



PROJECT MUSE®

Porphyry in Fragments: Jerome, Harnack, and the Problem of Reconstruction

Ariane Magny

Journal of Early Christian Studies, Volume 18, Number 4, Winter 2010,
pp. 515-555 (Article)

Published by Johns Hopkins University Press

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1353/earl.2010.a406755>



➔ *For additional information about this article*

<https://muse.jhu.edu/article/406755>

Porphyry in Fragments: Jerome, Harnack, and the Problem of Reconstruction

ARIANE MAGNY

Everyone working on Porphyry's *Against the Christians* refers to the fragment collection compiled by Adolf von Harnack in 1916. Harnack's scholarship was impressive, but his work is difficult to use, and needs revision in the light of new approaches to the collection and interpretation of fragments. This paper draws mainly on the methodological work of Most et al. (1997) to argue that a fragment should not be read apart from its contextual framework. As a case study, this paper examines the Porphyrian fragments that attack the New Testament as preserved by Jerome and concludes that Jerome has his own theological agenda, which influences the way in which he quotes Porphyry. Ultimately, this paper proposes a new fragment collection.

INTRODUCTION

Augustine says, in *City of God* 19.23, that Porphyry is the most learned philosopher of all, but the worst enemy of the Christians. Many modern scholars agree with Augustine's assessment of Porphyry of Tyre, the neoplatonist philosopher, who is said to be the most learned ancient critic of Christianity, as he skillfully performed the fiercest attacks on Christian sacred texts and interpretations of Jewish Scripture.¹ But do the Porphyrian fragments themselves bear witness to this characterization of their

This paper began as a short paper at NAPS and I wish to thank Gillian Clark for going through many drafts, the JECS reviewers, Bella Sandwell, Peregrine Horden, Neville Morley, and David J. Miller for their feedback, Elizabeth DePalma Digeser for seminar discussion, Elizabeth Clark for her encouragement, and David Brakke for his patience. I am also grateful to the Arts Faculty of the University of Bristol and the SSHRC for their financial support throughout the writing of this paper.

1. Robert L. Wilken, *The Christians as the Romans Saw Them* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1984), 126, labeled Porphyry as the most learned critic of all;

author as the detailed critic of Scriptures, or are modern (and other late ancient) interpreters simply following Augustine? It may be that the material selected by the authors who preserved the majority of fragments misleadingly suggests that Porphyry was well versed in the knowledge of Scripture, or perhaps, as Gillian Clark has pointed out, Porphyry, who also wrote a treatise demonstrating that the writings of Zoroaster were a later forgery, liked to work by analyzing texts.² It is even possible, as W. Kinzig, among others, has argued, that Porphyry, like Julian, had a Christian background,³ which would explain his knowledge of the religion as well as his aversion to it. The important fact is that, to judge from the fragments and Christian references to him, Porphyry was seen as a well-informed critic, and his ideas were very disturbing. This certainly raises problems about how to read the fragments extant in Christian literature.⁴

THE PROBLEM OF HARNACK

Almost all of Porphyry's work survives only in fragments. In particular, his fifteen books against the Christians survive only in quotations, paraphrases, or references in various Christian authors, chiefly Eusebius, Jerome, and Augustine.⁵ A few were also found in the works of Diodore of Tarsus,

see his book for a discussion on pre-Porphyrian philosophical attacks on Christianity. See also J. G. Cook, *The Interpretation of the New Testament in Greco-Roman Paganism* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2000), 103: "Porphyry was probably the most acute and philologically skilled critic of Christianity." See Porphyry, *Vie de Plotin*, ed. and trans. Luc Brisson et al. (Paris: Vrin, 1982), or *Neoplatonic Saints: The Lives of Plotinus and Proclus by their Students*, trans. Mark Edwards (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2000), for the information that Porphyry provides on his own life.

2. Gillian Clark, "Philosophic Lives and the Philosophic Life," in *Greek Biography and Panegyric in Late Antiquity*, ed. T. Hägg and P. Rousseau (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2000), 43.

3. Wolfram Kinzig, "War der Neuplatoniker Porphyrios ursprünglich Christ?," in *Mousopolos Stephanos: Festschrift für Herwig Görgemanns*, ed. M. Baumbach, H. Köhler, and A. M. Ritter (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag C. Winter, 1998), 320–32.

4. Adolf von Harnack, "Porphyrius, *Gegen die Christen*. 15 Bücher: Zeugnisse, Fragmente und Referate," *AKPAW* (1916): 1–115, for his collection of fragments, used the Latin edition of texts as found in J.-P. Migne's *Patrologia Latina*. I have decided to use the most recent editions of the texts for this paper; as a result, when a quotation differs from Harnack, it means that it is from another, more recent edition than PL (PL had to be used when no other edition existed for a text). Please also note that bold type is used for the portion of the translation that can be found in Harnack's fragment in order to make it clearly stand out of the context.

5. *Against the Christians* is a treatise presumably written in fifteen books between 270 and c. 300, and in which Porphyry is attacking the core of Christianity by

Epiphanius, Methodius, Nemesius, Pacatus, Severus of Gabala, Theodoret, and Theophylactus.⁶ How can we collect the fragments and reconstruct Porphyry's critique? Everyone refers to Harnack 1916, but everyone who has tried to use it knows the problems. This paper will focus specifically on the Porphyrian fragments present in the corpus of Jerome, and I will first outline the issues linked with Harnack's methodology.

Although previous scholars had discussed and interpreted individual fragments,⁷ Harnack produced the first printable collection of the fragments of *Against the Christians*, but he had his own point of view on how the gathering of the fragments should be conducted. He also states that he did not try to reconstruct the content of individual books of Porphyry's

analyzing Scripture. There is no scholarly agreement on the date of the treatise. See T. D. Barnes, "Scholarship or Propaganda? Porphyry *Against the Christians* and its Historical Setting," *BICS* 39 (1994): 53–65, who proposes c. 300, which would set the treatise right in the midst of the imperial discussions preceding the Great Persecution, while the traditional dating, following Joseph Bidez's *Vie de Porphyre* (Gand: E. van Goethem, 1913), is c. 270. It has been argued that Porphyry presented his anti-Christian ideas to Diocletian's court, which was based in Nicomedia, during the meetings preceding the Great Persecution of 303–311 launched against the Christians by the Tetrarchy (see Elizabeth DePalma Digeser, "Porphyry, Julian, or Hierokles? The Anonymous Hellene in Macarius Magnes' *Apokritikos*," *JTS* 53 [2003]: 466–502, and Jeremy M. Schott, "Porphyry on Christians and Others: 'Barbarian Wisdom,' Identity Politics, and Anti-Christian Polemics on the Eve of the Great Persecution," *J ECS* 13 [2005]: 278). As will be discussed later, scholars have also challenged the title "Against the Christians." We are left with fragments, because various imperial edicts ordered the destruction of Porphyry's anti-Christian work. The first one was issued by Constantine in 325, shortly after the Council of Nicaea; it was primarily directed against the priest Arius, but it mentions that Porphyry's works—as well as his reputation—were to be destroyed (see Socrates, *Church History* 1.9.30; Gelasius, *Church History* 2.36.1; *Cod. Theod.* 16.5.66). In 448, Theodosius II and Valentinian III jointly issued another edict in which Porphyry is mentioned in the context of the prosecution of two Christian bishops charged with heresy, namely Nestorius and Irenaeus of Tyre. On that occasion, the philosopher's anti-Christian writings were condemned to be burnt, as they may cause God's wrath and be harmful to men's souls. See "Edictum Theodosii et Valentiniani," February 17, 448 (*Collectanea Vaticana* 138), 1.1.4 (ed. Eduard Schwartz, *Acta Conciliorum Oecumenicorum* [Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1927], 66.3–4, 8–12), in Smith, *Porphyrii philosophi fragmenta* (Stuttgartiae: Teubner, 1993), 32.

6. There is a debate on whether the fragments from Macarius's *Apocriticos*, which represent the greatest number of fragments collected from *Against the Christians*, actually belong to the treatise. It will be discussed later.

7. Harnack, "Porphyrius, *Gegen die Christen*," 14: "In allen diesen Schriften sind die Fragmente des Porphyrius nicht gesammelt und abgedruckt, sondern zum Teil nur angedeutet. . . ."

work,⁸ but only to create a printable collection, for no scholar by that point had ever tried to perform such a task. He ordered the fragments by content and classified them under five headings—1) critique of the characters and reliability of the evangelists and apostles as a basis for the critique of Christianity; 2) critique of the Old Testament; 3) critique of the deeds and words of Jesus; 4) the dogmatic element; 5) the contemporary church—rather than attempting a reconstruction as previous scholars did.⁹ According to Harnack, this thematic division is preferable, for nothing is known about the content of Books 5 to 11 of *Against the Christians*, only about Books 1, 3, 4, and 12; Book 1 discusses the truthfulness of the apostles and evangelists, hence Harnack's first heading.¹⁰ Grouping the fragments under the five headings, he argues, gives a better impression of the extent of Porphyry's attack than would organizing them in the sequence of the relevant books of the Bible, but he does not further explain his position.¹¹ In all, he published ninety-seven fragments, fifty-two of which come from Macarius's *Apocriticos* and are therefore questionable (see below).

As far as his method is concerned, Harnack was very careful in selecting what he considered as belonging to *Against the Christians*, as opposed to what belonged to his other works, or to other writers, including those who preserved fragments. Following the principles of *Quellenforschung*,¹²

8. Harnack, "Porphyrius, *Gegen die Christen*," 10: "Dagegen habe ich mich nicht dazu entschlossen können . . . den Inhalt der einzelnen Bücher zu rekonstruieren."

9. Harnack, "Porphyrius, *Gegen die Christen*," 46–104: "1-Kritik des Charakters und der Glaubwürdigkeit der Evangelisten und Apostel als Grundlegung der Kritik des Christentums, 2-Kritik des Alten Testaments, 3-Kritik der Taten und Sprüche Jesu, 4-Dogmatisches, 5-Zur kirchlichen gegenwart." See also Pierre de Labriolle, "Porphyre et le christianisme," *RHPbR* 3 (1929): 405, who comments further on Harnack's classification. See also the pre-Harnack reconstructions: K. Wagenmann, *Jahrbücher für deutsche Theologie* 23 (1878): 138ff; A. Georgiades, *Περὶ τῶν Χριστιανῶν Αποσπασμάτων τοῦ Πορφύριου* (Leipzig, 1891); Anton I. Kleffner, *Porphyrius, der Neuplatoniker und Christenfeind* (Paderborn, 1896); Thomas W. Crafer, "The Work of Porphyry against the Christians, and its Reconstruction," *JTS* n.s. 15 (1914): 360–95. None of these authors offers a collection of fragments.

10. Harnack, "Porphyrius, *Gegen die Christen*," 10–11.

11. Harnack, "Porphyrius, *Gegen die Christen*," 10–11. "Aber auch das ist nicht zweckmässig, mit Lardner die Fragmente und Referate nach der Reihenfolge der biblischen Bücher zu ordnen. Dadurch wird der Eindruck der Angriffe sehr geschwächt, da eine ganze bunte Reihe entsteht. Die Fragmente kommen meines Erachtens am besten zu ihrem Rechte, wenn man das Material also ordnet." See N. Lardner, *The Credibility of the Gospel History*, 2.37 ("Testimonies of Ancient Heathens: Porphyry"), in *The Works of Nathaniel Lardner with a Life by Dr. Krippis* (London, 1838), 7.2, 347–90.

12. According to the Oxford English Dictionary, *Quellenforschung* is "the study of the sources of, or influences upon, a literary work" (Etymology: *Quelle*, "source,")

Harnack argues that there is no point in trying to distinguish “absolutely certain” from “certain” quotations, thus acknowledging that there is a scale for fragment quality, i.e. certain fragments, less certain fragments, and testimonia.¹³ (This method is still typical of fragment collections: Andrew Smith uses bold type for the words he thinks can be confidently ascribed to Porphyry.)¹⁴ Furthermore, Harnack states that the selection depends on the expert judgment of the scholar.¹⁵

There are practical difficulties in using Harnack. In order to get a copy of his collection, one needs to be patient and be prepared to wait for a library to be able to supply one, for they are very rare. After getting hold of a copy, one must decipher its content. Early twentieth-century, academic German is hard to read for non-native readers. And the fragments are, of course, in the original, ancient languages with no translation. In addition, the Greek font used by Harnack’s publishers only provided capital letters, which does not help a reader who was trained to read otherwise—the font most probably reproduces a particular Greek script found in a papyrus or codex. Next, the texts come from the now outdated editions found in Jacques-Paul Migne in the *Patrologia*. Finally, the selected fragments are too often from hard-to-identify authors, such as Pacatus, and Harnack provides little information to help locate their works—it is easy to abandon the search for some of the texts in which the fragments are preserved.

As for Harnack’s *mise-en-page*, it consists of a series of numbered fragments in the original ancient languages, each with the author’s name and the work’s title abbreviated and inconsistent means of reference (sometimes book and chapter, other times paragraph or page number). Several notes explain his selection when it may be unclear to the reader. The fragments

and *Forschung*, “research”). In other words, it means source criticism. In this case, one must assess Jerome as a source for Porphyry’s treatise. That means assessing fragments according to their quality (i.e. quotation or allusion; authentic, likely, polemical). See A. Benoît’s table on this: “Le *Contra christianos* de Porphyre: où en est la collecte de fragments?,” in *Paganisme, Judaïsme, Christianisme: Influences et affrontements dans le monde antique. Mélanges offerts à Marcel Simon* (Paris: Éditions E. de Boccard, 1978), 261–75.

13. Harnack, “Porphyrius, *Gegen die Christen*,” 9–10. “Hat man sich aber hieron überzeugt, dann wäre es eine überkritische Pedanterie, jene 52 Stücke und überhaupt alles nicht ganz Sichere von dem absolut Sicherem zu scheiden und für sich zu drucken. . . . Man mag sich dabei sagen, dass nicht überall Porphyrius rein und sicher hervortritt, sondern dass Abgeleitetes untermengt ist.”

14. See Smith, *Porphyrii philosophi fragmenta*. His is the authoritative collection of Porphyrian fragments, however it does not include *Against the Christians* because Harnack’s collection suffices.

15. Harnack, “Porphyrius, *Gegen die Christen*,” 10.

themselves vary in length, from one line to a page (the latter applies only to the fragments excerpted from Book 12 against Daniel), and are thematically grouped, as discussed above. As for their content, Harnack focused solely on what he thought was part of *Against the Christians*. The fragments are thus obviously extracted from a discussion in an ancient author, and they present part of an argument, of which the content is obscure, as well as a Porphyrian reference, paraphrase, or quotation. Fragment 2 is illustrative (throughout, I will use bold for the fragments and italics for Jerome's lemma):

Hieron. *ep.* 57.9 (ad Pamm.), 9—“*Haec replico, non ut evangelistas arguam falsitatis, hoc quippe impiorum est, Celsi, Porphyrii, Iuliani.*”¹⁶

He adds, in much smaller font size, “Besieht sich auf Matth.1, 22f. (Jes. 7, 14) und die Anfänge der Evangelien.” If we do not know to what *haec* (“these things”) refers, then it is difficult to make any conclusion about what Porphyry, Celsus, and Julian might have criticized.

Further issues need to be raised. Fragment 37 is problematic, for Harnack assumes that his readers understand the reference. His envisaged readers, in 1916, were theologians who knew Paul's letter to the Galatians. The fragment, which refers to circumcision, says:

“I wish those who disturb you were cut off!” It is asked [*quaeritur*] how Paul, the disciple of him who said, “Bless those who curse you,” and himself said, “Bless, and do not curse,” and in another place, “Nor shall those who curse possess the kingdom of heaven,” has now cursed those who disturb the churches of Galatia, and has cursed them with the expression of a wish. “I wish those who disturb you were cut off!” For the experience of cutting off is so much to be denounced that someone who inflicts it on the unwilling is punished by public laws, and someone who has castrated himself loses his civil rights. To make “Christ lives in me” true, they say: “Do you seek proof of Christ who speaks in me?,” the words of a curse cannot be understood as being from him who says, “Learn from me, for I am humble and mild and gentle of heart.” (Paul) is thought to have been unable to restrain himself, because of Jewish rage and some kind of uncontrolled madness, rather than to have imitated him who like a lamb to the shearer did not open his mouth, and did not curse those who cursed him.¹⁷

16. Jerome, *Letter 57.9* (Budé 3:67 = Harnack frag. 2): “I'm going over these things, not to accuse the evangelists of falsity; this indeed is the argument of the impious Celsus, Porphyry, and Julian.”

17. Jerome, *Commentary on Galatians 3.5.12* (= Harnack frag. 37), (PL 26:432–33). *Utinam et abscondantur qui vos conturbant. Quaeritur quomodo Paulus discipulus ejus qui ait: Benedicite maledicentibus vobis. Et ipse loquens: Benedicite et nolite*

Jerome says *quaeritur*, “it is asked,” but does not say who asks. Harnack assumes Porphyry because of the convictions expressed in the argument¹⁸ and the literary style.¹⁹ But the parallel he cites, namely fragment 78, is a Macarius fragment (Macarius 4.23).²⁰ Someone reading Harnack’s collection may not be aware, initially, that the authenticity of such Macarian fragments has been called into question. Harnack cites the context of fragment 37 in a note:

If this passage is ever blamed by the gentiles, we show how they may be answered. Now let us advance arguments to show how the heretics, that is Marcion, Valentinus, and all those who bark against the Old Testament, who accuse the creator of being bloodthirsty, a harsh warrior, and so great a judge, manage to excuse this in the apostle of the good God.²¹

Harnack observed that this passage of Galatians could be used very successfully as an argument against the separation of the two testaments. His comment is unclear unless the reader already knows why Marcion and Valentinus rejected the Old Testament, so we can see that there is a parallel to be made between the violent God depicted in the Old Testament and the violent behavior of Paul in the New Testament. Harnack thus suggests that Porphyry meant Paul was behaving like someone in the Old Testament cursing his enemies, not like a follower of Christ who commanded the blessing and not the cursing of our persecutors. But this does not entirely solve the problem of *quaeritur*. Since the Macarius fragments are questionable, the content of fragment 37 can no longer be matched

maledicere (Rom 12.14). *Et in alio loco: Neque maledici regnum Dei possidebunt* (1 Cor 15.50): *nunc et maledixerit eis, qui Ecclesias Galatiae conturbant, et cum optantis voto maledixerit: Utinam et abscondantur qui vos conturbant. Tam enim detestanda abscisionis est passio, ut et qui invitis eam intulerit, legibus publicis puniatur, et qui seipsum castraverit, infamis habeatur. Ut enim illud, aiunt, verum sit: Vivit in me Christus* (2 Cor 13.3); *et hoc: An experimentum quaeritis ejus qui in me loquitur Christus? certe maledictionis vox non potest ejus intelligi, qui dicit: Discite a me, quia humilis sum, et mitis, et mansuetus corde* (Matt 11.29). *Et magis putatur Judaico furore, et quadam effrenata insania se non potuisse cohibere, quam imitatus esse eum, qui tamquam agnus coram tondente se, non aperuit os suum, et maledicentibus non remaledixit.*

18. Harnack, “Porphyrius, *Gegen die Christen*,” 63.

19. Harnack, “Porphyrius, *Gegen die Christen*,” 63.

20. Harnack, “Porphyrius, *Gegen die Christen*,” 63.

21. Jerome, *Commentary on Galatians* 3.5.12 (PL 26:433): *Hic locus si quando ab ethnicis reprehenditur, quomodo eis responderi possit, ostendimus. Nunc a nobis contra haereticos proferatur, Marcionem videlicet, et Valentinum et omnes qui contra vetus latrant Testamentum, qua ratione illi qui Creatorem sanguinarium, severum bellatorem, et tantum judicem criminantur, hoc in Apostolo Dei boni valeant excusare.*

with certainty to the content of any other fragments of the collection. It is difficult to determine whether Harnack's intuition was right, but it is at least possible to guess that, since the ideas expressed in these fragments are found in Jerome, and since the latter devoted a fair amount of attention to the philosopher's attacks, the chances are that among "those who ask," to whom Jerome refers, is Porphyry. Although it may also be the case that many opponents noted the apparent contradictions, fragment 37 may reasonably be considered as belonging to *Against the Christians*.

The last example also illustrates the risk of misinterpretation due to the fragment order and shows how much clearer it would be had Harnack kept the sequence of Jerome's commentary instead of grouping fragments thematically, which led him to separate fragments taken from the same work and change their original place in the text. The result is misleading. Fragments 19, 20, and 21a illustrate this point. Fragment 19 reads:

This can be understood as spoken indirectly against Peter and others, because the gospel was not transmitted from the apostles to him [that is, Paul says he did not receive the gospel from the apostles—see context below].²²

The assertion about the gospel in question here is from Gal 1.1 (NRSV): "Paul an apostle—sent neither by human commission nor from human authorities. . . ." The context of fragment 19 (Jerome, *Commentary on Galatians* 1.1.1) reads:

Paul, apostle not from men, nor through any man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father who raised him from the dead. It is not because of pride, as some think, but by necessity that Paul declared that he was Apostle not from men, nor through any man, but through Jesus Christ, and God the Father, so as to confound with such authority those who published everywhere that Paul was not one of the twelve apostles, and that he had suddenly come out of nowhere, or who claimed that he was ordained by the elders. **This can be understood as spoken indirectly against Peter and others, because the gospel was not transmitted from the apostles to him.**²³

22. Jerome, *Commentary on Galatians* 1.1.1 (= Harnack frag. 19), (PL 26:335): *Potest autem et oblique in Petrum et in caeteros dictum accipi, quod non ab apostolis ei sit traditum Evangelium.*

23. Jerome, *Commentary on Galatians* 1.1.1 (PL 26:335): *Paulus apostolus, non ab hominibus, neque per hominem: sed per Jesum Christum et Deum Patrem, qui suscitavit eum a mortuis. Non superbe, ut quidam putant, sed necessarie, neque ab hominibus, neque per hominem, se Apostolum esse proponit: sed per Jesum Christum, et Deum Patrem, ut eos qui Paulum extra duodecim apostolos ventilabant, et nescio unde subito prorupisse, vel a majoribus ordinatum astruebant, hac auctoritate confunderet. Potest autem et oblique in Petrum et in caeteros dictum accipi, quod non ab apostolis ei sit traditum Evangelium.*

Fragment 20 (Jerome, *Commentary on Galatians* 1.1.16) reads:

Most people think this (that “I did not at once acquiesce in flesh and blood,” or, as the better version in the Greek text has it, “I did not associate with flesh and blood”) was said of the apostles. For Porphyry too objects that after the revelation of Christ he did not deign to go to people and engage in conversation with them, presumably so that after teaching from God, he should not be instructed by flesh and blood.²⁴

Fragment 21a (Jerome, *Commentary on Galatians*, prolog.) reads:

And the wholly unintelligent Bataneot and famous villain Porphyry objects, in the first book of his work against us, that Peter is blamed by Paul, because he starts off on the wrong foot in evangelizing; he wants to brand Peter with the mark of error, and Paul with that of insolence, and to accuse both of the falsehood of feigned teaching, while the chiefs of the churches disagree with one another. . . . But it is about time that setting out the words of the Apostle himself, we should explain each separate question.²⁵

Here, Jerome refers to the general aim of his commentary on Galatians, which will clarify its content.

It would have been much clearer if Harnack kept the sequence of the quotation within Jerome’s commentary instead of grouping fragments by themes. Fragment 19 comes before fragment 21a in Harnack because the latter was grouped with fragments 21b, c, and d, which pertain to the dispute between Peter and Paul. However, fragment 21a is part of Jerome’s prologue, while fragment 19 is part of his first book. When the reader encounters fragment 19 before fragment 21a, they can hardly understand to what it refers, since the content of fragment 19 is made clear only through the context of fragment 21a, which states that Jerome will explain passages from Galatians. Fragment 19 also pertains to fragment 21a, in which it is said that Paul withstood Peter to his face. The order of the fragments is thus confusing.

24. Jerome, *Commentary on Galatians* 1.1.16 (= Harnack frag. 20), (PL 26:351): *Plerosque de apostolis hoc (Continuo non acquievi carni et sanguini. Sive ut in Graeco melius habet: Non contuli cum carne et sanguine.) dictum arbitrari. Nam et Porphyrius objicit, quod post revelationem Christi non fuerit dignatus ire ad homines, et cum eis conferre sermonem: ne post doctrinam videlicet Dei, a carne et sanguine instrueretur.*

25. Jerome, *Commentary on Galatians*, prolog. (= Harnack frag. 21a), (PL 26:334): *Quod nequaquam intelligens Bataneotes et sceleratus ille Porphyrius, in primo operis sui adversum nos libro, Petrum a Paulo objecit esse reprehensum, quod non recto pede incederet ad evangelizandum: volens et illi maculam erroris inurere, et huic procacitatis, et in commune ficti dogmatis accusare mendacium, dum inter se Ecclesiarum principes discrepent. . . . Sed jam tempus est, ut ipsius Apostoli verba ponentes, singula quaeque pandamus.*

The other problem encountered is that although Harnack rightly assumed that fragment 19 was part of *Against the Christians*, given the content of fragment 20—and this even though Porphyry was not named—he omitted an important part of the context that would have provided his readers with better evidence that he was right.²⁶ In fragment 19, Jerome clearly mentions some anonymous detractors—*ut quidam putant*—who think that Paul was arrogant to call himself apostle. Fragments 19 and 20, when put together, actually mean that some opponents said that Paul was arrogant not only because he called himself an apostle, but also because he refused to share his revelation with “flesh and blood.”

Harnack’s pioneering work on *Against the Christians* fragments was extensive and impressive, as is evidenced by his prominent position in Porphyrian studies to this day. However, his fragment collection bears methodological problems that need to be addressed.

AFTER HARNACK

The post-Harnack historiography on the fragments shows changing perspectives on the task of scholarship and on pagan-Christian interaction. The case of Macarius the Great’s *Apocriticos* is the hotly debated topic, many scholars being in disagreement with Harnack as to the authorship of the Macarius fragments.²⁷ In the *Apocriticos*, Macarius—a Christian

26. See Harnack, “Porphyrius, *Gegen die Christen*,” 52, on frag. 19: “Sehr wahrscheinlich ist Porphyrius’ Interpretation gemeint . . . , s. die folgenden Nummer” (i.e. frag. 20).

27. See the following on the problem of the Macarius fragments: L. Duchesne, *De Macario Magnete et scriptis ejus* (Paris: Fr. Klincksieck, 1877); Wagenmann, *Jahrbücher für deutsche Theologie*, 138; Karl Johannes Neumann, *Juliani Imperatoris librorum contra Christianos quae supersunt* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1880); G. Schaulkhauser, *Zu den Schriften des Makarios von Magnesia. Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur* 31.4 (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1907); Johannes Geffcken, *Zwei griechische Apologeten* (Hildesheim and New York: G. Olms, 1970), 301; Bidez, *Vie de Porphyre*, 74–75; Crafer, “The Work of Porphyry,” 360 and 481; P. Frassinetti, “‘Sull’ autore delle questioni pagane conservate nell’ *Apokritico* di Macario di Magnesia,” *Nuovo Didaskaleion* 3 (1949): 41–56; S. Pezzella, “Il problema del *kata christianon* di Porfirio,” *Eos* 52 (1962): 87–104; Barnes, “Porphyry Against the Christians,” 424–42; Robert Waelkens, *L’Économie, thème, apologétique et principe herméneutique dans l’Apocriticos de Macarios Magnès. Recueil de travaux d’histoire et de philologie*, Université de Louvain 6.4 (Louvain: Publications Universitaires, 1974), 117–34; Anthony Meredith, “Porphyry and Julian against the Christians,” *ANRW* 2.23.2 (1980): 1127–28; R. Joseph Hoffman, *Porphyry’s Against the Christians* (Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 1994); Elizabeth DePalma Digeser, “Porphyry, Julian, or Hierokles? Makarios Magnes’ Apocritikos,” *JTS* (2003): 466–502; Richard

apologist of the end of the fourth century—presents a fictive argument occurring between himself and an anonymous Greek philosopher, nicknamed “the Anonymous Hellene” by the scholarly community, in which the Greek is criticizing the New Testament. Harnack found many parallels between the Porphyrian fragments, where Porphyry is named and attacks the New Testament, and the content of the Anonymous Hellene’s criticisms. He thus decided to include in his collection all the fragments from the *Apocriticos* pertaining to the Anonymous Hellene, arguing that Porphyry is the philosopher in question, but also arguing that Macarius was not aware he was quoting from Porphyry.²⁸

In general, however, it seems as though most scholars are interested in revising Harnack only when new fragments are discovered.²⁹ Indeed, as Benoît noted thirty years ago, studies that attempted a new fragment collection did not contribute anything new, in the sense that they failed to present a significantly different piece of work.³⁰ Only a brief survey is possible here.

First, three scholars added or removed fragments, but did not make any fundamental revision to Harnack 1916: Jacoby in 1923,³¹ Pezzella

Goulet, *Macarios de Magnésie: Le Monogénès. Édition critique et traduction française*, 2 vols. (Paris: Vrin, 2003); Schott, “Porphyry on Christians and Others,” 283.

28. Harnack, “Porphyrius, *Gegen die Christen*,” 7–9: “Die grosse Masse der Stücke verdankt man der indirekten Überlieferung bei Hieronymus und Makarius. . . . Aber eben nach diesem Masstab ist es überaus wahrscheinlich, dass in die 52 Stücken bei Makarius Magnes wesentlich porphyrianisches Gut zu erkennen haben. Zwar sind sie durch eine doppelte Vermittelung auf uns gekommen, indem sie erst von einem Unbekannten exzerpiert, dann von Makarius aufgegriffen und in eine umfangreiche fingierte Streitunterredung eingestellt worden sind. . . . Man darf daher mit gutem kritischen Gewissen die Auführungen des Heiden bei Makarius als porphyrianisch in Anspruch nehmen, wenn man auch keine Garantie für die Zuverlässigkeit jedes Satzes und jeder Wendung—am wenigsten für das Beiwerk—zu übernehmen vermag.” See Barnes, “Porphyry Against the Christians,” 428–30, and Digeser, “Porphyry, Julian, or Hierokles?,” who both argued against Harnack’s thesis.

29. Benoît, “*Contra christianos* de Porphyre,” 267; Pierre Nautin, “Trois autres fragments du livre de Porphyre *Contre les Chrétiens*,” *Revue Biblique* 57 (1950): 409–16; see also, for examples, J. -M. Demarolle, “Un aspect de la polémique païenne à la fin du IIIe siècle: le vocabulaire chrétien de Porphyre,” *Vigiliae Christianae* 26 (1972): 117–29, who does not discriminate between the Porphyry fragments and the Macarius ones when she analyses Porphyrian vocabulary (Benoît, “*Contra christianos* de Porphyre,” 263 n. 4).

30. Benoît, “*Contra christianos* de Porphyre,” 267.

31. Felix Jacoby, *Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker* (Berlin: Weidmann, 1923), no. 260 “Porphyrios von Tyros.” Jacoby’s collection of fragments from *Against the Christians* will not be used in this study, since he only kept most of the fragments on Porphyry’s Book 12—preserved by Jerome in his *Commentary on Daniel*—one

in 1962,³² and Anastos in 1966.³³ A few years later, Barnes surveyed the various fragment collections and, for the first time, removed the Macarius fragments.³⁴ Benoît then reordered Harnack by classifying the fragments in a table according to their author³⁵ and suggested that the sequence of argument in the context of fragments may follow Porphyry's arguments.³⁶ In 1984, Wilken offered an example of a fragment, which adds to Harnack's collection and deserves greater attention than it has received.³⁷ He observed that Porphyry was mentioned in Augustine's *On the Harmony of the Gospels*, which was written in response to pagans claiming that the evangelists had "invented the portrait of Christ presented in the Gospels."³⁸ In 1994, Hoffmann, following Waelkens, challenged Barnes's 1973 argument that the Macarius fragments were from a source other than Porphyry.³⁹ Hoffmann thus offered a new fragment collection, comprised of Macarius fragments only.⁴⁰

Richard Goulet's 2003 thorough study of the *Apocriticos* also revisits Barnes's conclusions as regards the fragments. Goulet questions some Porphyrian fragments. He compared all the Anonymous passages and Porphyry's works other than *Against the Christians*, and concluded that, although there is no definitive evidence that Porphyry is the Anonymous Hellene, it is probable that Macarius drew his Greek opponent's criticism from a lost treatise or from a secondary source—it is even probable that

fragment from Macarius (*Apocriticos* 3.15 [= Harnack frag. 69]), one from Augustine (*Letter* 102.8 [= Harnack frag. 81]), and one from Jerome (*Letter* 133.9 [= Harnack frag. 82]), whereas there were many other authors who preserved Porphyry's ideas. Guido Schepens, "Jacoby's *FGrHist*: Problems, Methods, Prospects," in *Collecting Fragments*, ed. G. W. Most (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1997), 144–73, discusses Jacoby's methodology (his article will be addressed later).

32. S. Pezzella, "Il problema," 87–104.

33. Milton V. Anastos, "Porphyry's Attack on the Bible," in *The Classical Tradition: Literary and Historical Studies in Honor of Harry Caplan*, ed. Luitpold Wallach (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1966), 421–50, esp. 426.

34. Barnes, "Porphyry Against the Christians," 424, 428–30. He convincingly invalidated the points that were traditionally used to pair Porphyry with the anonymous Hellene of the *Apocriticos* (points which led Harnack to date the comments to the third century).

35. Benoît, "Contra christianos de Porphyre," 270.

36. Benoît, "Contra christianos de Porphyre," 267.

37. Wilken, *Christians*, 144–45.

38. Wilken, *Christians*, 144.

39. Hoffman, *Porphyry's Against the Christians*, 22–23; Waelkens, *Économie*, 117–34.

40. Note that he included only a little more than a half of what Harnack had selected. See Hoffman, *Porphyry's Against the Christians*, 18.

Porphyry's critique has many points in common with other, unknown, pagan works.⁴¹ However, Goulet is adamant that the Anonymous Hellene's objections cannot be considered as fragments of *Against the Christians*. He also points out that Harnack himself had never meant his collection to comprise unquestionable fragments only (implying, therefore, that he included uncertain fragments), and that researchers have consistently made the mistake of citing the Macarius fragments as being Porphyrian without further explanations.⁴²

Recently Berchman has published a collection of all of the *Against the Christians* fragments, arranged chronologically by author (i.e. starting with the most ancient author who preserved fragments), including a useful translation of Harnack's fragments, and using new editions of texts. But the method for collecting fragments is unchanged (gathering fragments according to one's own judgment and removing them from the context in which they were embedded), and Berchman even adds conjectural fragments without an explanation.

In 2006, a Spanish team from the University of Cádiz published yet another fragment collection of *Against the Christians*.⁴³ They re-ordered and re-numbered the fragments. The introduction briefly discusses methodological concerns. The main argument of the team is that Harnack concentrated all the anti-Christian fragments into one collection authored only by Porphyry.⁴⁴ However, the team thinks it is best to invalidate all fragments where Porphyry is not named. As a result, they introduce their own authenticity scale, based on whether Porphyry is named or not. But Harnack, as has been discussed, was well aware of authenticity issues.⁴⁵ Furthermore, the collection contains the fragments deemed "unauthentic" by the team (the fragments from Anastasius Sinaita, Arethas of Caesarea, and some by Augustine, Diodore of Tarsus, Nemesius, and, more importantly, Macarius).⁴⁶ As A. Quiroga argues, the book as a whole is a significant contribution to the debate, for it is not limited to a mere collection,

41. Goulet, *Le Monogénès*, 1:135.

42. Goulet, *Le Monogénès*, 1:135; see also Harnack, "Porphyrius, *Gegen die Christen*," 10.

43. A. R. Jurado et al., *Porfirio de Tiro Contra los Christianos. Recompilacion de fragmentos, traduccion, introduccion y notas* (Cádiz: Universidad de Cádiz, Servicio de Publicaciones, 2006).

44. Jurado et al., *Porfirio di Tiro*, 59. "... como si éste hubiera sido prácticamente el único polemista antichristiano del mundo antiguo. . . ."

45. Harnack, "Porphyrius, *Gegen die Christen*," 9–10 n. 14.

46. Jurado et al., *Porfirio di Tiro*, 59.

but rather to analyzing the wider problem of the transmission of the text and the philosophical background of the fragments.⁴⁷

NEW METHODS

Fragments in Context

New methodological approaches allow for an expanded and more nuanced reading of *Against the Christians* by establishing certain criteria to study the treatise. First, there is the general problem of survival. As is too often the case with works from antiquity, fragments are the only means for acquiring knowledge about lost writings.⁴⁸ Indeed, as far as ancient Greek literature is concerned, “the ratio of surviving literature to lost literature is in the order of 1:40.”⁴⁹ Many factors contribute to preservation or destruction of works and they do not always relate to the quality of these works,⁵⁰ which were therefore not deliberately eliminated. According to Guido Schepens, “There are difficulties the distribution of ‘books’ in antiquity . . . had to face before the invention of typography; the preference for easy-to-handle compilations over the often too voluminous (and more valuable) originals . . . and, above all, the role of chance.”⁵¹ Furthermore, adds Schepens, most of the works from that period survived only partially in direct transmission. Textual distortions are thus very common, he argues, and are due to the mode of transmission from antiquity to the Middle Ages.

In the case of Porphyry, there are specific problems. The complete version of *Against the Christians* is unknown. The treatise was deliberately destroyed after the Great Persecution (303–311), various emperors having issued edicts condemning all of Porphyry’s infamous works to the flames.⁵²

47. A. Quiroga’s review of Jurado et al., *Porfirio de Tiro*, in *Vigiliae Christianae* 61 (2007): 232–34.

48. Schepens, “Jacoby’s *FgrHist*,” 144.

49. Schepens, “Jacoby’s *FgrHist*,” 144. Furthermore, only copies of the ancient material survive, as A. C. Dionisotti points out in “On Fragments in Classical Scholarship,” in *Collecting Fragments—Fragmente sammeln*, ed. Glenn W. Most, Aporemata: Kritische Studien zur Philologiegeschichte 1 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1997), 1.

50. Schepens, “Jacoby’s *FgrHist*,” 145. According to A. Laks, “Du témoignage comme fragment,” in *Collecting Fragments*, 237, “la fragmentation de l’oeuvre peut être due au support, quand le manuscrit (parfois) ou le papyrus (toujours) qui l’ont transmise sont incomplets ou endommagés.” Portions of works may also survive in the form of an anthology, i.e. as citations of works without direct tradition.

51. Schepens, “Jacoby’s *FgrHist*,” 145–46.

52. See Socrates, *Church History* 1.9.30; see also Gelasius, *Church History* 2.36.1; *Cod. Theod.* 16.5.66; “Edictum Theodosii et Valentiniani,” February 17, 448 (*Col-*

Some copies must have survived, but the principal sources for Porphyry's treatise are Christian apologists who aimed at defending their dogmas against any future threat of persecution, in the case of Eusebius, or against ridicule in the case of Augustine—who writes, for instance, in his *Letter* 102 to Deogratias, that stories such as Jonah in the belly of a whale were provoking laughter in pagan circles (102.30). These Christians quoted or paraphrased the philosopher when answering his ideas, which, in turn, creates a major problem for the fragment collectors. According to Schepens, “the methodological key-problem the student of (historical) fragments has to face is invariably a problem of *context*.”⁵³ Historians must, indeed, contextualize citations in the texts in which they were found in order to be able to understand their meaning fully. Consequently, the risk with contextualizing is the distortion of the meaning of *Against the Christians'* original version.⁵⁴ Here, “contextualization” thus means reading the fragment as if it belonged to the context in which it was transmitted.

While establishing the required parts of a good, modern, historical fragment collection (taking as example the work of the late Felix Jacoby), Schepens argues that the commentary should “consist of two moments.” These “aim at relocating the fragments in the lively political, intellectual and artistic process of intertextual exchange that once took place and to which the survival of these very fragments is testimony.” The first moment is “an act of *deconstruction* of the cover-text by which the fragment is set free from the potential biases of the text in which it survives. This operation aims at establishing the original meaning (if possible also the ‘wording’) of the fragments.”⁵⁵ Schepens named “cover-texts” the works

lectanea Vaticana 138), 1.1.4 (Schwartz 66.3–4, 8–12), cited in Smith, *Porphyrii philosophi fragmenta*, 32.

53. Schepens, “Jacoby's *FgrHist*,” 166.

54. Schepens, “Jacoby's *FgrHist*,” 166. Schepens further points out that ancient historians preferred an anonymous reference to one by name. One by name had a specific purpose: either to show that they disagreed or to show off their better knowledge. Schepens proposes to first examine critically the reference by name before using it “as evidence for reconstructing the contents of lost works.” He then suggests that any study of fragments should ideally be supplemented “by an examination of the indirect tradition.” The starting point of such an investigation should be the named fragments; otherwise the work will become speculative. Since Schepens is writing here on Jacoby's *Fragmente der griechischen Historiker*, he is concerned with historians, therefore his argument may well be applied to ancient writers such as Christians, especially since it is well known that they were imitating the classical writing style. It may be argued, however, that Christian writers tend to be more precise in giving references, perhaps because they had a tradition of quoting official letters or edicts.

55. See Schepens, “Jacoby's *FgrHist*,” 168–69, on the quotations.

in which the fragments survive, for this wording creates, according to him, a distinction from the (con)text “of the later works in which the fragments survive.”⁵⁶ As he put it, “The notion of cover-text conveys— . . . better than the phrases commonly used (sources of fragments or expressions like the citing or quoting later authors)—the consequential and multiple functions these texts perform in the process of transmitting a fragment.”⁵⁷ He uses the word “cover” to mean “to conceal, protect or enclose something.” He argues that the later authors perform just those three tasks when transmitting a text:

They, first of all, *preserve* (= protect from being lost) texts drawn from works that are no longer extant; very often, too, they more or less *conceal* the precursor text (form characteristics such as the original wording and style of the precursor text are no longer discernible; often also fragments seems to “hide” in the cover-text, so that one can only guess where a paraphrase begins or where a quotation ends); and, last but not least, the cover-text *encloses* the precursor text: it is inserted or enveloped in a new con-text, which may impose interpretations that differ considerably from the original writer’s understanding of his text.⁵⁸

The second moment that should be part of the commentary, according to Schepens, “is an attempt to *reconstruct* the lost context of the original work and try to re-insert the fragment in it.”⁵⁹

Next, there is a distinction to make between a *testimonium* and a fragment. According to A. Laks, “le couple fragment/témoignage fait partie de l’appareil critique primaire de tous les historiens de l’Antiquité.” Laks explains that a testimony is what can be found in the ancient literature about a lost text or its author, whereas a fragment is a part of that lost work. A fragment is thus a literal quotation, and a testimony is “le fait d’un lecteur . . . qui . . . nous livre une élaboration secondaire.” The difficulty lies in the fact that testimonies can be either confused with fragments, or one can hesitate between where a testimony and a fragment start and end, if present together. But Laks argues that scholars should go beyond the

56. Schepens, “Jacoby’s *FgrHist*,” 166–67 n. 66. Schepens uses the words “(con)text” and “con-text,” but it remains unclear how these are different from the usual word “context.”

57. Schepens, “Jacoby’s *FgrHist*,” 168.

58. See Schepens, “Jacoby’s *FgrHist*,” 166–67 n. 66, on the quotations.

59. Schepens, “Jacoby’s *FgrHist*,” 168. Schepens does not provide further explanations for what he means by “lost context.” Instead, he refers his readers to R. Vattuone, *Sapienza d’Occidente. Il pensiero storico di Timeo di tauromenio* (Bologna: Pàtron, 1991), 7–17.

traditional separation of the two categories (commonly made under the letters A—fragments—and B—testimonies) in fragment collections, and understand that a testimony may also be a fragment, and therefore may be included in the A category. The only reason why a testimony should be excluded is when the selection is made according to what is literal; only the fragment is literal. But if the selection criterion is changed to “content,” then the testimony should not be excluded from the fragments. Laks says that, “*Ce dont le témoignage est témoignage—quand il est un témoignage sur l’oeuvre—n’est en effet derechef qu’un fragment.*”⁶⁰ Laks applies his argument to doxographies (works that are collections of opinions) and therefore not to works such as Jerome’s, however he introduces the interesting notion that fragment collections should be more flexible in what they understand as being a fragment. As far as methodology is concerned, what an author says about a work before quoting or paraphrasing it should also be considered as part of the fragment.

Finally, one of the methodological issues raised by Schepens is the distinction between fragments that survive with or without title and/or book number.⁶¹ This step is very important because it allows an attempt to reconstruct the work and because the fragments’ order necessarily affects their interpretation. The title and number of books (fifteen) of *Against the Christians* are provided by a reference in the Souda; it may derive from Eusebius of Caesarea, who said that Porphyry wrote “a collection against us (the Christians) in Sicily.”⁶² This mention may be associated with the

60. See Laks, “Du témoignage comme fragment,” 237–39, for the quotations.

61. Schepens, “Jacoby’s *FgrHist*,” 165.

62. Souda, s.v. *Porphyrios* 2.2098 (ed. Ada Adler [Leipzig: Teubner, 1928–1938]), cited in Smith, *Porphyrii philosophi fragmenta*, 6: Πορφύριος ὁ κατὰ Χριστιανῶν γράφας . . . Κατὰ Χριστιανῶν λόγους ιε´. The Souda mentions fifteen *logoi* against the Christians, not *Against the Christians*. Eusebius, *Church History* 6.19.2 (LCL 265:56): Πορφύριος συγγράμματα καθ’ ἡμῶν ἐνστησάμενος. Both pieces of evidence are debated—see P. F. Beatrice, “Towards a New Edition of Porphyry’s Fragments against the Christians,” in *Σοφίης μαιήτορες: “Chercheurs de sagesse”: Hommage à Jean Pepin*, Collection des Études Augustiniennes, Série Antiquité 131 (Paris: Institut d’Études Augustiniennes, 1992), 348, and Harnack, *Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur* (Leipzig, 1897), 873, who argue that *Against the Christians* and the *Philosophy from Oracles* are the same work, and who, therefore, challenge *Against the Christians* as the title of the work; see Robert Wilken, “Pagan Criticism of Christianity: Greek Religion and Christian Faith,” in *Early Christian Literature and the Classical Intellectual Tradition*, ed. W. R. Schoedel (Paris: Beauchesne, 1979), 129, and his *Christians as the Romans Saw Them*, 136. Also, W. H. C. Frend, “Prelude to the Great Persecution: the Propaganda War,” *JEH* 38 (1987): 11, and A. J. Droge, *Homer or Moses? Early Christian Interpretations of the History of Culture* (Tübingen: Collection “Hermeneutische Untersuchungen zur Theologie” 26, 1989), 172, who argue that there are two separate works.

title *Against the Christians* found in the Souda—should it, of course, be an actual title. After having found the title, the volumes must be reconstructed, which is difficult since fragments are related to Books 1, 3, 4, 12, 13, and 14 only. Some fragments, therefore, allow for pairing Porphyry's ideas with a book number, and the ones that seem to correspond to the same ideas should thus be grouped under the right number.⁶³ This is how Harnack chose his five headings, as has been discussed above. Jerome identifies for us some of the content of Book 1: "And the wholly unintelligent Bataneot and famous villain Porphyry objects, in the first book of his work against us, that Peter is blamed by Paul."⁶⁴ The first book may thus have been devoted to attacks on the apostles—or it may well have been an introductory survey of the incoherence of Christian teaching. Porphyry then gives examples of how the evangelists misquoted the prophets. At *Ecclesiastical History* 6.19.9, Eusebius says that Porphyry criticized Origen's use of the allegorical method of interpretation to decode Scripture in Book 3 of *Against the Christians*. The book was thus most probably concerned with how the Bible should not be read as containing divine revelations aimed at the Christians, rather than the Jews.⁶⁵ Jerome also identifies some of the content of Book 14: "The famous impious Porphyry, who vomited his rage against us in numerous volumes, argues against this passage in Book 14 and says, 'The evangelists were so ill-informed. . . .'"⁶⁶ Book 14 was thus probably on the evangelists. We should, therefore, logically try to group all the fragments pertaining to these topics under either Book 1 or 14. It is, however, impossible to take for granted that everything written on these topics was originally found only in these books. Furthermore, since the contents of Books 2, 5–11, and 15 remain unknown, all the fragments of *Against the Christians* might need re-attribution.⁶⁷

63. Beatrice, "Towards a New Edition," 123. See also J. Dillon, "Gathering Fragments: The Case of Iamblichus," in *Fragmentsammlungen philosophischer Texte der Antike*, ed. W. von Burkert et al. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1998), 170, on methodology.

64. Jerome, *Commentary on Galatians* prol. (= Harnack frag. 21a). See n. 22 above.

65. See Schott, "Porphyry on Christians and Others," 303.

66. Jerome, *On the Beginning of Mark* 1.1–2 (= Harnack frag. 9), (CCL 78:452): *Locum istum impius ille Porphyrius, qui adversum nos conscripsit et multis voluminibus rabiem suam evomuit, in XIV volumine disputat et dicit: Evangelistae tam imperiti fuerant homines. . . .*

67. See Benoît, "Contra christianos de Porphyre," 265, on the content of these books.

Textual Complications

There are other important issues to take into account when it comes to locating an “original” text within its (con)text and cover-text, in particular the complexities of the citation process.⁶⁸ In the case of Porphyry and Jerome, there are special factors in their relationship. The next section will look at the textual problems raised by a fragmentary text that does not survive independently from its cover-text. I will discuss how texts were quoted in antiquity, and how Jerome’s reaction to Porphyry, as well as his background, might have shaped the fragments into their current form.

The context in which Jerome might have read and then used Porphyry should first be further analyzed. It has long been established that in antiquity, citations had a very different meaning than in our modern world. Ancient historians would very much like to take it for granted that when an author claims to be quoting and the work is lost, this is a “proper” citation, that is, a passage literally reproduced from a work. Unfortunately, this is not straightforward. From a modern perspective, a citation is a fully referenced and clearly identified passage either in the direct or indirect form of speech, with no changes made to the wording and meaning of the acknowledged author. None of the allusions made by Jerome to Porphyry live up to this modern ideal. Sometimes Jerome names Porphyry, but other times he simply refers to him. He quotes, summarizes, or makes passing comments about him presumably from memory, and in the process, he may even distort the meaning of his excerpts from Porphyry’s corpus. So how can we make sense of such a mess and get as close as possible to the lost treatise?

To begin untangling Jerome’s citations, we must first understand the process of citation as practiced in antiquity. First, a quotation or allusion depends on the reading that the quoting author made of a text, and it belongs to a particular politico-social context that invariably interferes with the original text. Sabrina Inowlocki took on the task of defining the concept of citation in antiquity, since, as she states, “. . . no comprehensive study on the subject has yet been published.”⁶⁹ Although she focuses on

68. Drawing on Mikhail Bakhtin (whose writings were rediscovered by western writers around 1960; see M. Acouturier’s preface to her translation of Bakhtin’s *Esthétique et théorie du roman* [Paris: Gallimard, 1978], esp. 9), literary theorists started to take into account all the variously located voices, which constitute the writing of any univocal text. See Mikhail Bakhtin, “Discourse in the Novel,” in *The Dialogic Imagination*, ed. and trans. M. Holquist et al. (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1981).

69. S. Inowlocki, *Eusebius and the Jewish Authors: His Citation Technique in an Apologetic Context* (Boston: Brill, 2006), 33.

Greek texts, her findings can be applied to Latin authors, who shared the common culture. She first notes that there were no citation techniques in antiquity. Rather, the ancients “choose or not to mark the use of citation.” When they choose to indicate a citation clearly, they (or their scribes—another complication!) mark it with a sign in the margin, as can be seen in manuscripts, as well as with linguistic markers (e.g., *lego*, etc.).⁷⁰ According to Delattre and Goulet, when an author and/or title are mentioned, the writer is appealing to the authority of the cited author in order to back up their own argument, for precision might better convince a reader; it is not done for the purpose of locating a passage.⁷¹ This explains why secondhand sources are almost never indicated, except in cases where the citing author intends to show his learning and research, (as, for example, in Porphyry’s *On Abstinence*: “Phylarchos reports that . . .”⁷²). This makes it impossible to decide whether or not Jerome may have used others’ works in order to read *Against the Christians*. There is also the practical difficulty of locating a passage, which Inowlocki does not mention: authors usually signal the beginnings and ends of books, but books—scrolls or codices—did not have standard subdivisions or pagination. The most difficult problem, however, when it comes to recovering fragments from a lost treatise, certainly lies in the fact that authors are not always faithful to the text, but make changes to it either deliberately or accidentally. Inowlocki, however, explains that the ancients would not hesitate to change the wording of a text in order to “express its essence more clearly,” not for the purpose of falsifying it. She goes on to list and explain the kinds of modifications that can be made to a cited text, and concludes by saying that the line between literal citation and allusions is very unclear because it was useless to the ancients. The meaning was more important to them than the phrasing was and, as a result, modifications were common as they were an explication of the truth. Inowlocki gives, among others, the example of Aristobulus, a Jewish philosopher, who cited Aratus, but subtracted the word “Zeus” from the poems, and replaced it by “God,” for he thought the meaning of the

70. Inowlocki, *Eusebius*, 33–36.

71. Inowlocki, *Eusebius*, 39–40. She cites from Daniel Delattre, “Les titres des oeuvres philosophiques de l’épicurien Philodème de Gadara et des ouvrages qu’il cite,” in *Titres et articulations du texte dans les oeuvres antiques*, ed. Jean-Claude Fredouille et al., Actes du Colloque International de Chantilly 13–15 décembre 1994 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1997), 125, and Richard Goulet, “Les références chez Diogène Laërce: sources ou autorités?,” in *Titres et articulations du texte*, 149–66.

72. Porphyry, *On abstinence*, 2.56.7 (ed. Luc Brisson, M. Patillon, and Alain-Philippe Segonds, *De l’abstinence*, vol. 2 [Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1979], 119): Φύλαρκος . . . ἰστορεῖ.

words refers to God, not to Zeus. He thus produced “his own reading of the text,” while not changing its meaning—“in his own view, he has only established the truth.”⁷³

One of Inowlocki’s most disturbing findings, as far as this study is concerned, is the fact that the ancients would make semantic changes for the purpose of adapting the meaning of a citation to make it fit with its new context: She also notes, “Faithfulness to the text often depend[ed] on the feelings of the quoting author towards the quoted author.”⁷⁴ It is obvious that Porphyry, being a famous anti-Christian author, was not very dear to Jerome, who on so many occasions presents him as “barking” rather than arguing.⁷⁵ This suggests another reason why Jerome may not have worried very much about reporting accurately what Porphyry said. Furthermore, it is highly unlikely that an opponent would accuse Jerome of misquoting Porphyry. Therefore, as Jerome himself says, for example, he will quote Porphyry when the occasion arises while writing his commentary on Daniel, for the purpose of his work is not to refute him but to talk about Daniel.⁷⁶

Added to these complications is the fact that Jerome, when he uses Porphyry, is translating his words from Greek into Latin. He himself says, in a letter to Pammachius (*Ep.* 57.6), that since his youth he has been translating ideas rather than words. He explains that a translator must be an interpreter and should never translate a text word for word, but focus on rendering its meaning in another language. What is left of Porphyry in Jerome has therefore been altered by both the translation process and by his intentions.

There are further complications of Porphyry’s treatise. First, it is deprived of what Gerard Genette would term a complete “paratexte.” As Genette put it, “[le paratexte est] ce par quoi un texte se fait livre et se propose comme tel à ses lecteurs, et plus généralement au public.”⁷⁷ Texts are accompanied by a variety of practices (such as titles, prefaces, etc.) and discourses (what the world would say about a text) that participate in their presentation to the public (“présenter”) as well as their actualization (“présenter” as in “rendre présent”). But, “Il est . . . des œuvres, disparues

73. Inowlocki, *Eusebius*, 40–47.

74. Inowlocki, *Eusebius*, 43–45.

75. See, for instance, Jerome, *Commentary on Matthew* 21.21 (= Harnack frag. 3), (SC 2:122): *Latrant contra nos gentilium canes in suis uoluminibus*.

76. Jerome, *Commentary on Daniel*, prol. (= Harnack frag. 43a).

77. Gerard Genette, *Seuils* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1987), 7–9.

ou avortées, dont nous ne connaissons que le titre.”⁷⁸ *Against the Christians* is thus a text, the remains of which are only an obscure “paratexte.” That is, not only is the title uncertain but also the text was preserved by Christian adversaries in a partial way. As a result, it is very difficult to assess the reception of *Against the Christians* in late antique circles, both pagan and Christian, and this makes it even harder to know the content of the lost text. Genette further explains: “Un élément de paratexte peut . . . apparaître à tout moment, [et] il peut également disparaître, définitivement ou non, par décision de l’auteur ou sur intervention étrangère, ou en vertu de l’usure du temps.”⁷⁹ *Against the Christians* was meant to disappear for good when it was burned on the orders of Christian emperors, although it is impossible to confirm whether their edicts were respected.

How important was Porphyry’s treatise to Jerome? The greatest amount of existing fragments was excerpted from Book 11 of his *Commentary on Daniel*. Passages from Porphyry’s Book 12 on Daniel⁸⁰ survive extensively to the point where the church father and the philosopher disagree on the prophecy about the fourth beast’s little horn, which Jerome ascribed to the antichrist, while Porphyry claims it was meant to represent Antiochus IV Epiphanes. Jerome says that he will answer adversaries point by point: *Sequamur igitur expositionis ordinem et iuxta utramque explanationem, quid aduersariis, quid nostris uideatur, breuiter annotemus. “Stabit,” inquit, “in loco Seleuci, frater eius”* (*Commentary on Daniel* 11.24 [= Harnack frag. 43p]). He later states that he has been exposing Porphyry’s argument (thus providing a concrete identity for those “adversaries”), and, more significantly, that he has been summarizing: *Haec, Porphyrius sequens Sutorium sermone lacinosissimo prosecutus est, quae nos breui compendio diximus* (*Commentary on Daniel* 11.24 [= Harnack frag. 43p]). It is impossible to tell whether or not Jerome is paraphrasing or quoting Porphyry elsewhere in the work.⁸¹

Jerome’s style may merely vary according to the text he is composing or to his argument. If Inowlocki’s line of argument is to be followed, then Jerome may both cite the text and modify it by making semantic, grammatical, or lexical changes; he does not recognize Porphyry as an authority, for he was a famous anti-Christian, and therefore does not worry

78. Genette, *Seuils*, 9.

79. Genette, *Seuils*, 12.

80. See Jerome, *Commentary on Daniel*, prol.

81. According to Alan Cameron, “The Date of Porphyry’s *Katà Xριστιανῶν*,” *Classical Quarterly* 18 (1967): 382, “Callinicus Sutorius [is] a sophist and historian from Petra who taught with great success in Athens in the late third century.”

about respecting his thoughts, and summarizes at his own convenience (and discretion).

Ancient conventions of citation are not the only factors, which may have contributed to the Porphyry created by Jerome. There is also the subjective way in which Jerome might have processed the text in his mind. In *La seconde main*, Antoine Compagnon takes a philosophical look at citation and explains how a reader systematically selects passages of a text as part of a complex reading process formed by the characteristics of memory. He argues that there are sentences that readers do not read, and others that they will remember. It is those sentences that they will cite. As he aptly put it, “Lorsque je cite, j’excise, je mutile, je prélève.”⁸² Compagnon defines four distinctive features of reading, namely “ablation” or “taking out,” underlining, accommodation, and sollicitation.⁸³

Compagnon argues that when someone engages in reading, “[sa] lecture procède déjà d’un acte de citation qui désagrège le texte et détache du contexte.” Someone will cite the sentences that caught their attention or seem to them to summarize the main idea of a book or a paragraph. Reading allows one to go back to a passage and reorganize the text in order to make sure that they are following the author’s argument. Therefore, “la lecture . . . dispose au souvenir et à l’imitation, soit à la citation. . . , [et] la citation . . . est un lieu de reconnaissance, un repère de lecture.”⁸⁴

Jerome, when he read either *Against the Christians* or secondhand material, must have experienced the reading process as explained by

82. Antoine Compagnon, *La seconde main, ou, le travail de la citation* (Paris: Seuil, 1979), 17.

83. Compagnon, *La seconde main*, 25. Compagnon’s work also contains a chapter entitled “Un comble, le discours de la théologie,” in which he analyzes the principles governing patristic commentary in late antiquity and how it is based on citation. He develops the idea that what he names “theological discourse” is a forever-expanding repetition in the form of a commentary, which has as its source the Bible. Compagnon argues that, “L’argument patristique a . . . la valeur d’une preuve ou d’une confirmation de la doctrine . . .” (220). While Compagnon’s conclusions could be used to better explain the relationship between Porphyry’s text and Jerome’s commentaries, in that Porphyry cannot be a source for Jerome, who was more likely to look for authority in patristic scholars, it is not applicable here, for Compagnon’s argument on patristic authority is not valid. Éric Rebillard, “A New Style of Argument in Christian Polemic: Augustine and the Use of Patristic Citations,” *J ECS* 8 (2000): 559–78, reached a different conclusion: “In his use of patristic citations as an argument in theological controversy, Augustine makes a clear distinction between the authority of a single writer and the authority of the consensus of the largest number of writers. As a consequence, he criticizes or rejects the authority of an argument from a patristic citation.”

84. Compagnon, *La seconde main*, 18 and 23.

Compagnon. In the event that the text was read to him, Jerome would have needed to assimilate its content swiftly and would have memorized the passages that made the whole meaningful to him and others which he found interesting. What needs to be understood here is what sort of sentences or passages caught his attention, as well as the reason why he either memorized or noted these. What do the Porphyrian fragments represent in his work? Do they represent the main ideas of the text from which he pulls his citations so that they might represent a summary, or were they “thrown” into his work simply because they bore a relation to Jerome’s own argument? The last section of this paper should help to negotiate this question.

Of interest here is also what Compagnon defines as “solicitation.”⁸⁵ For various reasons, a specific sentence solicits the reader’s attention, but this does not necessarily happen because it summarizes an idea. In the same fashion, Jerome must have been solicited by a few sentences that caught his attention either because he especially disliked them or because he wanted to correct them.

What Jerome retained from Porphyry may have been influenced by his opinion of the philosopher. To Jerome, an ordained Christian of the late fourth century, Porphyry’s discourse is not legitimate for various reasons. As a pagan, he does not write from the correct social perspective. Although paganism was still the official religion in the late third century when Porphyry was writing, Theodosius I made it unlawful in 391, when Jerome was writing and therefore Christianity was not under threat. Furthermore, as Dominic O’Meara explains, Porphyry’s Neoplatonism had a political agenda;⁸⁶ he was thus part of the group, which persecuted Christians. Even though Jerome would not necessarily have known this, Porphyry’s agenda might have tainted his work. And since Porphyry is no Christian, Jerome does not think that he can speak about Christianity and even less so on behalf of Christians. Jerome writes as a Christian in full authority, while Porphyry “speaks wrong.”

Furthermore, Jerome’s status as a Christian—and therefore a follower of the official religion in Rome—might have shaped the way he used *Against the Christians*. According to Genette⁸⁷ and Compagnon, Plato, in Book 3 of *Republic*, identified two narrative genres in poetry, namely pure narrative—when the poet speaks on his own behalf—and mimesis (or imitation)—when the poet wants to give the illusion that a character

85. Compagnon, *La seconde main*, 18–23.

86. Dominic J. O’Meara, *Platonopolis* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).

87. Gerard Genette, *Figures III* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1972), 184.

is speaking. Plato forbade the use of *oratio recta* (direct speech) to the guardians of his ideal city because it was a mimesis that posed a danger to their souls in that it consists in imitating the discourse of another, talking on their behalf, therefore making one's speech similar to someone else's through imitation. In other words, it implied appropriating their discourse. Mimesis is a representation through art, and it was used primarily by the poet. The philosopher thus forbids poetry for guardians because it lacks a direct relationship to truth. For Plato, in turn, indirect speech is acceptable since it is deprived of mimesis and therefore closer to truth.⁸⁸ Mimesis is thus the process by which one appropriates the words—or discourse—of someone else. However, when Jerome cites Porphyry, he appropriates his discourse, but not for the purpose of imitation. He rephrases it at his convenience, remembers what either helped him to make sense of the philosopher's treatise or solicited his attention while reading it (*à la Compagnon*), and finds an appropriate space for himself in the text where he will be able to oppose Porphyry and show him under a distasteful light. Furthermore, Jerome may well have looked for evidence he could cite against Porphyry by selecting the quotations that do most damage, a standard rhetorical technique.⁸⁹

According to theories of intertextuality, among the voices that influence the writing of any text is the audience. In this case, Porphyry's audience becomes Jerome's audience, for his ideas survive in texts that will be read by Jerome's readers. Genette explains how the author's original preface targets specific readers by clearly establishing the purpose and scope of the work.⁹⁰ An author cannot put his work forward in its preface, for it would be presumptuous; he may at least use it to point out its accuracy and thereby catch the audience's attention.⁹¹ In his *Commentary on Daniel* (written in 407), Jerome states that although Porphyry has written a whole book on Daniel, he does not intend to answer the philosopher, for Eusebius, Apollinarius, and Methodius have already done so extensively.⁹²

88. Compagnon, *La seconde main*, 101–5.

89. See Gillian Clark, "Augustine's Porphyry and the Universal Way of Salvation," in *Studies on Porphyry*, ed. George Karamanolis and Anne Sheppard (London: Institute of Classical Studies, 2007), 133, who argues that Augustine, in *City of God*, selected from Porphyry what would make him sound like a Christian.

90. Genette, *Seuils*, 197.

91. Genette, *Seuils*, 191.

92. Jerome, *Commentary on Daniel*, prolog. (= Harnack frag. 43a), (CCL 75A:772): *cui solertissime responderunt Eusebius Caesariensis episcopus tribus uoluminibus, octauo decimo et nono decimo et uicesimo, Apollinaris quoque uno grandi libro, hoc est uicesimo sexto, et ante hos ex parte Methodius.*

Furthermore, by the early fifth century, *Against the Christians* was not supposed to be freely circulating and read. Jerome empowers himself by delivering the unavailable work to posterity, a mighty device against the enemy of Christendom, for not only is the treatise meant to disappear over time, but its author is no longer alive to defend himself and address his own audience. Jerome is alone with an inaccessible work, and he does with it what he pleases. In the process, he appropriates Porphyry's audience. The church father is in a position to promote truth, and this is what his discourse is meant to represent.

How Methodology May Influence Assumptions

Not taking into account all the methodological and literary considerations can lead to mistaken claims about *Against the Christians*. Examples of such mistakes made even by an expert, relying on Harnack, rather than on an analysis of Jerome's use of Porphyry, can be found in Robert Wilken's *The Christians as the Romans Saw Them*. Wilken notes that Jerome answered Porphyry on Daniel "verse by verse."⁹³ But Jerome himself says that his task was "not to answer the calumnies of [their] adversaries, which would require a long discussion, but to plant here and there what was said to [the Christians] by the prophet, [he] remind[s] in [his] preface, that none of the prophets has spoken so clearly about Christ."⁹⁴ Jerome adds, "And whenever the occasion arose in the course of the explanation, I attempted to respond briefly to these calumnies."⁹⁵ Harnack preserved very little of the context, and, as a result, fragments 43a and 43b are misleading. Indeed, the cover-text tells us about the task Jerome had set for himself and how he intended to treat the Porphyrian problem. Jerome planned no formal refutation, even less a "verse by verse" one. Wilken evidently read Jerome's *Commentary on Daniel*, for he noted that Porphyry's interpretation of Daniel 9 is absent from Jerome's commentary on the same passage (this

93. Wilken, *Christians*, 138.

94. Jerome, *Commentary on Daniel*, prol. (= Harnack frag. 43a), (CCL 75A:772): *Verum quia nobis propositum est non aduersarii calumniis respondere, quae longo sermone indigent, sed ea quae a propheta dicta sunt nostris disserere, id est Christianis, illud in praefatione commoneo, nullum prophetarum tam aperte dixisse de Christo.*

95. Jerome, *Commentary on Daniel*, prol. (= Harnack frag. 43a), (CCL 75A:772): *Et tamen sicubi se occasio in explanatione eiusdem uoluminis dederit, calumniae illius strictim respondere conabor, et philosophiae artibus, immo malitiae saeculari, per quam subuertere nititur ueritatem, et quibusdam praestigiis clarum oculorum lumen auferre, explanatione simplici contraire.*

is discussed later in Daniel 12.7–11), but seems to have been misled by Harnack when he said that Jerome answered Porphyry verse by verse.⁹⁶

Wilken asks: “Why should Porphyry devote such attention to the Book of Daniel . . . ?”⁹⁷ It is from Porphyry’s Book 12, which he wrote on Daniel, that the most extensive set of fragments survives. Wilken rightly notes that this topic was a highly sensitive one for the church at the time, for the book was said to have been written by Daniel during the reign of Nebuchadnezzar and to foretell the coming of Christ and the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple. Claiming that the book had been written at a later period (during the reign of Antiochus IV Epiphanes) and by different authors, Porphyry proposed that Daniel’s purpose was historical rather than prophetic, and a forgery at that.⁹⁸ Without undermining the importance of this topic, can we say with confidence that Porphyry devoted more attention to it than to others? The philosopher clearly succeeded at creating unease within the church, for his criticism on Daniel earned him extensive replies from Eusebius, Apollinarius, and Methodius (according to Jerome). But a closer look at Jerome’s *Commentary on Daniel* reveals that he cited lengthy passages from Porphyry on Daniel 11 only, not on the other books. Jerome interpreted the eyes of the small horn of the fourth beast in Daniel 11 as representing the antichrist, while Porphyry associated it with Antiochus, who, according to him, uprooted all the other horns, or kings, and therefore their kingdoms. Jerome only intended to answer Porphyry on this particular point. Less is extant from the rest of Porphyry’s commentary on Daniel, for the philosopher is mentioned *en passant* in relation to Daniel 2, 3, 5, 7, and 9. Jerome felt the need to answer him only when it came to the antichrist, and it is on Daniel 11 that he reproduces the lengthiest passages. Did Jerome think that no one had previously given a satisfactory response to Porphyry on that point? To contradict his adversary, the church father used the same method, i.e. he performed

96. See Wilken, *Christians*, 142–43.

97. Wilken, *Christians*, 138.

98. Porphyry followed Theodotion’s reading, a Hellenistic Jew who translated the Bible into Greek ca. 180–190. See Jerome, *Commentary on Daniel* 11.44.45 (= Harnack frag. 43u), (CCL 75A:931): *quia secutus est Theodotionis interpretationem*. Fergus Millar, “Porphyry: Ethnicity, Language, and Alien Wisdom,” in *Rome, the Greek World, and the East* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 340–41, being interested in Porphyry’s use of Semitic languages as part of his cultural background, wonders whether Porphyry may have read the Bible in the original, Hebrew language, but stresses that there is no evidence. Perhaps this excerpt from Jerome can help solve this problem.

an historical interpretation of Daniel.⁹⁹ In sum, Wilken's statement needs nuance. While it is true that devoting an entire book to Daniel is remarkable in that it shows a need to downgrade its importance, what survives from it is not representative of its original content at all. Contextualizing the work would allow us to avoid making such assumptions as "[Jerome] cites [Porphyry] at length in the commentary."¹⁰⁰

Case Study: Porphyry in Jerome

Schepens's first step—deconstructing the cover-text—requires an investigation of Jerome and his motives for citing Porphyry. Although Porphyry was a philosopher, it is clear, as will be shown, from the remaining fragments that *Against the Christians* constituted a historical and philological analysis of the Bible. Most et al. grouped their essays on fragments into three different categories: the literary, the historical, and the philosophical, philological, and medical. Porphyry's lost treatise does not exactly fit in any of these categories. Schepens's method, which is concerned with reconstructing lost histories, will thus be applied to a different literary genre to see whether it can add to the previous fragment collections and to our knowledge of *Against the Christians*.

It should first be remembered that Jerome cites or paraphrases Porphyry for a defensive purpose. Furthermore, if we are to take Jerome at his word in the prologue to his *Commentary on Daniel*, his attack on the neoplatonist philosopher is not the principal aim of his work. He tells us that ". . . because in truth it is not proposed by us to answer the calumnies of an adversary, which demand a long discourse, but to discuss what was said by the prophet to our people, that is to Christians, I declare in my preface that none of the prophets spoke so openly about Christ."¹⁰¹ We owe to Jerome's *Commentary on Daniel* the most extensive fragments of *Against the Christians*. Jerome is our only remaining source for Book 12, since the other works written in response to Porphyry are lost. Fragments from other

99. Jerome, *Commentary on Daniel*, prol. (= Harnack frag. 43c), (CCL 75A:775): *Ad intellegendas autem extremas partes Danielis, multiplex Graecorum historia necessaria est: Sutorii uidelicet Callinici, Diodori, Hieronymi, Polybii, Posidonii, Claudii Theonis et Andronyci cognomento Alipi, quos et Porphyrius secutum esse se dicit, Iosephi quoque et eorum quos ponit Iosephus, praecipueque nostri Liuii, et Pompei Trogi, atque Iustini. . . .*

100. Wilken, *Christians*, 138.

101. Jerome, *Commentary on Daniel*, prol. (= Harnack frag. 43a), (CCL 75A:772): *Verum quia nobis propositum est non aduersarii calumniis respondere, quae longo sermone indigent, sed ea quae a propheta dicta sunt nostris disserere, id est Christianis, illud in praefatione commoneo, nullum prophetarum tam aperte dixisse de Christo.*

works of Jerome are so scattered that Jerome's statement may be applied as a general rule in regard to his attitude toward Porphyry. Porphyry's attacks on the book of Daniel came in Book 12 of *Against the Christians*, where he denied Christian claims that Daniel was a prophet who had accurately predicted the advent of Christ. His critique disturbed the early church fathers, which explains why Jerome devoted so much attention to it. In the prologue to his *Commentary on Daniel*, Jerome notes that Apollinarius, Eusebius, and Methodius have already responded to Porphyry, so there is no need for him to fully perform such a task.¹⁰² Who is Porphyry anyway, other than a "blasphemous, ignorant, and impious" philosopher?¹⁰³ Jerome will refer to Porphyry's work when he treats specific topics only. Furthermore, in the prologue to his *Commentary on Daniel*, Jerome states very clearly for his readers that "whenever the opportunity offers in the cause of this work, [he] shall try to reply briefly to [Porphyry's] allegations and to counter with a simple explanation the arts of philosophy, or rather the worldly malice with which [Porphyry] tries to undermine truth and to remove clear light from the eyes with deceptions."¹⁰⁴ So Jerome was writing a commentary on Daniel with only secondary attention to answering Porphyry, not an outright "Response to Porphyry."

As far as the fragments' "cover-text" is concerned, Jerome's assertion creates major methodological problems. First, the fragments will represent only the threatening aspect of the treatise to which Jerome could not help alluding. The fragments are thus merely a metonymy for *Against the Christians* as Jerome saw it.¹⁰⁵ Second, Jerome's own interests were mainly textual.¹⁰⁶ Following the steps of Origen, he studied Scripture

102. Jerome, *Commentary on Daniel*, prol. (= Harnack frag. 43a).

103. Jerome, *Commentary on Galatians*, prol. (= Harnack frag. 21a), (PL 26:334): *Quod nequaquam intelligens Bataneotes et sceleratus ille Porphyrius; Commentary on Galatians* 1.2.11–13 (= Harnack frag. 21c), (PL 26:366): . . . *Porphyrio blasphemanti; Abridged Commentary on the Psalms* 77 (= Harnack frag. 10), (CCL 78:66): *Inpius ille Porphyrius proponit aduersum nos*. Jerome stated, however, in the prologue to his *Commentary on Galatians*, that the critiques of the debate between Peter and Paul would deserve a proper answer on his part in another book.

104. Jerome, *Commentary on Daniel*, prol. (= Harnack frag. 43a), (CCL 75A:772): *Et tamen sicubi se occasio in explanatione eiusdem uoluminis dederit, calumniae illius strictim respondere conabor, et philosophiae artibus, immo malitiae saeculari, per quam subuertere nititur ueritatem, et quibusdam praestigijs clarum oculorum lumen auferre, explanatione simplici contraire*.

105. Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht, "Eat your Fragment! About Imagination and the Restitution of Texts," in *Collecting Fragments*, 319.

106. Eric Plumer, *Augustine's Commentary on Galatians* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2003), 38.

by comparing all the versions of the sacred texts, and himself translated some of the Bible into Latin in his Vulgate, thus being fully aware of the problems linked to translation and edition.¹⁰⁷ So he may have focused on Porphyry's critique of texts and disregarded other aspects of his argument. Third, he may have read Christian refutations of Porphyry rather than the full text of Porphyry. The full text may not have been available, and according to his own testimony, Jerome once had a dream, ca. 374, in which he is told by a divine judge: "You are lying: you are a Ciceronian, not a Christian."¹⁰⁸ Afterwards, Jerome swore to himself that he would never possess or read any secular literature.¹⁰⁹ Although the importance of this dream for understanding Jerome's scholarship can be challenged, it is most revealing in terms of the complexity of using Jerome as a source for Porphyry. Eric Plumer reminds us that when Jerome wrote his *Commentary on Galatians*, he mentioned this dream in the preface to Book 3. At that time, fifteen years have passed since he presumably opened a secular book.¹¹⁰ While Jerome's regular allusions to the pagan world give reason to doubt this, he might have well used secondary material to read Porphyry—for instance, the lost works of Apollinarius, Methodius, and Eusebius—instead of Porphyry himself.¹¹¹ Jerome himself says that anyone

107. See J. N. D. Kelly, *Jerome: His Life, Writings, and Controversies* (London: Duckworth, 1975), for a lengthy discussion of Jerome's writings.

108. Jerome, *Letter* 22.30 (ed. Jérôme Labourt, *Saint Jérôme. Lettres*, Collection Budé, vol. 1 [Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1949], 145): *Mentiris, ait, Ciceronianus es, non Christianus*. See also Kelly, *Jerome*, 41–44, and Plumer, *Augustine's Commentary on Galatians*, 40.

109. Jerome, *Letter* 22.30 (Labourt 145): *Domine, si unquam habuero codices saeculares, si legero, te negavi*.

110. Jerome, *Commentary on Galatians* 1.2.1–2 (PL 26:358); see Plumer, *Augustine's Commentary on Galatians*, 40: "[Jerome] reminds Paula and Eustochium that he has not read Cicero, Virgil, or any pagan writer for more than fifteen years."

111. According to Harnack, "Porphyrius, *Gegen die Christen*," 7, Jerome relied on these responses: "Nachweisbar selbst gesehen hat das Werk des Porphyrius . . . sonst niemand, ja es ist sehr warhscheinlich, dass auch Hieronymus es nicht selbst in Händen gehabt hat: denn so häufig, wenn er es zitiert, nennt er zugleich die Gegenschriften des Methodius, Eusebius und Apollinarius, dass der Verdacht, sie seien seine einzigen Gewährsmänner für den Inhalt des Werkes, nicht unterdrückt werden kann." But according to Beatrice, "Traité de Porphyre contre les chrétiens," 120, the Arian Philostorgius answered Porphyry in 420, which means that the treatise was possibly still circulating in the early fifth century. Beatrice also says that Libanius, *Oration* 18—cited by Socrates, *Church History* 3.23—refers to Porphyry when he writes "the old Tyrian," and that John Chrysostom, *De S. Babyla* 11 (ca. 380) wrote that the pagan writings against the Christians, if still extant, are to be found in Christian writings; see also Bidez, *Vie de Porphyre*, 130; see Jerome, *Commentary on Daniel*, prol. (= Harnack frag. 43a), on the responses of Eusebius, Apollinarius, and Methodius.

who would like to read those refutations (concerning the antichrist) could do so (Jerome, *Commentary on Daniel* 5.13). Furthermore, if we are to believe Jerome's statement in his *Commentary on Galatians*, the references to Porphyry were made from memory, which, in turn, explains why most of them are so scattered. Jerome also quotes directly from Porphyry, but so erratically that we can conclude that he may have had other Christians' responses in front of him while writing. The extent to which we can rely on Jerome is not obvious. It is thus very important to distinguish between the secondary elaboration made by Jerome on Porphyry's ideas and these ideas, i.e. to contextualize the fragments.

The "cover-text" will now be "deconstructed" by exploring why and when Jerome refers to Porphyry. The key question is how and why Jerome cited or responded to Porphyry. Attention will be given to the fragments of *Against the Christians* which are extant in various letters and commentaries of Jerome, namely his commentaries on Matthew, Joel, Isaiah, Mark, Daniel, Psalms, and finally Galatians as well as his letters to Pammachius, Augustine, and Demetrius. Jerome's fragments are a case study of how new methods might change our interpretation of Porphyry. Porphyry's ideas on the evangelists and the apostles are inscribed in a very large debate, which incorporates not only Porphyry the philosopher, but also Jerome's understanding of how to read Scripture, as well as his contemporary opponents.¹¹² Porphyry's arguments from Books 1 and 14 will first be presented. The fragments as gathered by Harnack may allow us to get a general sense of the philosopher's intent. By looking first at the content of those fragments alone, it appears that three main groups are targeted by Porphyry, namely the apostles and disciples of Christ, the evangelists, and Peter and Paul. First, Porphyry has special charges against the apostles, namely these were poor wretches from the countryside,¹¹³ who stupidly followed Christ "as if they had irrationally followed someone or other who called them."¹¹⁴ They boasted about their quite ordinary miracles, when there is nothing so extraordinary about performing magical art, for Apuleius and Apollonius were also skilled in that discipline: Jerome concedes that

112. See also Cook, *Interpretation of the New Testament*, who comments on all the New Testament fragments and their context in Porphyry's philosophical works. He also includes Jerome's answers, but has less discussion of the cover-text than this study proposes to do.

113. Jerome, *Abridged Commentary on the Psalms* 81 (= Harnack frag. 4), (CCL 78:89): *Homines rusticani et pauperes*.

114. Jerome, *Commentary on Matthew* 9.9 (= Harnack frag. 6), (SC 242:170): *Arguit in hoc loco Porphyrius et Iulianus Augustus uel stultitiam eorum qui statim secuti sunt Salutorem, quasi irrationabiliter quemlibet uocantem hominem sint secuti*.

many people had successfully done magic—in order to attract the money of rich women whom they duped.¹¹⁵ The apostles, according to Porphyry, used the antiquity of Scripture as a source of authority and abused by their teachings “the simplicity and ignorance of the listeners.”¹¹⁶ Porphyry also mocks the apostles’ lack of faith, as they were unable to perform the miracles ordered by Jesus—like moving mountains, for instance.¹¹⁷ As for the disciples, they irrationally interpret signs, taking for granted that an easily predicted solar eclipse is directly linked to the resurrection.¹¹⁸

Porphyry does not spare the evangelists. As mentioned above, Jerome says that he criticized their mistakes in his Book 14, presumably of *Against the Christians*.¹¹⁹ They are guilty of “falsity,” according to Porphyry, in that they are not able to cite properly the Bible on which they rely.¹²⁰ In one instance, Mark cites Isaiah only and forgets Malachi,¹²¹ and Matthew confuses Isaiah and Asaph,¹²² and forgets one generation in Daniel.¹²³

115. Jerome, *Abridged Commentary on the Psalms* 81 (= Harnack frag. 4), (CCL 78:89): *Homines rusticani et pauperes, quoniam nihil habebant, magicis artibus operati sunt quaedam signa. Non est autem grande facere signa. Nam fecere signa in Aegypto magi contra Moysen (Exod 7). Fecit et Apollonius, fecit et Apuleius. Infiniti signa fecerunt. Concedo tibi, Porphyri, magicis artibus signa fecerunt, ut divitias acciperent a divitibus mulierculis, quas induxerant: hoc enim tu dicis.*

116. Jerome, *Commentary on Joel* 2.28 (= Harnack frag. 5), (PL 25:975): *Ut quidquid utile audientibus esse cernebant, et non repugnare praesentibus, de alterius temporis testimoniis roborarent, non quod abuterentur audientium simplicitate et imperitia, ut impius calumniatur Porphyrius.*

117. Jerome, *Commentary on Matthew* 21.21 (= Harnack frag. 3), (SC 259:122): *Latrant contra nos gentilium canes in suis uoluminibus quos ad impietatis propriae memoriam reliquerunt, adserentes apostolos non habuisse fidem quia montes transferre non potuerint.*

118. Jerome, *Commentary on Matthew* 27.45 (= Harnack frag. 14).

119. Jerome, *On the Beginning of Mark* 1.1–2 (= Harnack frag. 9), (CCL 78:452): *Locum istum impius ille Porphyrius, qui adversum nos conscripsit et multis voluminibus rabiem suam evomit, in XIV volumine disputat et dicit: “Evangelistae tam imperiti fuerant homines.”*

120. Jerome, *Letter* 57.9 (= Harnack frag. 2), (Labourt 3:67): *Haec replico, non ut evangelistas arguam falsitatis—hoc quippe impiorum est, Celsi, Porphyrii, Iuliani.*

121. Jerome, *On the Beginning of Mark* 1.1–12 (= Harnack frag. 9), (CCL 78:452): *Evangelistae tam imperiti fuerunt homines, non solum in saecularibus, sed etiam in scripturis divinis, ut testimonium, quod alibi scriptum est, de alio ponerent propheta. (Here Jerome quotes directly from Porphyry). Jerome, *Commentary on Matthew* 3.3 (= Harnack frag. 9), (SC 242:90): *Porphyrius istum locum Marci evangelistae principio comparat in quo scriptum est: . . . Cum enim testimonium de Malachia Esaiaque contextum putemus adsumptum.**

122. Jerome, *Abridged Commentary on the Psalms* 77 (= Harnack frag. 10), (CCL 78:66): *“Aperiam in parabola os meum. . . .” Hoc Esaia non loquitur, sed Asaph. Denique et impius ille Porphyrius proponit aduersum nos hoc ipsum, et dicit: “Euan-*

As for the influential Peter and Paul, on whom Jerome preserved the most fragments, Porphyry highlights their dispute in his first book—as Jerome says in his *Commentary on Galatians*¹²⁴—stating that Peter was wrong, creating great disturbances within the church,¹²⁵ and that Paul, led by jealousy,¹²⁶ had boldly refuted him, while they both pretended to agree,¹²⁷ thus actually making the same mistake. Furthermore, Paul proclaimed himself apostle,¹²⁸ refused to share his revelation with the people,¹²⁹ and his teachings are violent in comparison to Christ's.¹³⁰ Peter proved to be even more violent when he sentenced to death two people who had not gotten rid of all their money.¹³¹

Harnack's collection provides us only with these hints, which require either a very good knowledge of the subjects criticized by Porphyry—e.g., the debate between Peter and Paul as found in the epistle to the Galatians

gelista uester Matthaeus tam inperitus fuit, ut diceret, quod scriptum est in Esaia propheta, Aperiam in parabola os meum."

123. Jerome, *Commentary on Daniel* 1.1.1 (= Harnack frag. 11), (CCL 75A:777): *Et ob hanc causam in euangelio secundum Matthaem una uidetur desse generatio* (Matt. 1.11–12), *quia secunda tesseriscedecas in Ioachim desinit filium Iosiae et tertia incipit a Ioiachin filio Ioachim; quod ignorans Porphyrius, calumniam struit ecclesiae, suam ostendens imperitiam, dum evangelistae Matthaei arguere nititur falsitatem.*

124. Jerome, *Commentary on Galatians*, prol. (= Harnack frag. 21a).

125. Jerome, *Commentary on Galatians* 3.5.10 (= Harnack frag. 22), (PL 26:430–31): *Sed nec Paulus tam procaci maledicto de Ecclesiae principe loqueretur, nec Petrus dignus qui conturbatae Ecclesiae reus fieret.*

126. Jerome, *Letter* 112.6, 11 (= Harnack frag. 21b), (Labourt 6:23): *Immo exarsisse Paulum inuidia uirtutum Petri.*

127. See Jerome, *Commentary on Galatians* 1.2.11 (= Harnack frag. 21c), (PL 26:358): *Maxime cum Lucas scriptor historiae, nullam hujus dissensionis faciat mentionem; nec dicat umquam Petrum Antiochiae fuisse cum Paulo, et locum dari Porphyrio blasphemanti; si autem Petrus errasse, aut Paulus procaciter apostolorum principem confutasse credatur;* Jerome, *Commentary on Isaiah* 14.26 (= Harnack frag. 21d), (ed. R. Gryson, C. Gabriel et al., *Commentaires de Jérôme sur le prophète Isaïe*, 4 vols. [Freiburg: Verlag Herder Freiburg, 1998]): *Qui dispensatoriam inter Petrum et Paulum contentionem (Gal 2) vere dicunt iurgium fuisse atque certamen, ut blasphemanti Porphyrio satisfaciant . . . ;* Jerome, *Commentary on Galatians* 3.5.10 (= Harnack frag. 22), (PL 26:430–31): *Occulte, iniquiunt, Petrum lacerat, cui supra in faciem restitisse se scribit, quod non recto pede incesserit ad Euangelii veritatem. Sed nec Paulus tam procaci maledicto de Ecclesiae principe loqueretur (Gal 2), nec Petrus dignus qui conturbatae Ecclesiae reus fieret.*

128. Jerome, *Commentary on Galatians* 1.1.1 (= Harnack frag. 19), (PL 26:335): *Potest autem et oblique in Petrum et in caeteros dictum accipi, quod non ab apostolis ei sit traditum Euangelium.*

129. Jerome, *Commentary on Galatians* 1.1.16 (= Harnack frag. 20).

130. Jerome, *Commentary on Galatians* 3.5.12 (= Harnack frag. 37).

131. Jerome, *Letter* 130.14 (= Harnack frag. 25).

and the Acts of the Apostles—or a very good knowledge of Jerome’s discussion of these topics. Going back to the “cover-text” allows us to get a very different sense of the fragments and of the way they are inserted in a debate with Jerome, who has his own views on the biblical texts.

When it comes to answering Porphyry’s charges against the evangelists, Jerome makes the point that the errors are not due to the evangelists but to translation issues. In the paragraphs preceding Porphyry’s charge, in *Letter 57* to Pammachius, Jerome exposes the textual discrepancies between the Hebrew text, the Septuagint, the Vulgate, and the evangelists. He gives precise examples and attributes the differences to the problem of translation. For instance, Jerome mentions a text from Zachariah cited by the evangelist John: “they will look at the one they pierced.”¹³² The Septuagint says rather, “and they will look at me, the subject of their insults.”¹³³ The Latin versions gave this translation: “and they will look at me, the subject of their games.”¹³⁴ Jerome discusses many other discrepancies, and these examples could well mean that Porphyry discussed exactly these issues. Without the context of the discussion, the “falsities” noted by Porphyry remain unidentified. This highlights a major problem of the Harnack collection, e.g., his fragment 2 on the evangelists who falsified the Old Testament writings is impossible to understand without the context.¹³⁵ As for Matthew, charged with having forgotten one generation of Daniel, Jerome explains that the error is Porphyry’s, who confused Jehoiakim with Jehoiakin, the former being the father of the latter. There are thus two men mentioned in Matthew.¹³⁶ Jerome alluded to Porphyry while discussing, at the beginning of

132. Jerome, *Letter 57.7* (Labourt 3:63): *Videbunt in quem conpuxerunt.*

133. Jerome, *Letter 57.7* (Labourt 3:63): καὶ ἐπιβλέψονται πρὸς με ἂνθ' ὃν ἐνορχήσαντο.

134. Jerome, *Letter 57.7* (Labourt 3:63–64): *et aspicient ad me pro his quae “inluserunt” siue “insultauerunt.”*

135. Jerome, *Letter 57.9* (= Harnack frag. 2).

136. See Jerome, *Commentary on Daniel 1.1.1* (CCL 75A:776–77): *Anno tertio regni Ioachim regis Iudae, uenit Nabuchodonosor rex Babylonis Hierusalem, et obsedit eam. Ioachim filius Iosiae, cuius tertio decimo anno prophetare orsus est Hieremias, sub quo etiam Holda mulier prophetauit, ipse est qui alio nomine appellatur Heliachim et regnauit super tribum Iuda et Hierusalem annis undecim, cui successit in regnum filius eius Ioiachin cognomento Iechonias, qui tertio mense regni sui, die decima, captus a ducibus Nabuchodonosor ductusque est in Babylonem, et in loco eius constitutus est Sedecias filius Iosiae patruus eius, cuius anno undecimo Hierusalem capta atque subuersa est. Nemo igitur putet eundem in Danielis principio esse Ioachim, qui in Hiezechielis exordio Ioiachin scribitur: iste enim extremam syllabam “chim” habet, ille “chin”—et ob hanc causam in euangelio secundum Matthaeum una uidetur deesse generatio, quia secunda tesseriscedecias in Ioachim desinit filium Iosiae et tertia incipit a Ioiachin filio Ioachim; quod ignorans Porphyrius, calumniam struit ecclesiae, suam ostendens imperitiam, dum euangelistae Matthaei arguere nititur*

his *Commentary on Daniel*, the two kings.¹³⁷ Next, the other mistakes that Porphyry noted are not due to the evangelists themselves, but rather to the copyists, according to Jerome. Porphyry had mocked the fact that Mark had misattributed the following passage only to Isaiah when he used it in his gospel: “The prophet Isaiah was talking about him when he said, “The voice of the one who was shouting in the desert: Pave the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.”¹³⁸ This passage is in fact also from Malachi. Relying on the authority of “the churchmen” (*ecclesiastici*) Jerome claims that Mark did not make any mistake. The error is that of the copyists who added the name of Isaiah in order to make one whole out of various biblical quotations.¹³⁹ The next occurrence provides clues as to the presence in Jerome of other possible fragments. In answer to Porphyry’s critique on the ignorance of Matthew, who wrongly attributed a passage to Isaiah—“and I would open my mouth in parables”—Jerome explains that the passage is from Asaph, but that a copyist, not recognizing this name, changed it to Isaiah, which sounded more familiar to him.¹⁴⁰ Jerome goes on in his text with so many examples that it is possible to infer that he is actually answering Porphyry’s points—e.g., the hour of the death of

falsitatem (= Harnack frag. 11). *Quodque “traditus” scribitur Ioachim, monstrat non aduersariorum fortitudinis fuisse uictoriam sed Domini uoluntatis.*

137. See Crafer, “The Work of Porphyry,” 488. He discusses, here and elsewhere, some of the context of Porphyry’s fragments in Jerome, but not extensively.

138. Jerome, *Commentary on Matthew* 3.3 (SC 242:88): *Initium euangelii Iesu Christi filii Dei; sicut scriptum est in Esaia propheta: Ecce mitto angelum meum ante faciem tuam qui praeparabit uiam tuam. Vox clamantis in deserto: Parate uiam Domini, rectas facite semitas eius.*

139. Jerome, *Commentary on Matthew* 3.3 (SC 242:90): *Nos autem aut nomen Esaiæ putamus additum scriptorum uitio quod et in aliis locis probare possumus, aut certe de diuersis testimonies scripturarum unum corpus effectum. Lege tertium decimum psalmum et hoc idem reperies.*

140. See Jerome, *Abridged Commentary on the Psalms* 77 (= Harnack frag. 10), (CCL 78:66): *Aperiam in parabola os meum.* See also Jerome, *Commentary on Matthew* 13.35 (SC 242:284), where he discusses Psalm 77: *Quod quia minime inueniebatur in Esaia, arbitror postea a prudentibus uiris esse sublatum. Sed mihi uidetur in principio ita editum, quod scriptum est: per Asaph prophetam dicentem . . . et primum scriptorem non intellexisse Asaph et putasse scriptoris uitium atque emendasse nomen Esaiæ, cuius uocabulum manifestius erat.* See Jerome, *Abridged Commentary on the Psalms* 77 (CCL 78:67), where he justifies some discrepancies between the gospel accounts of Jesus’ death: *Quomodo illud in Euangelio scriptum est, scriptum est in Matthæo et Iohanne quod Dominus noster hora sexta crucifixus sit, rursum scriptum est in Marco quia hora tertia crucifixus sit. Hoc uidetur esse diuersum, sed non est diuersum. Error scriptorum fuit: et in Marco hora sexta scriptum fuit, sed multi pro ἐπισημῶν graeco putauerunt esse gamma. Sicut enim ibi error fuit scriptorum, sic et hic error fuit scriptorum, ut pro Asaph Esaiam scriberent.*

Christ, set to three hours by Matthew and to six hours by Mark.¹⁴¹ This, of course, remains unnoticed without the context.

As for the charges against the apostles, Jerome uses arguments based on his faith. In response to Porphyry's claim that the apostles lured rich women by magical art, Jerome asks, why were the apostles crucified if their ultimate goal was making money? The apostles, Jerome insists, shed their blood so that the Christians' faith would be deemed good.¹⁴² In what concerns the apostles' lack of faith—as they did not move mountains—Jerome again provides a religious explanation when he states that the holy men actually performed miracles, but these are not to be found in any account, for Christians would have been highly criticized on that point by the non-believers. Indeed, when God performed miracles, the world was so skeptical that Jerome thinks accounting for the apostles' miracles would have done them no good.¹⁴³ As for stupidly following Jesus for salvation, Jerome says that Matthew, who obtained the status of apostle, actually achieved salvation, and Jesus' call was preceded with signs.¹⁴⁴ With regard to the eclipse of the sun that, according to Porphyry, is wrongly associated with the resurrection because the ignorant disciples did not know that it could have been easily predicted from moon cycles, Jerome argues that, since the gospels note the event's three-hour duration, it cannot be taken as a mere eclipse of the sun, and thus the prophecy was accomplished.¹⁴⁵

141. Jerome, *Abridged Commentary on the Psalms* 77 (quoted above).

142. See Jerome, *Abridged Commentary on the Psalms* 81 (cf. Harnack frag. 4), (CCL 81:89–90): *Fecerunt et alii signa magicis artibus: sed pro homine mortuo non sunt mortui, pro homine crucifixo. Sciunt isti hominem esse mortuum, et moriuntur sine causa. Felix ergo nostra uictoria, quae in sanguine apostolorum dedicata est. Fides nostra non probatur, nisi per illorum sanguinem.*

143. See Jerome, *Commentary on Matthew* 21.21 (cf. Harnack frag. 3), (SC 259:122): *Quibus nos respondebimus multa facta esse signa a Domino, iuxta Iohannis euangelistae testimonium, quae si scripta essent mundus capere non posset, non quo mundus uolumina capere non potuerit quae potest quamuis multiplicia sint unum armariolum uel unum capere scrinium, sed quo magnitudinem signorum pro miraculis et incredulitate ferre non possit. Igitur et haec credimus fecisse apostolos, sed ideo scripta non esse ne infidelibus contradicendi maior daretur occasio.*

144. See Jerome, *Commentary on Matthew* 9.9 (cf. Harnack frag. 6), (SC 242:170): *Nullum debere salutem desperare si ad meliora conuersus sit, cum ipse de publicano in apostolum sit repente mutatus . . . cum tantae uirtutes tantaque signa praecesserint quae apostolos ante quam crederent uidisse non dubium est.*

145. See Jerome, *Commentary on Matthew* 27.45 (cf. Harnack frag. 14), (SC 259:296): *Nulli autem dubium est paschae tempore lunam fuisse plenissimam. Et ne forsitan uideretur umbra terrae uel orbis lunae soli oppositus breues et ferrugineas fecisse tenebras, trium horarum spatium ponitur, ut omnis causantium tolleretur.* See also Cook, *Interpretation of the New Testament*, 146: "Jerome clarifies

As regards the apostles abusing their hearers, Jerome offers an answer of his own in his *Commentary on Joel*.¹⁴⁶ Porphyry seems to have criticized the fact that a psalm was cited in order to strengthen Peter's argument. Jerome is commenting on Joel 2.28–31, namely on the Joel prophecy quoted by Peter on the day of Pentecost.¹⁴⁷ Jerome goes on and explains that the apostles are not abusing their audience's ignorance and stupidity, as Porphyry claimed, but, "whatever the Apostles judged to be useful to those listening and not inimical to the present, they strengthened with the witness of another time."¹⁴⁸ This they did, as Paul said, in order to preach "fittingly and unfittingly."¹⁴⁹ As Crafer judiciously noted, the place of the fragment in the text implies that the philosopher was referring to that event too, and it "suggests that his attack on the Gospels was followed by a series of objections to the Acts of the Apostles."¹⁵⁰ What Porphyry means in fragment 5—as preserved by Harnack—is thus unclear without the context of Jerome's *Commentary on Joel*, since neither Peter nor Acts are mentioned. Going back to the context allowed Crafer to make his inference. These critiques target the faith of Christ's followers, which explains why it attracted Jerome's attention.

Finally, the Christian apologist deemed it very important to give attention to Porphyry's attack on the heads of the church. The main subject of tension is Galatians. The following arguments will make it clear that Jerome's explanations and the context into which he inserted the fragments

[Porphyry's] somewhat cryptic comment by arguing that an eclipse of the sun only happens at a new moon and not at the full moon of the passover feast."

146. Jerome, *Commentary on Joel* 2.28 (= Harnack frag. 5).

147. Jerome, *Commentary on Joel* 2.28 (PL 25:974): *Et erit post haec, effundam de spiritu meo super omnem carnem, et prophetabunt filii vestri, et filiae vestrae, et senes vestri somnia somniabunt, et iuvenes vestri visiones videbunt: et super servos meos et super ancillas meas in diebus illis effundam de spiritu meo, et dabo prodigia in coelo, et super terram sanguinem, ignem, et vaporem fumi. Sol convertetur in tenebras, et luna in sanguinem, antequam veniat dies Domini magnus et illustris. Et erit, omnis qui invocaverit nomen Domini, salvus erit. Hunc locum beatus apostolus Petrus impletum tempore Dominicae passionis exposuit, quando descendit die Pentecostes Spiritus sanctus super credentes.* See also Crafer, "The Work of Porphyry," 487–88, who briefly discusses both the passage and fragment.

148. Jerome, *Commentary on Joel* 2.28 (= Harnack frag. 5).

149. Jerome, *Commentary on Joel* 2.28 (PL 25:975): *Sed juxta apostolum Paulum, praedicarent opportune, importune.*

150. Crafer, "The Work of Porphyry," 487–88. It is, however, less clear what Crafer, in his brief comment, means when asserting that as regards Paul's above-quoted words, Jerome does not refer to Peter's speech, but only mentions Acts 19 on Peter and Paul's baptism.

are required to fully grasp the content of Porphyry's points as represented in Harnack's collection. The problems between Peter and Paul really bothered Jerome, especially since Porphyry accused Paul of challenging Peter. Paul taught the uncircumcised (Gentiles), whereas Peter taught the circumcised (Jews) (Gal 2.7). Paul explains in Galatians that he "withstood to Peter's face"¹⁵¹ because he would eat with Gentiles only when members of the circumcision were not present, for fear of their judgment (Gal 2.12).¹⁵² This conduct was not, according to Paul, in line with the gospel, for Jews who are faithful to Christ should not live according to the manners of the Jews, but of the Christians, who include non-sinner Gentiles (Gal 2.14–16). Paul clearly meant to define the Christian community here. Paul's disagreement with Peter's behavior makes an easy target for Christian opponents such as Porphyry; it allowed Porphyry to show both that the foundations of the Christian community are not solid and that the teachings of Christ are unclear, for even the heads of the church cannot agree on definition and conduct.

Plumer says that Jerome systematically attacked all those who accepted that there was a disagreement between the two chief apostles, even the Christian Marius Victorinus.¹⁵³ He also answered Augustine extensively in his famous *Letter* 112. Jerome wanted to promote his own explanation of the problems surrounding Jewish Christian and Gentile Christian practices, Peter and Paul having regularly compromised their teachings by promoting abstinence from Jewish Law, but then acting in conformity to the Law. Jerome's explanation is that Paul is not actually blaming Peter (for eating with the Gentiles and then turning away when he realized it was shocking the Jewish Christian community), but that the two men only pretend to be in conflict in order to please both communities.¹⁵⁴ In

151. Cited n. 22.

152. Macarios (3.22.4; Goulet, *Le Monogénès* 2:151) reproduces very closely the passage discussed by Jerome: Κατέγνω καὶ Παῦλος Πέτρου λέγων, Πρὸ τοῦ γὰρ ἐλθεῖν ἀπὸ Ἰακώβου τινάς, μετὰ τῶν ἐθνῶν συνήσθιεν. ὅτε δὲ ἦλθον, ἀφώριζεν ἑαυτὸν φοβούμενος τοὺς ἐκ περιτομῆς, καὶ συνεκρίθησαν αὐτῷ πολλοὶ Ἰουδαῖοι. See Goulet, *Le Monogénès*, 93–94 and 144.

153. Plumer, *Augustine's Commentary on Galatians*, 44.

154. Jerome, *Letter* 112.8 (Labourt 6:27): *Prius enim quam uenirent quidam a Iacobo, cum gentibus edebat; cum autem uenissent, subtraherat se, et segregabat, timens eos qui ex circumcisione errant; Jerome, Commentary on Galatians 1.2.11 (PL 26:364): Sed ut ante jam diximus, restitit secundum faciem publicam Petro et caeteris, ut hypocrisis observandae Legis, quae nocebat eis qui ex gentibus crediderant, correptionis hypocrisis emendaretur, et uterque populus saluus fieret, dum et qui circumcisionem laudant, Petrum sequuntur; et qui circumcidi nolunt, Pauli praedicant libertatem.* See Plumer, *Augustine's Commentary on Galatians*, 46, on how Jerome dealt with the conflict between Peter and Paul, and Anastos, "Porphyry's Attack on

his *Commentary on Galatians*, Jerome says that the Christians' answer to Porphyry's attack on Paul is not satisfying. Christians tried to work out a solution to the problem by claiming that Paul was answering another Cephas no one knows of:

The first answer to these people is that we do not know the name of some other Cephas than the one who in the gospel; in other letters of Paul and in this letter, it is sometimes written "Cephas" and sometimes "Petrus." Not because "Petrus" means one thing and "Cephas" another: but what we call *petra* in Latin and Greek, Hebrews and Syrians name *cephas* because of the closeness of their language.¹⁵⁵

The place of Porphyry's fragments in the debate further shows that the philosopher also had a problem with Paul faking obedience to the Law from fear of the Jewish Christians, for example, when he circumcised Timothy, a Gentile. Both men are thus guilty of the same crime.¹⁵⁶ Porphyry also accused the two men of violence: Peter for having cursed two disobedient Christians and Paul for ordering the "cutting off"—in both sense of the expression, i.e. circumcision and shutting up—of those who troubled the Galatians.¹⁵⁷ To answer Porphyry, Jerome says that Peter did not kill the

the Bible," 429, who also explains that Paul and Peter only pretended to disagree "in order to facilitate the conversion and and rehabilitation of the Jews." Jerome is answering Augustine who, in his *Letter* 28.3, said that the leaders of the church actually disagreed as to whether Gentile Christians were required to observe Jewish law.

155. See Jerome, *Commentary on Galatians* 1.2.11 (cf. Harnack frag. 21c), (PL 26:366): *Quibus primum respondendum, alterius nescio cujus Cephae nescire nos nomen, nisi ejus qui et in Evangelio, et in aliis Pauli Epistolis, et in hac quoque ipsa modo Cephas, modo Petrus, scribitur. Non quod aliud significet Petrus, aliud Cephas: sed quod quam nos Latine et Graece petram vocemus, hanc Hebraei et Syri propter linguae inter se viciniam, Cephon nuncupent. Deinde totum argumentum epistolae quod oblique de Petro, Jacobo, et Joanne dicitur, huic intelligentiae repugnare. Nec mirum esse si Lucas hanc rem tacuerit, cum et alia multa quae Paulus sustinuisse se replicat, historiographi licentia praetermiserit: et non statim esse contrarium, si quod alius ob causam dignum putavit relatu, alius inter caetera dereliquit. Denique primum episcopum Antiochenae Ecclesiae Petrum fuisse accepimus, et Romam exinde translatum, quod Lucas penitus omisit. Ad extremum si propter Porphyrii blasphemiam, alius nobis fingendus est Cephas, ne Petrus putetur errasse, infinita de Scripturis erunt radenda divinis, quae ille, quia non intelligit, criminatur.*

156. Jerome, *Letter* 112.9 (cf. Harnack frag. 21b), (Labourt 6:28), and *Letter* 112.6.11. Jerome, quoting from Acts 2.17, 20–24, 26, *et ecce discipulus quidam erat ibi nomine Timotheus, filius mulieris iudaeae fidelis, patre gentili . . . Hunc uoluit Paulus secum proficisci. Et adsumens circumcidit eum propter Iudaeos, qui erant in illis locis.*

157. Jerome, *Letter* 130.14 (= Harnack frag. 25), (Labourt 7:185): *Apostolus Petrus nequaquam inprecatur eis mortem; cf. Jerome, Commentary on Galatians 3.5.12 (= Harnack frag. 37).*

men, as their punishment would come with the judgment of God. Peter was thus merely responsible for prophetically announcing their punishment.¹⁵⁸ As Jerome had stated elsewhere in *Commentary On Galatians*, after all, Peter was the head of the church in Rome.¹⁵⁹ It follows that he might have been right, in Jerome's view. As for Paul, Jerome reports that he says he is condemned to death, which rather shows that the violent ones are the adversaries, whereas love is in the churches of God.¹⁶⁰ On Paul's refusal to share his revelation "with flesh and blood," Jerome explains that Paul means by this expression that he will only teach their spirit; he does not mean that he will not share it with human beings.¹⁶¹

As can be understood from this final point, the fragments as they appear in Harnack's collection do not allow for full comprehension of Porphyry's allusions or the core of his subject matter. It may also be suspected, from the special attention that Jerome gives to Porphyry's attack on the heads of the church that the philosopher was effective in disturbing the church and that he clearly wished to ruin the foundations of Christianity.

CONCLUSIONS

Context often clarifies fragments, and thus Harnack's exclusion of context justifies the creation of a new collection. Indeed, he was not preoccupied with problems of contextualization in relation to Jerome's testimony, as highlighted by Schepens and Laks. I intend to revise his work in the light of the new methodological approaches presented, i.e. to contextualize it, with the ultimate goal of establishing a new collection of fragments embedded

158. Jerome, *Letter* 130.14 (= Harnack frag. 25), (Labourt 7:185): *Sed Dei iudicium prophetico spiritu adnuntiat, ut poena duorum hominum sit doctrina multorum*; here, however, Jerome contradicts himself, as Harnack, "Porphyrius, *Gegen die Christen*," 55, notes, since in *Letter* 109.3, he clearly admits that Peter killed the men.

159. Jerome, *Commentary on Galatians* (PL 26:366): *Primum episcopum Antiochenae Ecclesiae Petrum fuisse accepimus, et Romam exinde translatum*. See also Plumer, *Augustine's Commentary on the Galatians*, 45.

160. Jerome, *Commentary on Galatians* 3.5.12 (cf. Harnack frag. 37), (PL 26:432–33): *Tradidit autem se morti condemnatus*.

161. Jerome, *Commentary on Galatians* 1.1.16 (= Harnack frag. 20), (PL 26:351): *"carne et sanguine" instrueretur. . . . Cum talibus qui caro et sanguis erant, quae Petro quoque non revelaverunt Filium Dei, non contulit Apostolus Evangelium quod ei fuerat revelatum, sed paulatim eos de carne et sanguine vertit in spiritum: et tunc demum eis occulta Evangelii sacramenta commisit. Dicat quispiam: Si statim non contulit cum carne et sanguine Evangelium, tamen subintelligitur, quod postmodum cum sanguine et carne contulerit: et sensus hic, quo apostoli excusantur, ne caro et sanguis sint, stare non poterit: dum nihilominus qui in principio cum carne et sanguine non contulit, postmodum, ut dixi, cum carne et sanguine contulerit.*

in their context, a collection which will be easier to consult in the future, and which will make a contribution to the interpretation of Porphyry and of the wider debate between Christians and non-Christians.

From what he preserved of Porphyry, we can see what concerned Jerome, but that does not tell us what concerned the philosopher. Porphyry probably did engage with texts, but we cannot claim that Porphyry did a verse-by-verse commentary. Contextualizing the fragments from *Against the Christians* shows to what extent these are embedded in the broader work of Jerome, based on his interest in textual analysis, his concern for defending Peter, Paul, and Christianity. The length of the fragments dedicated to the heads of the church indicates that Jerome considered it more important to cite Porphyry on this topic than on the attack on the apostles and evangelists. The new collection of fragments should help to better understand this aspect, by demonstrating that there are fewer fragments on other topics, but that does not prove that Porphyry wrote less extensively about them. The new collection will also help to make inferences as to the content of the books that may have consisted of detailed comparisons of the gospels. It will certainly make Porphyry more accessible than he is in the pioneering work of Harnack.

Ariane Magny is a Doctoral Student in the Department of Classics and Ancient History at Bristol University