human life after the manner of flatterers, allured by the sacrificial smoke.”¹⁶¹ Thereafter Clement cites the *Iliad* as daemonic first-person testimony: “In one place the daemons themselves admit this gluttony of theirs, when they say, ‘Wine and odorous steam; for that we receive as our portion’ [*Iliad* IV.49].”¹⁶²

Thus, as with Athenagoras and Minucius Felix before him, Clement of Alexandria portrays the daemonic body as one that gains its sustenance from the sacrificial fumes that emanate from the Graeco-Roman cultic system. In fact, Clement claims that the gluttonous demeanor of the daemons is likewise foisted upon those whom they invade and inhabit: “Those who bend around inflammatory tables, nourishing their own diseases, are ruled by a most lickerish demon, whom I shall not blush to call the Belly-demon, and the worst and most abandoned of demons...it is much better to be happy (*eudaimōn*) than to have a demon (*daimōn*) dwelling within us.”¹⁶³ It is perhaps the fear of contraction of gluttonous evil daemons that leads Clement to recommend that Christians avoid all meat that is sold in the markets.¹⁶⁴

of human sacrifice with allusions to Artemis (the *Iliad*) and Zeus, to whom a temple was purportedly dedicated with sacrifice (*Protr.* 3).

¹⁶¹*Protrepticus* 2. Translation from Butterworth, *Exhortation*, 89.

¹⁶²*Ibid.*

¹⁶³*Paedagogus* 2.1. Translation from Alexander Roberts, James Donaldson, and A. Cleveland Coxe, eds., *The Ante-Nicene Fathers* (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1885), II.241.

¹⁶⁴*Stromateis* IV.97.2-4.

By repeatedly partaking in the cultic system, then, pagans stand accused of inviting daemonic intercourse: “Why is it that...when faced by deadly and accursed daemons, you do not turn aside nor avoid them, although you have already perceived...that they are plotters and man-haters and destroyers?”¹⁶⁵ In his treatise *To the Newly Baptized*, Clement explains the importance of retaining one’s freedom from such gluttonous daemonic impulses: “For then the mind will remain steady, and will not be agitated by your eagerness and so become weak and of narrow discernment and see darkly; nor will it be worsted by gluttony, worsted by boiling rage, worsted by other passions, lying a ready prey to them.”¹⁶⁶ Thus, for Clement, as well as other Christian Platonists, proper cultic practice is inherently tied up with the cultivation and maintenance of morality. By paying cult to beings whose primary motivation is gluttony and pleasure, Hellenic suppliants inevitably contract just such insatiable desires.

Clement explains, moreover, that daemonic physiology is the reason that they continue to haunt the regions around the earth, since daemons are “unclean and loathsome spirits, admitted by all to be earthly and foul, weighed down to the ground, and ‘prowling round graves and tombs.’”¹⁶⁷ Clement’s characterization of the daemonic body as “sinking downward” is significant for understanding the threat of daemonic pollution. Since daemonic physiology is, by nature, “heavy” and downward-trending, the corruption of the human body with the daemonic will inevitably inhibit the soul’s ability to ascend and

¹⁶⁵*Protrepticus* 3. Translation, slightly emended, from Butterworth, *Exhortation*, 95.

¹⁶⁶*To the Newly Baptized*, iii.221 (Stählin). Translation from Butterworth, *Exhortation*, 371.

¹⁶⁷*Protrepticus* 4. Translation from Butterworth, *Exhortation*, 129.

experience apotheosis. Clement claims, therefore, that anyone who would bring such daemonic pollution into the community is “more wretched” than the daemons themselves.¹⁶⁸

Elsewhere, Clement explains that it is not only daemons, but likewise the gluttonous diet with which they are associated, that can impede the soul in its desired ascent. Thus, Clement exhorts newly-baptized Christians to partake of an austere, vegetarian diet:

Relax not the tension of your soul with feasting and indulgence in drink, but consider what is needful to be enough for the body. And do not hasten early to meals before the time for dinner comes; but let your dinner be bread, and let earth's grasses and the ripe fruits of the trees be set before you; and go to your meal with composure, showing no sign of raging gluttony. Be not a flesh-eater nor a lover of wine, when no sickness leads you to this as a cure.¹⁶⁹

Thus Clement, in similar ways to Hellenic vegetarians before and after him, including Porphyry, advises the avoidance of meat partially because of its supposed lack of physiological necessity, but also because it unravels the “tension” of the soul. Such “tension” was needed in order to maintain the soul’s buoyancy and ability to experience apotheosis.

In his *Stromateis*, Clement brings these various threads of psychology, physiology, and daemonology together:

For as the exhalations which arise from the earth, and from marshes, gather into mists and cloudy masses; so the vapours of fleshly lusts bring on the soul an evil condition, scattering about the idols of pleasure before the soul. Accordingly they spread darkness over the light of intelligence, the spirit attracting the exhalations that arise from lust, and thickening the masses of the passions by persistency in pleasures...And how we say that the powers of the devil, and the unclean spirits, sow into the sinner's soul, requires no more words from me, on adducing as a witness the apostolic Barnabas (and he was one of the seventy? and a fellow-worker of Paul), who speaks in these words: “Before we believed in God, the dwelling-place of our heart was unstable, truly a temple built with hands. For it was full of idolatry, and was a house of demons, through doing what was opposed to God.”¹⁷⁰

In this one passage we see the convergence of many strands that run throughout the early Christian Apologists. First, it should be noted that both the soul and daemons are in danger of

¹⁶⁸*Protrepticus* 10.

¹⁶⁹*To the Newly Baptized* iii.222 (Stählin). Translation from Butterworth, *Exhortation*, 375.

¹⁷⁰*Stromateis* II.20. Translation from William Wilson (Trans., Ed.), *The Writings of Clement of Alexandria* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1869), II.66. Clement here cites the *Epistle to Barnabas* 16.

partaking of too many “exhalations,” whether they be from the earth or from sacrificial victims, which can result in cosmological descent. Moreover, the act of “thickening” or “fattening” is put in direct contrast with the soul’s “tension.” A pious person will maintain a thin, spiritual soul that is not fattened by lust, gluttony, or the corporeal bodies of the daemons. It is these latter beings who have fed too much on the exhalations from sacrifice, and thus fattened their body to the point that they are restricted to the lower parts of the cosmos. Clement exhorts his readers, therefore, to avoid such a process of fattening in order to attain to the psychological ascent that he and his readers held up as the ultimate goal.

In the writings of Clement of Alexandria, therefore, we encounter a crescendo of the Christian discourse of daemonic pollution. Throughout early Christian literature, we repeatedly encounter the assertions that (1) animal sacrifice placates the gluttonous desires of evil daemons and (2) cultic practitioners stand in danger of daemonic pollution. What is fascinating about this process is that in each instance, the Christian discourse of daemonic corruption is often framed in terms of Platonic anthropology and psychology. Thus, it appears that this particular brand of Christian daemonology was forged in the flames of Platonic discourse, where thinkers debated the merits of various theosophical practices with regard to attaining the goal of psychological ascent.

CHRISTIAN PLATONISTS AND EARLY IMPERIAL INTELLECTUALISM

The recognition of the complex interweaving of Christian and Platonic ideologies is significant for discerning the intellectual lineage of Porphyry’s daemonology. Indeed, if Christian authors successfully synthesized Platonic psychology with Christian daemonology, then this could provide one avenue by which the Christian discourse of daemonic corruption

came to influence 2nd and 3rd century Platonic philosophy, and thus, ultimately, Porphyry himself. Such a hypothesis is strengthened once it is recognized that the literary productions of various intellectuals represent only a small fragment of ancient intellectual exchange. This is true not only with regard to the plethora of non-extant written works, but also with respect to the oral and aural exchanges that typified the late ancient philosophical experience.

Indeed, scholars of antiquity have recently begun to emphasize that extant ancient literature represents only *one* aspect of the intellectual endeavors that formed these texts' broader milieu. Pierre Hadot, for example, has stressed that the practice of "philosophy" was an all-encompassing manner of life that demanded continual self-transformation, "both psychogogically and ethically."¹⁷¹ What is more, scholars are beginning to appreciate the complexity of the intellectual communities which these philosophers frequented. Such groups are often characterized as philosophical "schools," but, as John Dillon has emphasized, such a term might be misleading in its overestimation of these communities' enrollments and organization.¹⁷² Dillon notes that these groups were rather informal, and included attendance by casual auditors, "professional" students of philosophy, as well as those preparing for political careers.¹⁷³ Porphyry claims, for example, that Plotinus' lectures were open to all,¹⁷⁴ and anecdotal evidence concerning Plotinus' school records the

¹⁷¹Pierre Hadot, *What is Ancient Philosophy?* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2002), 36.

¹⁷²John M. Dillon, "Philosophy as a Profession in Late Antiquity," in *Approaching Late Antiquity: The Transformation from Early to Late Empire*, eds. Simon Swain and Mark Edwards (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 402.

¹⁷³Dillon, "Philosophy as a Profession," 403-4.

¹⁷⁴*Vita Plotini* Ch. 1. For discussion, cf. Dillon, "Philosophy as a Profession," 405.

unexpected arrivals of a portrait-painter and Plotinus' former students.¹⁷⁵ Besides these semi-private meetings, however, there were also occasional public debates, as evidenced from the public challenge posed by Alypius to Iamblichus,¹⁷⁶ which Dillon has characterized as an ancient analogue to the modern-day press conference.¹⁷⁷

It is within just such a context that we must place the early Christian apologists and their engagement with contemporary intellectuals. As Pierre Hadot and Winrich Löhr have argued, Christian philosophical and exegetical schools were “completely analogous” to their Hellenic counterparts.¹⁷⁸ Harlow Gregory Snyder has shown the fruitfulness of applying such insights to the context of the early Christian apologists by inquiring into the material conditions of Justin Martyr's “school” in Rome.¹⁷⁹ In the *Acts of Justin*, Snyder notes, Justin provides a tantalizing detail concerning his philosophical instruction: “I have been living above the Bath of Myrtilus” where “anyone who wished could come around to my home and I would share with him the words of truth.”¹⁸⁰ Justin's instruction of students “above a bath” places him in a public thoroughfare, where, as noted by Snyder, Justin would encounter interlocutors from diverse walks of life.¹⁸¹ Snyder characterizes such a space as a “focal point of social interaction” within the city, a fact which is best summarized by Russel Meiggs: “At

¹⁷⁵*Vita Plotini* Ch. 3.

¹⁷⁶Recorded in Eunapius, 5.3.406.

¹⁷⁷Dillon, “Philosophy as a Profession,” 409.

¹⁷⁸Hadot, *What is Ancient Philosophy?* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2002), 239. Cf. Löhr, “Christianity as Philosophy,” 160-188.

¹⁷⁹Harlow Gregory Snyder, “‘Above the Bath of Myrtilus’: Justin Martyr's “School” in the City of Rome” in *Harvard Theological Review* 100, no. 3 (July 2007), 335-363.

¹⁸⁰Text of Recension A of the *Acts of Justin Martyr* from Herbert Musurillo, *Acts of the Christian Martyrs* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), 44. Translation from Snyder, “Above the Bath of Myrtilus,” 337.

¹⁸¹Snyder, “Above the Bath of Myrtilus,” 337-8.

the baths the gossip and scandal of the town could be exchanged. [Baths] combined the amenities of swimming, bath, gymnasium, and community centre; and there was no need to hurry away, for food and drink could be bought on the premises.”¹⁸² Such a remark is significant in that it places Justin the disputant at the center of the civic discourses of Rome,¹⁸³ where diverse groups of people would have congregated for discussion, which often served as preludes to dinner conversations.¹⁸⁴

At the conclusion to his study, Snyder contends that the recognition of the material conditions of the “lived philosophy” of intellectuals such as Justin can help lift them from categories such as “church father” or “Apologist” and restore them “to the noisy, smelly, and crowded streets” of their respective locales.¹⁸⁵ Such a re-contextualization is particularly important for understanding the 2nd and 3rd century Christian intellectuals heretofore discussed. It forces the recognition that the Christian incorporation of discourses of daemonic corruption did not merely take place upon pages of papyrus, but was also constructed and disputed on the street corners of the *polis*, in the alcoves of the public baths, and within the dinner rooms of private estates. It is within *this* context that Christian apocalyptic daemonology, as publically espoused by Christian “apologists”, began to exert an influence on the intellectual atmosphere of early Imperial and Late Antique Platonism. Indeed, it is suggestive that almost all of our non-Christian evidence for “daemonic sacrifice” among philosophical circles, such as is found in the writings of Plutarch and Celsus, postdates (or is

¹⁸²Russel Meiggs, *Roman Ostia* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973), 404, as cited in Snyder, “Above the Bath of Myrtinus,” 347.

¹⁸³Snyder, “Above the Bath of Myrtinus,” 343.

¹⁸⁴*Ibid*, 347.

¹⁸⁵*Ibid*, 362.

at least contemporary with) the *floruit* of the earliest Christian apologists. The acknowledgement of the diverse religious makeup of Hellenic intellectual discourses, then, serves as an essential first step in bringing to light the rich intellectual milieu from which Porphyry emerged, a milieu in which Origen of Alexandria was likewise active. It is to these two Platonists that I turn in the following chapters.

Chapter Six

‘CERTAIN PLATONISTS’: ORIGEN, PORPHYRY, AND DISCOURSES OF DAEMONIC SACRIFICE

As noted earlier, scholars such as Gregory Smith and Heidi Marx-Wolf have pointed out the similarities between the daemonologies of Origen and Porphyry. In what follows, I build upon these studies by forwarding two pieces of evidence that have evaded scholarly analysis. First, I explore the intersections of Origen and Porphyry’s intellectual circles, an examination which occasions a reconsideration of the textual framework for Porphyry’s discussion of carnivorous daemons, in particular scrutinizing his claim to be reporting the daemonology of “certain Platonists.” Second, I provide a more wide-ranging textual comparison of Origen’s and Porphyry’s respective daemonologies, a survey which will solidify the case for their dual participation in a (Christian) Platonist discourse of daemonic sacrifice and pollution.

THE SHARED INTELLECTUAL CIRCLES OF ORIGEN AND PORPHYRY

Extant evidence demonstrates that Origen of Alexandria was deeply embedded within the Platonic intellectual circles of his time. According to Porphyry’s *Against the Christians*, for example, Origen was an “auditor of Ammonius,”¹⁸⁶ an Alexandrian Platonist philosopher

¹⁸⁶Porphyry, *Against the Christians*, fr. 39 (Harnack) apud Eusebius, *HE* 6.19.6. Hierocles, a 5th century philosopher, likewise claims that Ammonius had a student named Origen (*Prov. ap. Phot. Bibl. Cod.* 214, 173a18-40; *Cod.* 251,461a24-39). Theodoret corroborates this evidence, claiming that “our Origen” studied with Ammonius the philosopher (*Affect.* 6.60). Hierocles, a 5th century philosopher, likewise claims that

Ammonius had a student named Origen (*Prov. ap. Phot. Bibl. Cod.* 214, 173a18-40; *Cod.* 251,461a24-39). It is unclear, however, whether Hierocles is referring to Origen of Alexandria or some other “Origen.” Scholars have long been perplexed, in fact, by the mention of a certain Origen in Porphyry’s *Vita Plotini*, Longinus’ *De Fine*, Hierocles’ *De Providentia*, and the writings of Eunapius. These disparate mentions of “Origen” have inspired a debate as to whether Origen the Christian thinker, well-known for his deft integration of Graeco-Roman philosophy into Christian theology, could be commensurate with the intellectual mentioned in these pagan sources, or if perhaps there are two Origenes who frequented the philosophical circles of 3rd century Alexandria. The “two Origen” hypothesis was first proposed by Henri de Valois in a 1659 commentary on Eusebius’ *Ecclesiastical History*. The impetus for de Valois’ claim stems from Eusebius’ quotation of a passage from Porphyry’s *Against the Christians*, wherein Porphyry claims that, despite the fact that Origen was a “Greek educated in Greek learning,” he nonetheless “drove headlong towards barbarian recklessness,” taking up a “manner of life [which] was Christian” (ap. Eus., *HE* 6.19.6-7). Eusebius thereafter dismisses Porphyry’s testimony, and counters that Origen had been a Christian since his childhood (*HE* 6.19.9). Based upon Porphyry’s and Eusebius’ disagreement, de Valois concludes that there was a second Origen, who was likewise a student of Plotinus, and who is referenced by Porphyry, Longinus, Hierocles, and Eunapius. De Valois’ hypothesis has found strong support among contemporary scholars, though many recent treatments have reaffirmed the singularity of the figure of Origen.

The three main problems with assuming that there is a “single Origen” are (1) the dating of Origen’s death, (2) the “Ammonian pact” and Origen’s exile from Alexandria, and (3) later reports on Origen’s literary oeuvre. First, scholars have noted the dissonance between the traditional date for Origen’s death (251CE) and the report that a certain Origen wrote a treatise entitled *That the King is the Only Creator* during Galleinus’ reign (r. 253-268), and thus at least two years after the Christian Origen’s purported death. The evidence here is rather ambiguous, however, since Eusebius here only provides a *terminus post quem* (ca. 251CE), but does not give any more precise information. Moreover, Eusebius elsewhere places Origen’s death ca. 254-56CE (*HE* 6.2.2-12), and thus within the range of the purported writing of the above-mentioned treatise.

A second problem for merging the two Origen figures is biographical chronology. According to Porphyry, a certain Origen agreed with Plotinus and Erennius, two fellow students of Ammonius, to keep their instructor’s secret teachings concealed, a pact that was presumably sealed in Alexandria soon after Ammonius’ death (ca. 243CE). The difficulty with understanding this as a reference to the Christian Origen is that Origen is said to have left Alexandria around 232 CE, nearly eleven years before the pact could have been enacted. Scholars such as Elizabeth De Palma Digeser have proposed that Origen could have visited Alexandria for the occasion, though the lack of evidence for Origen’s renewed presence in Alexandria remains a problem for the “one Origen” hypothesis.

Finally, a third issue is Origen’s literary output. Longinus claims that a certain Origen mostly resisted writing down his philosophical writings, and instead preferred to communicate his teachings orally (*Peri Telous*, ap. Porph. *VP*, 20). Porphyry likewise suggests that a certain Origen had a relatively meager literary output, as he claims that Origen composed only two treatises. For anyone who is familiar with the Christian Origen’s voluminous literary production, such reports of literary restraint are hard to reconcile. What is more, the literary works ascribed to the two Origenes never appear in a single list; that is, pagan authors never mention “Origen’s” Christian treatises, whereas Christian authors never mention the treatises ascribed to Origen by pagan authors (*On Daemons*, *That the King is the Only Creator*). Elizabeth DePalma Digeser and Ilaria L.E. Ramelli have both attempted to assuage this discrepancy by asserting that Origen’s writings were simply read and interpreted along parallel (non-intersecting) reading networks. Digeser herself points out, however, that Porphyry had extensive knowledge of Origen’s intellectual career and literary output, including his monumental *De Principiis* (Digeser, *A Threat to Public Piety*, 177-78); if such familiarity is to be presumed, then how could Porphyry imply that the Christian Origen preferred to communicate his teachings orally, rather than through writing? The evidence from our earliest source on the issue gives strong indications, then, that there were two separate Origenes who frequented the philosophical circles of 3rd century Platonists. The burden of evidence, therefore, rests with those who would read against the witness of Porphyry and assert the singular identity of the Christian and pagan Origenes.

Thomas Böhm, Elizabeth DePalma Digeser, and Ilaria L.E. Ramelli have attempted to shore up the weaknesses of the one Origen hypothesis by outlining the ostensible doctrinal similarities between the two authors. These include the two authors’ agreement concerning the intelligibility of the Creator-Deity (Böhm), as well as their similar utilization of Homeric literature (Ramelli). Such proposals are suggestive, but there are two significant caveats that render such argumentation circumspect. First, doctrinal similarities need not imply

and instructor of the famous Plotinus. Origen claims that he was not the only Christian who pursued training in Hellenic philosophy, but instead “followed the example” of Pantaenus, a Christian Stoic that purportedly taught in Alexandria (and possibly served as the tutor for Clement of Alexandria),¹⁸⁷ as well as Heraclas, the presbyter and future bishop. Porphyry corroborates Origen’s witness to the strong Christian presence among Hellenic intellectual circles, as the Neo-Platonist claims that “many Christians” attended Plotinus’ classes in Rome.¹⁸⁸

identity. Even the most ardent supporters of the two Origen hypothesis would concede that these two figures emerged from similar intellectual contexts; thus, the fact that the two Origenes share various philosophical tenets is to be expected of two thinkers who shared similar chronological and geographical milieu, and even shared a philosophical instructor (Ammonius). On balance, then, their philosophical agreement is rather unremarkable, and holds little value in solving the problem of their identification. Second, scholars have failed to consider one of the few philosophical tenets for which we have information concerning the pagan Christian: daemonology. Proclus, in his *Commentary on the Timaeus*, claims that a certain Origen interpreted the myth of Atlantis as referring to “the opposition of certain daemons, some of them being more, but others less, excellent. And some of them being superior in multitude, but others in power: some of them vanquishing, but others being vanquished” (I.77). According to Proclus, therefore, this Origen believed daemons to be of varying excellence, strength, and number. This is in direct contrast to the conceptualization of Origen the Christian, who held daemons to be part of an undifferentiated onslaught of evil powers against the forces of good. Origen argues, for example, that “the name of daemons is not morally neutral like that of men,” rather, “the name of daemons is always applied to evil powers” (*Contra Celsum* V.5). Elsewhere in the same work, Origen states that “the entire race” of daemons is “evil” (*Contra Celsum* VIII.31). Origen’s comments, therefore, are difficult to square with Proclus’ contention that “Origen” held to a sliding scale of excellence for daemons. A brief comparison of the two Origenes’ daemonologies, therefore, thwarts any attempt to use doctrinal similarities to solve the problem of the two Origenes, and serves as another piece of evidence that the Neo-Platonist Origen and Christian Origen, while perhaps similar in some respects, are not one and the same. For further discussion, see Pier Franco Beatrice, “Porphyry’s Judgment on Origen,” in *Origeniana Quinta*, ed. R. J. Daly. Leuven University Press (1992), 351–367; Thomas Böhm, “Origenes- Theologe und (Neu-)Platoniker? Oder: Wem Soll Man mißtrauen Eusebius oder Porphyrius?” *Adamantius* 8 (2002), 7-23; Elizabeth DePalma Digeser, “Origen on the Limes: Rhetoric and the Polarization of Identity in the Late Third Century,” in *The Rhetoric of Power in Late Antiquity: Religion and Politics in Byzantium, Europe and the Early Islamic World*, eds. Robert M. Frakes, Elizabeth DePalma Digeser and Justin Stephens (New York: Tauris Academic Studies, 2010), 197-218; Heinrich Dörrie, “Ammonios Sakkas,” *Theologische Realenzyklopädie* 2 (1978), 463-471; Mark J. Edwards, “Ammonius, Teacher of Origen,” *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 44.2 (1993), 169-181; Richard Goulet, “Porphyre, Ammonius, Les Deux Origène et les autres,” *Revue D’Histoire et de philosophie religieuses* 57.4 (1977), 471-496; Ilaria L.E. Ramelli, “Origen, Patristic Philosophy, and Christian Platonism; Rethinking the Christianisation of Hellenism,” *Vigilae Christianae* 63 (2009), 217-263.

¹⁸⁷Eusebius, *HE* 6.19.10-14, 5.11.2-5, 6.13.2. See also *HE* 6.3.2. For discussion, cf. Ramelli, “Origen,” 219.

¹⁸⁸Porphy, *VP*, 16. For discussion, cf. Ramelli, “Origen,” 239.

After leaving Alexandria, Origen continued his philosophical endeavors by operating his own philosophical school, where he entertained auditors both Christian and Hellenic, and instructed pupils in Christian doctrine and Hellenic *paideia*.¹⁸⁹ Origen likely inherited such eclecticism from his teacher, Ammonius, who serves as a vital link between the circles of Christian and Hellenic Platonists in the 3rd century. According to the reconstruction of Digeser, Ammonius taught a philosophy “without conflicts” between the classical Greek thinkers, drawing on the writings and traditions of Plato, Aristotle and Pythagoras.¹⁹⁰ Ammonius tutored several aspiring philosophers in early 3rd century Alexandria, and attracted a wide range of pupils, including Origen, Plotinus, and Longinus.¹⁹¹ Porphyry states that Ammonius “made the greatest advance in philosophy of our time,” and that Origen “owed much to his master” with regard to philosophical training.¹⁹² Interestingly, Porphyry claims that Ammonius himself was a Christian prior to taking up Hellenic customs,¹⁹³ a fact that may explain his theologically-diverse audience.

¹⁸⁹HE 6.17.2-3. Origen’s dynamic curriculum is confirmed by the reports of his student Gregory Thaumaturgus (*Address of Thanksgiving to Origen*, chs. 6-9, 11), as well as Origen’s *Letter to Gregory*, where the Alexandrian philosopher situates philosophical training as essential in the formation of a Christian intellectual. Cf. the examination of Gregory Thaumaturgus’ testimony in Winrich Löhr, “Christianity as Philosophy,” 160-188. The witness and identity of Gregory Thaumaturgus has been the subject of extensive debate among contemporary scholars; I here retain the traditional identification of Gregory Thaumaturgus with the author of the *Address of Thanksgiving to Origen*, though such identification remains an open question. For an overview of the contemporary debate, cf. Michael Slusser, “Saint Gregory Thaumaturgus,” *Expository Times* 120.12 (September 2009), pp. 573-585. On Origen’s *Letter to Gregory* and Christian intellectual training, cf. Ramelli, “Origen,” 222.

¹⁹⁰Digeser, *A Threat to Public Piety*, 17.

¹⁹¹Porphyry, *Against the Christians*, fr. 39 (Harnack), apud Eus. HE 6.19.6. Cf. Porphyry, *Vita Plotini* 3.10.

¹⁹²Eusebius HE 6.19.6. Translation from Eusebius of Caesarea, *The Ecclesiastical History*. Translated by J. E. L. Oulton (Cambridge, Mass.; London: Harvard University Press; W. Heinemann, 1973), II.59.

¹⁹³The text here is quite ambiguous. In full, Porphyry states: “For Ammonius was a Christian, brought up in Christian doctrine by his parents, yet, when he began to think and study philosophy, he immediately changed his way of life conformably to the laws” (Eus., HE 6.19.6; Oulton, *Eusebius: Ecclesiastical History*, II.59). Based on this fragment, it is impossible to determine what Porphyry implied by Ammonius’ “conformity to the laws.” Based on his own disdain of animal sacrifice, it is perhaps best to avoid simplistically equating

The recognition of the close connection between Origen, Ammonius, and Plotinus has important ramifications for our understanding of Porphyry's intellectual context, in that it places Origen within the same intellectual circles as Porphyry's primary philosophical instructors. Porphyry received some initial philosophical instruction in Athens under Longinus, one of Ammonius' former students.¹⁹⁴ Around 263 CE, Porphyry joined Plotinus' circle in Rome.¹⁹⁵ Porphyry received his philosophical training, therefore, from two of Ammonius' pupils, and thus stands within the same philosophical lineage as Origen.

There are some indications, moreover, that Porphyry and Origen's association extends even beyond a shared intellectual pedigree. Porphyry claims, for example, that he personally encountered Origen when the Neo-Platonist "was still quite young," and admits that, despite Origen's inappropriate allegorical exegesis, the Alexandrian "had a great reputation, and still holds it, because of the writings he has left behind him" and "whose fame has been widespread among the teachers of this kind of learning."¹⁹⁶ Porphyry's meeting with Origen likely occurred around 248-50 CE in Caesarea or Tyre, Porphyry's hometown.¹⁹⁷ Porphyry doesn't specify his and Origen's interactions, though Athanasius Syrus, a 7th

Porphyry's statement with adherence to animal sacrifice, though perhaps some other sacrificial service is implied. Elizabeth DePalma Digeser cautions against too hastily trusting Porphyry's implication that Ammonius completely abandoned Christianity: "Porphyry's statement indicates that Ammonius achieved 'conformity' with the Graeco-Roman mores and civil codes of Alexandria, which, in turn, implies, not that he sacrificed, since such an act does not seem to have been called for, but that he probably did not protest Septimius Severus's edict banning conversion to Christianity" (Digeser, *A Threat to Public Piety*, 42-3). Digeser points to two pieces of evidence to contend that Ammonius need not necessarily be considered a complete "apostate": (1) Ammonius is said to have continued to subject biblical texts to exegesis and textual criticism, and (2) Christian Gnostics and other Christians like Theodotus indicate that "quasi-Christian" philosophers would not have been anomalous in the Late Antique Alexandrian context (Ibid, 46-7).

¹⁹⁴*Vita Plotini* 4, 7.51.

¹⁹⁵*Vita Plotini* 4.7-9, 5.1-5. On Porphyry at Plotinus' school, see Dillon, "Philosophy as a Profession," 401-418.

¹⁹⁶Eusebius, *HE* 6.19.6. Translation from Oulton, *Eusebius: Ecclesiastical History*, II.59.

¹⁹⁷Digeser, *A Threat to Piety*, 26.

century Syriac Patriarch, claims that Porphyry was one of Origen's pupils.¹⁹⁸ Porphyry's tutelage under Origen is not well documented, though not altogether implausible, since the fifth century historian Socrates of Constantinople claims that Porphyry was a Christian prior to his "apostasy" to Hellenism.¹⁹⁹ According to the Socrates' account, Porphyry remained faithful until he was attacked by a group of Christians at Caesarea, an incident which explains both his apostasy and fervent oppositional writings.²⁰⁰

Even if the traditions concerning Porphyry's Christian past and tutelage under Origen are apocryphal, there remain strong literary connections between the two. Porphyry, for example, hints that he is familiar with Origen's oeuvre, both by his mention of "the writings [Origen] has left behind him,"²⁰¹ and also by providing a list of Origen's favored philosophers.²⁰² As Digeser has pointed out, the latter list corresponds to the Hellenic authors featured most prominently in Origen's writings, and thus likely indicates Porphyry's familiarity with Origen's library and/or literature. Furthermore, Pier Franco Beatrice has noted that Porphyry's catalogue of authors closely corresponds to the description of Origen's curriculum by Gregory Thaumaturgus in his panegyric of 240 CE.²⁰³ Porphyry's familiarity

¹⁹⁸This comes from a tenth century manuscript, in the biographical information that accompanies Porphyry's *Isagoge*. For discussion, see Digeser, *A Threat to Public Piety*, 76.

¹⁹⁹Socrates, *HE* 3.23.37-39, relying on a lost fragment of Eusebius' work. Nicephorus likewise repeats this claim (*HE* 10.36), though likely in reliance upon Socrates. Cf. Digeser, *A Threat to Public Piety*, 76, as well as Andrew Smith and David Wasserstein, eds. 1993. *Porphyrii Philosophi Fragmenta* (Stuttgartiae: B.G. Teubneri), 14-15.

²⁰⁰Socrates, *HE* 3.23.37-39; Nicephorus *HE* 10.36. For discussion, see Digeser, *A Threat to Public Piety*, 76-77.

²⁰¹Eusebius, *HE* 6.19.6

²⁰²Eusebius, *HE* 6.19.6-7.

²⁰³Beatrice, "Porphyry's Judgment," 354-5, citing Gregory Thaumaturgus *Adress of Thanksgiving*, 7-14. Beatrice denies that Gregory Thaumaturgus is the author of the panegyric, and identifies the author as the otherwise-unknown 'Theodore-Gregory.'

with Origen's literary corpus is confirmed, moreover, by the former's paraphrasing of a passage from Origen's *Peri Archon* in Porphyry's treatise *Against the Christians*.²⁰⁴ In sum, Porphyry stands directly within the intellectual lineage of Origen of Alexandria, and likewise exhibits familiarity with the Christian theologian's career and literary oeuvre, a point which reinforces the close connection between the ideological domains of Porphyry and Origen.

There are intra-textual indications, furthermore, that Porphyry is drawing from the intellectual circle of Ammonius of Alexandria, and, thus, from the philosophical milieu in which Origen was embedded. Porphyry introduces his discussion of daemonic sacrifice thusly:

ἐμοὶ δὲ τὰ μὲν ἄλλα εὖστομα κείσθω, ἃ δ' οὖν τῶν Πλατωνικῶν τινὲς ἐδημοσίευσαν, ταῦτα ἀνεμέσητον παρατιθέντα τοῖς εὐζυνέτοις μὲν εἰν τὰ προκείμενα· λέγουσι δὲ ὧδε.

For the rest, 'let it remain unsaid' by me; but it is not blameworthy to set before those of good understanding, to illuminate the discussion, thoughts which certain Platonists have made public. This is what they say.²⁰⁵

Despite past attempts to identify these "Platonists" with various ancient writers,²⁰⁶ Mark J.

Edwards has noted that it was more common to "speak allusively," as Porphyry does here, of contemporary acquaintances (or those within your own philosophical circle), while ancient sources were typically quoted by name (or not at all).²⁰⁷ Independent of Edwards, Hans

²⁰⁴Porphyry, *Against the Christians*, fr. 1 (Harnack) apud Eusebius, *Praeparatio* I.2, paraphrasing Origen, *Peri Archon* 4.1.1. For discussion, cf. Digeser, *A Threat to Public Piety*, 178.

²⁰⁵DA 2.36.6. Translation adapted from Clark, *On Abstinence*, 70.

²⁰⁶Gillian Clark, for example, proposed Xenocrates as a possible source, based on the latter's ascription to the existence of malevolent daemons as reported by Cleombrotus in Plutarch's *De Defectu Oraculorum*. (Clark, *On Abstinence*, 154 n. 299, citing Plutarch, *Mor.* 416d). Some have proffered that Porphyry could be drawing upon the work of Numenius, a philosopher who was purported to have entertained the possibility of malevolent daemons. This proposal is rather unlikely, since Porphyry elsewhere refers to Numenius as a "Pythagorean," rather than a "Platonist" as he does his source here (Yochanan Lewy, *Chaldaean Oracles and Theurgy: Mysticism Magic and Platonism in the Later Roman Empire*, ed. Michel Tardieu (Paris: Études augustiniennes, 1978), 497 n. 1). For discussion on Numenius' daemonology, see John M. Dillon, *The Middle Platonists, 80 B.C. to A.D. 220* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1996), 378.

²⁰⁷Mark Edwards, "Porphyry's Egyptian 'De Abstinencia' II.47," *Hermes* 123, no. 1 (1995), 127.

Lewy has forwarded a compelling argument for identifying Porphyry's source as a contemporary philosopher. Lewy contends that Porphyry's source is none other than Origen the Neo-Platonist, a 3rd century pupil of Ammonius Saccas and colleague of Porphyry's mentor Plotinus. (Contemporary scholars often refer to this Origen as the "the Neo-Platonist" in order to distinguish him from his Christian namesake).²⁰⁸ Lewy bases this identification on Porphyry's initial hesitancy to discuss the topic ("let it remain unsaid by me," but it is not blameworthy...) and accompanying remark that certain Platonists have already "made public" these teachings. Lewy connects this hesitancy concerning now-published secret teachings with Porphyry's statements regarding the pupils of Ammonius in the *Vita Plotini*; Porphyry there claims that Plotinus, Errenus and Origen the Neo-Platonist entered into a pact to keep secret the teachings of their teacher, the late Ammonius Saccas. According to Porphyry, Origen the Neo-Platonist broke the pact by publishing a treatise entitled *On Daemons*.²⁰⁹ Lewy concludes, therefore, that Porphyry must be drawing upon Origen the Neo-Platonist's non-extant treatise *On Daemons* which "made public" Ammonius' secret teachings. Lewy supplements this hypothesis by noting that our only remaining testimony concerning the daemonology of Origen the Neo-Platonist attests to his belief in classes of

²⁰⁸I here follow the traditional belief in the existence of two Origenes, one a Christian, another a non-Christian Platonist, despite the compelling arguments made by some recent studies on behalf of the "one Origen" hypothesis. For discussion and bibliography, see note 186 above.

²⁰⁹Lewy, *Chaldaean Oracles*, 505. Cf. *Vita Plotini* 3.24-25. See also Beatrice, "Porphyry's Judgment," 362. Beatrice concurs with Lewy's assessment, but disagrees with Lewy concerning the identification of the Origen in question; namely, Beatrice contends that there was only one Origen, and thus asserts that it was Origen the Christian theologian who wrote a treatise *On Daemons*. Beatrice, then, uses Lewy's argument to assert that Origen the Christian theologian exerted influence upon Porphyry through this treatise. The present hypothesis differs from Beatrice and sides with Lewy concerning the existence of two Origenes, one a Christian theologian, another a "Hellenic" Neo-Platonist. The fact that Porphyry seems to be drawing upon multiple sources, however, indicates that the contemporary scholar need not select one intellectual influence or the other – it is quite possible that there were two Origenes in the Ammonian philosophical lineage, and that both exerted influence on the daemonology of Porphyry's *De Abstinencia*.

both good and evil daemons, a bifurcated daemonology that is comparable to the doctrines contained in the *De Abstinencia* extract.²¹⁰

Lewy is correct to identify the circle around Ammonius as the ultimate source for Porphyry's discussion, but his proposal overburdens the available evidence in attempting to identify a *singular* source. It is significant, for example, that Porphyry claims that he is reporting the ἀνεμέσητον...τῶν Πλατωνικῶν τινές.²¹¹ Hence, Porphyry claims that he is drawing on *multiple* Platonic witnesses, as indicated by the use of genitive plural in reference to the "Platonists," as well as the third person plural verb λέγουσι (2.36.6). The attempt to identify a singular source for Porphyry's daemonological diversion misconstrues Porphyry's framing of his source material. Lewy is correct to point to the Neo-Platonist Origen's non-extant treatise *On Daemons* as a possible influence, but this does not necessarily entail that this treatise was Porphyry's *exclusive* source.

Lewy's broader suggestion, however, that Porphyry is drawing upon the heirs of Ammonius, is significant. As noted earlier, Origen of Alexandria, following the example of Christian intellectuals before him, received philosophical instruction under Ammonius. Origen continued, moreover, to train his own pupils in an eclectic curriculum that included the Hellenic instruction he had received from Ammonius. Porphyry himself is well aware of Origen's Ammonian heritage; Porphyry explicitly acknowledges Origen's background as an "auditor" of Ammonius, and even claims that Origen "owed much to his master [Ammonius]." When Porphyry attributes his daemonological discourse to "certain Platonists," therefore, he provides evidence that he is drawing from a particular circle of

²¹⁰Lewy, *Chaldaean Oracles*, 505-508.

²¹¹DA 2.36.6.

contemporary philosophers which included the Christian Origen. This allusive attribution, when combined with Porphyry's personal knowledge of Origen's literature and career, suggests that Origen of Alexandria might be the crucial figure who linked Christian Platonist daemonology with Hellenic intellectual circles, and thus deserves consideration as a potential influence upon the daemonology of Porphyry. The advantage of this hypothesis is that the contours of the Christian Origen's daemonology can be reconstructed based on the wealth of the extant evidence. Thus, this hypothesis is textually verifiable, an attribute which is comparatively lacking for alternative proposals. In the following section, therefore, I test this hypothesis through an extended textual comparison of the daemonologies of Origen and Porphyry.

ORIGEN'S AND PORPHYRY'S DAEMONOLOGY: A TEXTUAL COMPARISON

Porphyry's cultural and philosophical milieu placed him squarely within a context that interacted extensively with Christian Platonist daemonology. Such an observation, in turn, undergirds the potentiality and plausibility that Porphyry's daemonology draws upon a common intellectual lineage with Origen's.²¹² Indeed, scholars of antiquity are becoming increasingly aware of the numerous cross-cult and cross-philosophical similarities among 3rd

²¹²On Origen's daemonology, cf. Henri Crouzel, "Celse Et Origène À Propos Des <Démones>," in *Frontières Terrestres, Frontières Célestes Dans L'antiquité*, ed. Aline Rousselle (Paris: Presses Universitaires de Perpignan, 1995), 331-355; Henri Crouzel, "Diable Et Démones Dans Les Homélies D'Origène," *Bulletin De Littérature Ecclésiastique* 95, no. 4 (1994), 303-331; Henri Crouzel, "Le Démoniaque Dans L'Oeuvre D'Origène," in *Figures Du Démoniaque, Hier Et Aujourd'Hui*, ed. Michel Lagrée and others (Bruxelles: Facultés universitaires Saint-Louis, 1992), 31-61.

century intellectuals that have typically been dissimilated as “Christian” and “pagan.”²¹³

With regards to daemonology, moreover, scholars have occasionally noted the ostensible parallels between Porphyry and his Christian counterparts. In his wide-ranging survey of daemonological physiologies, for example, Gregory Smith noted that Porphyry’s understanding of the daemonic body aligned closely with Origen’s, though Smith did not elaborate on possible literary ties.²¹⁴ What is more, as part of her research of the *via universalis* in the writings of Origen, Porphyry and Iamblichus, Heidi Marx-Wolf pointed out that “Porphyry shared much more in common with Christian writers on the nature of evil *daimōnes* and their culpability for mass deception, corruption, pain and suffering” than some of his contemporaries, such as Iamblichus.²¹⁵ In what follows, then, I juxtapose the discourses of daemonic sacrifice and corruption as found in the extant literature of Origen with that of Porphyry, a survey which will solidify the case for their dual participation in a (Christian) Platonist discourse of daemonic sacrifice and pollution.

Origen’s and Porphyry’s characterization of malevolent demons share many similarities. Both authors, for example, claim that these evil beings have usurped the identity of local deities for their own benefits. Porphyry claims that demons “put on the masks of

²¹³Cf. John Dillon, “Plotinus, Philo, and Origen on the Grades of Virtue” in Horst-Dieter Blum, ed., *Platonismus und Christentum*, (Münster: Aschendorffsche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1983), 92-105; Henri Crouzel, *Origene et Plotin Comparaison doctrinale* (Paris: Téqui, 1991).

²¹⁴Smith, “How Thin is a Demon?”, 479-512.

²¹⁵Marx-Wolf, *Third-Century Daimonologies and the Via Universalis: Origen, Porphyry and Iamblichus on Daimones and Other Angels*, Vol. 46 (Louvain: Peeters, 2010), 209. This point is elaborated further in Marx-Wolf’s unpublished dissertation, “Platonists and High Priests: Daemonology, Ritual and Social Order in the Third Century CE” (Ph.D., University of California, Santa Barbara, 2009), esp. 87-137. Marx-Wolf builds her case, however, on only a handful of passages, and otherwise relies heavily upon the “single Origen” hypothesis (see above, note 195).

other gods.”²¹⁶ and therefore “receive from everyone honours equal to the gods and other forms of worship.”²¹⁷ Origen likewise claims that daemons receive illicit worship, and attributes this improper cultic activity to the ignorance of the populace: “The demons on earth are thought to be gods by people who have not been educated in the matter of daemons.”²¹⁸ Thus, both Porphyry and Origen attribute the impious worship of evil daemons to the daemonic trickery of a foolish populace, reproducing a theme of daemonic mimicry and trickery that appears through early Jewish and Christian daemonologies.²¹⁹

What is more, both Origen and Porphyry correlate the variability of these daemonic cults to local custom. For example, Origen states that daemons receive their names based on the local language,²²⁰ and Porphyry similarly attributes daemonic names to local idiosyncrasies.²²¹ This kind of daemonological etiology is part of the process of

²¹⁶DA 2.40.3. “ὑποδύντες τὰ τῶν ἄλλων θεῶν πρόσωπα.” Greek text throughout taken from A. Nauck, ed., *Porphyrii Philosophi Platonici Opuscula Selecta*, 2nd ed. (Leipzig: Teubner, 1886 (1963)), 85-269.

²¹⁷DA 2.37.4. “παρ’ ἐκάστοις τυγχάνουσι τιμῶν τ’ ἰσοθέων καὶ τῆς ἄλλης θεραπέας.” Translation from Clark, *On Abstinence*, 70.

²¹⁸CC III.29. “οἱ μὲν ἐπὶ γῆς δαίμονες, παρὰ τοῖς μὴ παιδευθεῖσι περὶ δαιμόνων νομιζόμενοι εἶναι θεοί.” Chadwick, *Contra Celsum*, 147. Interestingly, both Porphyry and Origen stress that the status of daemons leads to confusion among the people, and stress the need for correct instruction. Porphyry states: “the concept of daimons is confused and leads to serious misrepresentation, so it is necessary to give a rational analysis of their nature, for perhaps (they say) it is necessary to show why people have gone astray about them” (DA 2.38.1, Clark, *On Abstinence*, 70).

²¹⁹On this theme in early Christian literature, cf. A.Y. Reed, “The Trickery of the Fallen Angels and the Demonic Mimesis of the Divine: Aetiology, Demonology and Polemics in the Writings of Justin Martyr,” *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 12, no. 2 (2004), 141-171.

²²⁰“Καὶ οὕτως εὗρεθήσεται τῶν ἐπὶ γῆς δαιμόνων, λαχόντων διαφόρους τόπους, φέρεσθαι τὰ ὀνόματα οἰκείως ταῖς κατὰ τόπον καὶ ἔθνος διαλέκτοις.” “So also the names of the daemons upon earth, which have possession of different localities, will be found to be related to the languages used in each respective locality and nations” (CC I.24, Chadwick, *Contra Celsum*, 24).

²²¹DA 2.37.4: τοῦτων δὲ οἱ μὲν κατονομασθέντες ὑπὸ τῶν ἀνθρώπων...οἱ δὲ ὡς τὸ πολὺ μὲν οὐ πάνυ τι κατονομάσθησαν, ὑπ’ ἐνίων δὲ κατὰ κώμας ἢ τινὰς πόλεις ὀνόματός τε καὶ θρησκείας ἀφανῶς τυγχάνουσιν: “People have given some of them [the daemons] names...Others have no name at all in most places, but acquire a name and cult inconspicuously from a few people in villages or in some cities” (DA 2.37.4; Clark, *On Abstinence*, pg. 70).

“systematization” that David Frankfurter has so fruitfully traced in his work, *Evil Incarnate*. As noted by Frankfurter, such a process bestows a certain power upon the daemonological theorist (Origen, Porphyry) by giving them a supra-local daemonological knowledge that simultaneously undermines and subordinates the local/regional knowledge that attributes divine names to local deities. Philosophers like Origen and Porphyry, both interested for various reasons in diminishing the stature of the cult, systematized cultic variation by categorizing it under the undifferentiated control of the “daemonic.”

Despite their attempts to systematize the chaotic realm of the daemonic, both Porphyry and Origen claim that daemons continue to wreak havoc upon the earth. Origen states that evil daemons “bring about plagues, or famines, or stormy seas, or anything similar.”²²² Origen reiterates elsewhere that daemons bring about “famines, barren vines and fruit-trees, and droughts, and also for the pollution of the air, causing damage to the fruits.”²²³ Interestingly, Porphyry attributes just the same types of events to malevolent daemons:

One thing especially should be counted among the greatest harm done by the maleficent *daimōnes*: they are themselves responsible for the sufferings that occur around the earth (plagues, crop failures, earthquakes, droughts and the like), but convince us that the responsibility lies with those who are responsible for just the opposite.²²⁴

²²²CC I.31. “φαύλων δαιμονίων, ἐνεργούντων λοιμούς ἢ ἀφορίας ἢ δυσπλοΐας ἢ τι τῶν παραπλησιῶν.” Chadwick, *Contra Celsum*, 31.

²²³CC VIII.31. “δαιμόνων ἐστὶν ἔργα, φήσομεν ὅτι λιμοὶ καὶ ἀφορίαι σταφυλῆς καὶ ἀκροδρύων καὶ αὐχοὶ ἀλλὰ καὶ ἡ τοῦ ἀέρος διαφθορά ἐπὶ λύμῃ τῶν καρπῶν.” Chadwick, *Contra Celsum*, 475.

²²⁴DA 2.40.1. “ἐν γὰρ δὴ καὶ τοῦτο τῆς μεγίστης βλάβης τῆς ἀπὸ τῶν κακοεργῶν δαιμόνων θετέον, ὅτι αὐτοὶ αἵτιοι γιγνόμενοι τῶν περὶ τὴν γῆν παθημάτων, οἷον λοιμῶν, ἀφοριῶν, σεισμῶν, αὐχμῶν καὶ τῶν ὁμοίων, ἀναπεύθουσιν ἡμᾶς, ὥς ἄρα τούτων αἱτιοὶ εἰσιν οἵπερ καὶ τῶν ἐναντιωτάτων [τουτέστιν τῶν εὐφοριῶν], ἑαυτοὺς ἐξαιροῦντες τῆς αἰτίας καὶ αὐτὸ τοῦτο πραγματευόμενοι πρῶτον, τὸ λανθάνειν ἀδικοῦντες.” Clark, *On Abstinence*, 71.

Thus, both Origen and Porphyry attribute plagues, famines, and various other agricultural and cosmological disasters to the ongoing activity of evil daemons.²²⁵ Porphyry reiterates the daemons' desire to conceal their own involvement in these disasters ("convince us..."), reproducing a motif that is typically found among Christian daemonologies.

According to Porphyry, moreover, evil daemons lie at the root of "civil conflicts and wars and kindred events."²²⁶ The attribution of strife and war to daemons finds a parallel in Origen's *Contra Celsum*, where he contends that daemons "stir up wars, violate oaths, and disturb the peace."²²⁷ Thus, Porphyry's etiology of unfortunate worldly events falls precisely in line with that of his Christian Platonist contemporary.

Interestingly, Porphyry's daemonology likewise agrees with Christian counterparts by claiming that daemons have a "leader." In his discussions of "magicians" who utilize the agency of evil daemons, Porphyry claims that such people give "honor" to their daemonic assistants "and in particular their chief."²²⁸ The claim that daemons have some kind of "chief" is rather peculiar among non-Christian intellectuals, but is in accord with popular Jewish and Christian daemonologies, which often positioned the biblical figure of Satan as

²²⁵Origen claims further that daemons "are responsible for...even the death of animals and plague among men" (CC VIII.32). "καὶ τῶ τῶν ζώων θανάτῳ καὶ τῶ κατὰ τῶν ἀνθρώπων λοιμῶ." On natural disasters and calamities attributed to daemons, cf. Plutarch, *Moralia* 417D,E; *Corp. Hermet.* XVI.10.1-3; Augustine, *Civ. Dei.* X.21. On the connection with Hermetic literature, cf. Timotin, *La Démonologie Platonicienne : Histoire De La Notion De Daimon De Platon Aux Derniers Néoplatoniciens* (Leiden;Boston: Brill, 2012), 209: "L'idée d'associer les calamités naturelles à l'influence des daimones se retrouve dans les Hermetica, où il ne s'agit pas cependant de daimones proprement mauvais, mais plutôt de daimones justiciers, les calamités qu'ils sont censés produire ayant une fonction éminemment punitive et pédagogique."

²²⁶DA 2.40.3. "στάσεις καὶ πόλεμοι φύονται καὶ τὰ συγγενῇ τούτων." Clark, *On Abstinence*, 72.

²²⁷CC VIII.73. Chadwick, *Contra Celsum*, 509.

²²⁸DA 2.41.5. "μάλιστα καὶ τὸν προεστῶτα αὐτῶν." In his *Praeparatio Evangelica*, Eusebius preserves a fragment from Porphyry's *Of the Philosophy to be Derived from Oracles*, which positions Hecate, or, in another fragment, Sarapis, as the "ruler" of the daemons (IV.23).

the leader of the daemonic ranks. Indeed, Porphyry could have easily acquired such an idea from his acquaintance with Origen's writings. Origen, states, for example that "a great daemon, in fact the ruler of daemons" holds human souls in subjection once they have come to earth,²²⁹ and elsewhere identifies this figure as "Satan" or "the Devil."²³⁰

Origen and Porphyry agree that this "chief daemon" and his minions aim to distract the pious from the divine. Origen states, for example, that daemons "lead men astray and distract them, and drag them down from God and the world beyond the heavens to earthly things."²³¹ He attributes such activity to the daemons' opposition to God, claiming that daemons "engage in this sort of activity because they want to lead the human race away from the true God."²³² In similar fashion, Porphyry claims that the daemonic trickery of humankind is due to their desire to lead men away from authentic divinity and towards themselves. Porphyry explains their illicit mimicry: "They do such things because they want to dislodge us from a correct concept of the gods and convert us to themselves...slipping on (as it were) the masks of the other gods."²³³ Elsewhere, Porphyry again asserts that the daemons, along with their "ruling power," have rather high aspirations: "They want to be

²²⁹CC I.31. "μεγάλου δαίμονος καὶ δαιμόνων ἄρχοντος, ὑποτάξαντος ὅλας τὰς ἐπὶ γῆν ἐληλυθυίας ἀνθρώπων ψυχάς." Chadwick, *Contra Celsum*, 31.

²³⁰CC II.51, VI.43-44.

²³¹CC V.5. "πλανώντων καὶ περισπώντων τοὺς ἀνθρώπους καὶ καθελκόντων ἀπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ τῶν ὑπερουρανίων ἐπὶ τὰ τῆδε πράγματα." Chadwick, *Contra Celsum*, 267.

²³²CC IV.92.. "περὶ τὸ τοιοῦτον ἔργον καταγινόμενοι, βουλόμενοι ἀπάγειν τοῦ ἀληθινοῦ θεοῦ τὸ τῶν ἀνθρώπων γένος." Chadwick, *Contra Celsum*, 257.

²³³DA 2.40.2-3. "ταῦτα δὲ καὶ τὰ ὅμοια ποιοῦσιν μεταστῆσαι ἡμᾶς ἐθέλοντες ἀπὸ τῆς ὀρθῆς ἐννοίας τῶν θεῶν καὶ ἐφ' ἑαυτοὺς ἐπιστρέψαι... καὶ ὥσπερ ὑποδύντες τὰ τῶν ἄλλων θεῶν πρόσωπα, τῆς ἡμετέρας ἀβουλίας ἀπολαύουσι, προσεταιριζόμενοι τὰ πλήθη διὰ τοῦ τὰς ἐπιθυμίας τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἐκκαίειν ἔρωσιν καὶ πόθοις πλούτων καὶ δυναστειῶν καὶ ἡδονῶν." Clark, *On Abstinence*, 72.

gods, and the power that rules them wants to be thought the greatest god.”²³⁴ The latter assertion, that the leader of the daemons aspires to the throne of the highest deity, sounds strikingly familiar to the Christian understanding of the reason for Satan’s (and his minions’) primordial fall: the former angel envied God’s position, and his resulting fall from grace has led to his current status as the vengeful “prince of matter.”²³⁵ Andrei Timotin notes that such a concept is “tout a fait nouvelle en milieu platonicien.”²³⁶ Porphyry could have easily encountered such an idea in Origen’s literature or teaching; Origen states, for example, that Satan was a “wicked power who fell from the heavens” and thereafter “deceived the female race with a promise of divine power and of attaining to greater things.”²³⁷ Thus, Origen here, in similar fashion to Porphyry, reproduces the Christian mythology of Satan’s wicked trickery and ambitious aspirations.

Despite the fact that the daemons and their leader aspire to ascend to the heavens, however, they continue to meddle in human affairs. In addition to earthly calamities, both Origen and Porphyry, for example, claim that illicit ritual power, otherwise known as “sorcery” or “magic,” stems from the human manipulation of daemonic agency. Porphyry states that “it is through the opposite kind of *daimōns* that all sorcery is accomplished.”²³⁸ Origen similarly claims that oracular responses are crafted through daemonic power, and that

²³⁴DA 2.42.2. “Βούλονται γὰρ εἶναι θεοὶ καὶ ἡ προεστῶσα αὐτῶν δύναμις δοκεῖν θεὸς εἶναι ὁ μέγιστος.” Clark, *On Abstinence*, 73.

²³⁵Dale B. Martin, “When did Angels Become Demons?” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 129, no. 4 (12/01, 2010), 657-677.

²³⁶Andrei Timotin, *La Démonologie Platonicienne : Histoire De La Notion De Daimon De Platon Aux Derniers Néoplatoniciens* (Leiden ;Boston: Brill, 2012), 212.

²³⁷CC VI.43. “ἐπαγγελία θεότητος καὶ μειζόνων ἀπατήσας τὸ θηλύτερον γένος.” Chadwick, *Contra Celsum*, 360.

²³⁸DA 2.41.5. “διὰ μέντοι τῶν ἐναντίων καὶ ἡ πᾶσα γοητεία ἐκτελεῖται.”

“Magi” often operate by invoking the assistance of daemons.²³⁹ Porphyry likewise attributes various magical works to the assistance of daemons: “These *daimōns* abound in impressions of all kinds, and can deceive by wonderworking. Unfortunate people, with their help, prepare philtres and love charms.”²⁴⁰ Origen’s understanding of the human manipulation of daemons reads similarly: “Certain evil daemons...grant to those who offer them sacrifices the destruction of other people as their reward, if this is requested by their worshippers.”²⁴¹ The fact that both Origen and Porphyry connect “magic” with daemonology serves not only to reiterate the close ties in their respective *conceptions* of daemons, but also the way in which they utilize daemons in their literary projects. While the wider Hellenic tradition sometimes connected magic with the daemonic,²⁴² Porphyry and Origen jointly diverge from this tradition by positing *malevolent* daemons as the ultimate sources for magical power, and thus use daemons and magic to construct the boundaries between proper and illicit cultic practice, “religion,” and philosophy.

In sum, Origen and Porphyry are in agreement that (evil) daemons usurp the power and identity of the divine pantheon, receive their names based on local customs, inflict numerous calamities in the lower cosmos, answer to a “leader” or “chief,” and play a major role in assisting human “magical” activities. Based upon these similarities, then, we can confidently assert that the malevolent daemonologies of Origen and Porphyry are operating within similar discursive spaces, and likely drawing upon a common tradition. This is

²³⁹*Peri Archon* III.3.3.

²⁴⁰*DA* 2.42.1. “Πλήρεις γὰρ πάσης φαντασίας οἷτοι καὶ ἀπατῆσαι ἱκανοὶ διὰ τῆς τερατουργίας. διὰ τούτων φύττρα καὶ ἐρωτικά κατασκευάζουσιν οἱ κακοδαίμονες.” Clark, *On Abstinence*, 72-3.

²⁴¹*CC* VII.6. “πονηροὺς τινὰς δαίμονας, χαίροντας ταῖς κνίσσαις καὶ ταῖς θυσίαις, μισθοὺς ἀποδιδόναι τοῖς θύσασιν τὴν ἐτέρων φθοράν, εἰ τοιοῦτο οἱ θύοντες εὐχόιντο.” Chadwick, *Contra Celsum*, 400.

²⁴²Cf. Plato, *Symposium* 202d-203a.

particularly significant for our understanding of the genesis of Porphyry's discourse of daemonic corruption, as such commonalities suggest that Porphyry's and Origen's agreement concerning the ill effects of animal sacrifice and daemonic corruption, to be surveyed shortly, are not coincidental.

Both Origen and Porphyry claim that animal sacrifice benefits evil daemons by providing sustenance to their "pneumatic" bodies, and likewise concur that the performance of animal sacrifice brings detrimental daemonic corruption upon the body of Hellenic suppliants. At the base of such a reconstruction is a particular understanding of the daemonic body. Origen addresses this issue in the preface of his work *De Principiis*, where he states that "the form or outline of [a] demoniacal body, whatever it is, does not resemble this gross and visible body of ours....[but is] naturally fine, and thin as if formed of air."²⁴³ Hence, as seen here, Origen asserts that daemons do indeed possess a "physical" body, though it lacks the "thickness" and "visibility" of its human counterpart. Porphyry makes a similar distinction between consistently-visible bodies and that of daemons:

For they are not clad in a solid body nor do they all have one shape, but they take many forms: the shapes which imprint and are stamped upon their *pneuma* are sometimes manifest and sometimes invisible, and the worse ones sometimes change their shape. The *pneuma*, insofar as it is corporeal, is passible and corruptible. Though it is so bound by the souls that the form endures for a long time, it is not eternal; for it is reasonable to suppose that something continuously flows from them and that they are fed.²⁴⁴

²⁴³*Peri Archon*, Pref.8. Translation adapted from Roberts et. al., *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, IV.241.

²⁴⁴*DA* 2.39.1-2. "οὐ γὰρ στερεὸν σῶμα περιβέβληνται οὐδὲ μορφὴν πάντες μίαν, ἀλλ' ἐν σχήμασι πλείοσιν ἐκτυπούμεναι αἱ χαρακτηρίζουσαι τὸ πνεῦμα αὐτῶν μορφαὶ τοτὲ μὲν ἐπιφαίνονται, τοτὲ δὲ ἀφανεῖς εἰσίν• ἐνίοτε δὲ καὶ μεταβάλλουσι τὰς μορφὰς οἷ γε χείρους. τὸ δὲ πνεῦμα ἢ μὲν ἐστὶ σωματικόν, παθητικόν ἐστι καὶ φθαρτόν• τῷ δὲ ὑπὸ τῶν ψυχῶν οὕτως δεδέσθαι, ὥστε τὸ εἶδος αὐτῶν διαμένειν πλείω χρόνον, οὐ μὴν ἐστὶν αἰώνιον. καὶ γὰρ ἀπορρεῖν αὐτοῦ τι συνεχῶς εἰκὸς ἐστὶ καὶ τρέπεσθαι." Clark, *On Abstinence*, 71.

Thus, as evidenced by the juxtaposition of these literary extracts, both Porphyry and Origen agree that daemons indeed have bodies, though, in Origen's words, "tenuous as a breath of air."

Perhaps more importantly, Porphyry's characterization of the daemonic body includes the assertion that "something continuously flows from them and...they are fed."²⁴⁵ Porphyry claims, therefore, that daemonic bodies are dependent upon continual sustenance. In his *Exhortation to Martyrdom*, Origen concurs that daemons require sustenance and specifies that the daemons' preferred food is the reason for their current position in the cosmos: "These demons...must have the nourishment of the exhalations and, consequently, are always on the lookout for the savour of burnt sacrifices, blood, and incense."²⁴⁶ Origen's identification of the "exhalations" of sacrifice as the food of daemons is particularly important for our purposes, because it is identical to Porphyry's. The latter claims that the daemonic body "lives on *vapours and exhalations*... and it draws power from the smoke that rises from blood and flesh."²⁴⁷ Thus, both Origen and Porphy explicitly connect the sacrificial cult with the "exhalations" from the bloody sacrifices that purportedly nourish the bodies of daemons.

²⁴⁵Ibid.

²⁴⁶*Exhortation to Martyrdom* 45. "δεόμενοι τροφῆς τῆς διὰ τῶν ἀναθυμιάσεων ἐπιτηροῦσιν ὅπη κνίσσα ἀεὶ καὶ αἵματα καὶ λιβανῶτοι, ἐξευτελίζουσιν ὡς ἀδιάφορον τὸ θύειν." Translation from Origen, *Prayer, Exhortation to Martyrdom*, trans. John J. O'Meara (Ramsey, N.J.; New York: Newman Press, 1954), 188. Cf. *CC VII.5: Daemons* "bodies, nourished by the smoke from sacrifices and by portions taken from the blood and burnt-offerings in which they delight, find in this, as it were, their heart's desire, like vicious men who do not welcome the prospect of living a pure life without their bodies, but only enjoy life in the earthly body because of its physical pleasures" (Chadwick, *Contra Celsum*, 398).

²⁴⁷*DA* 2.42.3. "ζῆ γὰρ τοῦτο ἀτμοῖς καὶ ἀναθυμιάσεσι...καὶ δυναμοῦται ταῖς ἐκ τῶν αἱμάτων καὶ σαρκῶν κνίσαις." Clark, *On Abstinence*, 73.

Porphyry and Origen are in agreement, moreover, regarding the effect that such “exhalations” have upon the daemonic body. According to Porphyry, the daemons’ pneumatic body “grows fat” upon the “drink-offerings and smoking meat” in which they rejoice.²⁴⁸ In a similar fashion, Origen claims that the daemonic partaking of the exhalations of sacrifice leads them to inhabit the “heavy atmosphere that encircles earth.”²⁴⁹ Thus both Origen and Porphyry claim that one of the ill effects of the consumption of daemonic food is the superfluous material heft that accompanies such a diet. In such a way, both philosophers connect the physiological effects of meat consumption with the idea that daemonic bodies are expanded or weighed down by their continual inhalation of sacrificial fumes. This understanding of the daemonic body is dependent upon a cosmological hierarchy which correlates materiality to inferiority. Put simply, each realm of the cosmos has a varying level of materiality, with the human world possessing the highest proportion. The daemons, by partaking of animal sacrifice, weigh their bodies down to the extent that they are unable to ascend to higher realms.

Origen, therefore, places the blame for daemonic intervention squarely on the shoulders of Hellenic cultic practitioners, claiming that if not for the continual ceremonies of animal sacrifice, daemons “could not exist” since they would be “without the exhalations and nourishment considered vital to their bodies.”²⁵⁰ Indeed, Origen asserts that the advent of

²⁴⁸DA 2.42.3. “οὗτοι οἱ χαίροντες ‘λοιβῇ τε κνίσῃ τε’, δι’ ὧν αὐτῶν τὸ πνευματικὸν καὶ σωματικὸν παίνεται.” Clark, *On Abstinence*, 73.

²⁴⁹*Exhortation to Martyrdom* 45.

²⁵⁰*Exhortation to Martyrdom* 45. O’Meara, *Prayer, Exhortation to Martyrdom*, 188.

Jesus, and the resulting spread of Christianity, brought about a decrease in sacrificial offerings which “exasperated” the daemons.”²⁵¹

Thus, both Porphyry and Origen agree that the tenuous body of the daemons is dependent upon the “exhalations” from the “blood and smoke” which emanates from sacrificial ceremonies. What is more, they likewise agree that, due to this need for physiological sustenance and enjoyment, it is the daemons that have created and perpetuated the performance of (animal) sacrifice. Origen, for example, claims that daemons and their supplicants maintain a mutually beneficial relationship due to the former’s desire for sacrifice: “Certain evil daemons, that delight in burnt-offerings and sacrifices, grant to those who offer them sacrifices the destruction of other people as their reward.”²⁵² Origen specifies the daemons’ motivations for working on behalf of those who pay them cult: “The daemons seem to perform the petitions of those who bring requests to them more because of the sacrifices they offer than because of their virtuous actions.”²⁵³

Porphyry similarly asserts that daemons seek out sacrifice: “They prompt us to supplications and sacrifices, as if the beneficent gods were angry.”²⁵⁴ Elsewhere, Porphyry explains how such daemons “prompt” humans to sacrifice, claiming that daemons “rub off” onto other souls by displaying the “forms of [their] representations in the airy *pneuma* that

²⁵¹ *Comm. On Matt. XIII.23*. Cf. *CC III.29*, where Origen argues that daemons “saw the ‘drink-offerings and burnt-offerings,’ in which they greedily delighted, being taken away by the success of Jesus’ teaching. But God, who sent Jesus, destroyed the whole conspiracy of daemons...” (Chadwick, *Contra Celsum*, 147).

²⁵² *CC VII.6*. “πονηροὺς τινὰς δαίμονας, χαίροντας ταῖς κνίσσαις καὶ ταῖς θυσίαις, μισθοὺς ἀποδιδόναι τοῖς θύσασιν τὴν ἐτέρων φθοράν, εἰ τοιοῦτο οἱ θύοντες εὐχόιντο.” Chadwick, *Contra Celsum*, 400.

²⁵³ *CC VII.6*. “Καὶ διὰ ταῦτα εἰκόασι μᾶλλον ποιεῖν οἱ δαίμονες τὰ ἀξιούμενα ὑπὸ τῶν αὐτοῖς προσαγόντων ἢ διὰ τὰ ἔργα τῆς ἀρετῆς.” Chadwick, *Contra Celsum*, 399.

²⁵⁴ *DA 2.40.2*. “τρέπουσιν τε μετὰ τοῦτο ἐπὶ λιτανείας ἡμᾶς καὶ θυσίας τῶν ἀγαθοεργῶν θεῶν ὡς ὠργισμένων.” Clark, *On Abstinence*, 72.

either accompanies or is adjacent to them; and without touching the *pneuma* in any way, they nevertheless display – in a way that cannot be described – the images of their faculty of representation by means of the air around them as if in a mirror.”²⁵⁵ Such detailed descriptions of the wicked machinations of the daemons are significant for two reasons. First, Porphyry’s assertion that daemons demand sacrifice, in connection with his understanding of daemonic physiology, offers an understanding of why daemons would receive cult. In the traditional understanding, humans offered lower/intermediary deities cultic honors in order to eschew personal danger and/or honor the deities for their benevolent administration of the cosmos. Porphyry’s counter-assertion, which is in full agreement with Origen, contends that daemons manipulate the souls of humans and solicit sacrifice out of sadistic gluttony. Second, Porphyry implies that daemons receive sacrifice because they successfully trick humans into thinking that the gods are angry, an assertion which imputes cultic practice with the charge of “superstition.” Origen likewise claims that daemons demand sacrifice, duping their human suppliants “by certain magical spells” and other methods, so that they might “greedily partake of the portions of the sacrifices and seek for illicit pleasure and for lawless men.”²⁵⁶ Thus, as surveyed here, both Porphyry and Origen assert that daemons seek out sacrifice for their own personal pleasure, duping their human suppliants in the process as part of a conspiracy to perpetuate their cultic activity.

Participation in this ongoing daemonic cult, moreover, has dire consequences.

According to both Porphyry and Origen, anyone who participates in sacrifice to daemons

²⁵⁵ Porphyry, *To Gaurus on How Embryos are Ensouled*, 6.1. Translation from Porphyry, *To Gaurus on how Embryos are Ensouled, and on what is in our Power*, trans. James Wilberding (London: Bristol Classical Press, 2011), 39.

²⁵⁶ CC VII.64. “ἐν οἷς τῆς τῶν θυομένων ἀποφορᾶς λίχνως μεταλαμβάνοντες παράνομον ἡδονὴν καὶ παρανόμους θηράσονται.” Chadwick, *Contra Celsum*, 448.

and/or partakes of the resulting sacrificial meat puts themselves at risk of daemonic pollution. Origen, for example, drawing upon Pauline phraseology from 1 Cor 8-10, asserts that one should not mix sacrificial meat, “the table of daemons,” with the Eucharist, “the table of the Lord.”²⁵⁷ Porphyry shares Origen’s concern regarding sacrifice and daemonic corruption. He exhorts Castricius: “an intelligent, temperate man will be wary of making sacrifices through which he will draw such beings to himself.”²⁵⁸ According to Porphyry, moreover, such daemons might even come to reside within the body, an invasion they attempt because of their desire to use our digestive system to satisfy their rapacious appetite:

Our bodies are also full of them, for they especially delight in certain kinds of food. So when we are eating they approach and sit close to our body; and this is the reason of the purifications, not chiefly on account of the gods, but in order that these evil daemons may depart. But most of all they delight in blood and in impure meats and enjoy these by entering into those who use them.²⁵⁹

In his *Letter to Marcella*, moreover, Porphyry cautions his wife that the person who does not purify his soul, presumably by avoiding animal sacrifice, will make his soul a “dwelling place for the wicked daemon.”²⁶⁰ Interestingly, Origen likewise notes that “dining with daemons” may invite daemonic cohabitation; he exhorts his audience not to partake of sacrificial offerings “in order that we may not be fed on demon's food, perhaps because if we were to partake of things strangled some spirits of this nature might be fed together with

²⁵⁷CC VIII.24; VIII.28-32.

²⁵⁸DA 2.43.1. “διὸ συνετὸς ἀνὴρ καὶ σώφρων εὐλαβηθήσεται τοιαύταις χρῆσθαι θυσίαις, δι’ ὧν ἐπισπάσεται πρὸς ἑαυτὸν τοὺς τοιούτους.” Clark, *On Abstinence*, 73.

²⁵⁹*On Philosophy to be Derived from Oracles*, Fr. 326F apud Eusebius, *Praeparatio Evangelica* 4.23. Translation from Eusebius of Caesarea, *Preparation for the Gospel*, trans. Gifford (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1981), 192.

²⁶⁰Porphyry, *Letter to Marcella*, 19.

us.”²⁶¹ Thus, for both authors, daemonic commensality is a primary danger of the consumption of sacrificial meat, and thus should be avoided at all costs.

In fact, both Origen and Porphyry identify Hellenic cultic practice as the primary reason why daemons are able to continue corrupting human bodies. Origen, for example, claims that “a man cannot feast with daemons except by eating what are popularly called sacred offerings, and by drinking the wine of the libations made to the daemons.”²⁶² Thus, the Alexandrian church father positions sacrificial ritual as the cosmological tether which enables daemons to continue to corrupt human beings and carry out their wicked agenda. Porphyry similarly claims that it is the byproducts of animal sacrifice that perpetuate daemonic potency. In his *On the Cave of the Nymphs*, Porphyry claims that such evil spirits would not interact with human beings if they were not able to consume the “vapor of blood” which emanates from sacrificial ceremonies.²⁶³ Origen and Porphyry agree, then, that it is animal sacrifice and its production of daemonic food that retains daemonic presence in this cosmos.

For both Origen and Porphyry, furthermore, the prospect of daemonic corruption has weighty consequences. Both philosophers subscribed to a Platonic psychology which envisioned the soul as a semi-divine entity which, having fallen from higher realms, should

²⁶¹CC.8.30. “ἵνα μὴ τραφῶμεν τροφῇ δαιμόνων, τάχα τινῶν τοιούτων πνευμάτων συντραφησομένων ἡμῖν, ἐὰν μεταλαμβάνωμεν τῶν πνικτῶν.” Chadwick, *Contra Celsum*, 473.

²⁶²CC VIII.31. “Ἡμεῖς μὲν οὖν, ὅσον ἐπὶ βρώμασι καὶ πόμασι, τοῦ συνεστιᾶσθαι δαίμοσι τρόπους ἄλλους οὐκ ἴσμεν ἢ καθ’ οὓς τὰ καλούμενα παρὰ τοῖς πολλοῖς ἱερόθυστα ἐσθίει τις καὶ πίνει τὸν τῶν παρὰ τοῖς δαιμονίοις γινομένων σπονδῶν οἶνον.” Chadwick, *Contra Celsum*, 474.

²⁶³Smith and Wasserstein, *Porphyrii Philosophi Fragmenta*, Fr. 377F. For discussion, cf. Marx-Wolf, “Platonists and high priests,” 115.

re-ascend to its former abode as part of a reunification with the divine. Porphyry summarizes this position in *De Abstinencia*:

We make every effort, drawing on the soul and on external things, to become like God and those who accompany him – and this happens through dispassion, through carefully articulated concepts about what really is, and through a life which is directed to those realities.²⁶⁴

Origen likewise asserts that the ultimate goal of the pious should be the ascent of the soul,²⁶⁵ and positions contemplation of God as the method by which the soul ascends:

It is clear that as each of our members maintain a relationship towards its proper object, the eyes for things visible, the hearts for things audible, in the same way the intelligence maintains a relationship towards things intelligible, and towards God who is above things intelligible.²⁶⁶

Elizabeth DePalma Digeser summarizes this shared psychology: “Third-century Platonists ... thought that a range of activities positioned the soul, depending on its condition, at different levels within the celestial spheres, even to union with transcendent divinity.”²⁶⁷

Read in light of these common psychological concepts, the danger inherent in daemonic pollution becomes evident. Within Platonic psychology, the soul remained “in tension,” and thus buoyant and able to ascend, only if it maintained the proper balance between the rational, spiritual, and appetitive parts of the soul.²⁶⁸ Evil daemons, on the contrary, were typified as unbalanced beings who had given themselves over to the passions

²⁶⁴DA 2.43.3. “ἡμεῖς δὲ κατὰ δύναμιν οὐ δεησόμεθα ὧν οὗτοι παρέχουσιν, ἀλλ’ ἕκ τε ψυχῆς ἕκ τε τῶν ἐκτὸς πᾶσαν σπουδὴν ποιούμεθα, θεῶ μὲν καὶ τοῖς ἀμφ’ αὐτὸν ὁμοιοῦσθαι, ὃ γίνεται δι’ ἀπαθείας καὶ τῆς περὶ τῶν ὄντων ὄντων διηρθρωμένης διαλήψεως καὶ τῆς πρὸς αὐτὰ ταῦτα ζώης.” Clark, *On Abstinence*, 73.

²⁶⁵Cf. CC VII.32, where Origen explains the bodily resurrection thusly: “when the soul, which in its own nature is incorporeal and invisible, is in any material place, it bears this body after it has put off the former body which was necessary at first but which is now superfluous in its second state. In the second place, it puts a body on top of that which it possessed formerly, because it needs a better garment for the purer, ethereal, and heavenly regions” (Chadwick, *Contra Celsum*, 420). Origen views the soul, therefore, as the element of the human which will ultimately ascent to the heavens, which Origen conceives of as a place superior and external to the material cosmos.

²⁶⁶ *Exhortation to Martyrdom* 47.

²⁶⁷ Digeser, *A Threat to Public Piety*, 100.

²⁶⁸ Plato, *Republic* 435d-441c2; *Timaeus* 69a-70b

and appetites of the lower parts of the soul. Porphyry explains the evil daemons' distinguishing characteristics: "In the maleficent [daemons the soul] is out of balance; they allot more to their passible element."²⁶⁹ This lack of balance carries dreadful consequences for the person who might become infected with daemoniac corruption, as the daemon's imbalance and irrationality will inevitably skew the psychological tension of its human host. Origen explains the implications of daemoniac corruption: "[Daemons] lead men astray and distract them, and drag them down from God and the world beyond the heavens to earthly things."²⁷⁰

Because of this unwanted peril, Porphyry reminds Castrius that it is the philosopher's goal "to become unlike wicked people and *daimōns* and anything else that delights in things mortal and material."²⁷¹ Origen, similarly, exhorts his readers, claiming that one who avoids daemoniac interaction "rises above" daemoniac bondage and thus "ascends" to the heavenly realms.²⁷² The danger of daemoniac corruption, then, does not necessarily lie in earthly afflictions, but rather in the restriction from psychological ascent, the ultimate goal in the Platonic systems of both Porphyry and Origen.

To summarize, both Origen and Porphyry claim that daemoniac bodies are sustained by the inhalation of the "vapors" which emanate from the sacrificial victims typical of

²⁶⁹DA 2.39.3. "ἐν συμμετρίᾳ μὲν οὖν τὸ τῶν ἀγαθῶν ὡς καὶ τὰ σώματα τῶν φαινομένων, τῶν δὲ κακοποιῶν ἀσύμμετρα, οἱ πλέον τῷ παθητικῷ νέμοντες τὸν περίγειον τόπον οἱ πλέον τῷ παθητικῷ νέμοντες τὸν περίγειον τόπον οὐδὲν ὅτι τῶν κακῶν οὐκ ἐπιχειροῦσι δρᾶν." Clark, *On Abstinence*, 71.

²⁷⁰CC V.5. "πλανώντων καὶ περισπώντων τοὺς ἀνθρώπους καὶ καθελκόντων ἀπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ τῶν ὑπερουρανίων ἐπὶ τὰ τῆδε πράγματα." Chadwick, *Contra Celsum*, 267.

²⁷¹DA 2.43.3. πονηροῖς δὲ ἀνθρώποις καὶ δαίμοσιν καὶ ὅλως παντὶ τῷ χαίροντι τῷ θνητῷ τε καὶ ὑλικῷ ἀνομοιοῦσθαι. Clark, *On Abstinence*, 73.

²⁷²CC VIII.5. "Υπερναβαίνει δὲ τὴν παρὰ πᾶσι δαιμονίοις δουλείαν ὁ μὴδὲν ἔργον δαιμονίοις φίλον ποιῶν, καὶ ὑπερναβαίνει τὴν μερίδα τῶν παρὰ Παύλῳ λεγομένων εἶναι θεῶν ὁ σκοπῶν."

Hellenic cultic practice. Furthermore, these two Platonists concur that the consumption of the sacrificial meat puts the practitioner at risk of becoming corrupted with daemons. This is a particularly grave danger for Origen and Porphyry, as both characterize daemonic bodies as “imbalanced” and “impassioned.” Daemonic infection, then, would inevitably harm the psychological balance of the host, and thus inhibit the psychological ascent which both Porphyry and Origen held as the ultimate goal of philosophy.

By reexamining Porphyry’s own attribution to “certain Platonists,” as well the extensive daemonological tenets he shares with Origen, this study calls for a reconsideration of the place of Porphyry’s daemonology within broader philosophical trends. Against the hypothesis of Martin, that Porphyry’s daemonology is largely due to the creeping influence of “popular” daemonologies, this study responds by contextualizing Origen’s daemonology within a particular Christian discourse, which can be traced from Paul of Tarsus up to Porphyry’s own day. Against the past proposals which have ridiculed the “primitive” or “barbarian” nature of Porphyry’s daemonology, this study responds by demonstrating the fundamentally *philosophical* and *intellectual* background of Porphyry’s daemonology. In sum, Porphyry’s daemonology emerges not as a peculiar oddity deserving of dismissal, but as an intellectual product of 3rd century Platonism, and thus serves as a witness to the rich complexity of the discursive space from which it emerged.

Chapter Seven

CONCLUSION

The detection of strong daemonological connections between Origen and Porphyry holds implications not only for ancient daemonological traditions, but also for larger issues in the scholarship of late antiquity. In what follows, I propose three areas where this study's findings hold the potential to alter scholarly approaches and understandings: (1) ancient ritual, (2) imperial politics, and (3) intellectual histories of antiquity.

ANCIENT RITUAL

The ritual implications of Origen's and Porphyry's dual discourses of daemonic pollution are numerous. By undermining the purity of sacrificial meat, both Origen and Porphyry simultaneously destabilize one of the most prominent rituals in the Hellenic world, as well an event that undergirded socio-political hierarchies. Thus, by arguing that daemons were the ultimate recipient of (animal) sacrifice, these two Platonists forged a dual front in critiquing an ancient ritual institution. But we should not conclude, therefore, that this tandem denunciation spelled the end of "sacrifice" as a ritual practice and concept. Rather, we should instead see Origen's and Porphyry's anti-sacrifice critiques as two instances in a more wide-ranging debate concerning the proper ritual practice in ancient religious communities. Laura Nasrallah, for example, has stated that "sacrifice is a term we can

legitimately trace not because it signifies one precise thing or the apex of “pagan” ritual, but because it is a polemical category used by ancient authors.”²⁷³

Thus, Nasrallah concludes that within our extant literature, sacrifice “is an unsubtle knife by which Christians, among others, differentiate themselves from others on two fronts as they philosophically debate (and deliberately misinterpret) the sacrificial practices of their proximate others.”²⁷⁴ Origen and Porphyry’s agreements on the dangers of daemonic pollution inherent in animal sacrifice, then, demonstrate the way in which they shared a rhetorical strategy in combatting competing ritual traditions, while constructing their own. For example, George Heyman has noted that Christians constructed a discourse of “spiritual sacrifice” as a potent weapon in their contestation of the prevailing rituals of the Roman imperial state.²⁷⁵ Porphyry similarly repositions proper piety as a kind of human “rational” sacrifice, offering “our own uplifting as a holy sacrifice to god.”²⁷⁶

That is not to say, of course, that Porphyry and his Christian counterparts were in total agreement regarding ritual activity. Indeed, Porphyry still maintained that non-philosophers may offer sacrifices to the lower deities, and even conceded, as noted previously, that civic governments may need to propitiate the evil daemons for their own

²⁷³Nasrallah, “The Embarrassment of Blood,” 146.

²⁷⁴Ibid.

²⁷⁵George Heyman, *The Power of Sacrifice : Roman and Christian Discourses in Conflict* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2007), xv. Cf. Jennifer Wright Knust and Zsuzsanna Várhelyi, “Introduction,” in Ibid (eds.), *Ancient Mediterranean Sacrifice* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 17: “Arguably, then, it is the Christian who bequeathed to future generations the metonymic equivalence of sacrifice and violence: envisioning the deaths of Jesus and the martyrs as the only truly efficacious sacrifice, second-century Christians demoted Israelite animal sacrifice to the role of either allegorical precursor or divine concession. Pagan sacrifice, however, was interpreted as demon-inspired violence.” For Christian examples, cf. Romans 12:1; Athenagoras, *Legatio* 13:2-4; Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.* 7.6.32.

²⁷⁶DA 2.34. Clark, *On Abstinence*, 69; cf. *Letter to Marcella*, 18. For discussion, cf. Nasrallah, “The Embarrassment of Blood,” 147.

good.²⁷⁷ Thus, Porphyry's discourse of daemonic sacrifice and pollution does not represent his comprehensive system, but is only one aspect of a larger interpretive program that actually makes a case on behalf of the *continuation* of most forms of cultic practice. When read in this light, Porphyry's use of Christian Platonic discourse is particularly significant. As detailed in chapters 3 and 4, the Christian discourse of daemonic sacrifice and pollution emerged primarily out of a polemical context in which Christians urged non-participation in sacrifice and other cultic ceremonies. Porphyry, however, has reshaped this discourse by limiting the influence of evil daemons to *only* animal sacrifice, rather than all Hellenic cultic activities, and thus carves out a space by which traditional cultic practice can endure. In doing so, he has fundamentally altered the original polemical intent of the discourse he is drawing upon, and effectively diminished its original implications for ritual practice. Such a move, then, is just one example of a larger phenomenon that Jeremy Schott has identified in Porphyry's works, namely, that "Porphyry's readings of ethnic traditions help him establish mastery over the traditions of various peoples and, by extension, establish power and control over the people themselves."²⁷⁸ In this particular case, therefore, Porphyry has not ceded power to Christians by utilizing their daemonic discourse, but instead appropriated their discourse for his own, more limited, ritual critique, and thus constructed the Hellenic cult in a way that it is insulated from Christian criticism.

Porphyry's utilization of such Christian discourses, however, would have consequences he was unlikely to have anticipated. His daemonological positions, and especially that of the *De Abstinencia*, became particularly useful fodder for later Christian

²⁷⁷DA 2.43.2.

²⁷⁸Schott, *Christianity and Empire*, 66.

writers such Eusebius of Caesaria, Theodoret of Cyrrhus, and Cyril of Alexandria.²⁷⁹ These writers often seized upon the notable commonalities between Porphyry's (evil) daemonology and their own, and boasted that even the most ardent critic of Christianity agreed with them on the issue of sacrifice. Thus, while Porphyry's discourse of daemonic sacrifice and corruption was originally utilized as part of a nuanced system designed to bolster the case for the continuance of traditional cultic practices, it was eventually adopted as a weapon in a wider assault on those very practices. Porphyry's daemonology ultimately resulted in his image being used, paradoxically, in defense of Christian doctrine and as the ideological undergirding for the creation of a Christian empire that eschewed civic support of *all forms* of sacrifice.

IMPERIAL POLITICS

Porphyry's discourse of daemonic corruption likewise proved significant within the realm of imperial politics. Scholars have long recognized the significant role played by Late Antique philosophers in the volatile political atmosphere of the 3rd and 4th century Roman Empire. Among this group, Elizabeth DePalma Digeser has recently suggested that Porphyry played a significant role in articulating an intellectual framework which undergirded the Great Persecution under Diocletian (ca. 303-313 CE). Digeser points out that imperial policy concerning Christians shifted dramatically in the late third and early fourth centuries; a shift which she attributes not to the sudden swing in demeanor of the Emperor, but rather to the

²⁷⁹See, for example, Eusebius, *Praeparatio Evangelica* 4.22.10-12, 4.18-19.1; Cyril, *Contra Julianum*, 4.692a-c; Theodoret, *A Cure for Greek Maladies*, 3.60. For discussion on the reception of Porphyry in Christian literature more broadly, see Markus Mertaniemi, "Acerrimus Inimicus: Porphyry in Christian Apologetics." In *Continuity and Discontinuity in Early Christian Apologetics*, edited by Jörg Ulrich, Anders-Christian Jacobsen, Maijastina Kahlos (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2009), 97-112.

misgivings that religious experts were expressing concerning the pollution of Christian impiety, an anxiety further inflamed by the intellectual frameworks espoused by Neo-Platonists like Porphyry.²⁸⁰ In such a way, the discourse of daemonic pollution played a significant role in leading to an increase in anti-Christian sentiment, a development that is all the more ironic considering that, as outlined previously, such ideas were built upon a Christian ideological foundation.

That is not to say, however, that the discourse of daemonic pollution was used exclusively for divisive rhetoric. Rather, Digeser has likewise noted that the Emperor Constantine drew upon just such a discourse in unifying the Empire. To be more specific: due to the connection of daemonic corruption with the practice of ritual sacrifice, both Platonists and Christians formed an unlikely intellectual alliance. Constantine seized upon this unifying ideology by targeting only blood sacrifice for exclusion from cultic tolerance.²⁸¹ Digeser asserts, therefore, that by creating a tolerant space for both Platonic and Christian ritual activity, while outlawing their common ideological foe, Constantine utilized the socio-political consequences of the discourse of daemonic pollution to his political advantage.

I would add here that Digeser could push her point further concerning Porphyry's importance for these developments. Porphyry's utilization of a *Christian* discourse of daemonic corruption represents a pivotal moment in the construction of an intellectual framework for a Christian empire. Ultimately, Porphyry expressed his philosophical objection to sacrifice in a manner which was fully explicable to a Christian audience, and thus provided an intellectual framework by which Christian and Hellenic intellectuals could

²⁸⁰Digeser, *A Threat to Piety*, 164.

²⁸¹Ibid, 190.

form an ideological alliance. To put it another way: Porphyry was not the first Hellenic thinker to voice a critique of the traditional cultic system; he was the first (or perhaps the most prominent) to do so utilizing a primarily Christian discourse, and thus provided the decisive opportunity for the ritual unification of Hellenic and Christian intellectuals, and thus for the ideological construction of a Christian Empire.

INTELLECTUAL HISTORIES

In closing, it is fitting to reflect on contemporary intellectual histories, and return to the question first posed in Chapter 2: why is Porphyry's daemonology so peculiar? The short answer to this query, of course, is that Porphyry's daemonology is not so peculiar after all. As this study has demonstrated, Porphyry's daemonology draws upon and participates within a daemonic discourse that was fully intelligible within his religious, cultural and philosophical context, and which he expected his recipient and fellow Platonic philosopher, Castrius, to find comprehensible. Thus, Porphyry's daemonology is only "anomalous" if we ignore the social and cultural milieu in which it was constructed and disseminated. As scholars have increasingly declared, the ancient Roman Empire was not one divided between 'pagans' and Christians, despite those terms' permeation of contemporary scholarship. Rather, the case of Origen and Porphyry demonstrates that even personal antipathy need not indicate a lack of shared intellectual ideologies – an assumption that has been maintained with regard to Porphyry and Iamblichus, but discarded with regard to Hellenes and Christians.

Such an observation is significant for the reconstruction of intellectual histories and lineages. The recognition of the unstable nature of identity requires the scholar to reassess the methodologies by which one examines intellectual influence. Rather than one-to-one correlations, the socio-historical situation of ancient intellectuals demands the recognition of more complex processes that included polyvalent ideologies, multi-directional lines of influence, and blurred boundary lines. The discourse of daemonic pollution in the writings of Porphyry was constructed within an environment that drew on a plethora of ideologies, including but not limited to a Christian discourse that found its most immediate representative in Origen of Alexandria. Such an acknowledgement unmask the devious trickery that rigid categories have effected upon past scholarship, and exposes the complex ways in which intellectual traditions were molded, maintained, and, indeed, mimicked.

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