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μῦθοι AND γενεαλογία IN THE PASTORAL EPISTLES:

A REAPPRAISAL

A Research Paper Presented to the Faculty
of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for elective
EN-505

by

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March 1968

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Nature of the Problem

Both the paucity and the relative dating of the periodical articles that deal directly with the *μῦθοι* and *γενεαλογίαι* in the Pastoral Epistles provide an indication of the problem of identifying these concepts. With the exception of Sandmel's paper¹ no single study has been devoted exclusively to this issue in the past two decades. Although nearly every commentator devotes more than a few lines to the concepts, gives them major consideration in introductory remarks concerning the nature of the *ἑτεροδιδάσκαλοι* or even (e.g. C. Spicq²) claims that these phenomena lie at the very heart of the alien proclamation refuted in the Pastorals, most of these writers conclude that the precise identity of the *μῦθοι* and *γενεαλογίαι* must remain uncertain. Even Sandmel says at the outset of his study that his suggestions are "frankly speculative."³

¹S. Sandmel, "Myths, Genealogies, and Jewish Myths and the Writing of Gospels," Hebrew Union College Annual, 27 (1956), 201-211.

²C. Spicq, Les Épîtres Pastorales (Paris: Gabalda, 1947), p. lvi.

³Sandmel, p. 201.

The motivation for the present study, therefore, is partially to be found in this uncertainty. For as in so many problems, uncertainty has fostered several trends of interpretation. Commentators since Irenaeus and Tertullian (on the one hand) and Ambrosiaster and Jerome (on the other) have applied these terms either to Gnostic myths or to Jewish fables. The recent commentators, for the most part, are either sufficiently ambivalent to accept an "either-or" situation,⁴ or accommodating enough to suggest a fusion of both of these elements.⁵ Underscoring the variegated pattern of interpretation of these words is the fact that any suggestion that has attempted to make a precise identification of their referents has been subsequently criticized. Thus, Dibelius and Conzelmann reject any attempt to identify the heresy designated by these terms with a schematized second-century Gnosticism.⁶ Hort⁷ and Kittel,⁸ on the other hand, who apply

⁴W. Lock, The Pastoral Epistles (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1924), pp. 8-9.

⁵Cf. J. N. D. Kelly, The Pastoral Epistles (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1963), p. 12. J. Jeremias, Die Briefe an Timotheus und Titus (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1947), p. 9. C. K. Barrett, The Pastoral Epistles (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963), p. 17. A complete discussion of the positions adopted by the commentators is given in Chapter III.

⁶M. Dibelius, Die Pastoralbriefe (4th edition revised by Hans Conzelmann; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1966), p. 14.

⁷F. J. Hort, Judaistic Christianity (London: MacMillan & Co., 1904), pp. 135-140.

⁸G. Kittel, "Die γενεαλογία der Pastoralbriefe," ZNW, 20 (1921), 49-69.

the terms to phenomena existing within Judaism during the New Testament period, become the objects of Sandmel's rather stinging critique.⁹

Therefore, the uncertainty shown in the positions and counter-positions of commentators, and the fact that the most recent full-scale works devoted to the Pastorals have either overlooked or have chosen not to answer Sandmel's suggestions constitute the reason for this investigation. Special attention has been given in this study to the occurrence of the noun, ἐκδήτησις in 1 Tim. 1:4, which the writer of the Pastorals places in a parallel relationship to the μῦθοι and γενεαλογίαι. Although it is listed as a hapax legomenon by Lidell and Scott and Bauer, Arndt, and Gingrich and is consistently regarded as such by the commentators (if not omitted from the discussion entirely), another occurrence of ἐκδήτησις has since been discovered which may have an important bearing on the identity of the μῦθοι and γενεαλογίαι in the Pastorals.¹⁰ This brief study, then, is an attempt to view the terms in context; to weigh the evidence amassed in dictionaries, commentaries, monographs, and periodicals; to

⁹Sandmel, pp. 202-205.

¹⁰S. Lieberman, Hellenism in Jewish Palastine (New York: The Jewish Theological Seminary, 1950), p. 48. Lieberman's study of the equivalents for the Hebrew שָׁרָף occasioned the recording of this variant of the Septuagint text of 2 Chron. 13:22 in Origen's Hexapla, edited by F. Field (Oxford: n.p., 1875), I, 740.

evaluate the suggested referents for the two terms; and to submit tentative conclusions that will account for both the situation addressed in the Epistles and the present knowledge of the religious and philosophical motifs present in the late first and early second centuries.

Scope and Method of this Study

The investigation is presented first from the standpoint of the occurrence of the terms $\mu\tilde{\upsilon}\theta\omicron\iota$ and $\gamma\epsilon\nu\epsilon\alpha\lambda\omicron\chi\acute{\iota}\alpha\iota$ in antiquity (Chapter II). Only those uses of the terms that prove helpful to an understanding of the situation addressed in the Pastorals are here included. Although significant departures from the meaning given the terms (especially that of $\mu\tilde{\upsilon}\theta\omicron\varsigma$) by the early Hellenic writers are noted, no attempt is made to duplicate the studies by Büchsel and Stählin¹¹ and the detailed summary of material catalogued by Spicq.¹²

This is followed by a consideration of the five passages in the Pastorals in which the terms $\mu\tilde{\upsilon}\theta\omicron\iota$ and $\gamma\epsilon\nu\epsilon\alpha\lambda\omicron\chi\acute{\iota}\alpha\iota$ occur (Chapter III). The larger context of the verse is of primary consideration, since the characteristics of the $\mu\tilde{\upsilon}\theta\omicron\iota$ and $\gamma\epsilon\nu\epsilon\alpha\lambda\omicron\chi\acute{\iota}\alpha\iota$ can frequently be discovered only by the

¹¹F. Büchsel, " $\gamma\epsilon\nu\epsilon\alpha\lambda\omicron\chi\acute{\iota}\alpha\iota$," Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, edited by G. W. Bromily (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1964), I, 663-665; hereafter referred to as TWNT. G. Stählin, " $\mu\tilde{\upsilon}\theta\omicron\varsigma$," TWNT, IV, 762-795.

¹²Spicq, pp. lvi-lvii.

implications made in the surrounding verses, i.e., by what is spoken against the heresy rather than what is said about it. For this reason the larger segments of paranesis will be looked at carefully. Terms that qualify the $\mu\hat{\upsilon}\theta\omicron\iota$ and $\gamma\epsilon\gamma\epsilon\alpha\lambda\omicron\gamma\acute{\iota}\alpha\iota$ are isolated and compared to other similar contexts in which they occur. In this chapter every attempt is made to avoid using the terms "Judaizing" and "Gnosticising" in any manner that would resemble a technical sense. Such terminology would prematurely judge the evidence, since (for the sake of this study) a closer look at what is meant by these designations has been left until a later section.

In Chapter IV the divergent and convergent views of the commentaries and special studies are grouped under these three basis themes: Judaic fables, Gnostic myths, and Gnosticizing Judaic tendencies. As has already been noted, the terminology is not fully discussed until the following section (Chapter V); however, the discussion of the commentators' views in the fourth chapter entails only their definitions which will demand closer scrutiny in the fifth chapter, where monographs devoted to Gnosticism and Judaism (and some of the literature characteristic of both) in the first and second centuries is employed to evaluate the suggested interpretations.

The conclusions of the study are summarized in Chapter VI. These tentative summations are then used in a critique of Sandmel's as yet unanswered study. His views, since they

diverge from interpretations suggested thus far, have not been considered until this point in order that a systematic reappraisal of his position could serve as the goal of this study.

Limitations of this Study

This paper is a tentative reappraisal of the nature of the $\mu\tilde{\upsilon}\theta\omicron\iota$ and $\gamma\epsilon\nu\epsilon\alpha\lambda\omicron\chi\acute{\iota}\alpha\iota$ as these reflect a portion of the heresy combatted in the Pastorals. It is not intended to be an investigation of the entire heresy, much less the complete gamut of exhortation which the Epistles contain. This might appear to pose a false separation, since the wider contexts of the passages that include mention of the $\mu\tilde{\upsilon}\theta\omicron\iota$ and $\gamma\epsilon\nu\epsilon\alpha\lambda\omicron\chi\acute{\iota}\alpha\iota$ seem to draw in much of the polemic and even some of the advice concerning early church order contained in these letters. Nonetheless, only those aspects of the false teaching which have been considered have been evaluated as being directly related to the $\mu\tilde{\upsilon}\theta\omicron\iota$ and $\gamma\epsilon\nu\epsilon\alpha\lambda\omicron\chi\acute{\iota}\alpha\iota$. The possible arbitrariness of this distinction is fully recognized. However, this has been done with careful attention to the contexts of the passages themselves, to the external evidence, and to the secondary sources. Where significant departures occur between this study and the commentaries, that disagreement has been noted and in some cases evaluated.

Secondly, the two-fold problem of the authenticity and dating of the Epistles has been excluded from the consideration

of this paper. The suggestions since J. E. C. Schmid (1804)¹³ and F. E. D. Schleiermacher (1807)¹⁴ that the Pastorals are pseudepigraphic, the more contemporary "fractionalist" arguments of P. N. Harrison (on the basis of linguistic analysis)¹⁵ and B. S. Easton (on the basis of Harrison's statistics, external evidence, and the cumulative force of un-Pauline traits),¹⁶ and the recently renewed

¹³D. Guthrie, The Pastoral Epistles (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1957), p. 15.

¹⁴D. Guthrie, "The Development of the Idea of Pseudepigraphy in New Testament Criticism," The Authority and Integrity of the New Testament (London: SPCK, 1965), p. 15.

¹⁵P. N. Harrison, The Problem of the Pastoral Epistles (London: Oxford University Press, 1921), p. 47. "Under test after test the Pastorals are shown to be divided from the other epistles by a great gulf . . ." Harrison's entire study is replete with tables, diagrams, and indices and contains several noteworthy appendices. It has become a kind of water-shed for this phase of criticism in the study of the Pastorals. The argument has been considered and evaluated in every commentary that post-dates Harrison's work. An opposing study on linguistic grounds is given by F. R. M. Hitchcock who compares the Pastorals to Philo and finds that between the writer of the Epistles and Philo there exists an 87.5 per cent degree of correlation in use of terminology. He concludes that Harrison has assigned a dating much too late for most of the "non-Pauline" language: F. R. M. Hitchcock, "Philo and the Pastorals," Hermathena, 56 (1940), 115, 135. C. F. D. Moule has also taken a critical position over against some of Harrison's work (especially his theory concerning the origin of the fragments themselves) and chooses instead a Lukan authorship during the time of a proposed second imprisonment of Paul. His study is also structured toward analyzing linguistic and conceptual similarities--in this instance between the Pastorals and the Lukan corpus: C. F. D. Moule, "The Problem of the Pastoral Epistles: A Reappraisal," Bulletin of the John Rylands Library, 47 (1965), 430-452.

¹⁶B. S. Easton, The Pastoral Epistles (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1947), pp. 9-33.

arguments in behalf of Pauline authorship¹⁷ are complex enough to demand a study in their own right. While some might hold that to avoid the issue of authorship while treating the nature of the μῦθοι and γενεαλογίαι is begging the question, it is the position of this writer that the phenomena standing behind these latter concepts can be studied irrespective of Pauline authorship. In the fifth chapter attention will be given equally to first and early second century evidence (where possible) to allow for either position.

Finally, the area of external evidence is sharply limited in this study. Neither the summary of the uses of the terms in antiquity, nor the resume of the patristic attestations, nor even the examination of the positions of the commentators is meant to be exhaustive. These are merely guides to the chief connotations of the words (Chapter II) and to the lines of interpretation (Chapter IV) which were somewhat established already early in the Christian era and which have been followed to a greater or lesser degree since that time.

¹⁷Cf. Spicq, pp. xciv-cxxx. Kelly, pp. 16-36. These are the two most recent and noteworthy examples of this position.

CHAPTER II

μῦθοι AND γεγελοχία IN ANTIQUITY

μῦθος in Ancient Greek Literature

The earliest uses of the term, μῦθος, exhibit neither negative nor positive connotations. As Stählin points out, at least one occurrence of μῦθος that goes back to perhaps the sixth or even eighth century B. C., (Odyssey XI, 511) simply means "thought": οὐκ ἤμάρτανε μύθων ("He did not stray in his thoughts.").¹

Spicq gives as his translation of the earliest occurrences of the noun "report, response, order, or proverb." All of these are, according to Spicq, natural developments of the basic meaning "word," the sense in which μῦθος is used earlier in Homer as well as by Aeschylus and Plato in the fifth century B. C.² When Stählin considers the use of μῦθος for "account" or "story" he comments that within this

¹G. Stählin, "μῦθος," Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, edited by G. W. Bromily (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1964), IV, 766. Hereafter referred to as TWNT.

²C. Spicq, Les Épîtres Pastorales (Paris: Gabalda, 1947), p. lvi. Cf., however, Stählin who maintains that the equation of μῦθος and ἔπος ("mere word") was a gradual rapprochement of an earlier antithesis between μῦθος as "thought" and ἔπος used as "uttered thought."

use the question that is crucial to the New Testament occurrences of the term arises--namely, the question of truth or falsity.³

The earliest use of μῦθος that touches on either of these attributes is again found in Homer (Odyssey XI, 492). Here it exhibits the actual meaning of truth. In Euripides ὁ μῦθος is qualified by τῆς ἀληθείας in the sense of a "truthful account" (Phoenissae 469). By way of contrast, μῦθος is also used in the sense of "rumor," "unsupported story," or "legend" by Euripides (Ion 994) to indicate that which preceded history properly so-called. And it is employed by Plato (Respublica I, 350e) to indicate that which women tell to their children: ὡςπερ ταῖς γραιυαῖς ταῖς τοὺς μύθους λεγούσαις. Plato notes later in the same work that μῦθος in this sense is that which, although false, contains an element of truth and is, therefore, to be valued as a pedagogical device: πρῶτον τοῖς παισίοις μύθους λέγομεν· τοῦτο δὲ που ὡς τὸ ὅλον ἐλπεῖν ψεύσος· ἐν δὲ καὶ ἀληθῆ (Respublica II, 377a).⁴

³Stählin, p. 767. The question can hardly be answered by a survey of the Hellenic writers alone, as Stählin's own comment indicates (infra., p.12). Myth was variously evaluated in the Greek world according to the point of perspective of each writer.

⁴Ibid., p. 768.

The difficulty of assessing the negative or positive value of μῦθοι in the Greek world, furthermore, involves making distinctions between the various philosophical schools. Among these there is no unified voice. The Stoics used the traditional myths in an allegorical fashion, while the Epicureans called myths an empty illusion. Plato himself is ambivalent toward μῦθος. On the one hand, Plato uses his own definition of μῦθος (as a plastic illustration of the metaphysical) and employs the ancient national epics as vehicles for his teaching concerning the destiny of the soul. Yet, on the other hand, he is also openly critical of the traditional μῦθοι. Thus, he bars poets or μυθολόγοι, including Homer, from his ideal state (Respublica III, 398a).⁵ So μῦθος can, even in Plato, be placed in contrast to truth; and here, significantly enough, the context is a discussion of an historical narrative. When Critias proposes the reading of Solon's account of Greek history it is evaluated, μὴ πλασθέντα μῦθον, ἀλλ' ἀληθινὸν λόγον (Timaeus, 26e). In a context that is concerned not with history but with poetry myth (or mythological speech) is contrasted by Plato to λόγος: ἐντροήσας ὅτι τὸν ποιητὴν θεοὶ εἶπερ μέλλοι ποιητῆς εἶναι, ποιεῖν μύθους, ἀλλ' οὐ λόγους (Phaedo, 61b).

It is because of this ambivalence that Stählin concludes that

⁵ Ibid., pp. 777, 779.

μῦθος. . . is variously evaluated in antiquity according to the outlook and standard of the person concerned. There is joyous acceptance in poetry and popular religion, profound interpretation in the mysteries and Plato, allegorical reinterpretation in nature philosophy and Stoicism to the overthrow of any independent significance of myth, frivolous mockery in many literary and educated circles, criticism and rejection on ethical and rational grounds in several writers, especially philosophers. There is, however, no formal repudiation on religious grounds until we come to the New Testament and Christian writers of the first centuries.

One use of μῦθος by the historian Diodorus Siculus (first century B. C.) illustrates the above-mentioned negative evaluation on ethical grounds (here, in relation to the passing on of traditional customs and its effect on the preservation of piety). Diodorus compares the more favorable virtue of the Egyptians with that shown by the Greeks who hand down their customs μύθοις πεπλοσμένοις καὶ φήμασι διαβεβλημένοις which, in turn, does not yield τὴν τε τῶν εὐσεβῶν τιμὴν καὶ τὴν τῶν πονηρῶν τιμωρίαν (I, 93).⁷ Perhaps significant are the occurrences of μῦθος in connection with γεγελοχίαι (or a combination of verbal cognates of the two terms). All of these occurrences are considered below.

⁶Ibid., p. 779.

⁷Diodorus of Sicily, The Loeb Classical Library, edited and translated by C. H. Oldfather (London: Heinemann Ltd., 1933), I, 316.

γενεαλογίαι and Their Relationship to μῦθοι in Antiquity

The earliest use of γενεαλογίαι appears in Plato (Cratylus 396c), where it refers to the genealogical descendancy of the gods. Three other occurrences of the term (or its verbal counterpart) are found in contexts that include comments on types of historical narratives. In two instances γενεαλογίαι or the writing of the same are combined with some form of μῦθοι. Solon's account of the origin of the race is called by Plato (Timaeus 22a) μυθολογεῖν καὶ . . . γενεαλογεῖν. Here the expression could simply mean a primeval history.

However, Polybius in the second century B. C. places the terms in tandem and gives them a decidedly pejorative cast when he refers to those who are concerned with τὰ τε περὶ τὰς γενεαλογίας καὶ μύθους (IX, 2, 1). The negative connotation of this phrase is reinforced by the fact that earlier in the same work (IV, 1, 4) Polybius had referred to those early eras of history that are recounted in a manner (ὁ γενεαλόγικος τρόπος) especially appealing to the inquisitive, a method from which he himself abstains. Büchsel maintains that the parallel is sufficiently pronounced to allow the conclusion that "μῦθοι and γενεαλογίαι" was a kind of formulaic expression for primitive history.⁸ Although one is almost

⁸F. Büchsel, "γενεαλογίαι," TWNT, I, 663-664. Cf. also W. Lock, The Pastoral Epistles (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1924), p. 8. Although Lock says that ". . . γενεαλογίαι was used

constrained toward caution (and, therefore, away from such a generalization) on the basis of merely three citations, it can at least be submitted that the expression "μῦθοι and γενεαλογίαι" was known, and that it was employed by two Greek writers in the context of historical narratives.

μῦθοι and γενεαλογίαι in the Septuagint and Judaism

Of the two terms, only μῦθος occurs in the Septuagint. In Sirach 20:19 a passing reference is made to μῦθος as ἄκαιρος ἐν στόματι, ἀπαιδεύτων ἐνσελεχισθήσεται. Here it simply means "story," and its use is limited to a metaphor describing an ungracious man.⁹ Except that this use supports the assertion that μῦθος can possess a completely neutral meaning prior to a Christian interpretation, the occurrence in the Septuagint is not at all helpful in understanding the significance of the term in the New Testament.

Philo, like the Greek historians, is a rather ambivalent witness. While rejecting the μῦθοι of the ἔθνη and thereby all their religious formulations in favor of Old Testament

widely of any mythologies connected with the history of early founders of states," he, too, cites only these examples.

⁹One other occasion of μῦθος exists but only as a variant reading of the text of Wisdom of Solomon 17:4 in the version given by Aquila. Surely Rahlfs is correct in selecting μῦχος ("innermost chamber of the house") as the most-likely original reading at this point.

history (De Confusione Linguarum 3),¹⁰ Philo, nevertheless, does in fact what he denies in principle: he uses a mythological framework via an allegorical method of interpretation to point up the deeper and permanent meaning within the texts of the Torah. This method, which had already been brought into Judaism by Aristobulus, he shared completely with the Hellenistic philosophers of his day.¹¹ However, one is able to discern even in Philo a distinction between that which was μυθωδῶς and that which was regarded as Scriptural truth based in history,¹² even if this was (by our analysis) merely a semantic distinction.

Josephus uses the "telling of myths" in a pejorative sense in at least one instance. He draws a sharp distinction between one of the methods of Greek historians τινὲς μὲν ἐπὶ τὸ μυθολογεῖν τραπόμενοι and the chief characteristic of records of the Jewish nation: τῆς μὲν γὰρ ἀληθοῦς ἔστι τεκμήριον ἱστορίας.¹³ At least in these three instances the term μῦθος has significantly negative overtones and is used in a polemical sense by Jewish writers to mark off non-Jewish accounts of history.

¹⁰ αἱ ἱεραὶ λεγόμεναι βίβλοι παρ' ὑμῖν καὶ μύθους περιέχουσιν. In Stählin, p. 790.

¹¹ C. Colpe, "Philo," Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart (3rd edition; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1961), V, col. 344.

¹² μηδεὶς ὑπολάβη μῦθον εἶναι τὸ εἰρημένον In Stählin, p. 790.

¹³ Josephus, Contra Apion I, 5, 25, 26.

The γενεαλογίαι, however, have no such negative connotations in either Philo or Josephus. Although the context of one use of a cognate in Josephus is manifestly pejorative, the point of censure is not the genealogies themselves but rather the fact that these constitute an instance of contradiction among Greek historians.¹⁴ The genealogies are merely the form of historical material upon which Hellanicus and Acusilaus disagree, according to Josephus. Philo uses τὸν γενεαλογικὸν μέρος as a designation of the entire historical portion of the Pentateuch with the exception of creation (De Vita Mosis II, 8).¹⁵ Thus, a negative attitude toward γενεαλογίαι within Judaism cannot be illustrated from the writings of Philo or Josephus. Furthermore, some commentators feel that Philo's use of the term in De Vita Mosis II, 8 may be one of the most significant indicators of what is meant by γενεαλογίαι in the Pastorals.¹⁶

¹⁴Contra Apion I, 3, 16.

¹⁵Lock, p. 8.

¹⁶Infra., p. 35.

CHAPTER III

μῦθοι AND γενεαλογίαι IN THE PASTORALS

Since, as has already been indicated by Stählin, the New Testament use of μῦθος entails a departure from its use in Greek antiquity insofar as that term is here " . . . repudiated on religious grounds,"¹ attention is now given to the four occurrences of μῦθοι in the Pastoral Epistles. The only other use of the term in the New Testament (in 2 Peter 1:16) is briefly considered together with its closest parallel in the Pastorals, 2 Tim. 4:4.

The only two occurrences of γενεαλογίαι in the New Testament are examined together with the final passage considered in the study of the μῦθοι (1 Tim. 1:4). This decision has been made in view of two factors: (1) The terms are placed together in the First Timothy passage. (2) In the Titus 3:9 use of γενεαλογίαι, although μῦθος does not occur, the surrounding terminology and context is sufficiently similar to that of 1 Tim. 1:4 to warrant a parallel consideration. The decision to consider 1 Tim. 1:4 and its parallel in Titus as the last of the passages is made in view of the fact that herein the most concrete indication of the nature of the μῦθοι and γενεαλογίαι is made. The

¹Supra, p. 12.

order of consideration of the passages, then, is that of ascending rather than descending importance.

This chapter is primarily concerned with delineating the concept of *μῦθοι* and *γενεαλογίαι* from the standpoint of context. At times translations of the terms will be suggested. In instances where these terms are considered sufficiently unambiguous to allow a tentative identification and interpretation to be immediately assigned to these phenomena, this has been done. However, for the most part the interpretation will only be suggested after a critical examination of the commentators has been made in Chapter IV. In those instances where even the translation of surrounding terminology would imply an interpretation that is presently disputed, merely the Greek terms considered significant are noted. The general thrust of the context is stated in language that does not go beyond the explicit assertions of that context itself.

2 Timothy 4:4

καὶ ἀπὸ μὲν τῆς ἀληθείας τῆν ἀκοήν ἀποστρέψουσιν,
ἐπὶ δὲ τοὺς μύθους ἐκτραπήσονται. The larger context of
the exhortation begins in 3:1 and continues through 4:8.
The ἐν ἔσχαταις ἡμέραις ἔσθήσονται καιροὶ χαλεποὶ (3:1)
gives an eschatological coloring to this entire section, a
note repeated in 4:3 (at which point the older Greek para-
graph marking sets off the immediate context of the warning
in 4:4) with the phrase ἔσται γὰρ καιρὸς ὅτε

The problem of the future tenses in 4:4 is minimized when seen in context, for the errant tendencies personified by men who are φίλαυτοι, φιλάργυροι, ἀλαζόγες ("braggerts, hollow men"), . . . βλάσφημοι, . . . ἀγόσιοι, . . . διάβολοι, . . . are to be part of the present concern of the addressee: τούτους ἀποτρέπου(3:5)! These men are described significantly as those who have the μόρφωσιν εὐσεβείας but who deny τὴν . . . δύναμιν αὐτῆς (3:5).

The fact that the turning ἐπὶ . . . τοὺς μύθους is synonymous to the act of turning ἀπὸ τῆς ἀληθείας is also illuminated by the forgoing context. Those who make their way into homes find a hearing with γυναικάρια (a term of opprobrium signifying "silly women") who are not able ἐπίγνωσιν ἀληθείας ἔλθεῖν, are burdened with (3:6-7) ἁμαρτίας, and are driven by ἐπιθυμίας of many hues. Each of these traits may indirectly reflect the nature of the μῦθοι. For μῦθοι is probably used in 4:4 to characterize the content of the message proclaimed by those already designated as having impure minds and as being opposed to the truth (3:8). The "knowledge" of "truth" (which occurs again in 4:4) may be terminology adopted from the claim made for such μῦθοι by their promoters. The moral aspersion given these men and their teaching (3:8) is illustrated by the Midrashic tradition of Ἰάννης and Ἰαμβεῆς (or Μαμβεῆς, as in Ambrosiaster, the Western text tradition and the Talmud). This might be a polemical allusion to some of their own claims. In this case the reference could be to their claims to magical powers.

Finally, the characteristics of the μῦθοι in 4:4 are combatted in the preceding verses with an appeal to follow the writer's personal (i.e. Apostolic) example.² Apostolic διδασκαλία is closely alligned with εὐσεβεία, and that Apostolic standard is parallel to the received teaching of πᾶσα γραφή θεόπνευστος.³ This teaching leads the man of God to be ἄρειος . . . πρὸς πᾶν ἔργον ἀγαθὸν ἐξηρητισμένος(3:17). Thus the ὑγιαίνουσα διδασκαλία is not only tied closely to the exercise of εὐσεβεία, but is also the obverse of that to which those who are governed by τὰς ἰσίας ἐπιθυμίας will turn (4:3).⁴ This second occurrence of ἐπιθυμία in the context (the other already noted in 3:6) is probably more than happenstance and may well be seen, in the light of its earlier use, as an intended reflection of the ethically impure overtones of the μῦθοι.

²Whether the claim of Apostolicity is made by an Apostle or by a pseudonymous writer is immaterial, since the Apostolic standard is cited as normative in either event.

³The significance of θεόπνευστος is properly outside the limits of this study. Still it might be maintained here that the term, like others already noted in the larger context, may have been adopted from the vocabulary of the opposition and is here given a typically "orthodox" recasting for the sake of the polemic.

⁴The same phrase exists in a markedly eschatological context in 2 Peter 3:3.

1 Timothy 4:7

τοὺς δὲ βεβήλους καὶ γερώσεις μύθους παραιτοῦ. The larger context of the passage begins in 4:1 after the conclusions of the inserted hymn. Before that hymn the writer had concluded, "Confessedly, great is the τὸ τῆς εὐσεβείας μυστήριον." The context itself begins on an eschatological note. The first five verses of the chapter summarize the basis for the exhortation found in vs. 6-10. The ταῦτα . . . of 4:6 has as its antecedent then (much like the τούτους of 2 Tim. 3:5) the phenomena that characterize the ὑστέροις καιροῖς. The character of the last times is to be seen in the fact that ἀποστήσονται τίτες τῆς πίστεως (4:1). The "deceiving spirits," "teachings of demons," and the "insincerity of liars" that lead men astray are subsumed under that first eschatological formula. They are indications (together with the initial warning of apostasy) of the presence of the end times. As the Nestle-Aland text notes in the margin, a similar theme is present in 2 Peter 2:1 (where ψευδοδιδάσκαλοι are marks of the last time). In that passage, as in the clearly eschatological warning of 2 Peter 3:3, and in the first five verses of 1 Tim. 4, the future warning is translated and applied immediately in a rather specific (and perhaps similar) present-tense paranesis.

A kind of ascetic dualism is reflected in vss. 3-4 by those who κωλύοντων γαμῆν, ἀπέχεσθαι βρωμάτων. This accent calls forth the apologetic on the good of all creation, the

two-fold mention of receiving the created order *μετά* εὐχαριστίας (vss. 3-4), and the insistence that it has been ἀγιάζεται. This emphasis is in antithetical relationship to the μῦθοι of the seventh verse, as the phrase τῆς καλῆς διδασκαλίας in verse six makes clear.

The μῦθοι are modified by the adjectives βέβηλοι and χραῶδες. The first of these terms ascribes an ethically pejorative quality to the μῦθοι.⁵ Thus, in 1 Tim. 1:9 (where βέβηλος is parallel with ἀνόσιος) that which is βέβηλος is profane or irreligious in a Greek (ethical) rather than a Jewish (ceremonial) sense.⁶ Hauck maintains that this emphasis is due to the stronger Hellenistic influences in the Pastorals. He notes that βέβηλος is employed in Heb. 12:16 with πόρνος in the same sense.⁷ This ethically pejorative qualification of μῦθοι could then reflect the phrase κεκαυστηριασμένων τὴν ἰσίαν συνείδησιν in the second verse of

⁵Walter Bauer, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature, translated and revised by W. Arndt and F. W. Gingrich (Fourth revised edition; Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1957), p. 138. Hereafter referred to as BAG.

⁶βεβήλους κενοφωνίας are to be avoided by the addressee in 1 Tim. 6:20-21 when he is told to guard the παραθήκης, the deposit of received teaching. Throughout the concluding section of this letter (1 Tim. 6:3b ff.) the terminology and concerns are nearly parallel to the 1 Tim. 4:1-8 and 2 Tim. 3:1-4:8. In 1 Tim. 6:20 the "profane empty sounds" are placed together with the "antitheses of ψευδωνύμου γνώσεως--another polemic (ψευδωνύμου) against their claims, namely the possession of γνώσις.

⁷Fredrich Hauck, "βέβηλος," TWNT, I, 604.

the chapter, especially since the exclusion of μῦθοι is followed by the exhortation to train . . . σεαυτὸν πρὸς εὐσέβειαν. But this latter phrase is, in turn, the occasion for an antithetical parallel between εὐσέβεια and σωματικὴ γυμνασία ("bodily exercise" or perhaps, in consideration of the context, better: "spiritual asceticism"). Thus, both ethical libertinism and a kind of ascetic rigorism characterize the functional implications of this teaching.

The adjective γραιῶδες can be variously interpreted. The designation of "old women" or "fit for old women" probably underscores futility, emptiness, or the lack of any worthwhile result. It may then be equivalent to that material that appeals to the γυναικεία of 1 Tim. 3:6. On the other hand, this may refer only to the typical activity of older women who are known for their garrulity.⁸ Even in this sense, the context would seem to indicate a rather negative rendering of γραιῶδες.

Titus 1:14

. . . μὴ προσέχοντες Ἰουδαϊκοῖς μύθοις καὶ ἐντολαῖς ἀνθρώπων ἀποστρεφόμενων τὴν ἀλήθειαν Here the μῦθοι are given a rather crucial identification: they are Jewish. This corresponds with the concern exhibited immediately

⁸Stählin, p. 786.

following the listing of qualifications required of an ἐπίσκοπος in vss. 7-9. The last characteristic of such a one (vs. 9b) is that he must be able to exhort by means of the τῆ διδασκαλίᾳ τῆ ὑγιαίνουσα and also to refute τοὺς ἀντιλέγοντας.

It is against these that the warning in vss. 10-16 is directed as the γάρ (vs. 10) indicates. In addition to the insubordinate ones, empty talkers (ματαιολόγοι),⁹ and those who deceive, those especially singled out are οἱ ἐκ τῆς περιτομῆς. Grammatically the phrase can be construed only one way. It simply means "the circumcision (party)," since here ἐκ with the genitive is used substantively.¹⁰ Parallel instances are found in Rom. 9:6 (οἱ ἐξ Ἰσραήλ), "the Israelites" and Acts 6:9 (οἱ ἐκ τῆς συναγωγῆς, "members of the synagogue").¹¹

The Ἰουδαϊκοῖς μύθοις are connected to the ἐντολαῖς ἀνθρώπων by καί (Titus 1:14) and are further qualified as leading away from the truth (again, a motif noted before). But the following affirmation that πάντα καθαρὰ τοῖς καθαρῶις

⁹Infra, p. 27. The ματαιολόγοι is a hapax legomenon in the New Testament, but the similarity of term and context to the use of its cognate in 1 Tim. 1:6 warrants no further comment at this point.

¹⁰BAG, p. 234.

¹¹The grammatical argument is significant as a basis for evaluation of Sandmel's presuppositions. Infra, Chapter VI.

(vs. 14b) seems to substantiate Jewish identity of the ἔντολῶν ἀνθρώπων, since their implied "clean-unclean" distinctions probably indicate a concern for ceremonial purity.¹² It is to offset this distinction that the writer uses κάθαρσος in the substantive. However, in concluding the exhortation (vss. 14-16) those for whom nothing is pure are called μεμιασμένοις (v. 15). Their mind (ὁ νοῦς) and their conscience (ἡ συνείδησις) are designated as ethically impure since their confessions and their works contradict one another. Here again, as in the context of both 2 Tim 4:4 and 1 Tim. 4:7, the μῦθοι are connected with those whose lives are labelled as ethically impure.¹³

¹²BAG, p. 388.

¹³BAG, p. 522. The mention of conscience for the second time in the context of μῦθοι may be expanded by a parallel in 1 Tim. 1:19. There Hymenaeus and Alexander are mentioned among those who have ἀπωσάμενοι ("spurned") conscience and have made shipwreck of the faith. Their error is referred to as βλασφημεῖν (1:20), and the same motif (βλασφημία) is connected to Σητησεῖς and λογομαχίας in 1 Tim. 6:4. In this latter verse those who engage in these "disputes" and "word battles" are said to believe πᾶσι μὲν εἶναι τὴν εὐσέβειαν. And this might even be seen to come full circle when in 2 Tim. 2:17-18 a certain Hymenaeus and Philetus are mentioned (in context again with λογομαχεῖν [2:14]) as having claimed that the ἀνάστασιν ἤδη γεγονέναι. Perhaps the foolish disputes and word battles are here also connected not only to a kind of libertinism (the denial of conscience) but also to the denial of a bodily resurrection. The dualism noted earlier, therefore, in the context of μῦθοι (cf. 1 Tim. 4:7) seems, at least by way of implication to be underscored again at this point.

1 Timothy 1:4 and Titus 3:9

. . . μηδὲ προσέχειν μύθοις καὶ γενεαλογίαις ἀπεράντοις αἴτινες ἐκδητήσῃς παρέχουσιν μᾶλλον ἢ οἰκονομίαν Θεοῦ τὴν ἐν πίστει (1 Tim. 1:4). In Titus the similar warning is given: μωρὰς δὲ δητήσῃς ^{καὶ} γενεαλογίας καὶ ἔριν καὶ μάχας τομικὰς περιΐσταδο· εἰσὶν γὰρ ἀνωφελεῖς καὶ μάταιοι.

The wider context of the admonition in 1 Tim. 1:4 begins immediately after the apostolic greeting and extends through the discussion concerning the law in vss. 8-11. This has been noted both by paragraph indentations in the Nestle-Aland text and by the older Greek paragraph divisions.

Those who are to be commanded to desist from ἑτεροδιδασκαλεῖν must have been associated with the Christian community, unless the παραγγελίης (vs. 3) is merely a homiletical device designed not to indicate an internal problem in the Ephesian congregation but to point out an external polemic going on at a later date. But since no textual evidence suggests deletion or emendation of παραγγελίης, the word is here neither excised or reinterpreted in view of the suggested arguments of authorship, dating, or addresses.

Those who are the source of the problem are alluded to again in vss. 6-7 as having turned from the exercise of ἀγάπη.¹⁴

¹⁴The intricate grammatical construction of vss. 3-7 is bypassed in favor of a consideration (in this context) of the chief traits of the aberration itself. Thus this discussion is limited to the ad quem rather than the a quo. Of this section Blass, Debrunner, and Funk note: "The construction . . .

to ματαιολογίαγ ("empty prattle"),¹⁵ wishing rather to be νομοδιδάσκαλοι.¹⁶ If this is how those who were engaged in ἑτεροδιδασκαλεῖν are to be characterized (and in view of the succeeding discussion of the νόμος in vs. 8ff. there would seem to be support for this argument), then the larger context lends a decidedly Judaic cast to the entire passage and perhaps to the substance of the "endless" μῦθοι and γενεαλογίαι as well. Furthermore, the relative clause (αἴτινες ἐκζητήσεις παρέχουσιν) provides what may be a rather significant indication of the nature of the μῦθοι and γενεαλογίαι. The clause is important from the standpoint of grammar alone, the αἴτινες making clear that the entire clause modifies the μῦθοι and γενεαλογίαι. The ἐκζητήσεις, which μῦθοι and γενεαλογίαι are said to promote, gives a unique aspect to this verse.¹⁷ The

is reduced to utter chaos by interminable insertions and appended clauses." F. Blass and A. Debrunner, A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature (translated and revised by R. Funk, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1961), p. 245.

¹⁵Bauernfeind, "ματαιολογία," TWNT, IV, 524.

¹⁶Rengstorf, "διδάσκαλος," TWNT, II, 159. Rengstorf points out that νομοδιδάσκαλοι is essentially a construct coined by the Christian community and used ". . ." to mark off Jewish from Christian teachers at the decisive point, namely, the absolutizing of the ."

¹⁷ἐκζητήσεις is chosen over the variant, ζητήσεις because the former is a hapax legomenon and, therefore, the more difficult reading. Ζητήσεις would be the reading likely to be a scribal change in view of the Titus 3:9 parallel and other occurrences of the term in the Pastorals themselves.

verb ἐκζητέω is more frequently found than ζητέω as the Septuagint rendering of the Hebrew שׁוֹרֵץ ("seek out"). Thus, although the verb is not unusual in the Septuagint and is even found in the secular papyri from the first century B. C. in the sense of "investigate carefully,"¹⁸ no mention has been made of another occurrence of the noun, ἐκζητήσις, in any of the literature related to the 1 Tim. 1:4 passage.¹⁹ The noun occurs in Origen's Hexapla as a variant translation of שׁוֹרֵץ in 2 Chron. 13:22.²⁰ The phrase that is given as יְהוֹרֵץ הַמִּצְרַיִם שׁוֹרֵץ in the Masoretic Text is rendered ἐν τῇ ἐκζητήσει Ἀσῶα τοῦ προφήτου in several recensions of the Septuagint.²¹ This passage may allow us to establish a more precise connotation for ἐκζητήσις than that reflected by the

¹⁸James Moulton and George Milligan, The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament, Illustrated from the Papyri and Other Non-Literary Sources (London: Oxford University Press, 1949), p. 194.

¹⁹Supra, p. 3. Schlatter does relate 1 Tim. 1:4 to the Titus 3:9 passage on the basis of the fact that both reflect the Hebrew verb, שׁוֹרֵץ. However, Schlatter does not note that ἐκζητήσις is used elsewhere for the participial form of שׁוֹרֵץ. A. Schlatter, Die Kirche der Griechen im Urteil des Paulus, -- eine Auslegung seiner Briefe an Timotheus und Titus (Stuttgart: Calwer Vereinsbuchhandlung, 1936), p. 37.

²⁰F. Field, Origenes Hexaplorum (Oxford: n.p., 1875), I, 740.

²¹Alfred Rahlfs, "History of the Septuagint Text," Septuaginta, Id est Vetus Testamentum graeca iuxta LXX interpretes, edited by A. Rahlfs (Seventh edition; Stuttgart: Priv. Württembergischen Bibelanstalt, 1962), I, xxix. The reason for Origen's notation of the variant was probably the question of the prophet's name. Ἀσῶα is usually read.

phrase "out-of-the-way researches,"²² and we may thereby come a step closer to the probable identification of the μῦθοι and γενεαλογίαι.

Could the writer have had a rather specific phenomenon in mind when he referred to μῦθοι and γενεαλογίαι that lead to ἐκσητήσεις i.e. Midrashic exposition? While the evidence is too meager at the present time to allow a confident affirmative, several factors suggest the hypothesis.

First, the participle, שְׂרָרָה, occurs only twice in Biblical Hebrew (although it is quite common in later Hebrew).²³ Both Old Testament occurrences are translated in the Septuagint recension of Rahlfs with the Greek equivalent for "book" (βιβλίω in 2 Chron. 13:22, γραφήν in 2 Chron. 24:27). In the latter verse, the reference is to the "Midrash of the Book of the Kings." This same collection is mentioned four additional times in Second Chronicles and is designated as the סֵפֶר הַמֶּלֶךְ of the Kings. Eissfeldt concludes that "Midrash" is the accurate designation of this work.²⁴ Thus, even the earliest translators of the Septuagint perhaps understood שְׂרָרָה as a special

²²W. Lock, The Pastoral Epistles (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1924), p. 9.

²³William Gesenius, A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament (edited by F. Brown, et al; Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1962), p. 205.

²⁴Otto Eissfeldt, The Old Testament, an Introduction (translated by Peter Ackroyd; New York: Harper and Row, 1965), pp. 532-533.

activity or product of a scribe or prophet. The verb, $\psi\grave{\alpha}\rho\eta$, also occurs in Sirach 39:1, 3 in connection with the activity of a Rabbi. Finally, $\psi\grave{\alpha}\rho\eta$ in post-Biblical Hebrew corresponds to the rise of a formal compilation of a portion of Midrashic tradition in the Mishnah. Although not arising as an independent phenomenon until much later than the first and second centuries A. D., Midrashic exegesis was already part of traditional Rabbinic exposition of the Torah.²⁵ This development, plus the unique use of $\acute{\epsilon}\kappa\sigma\eta\tau\eta\sigma\iota\varsigma$ for $\psi\grave{\alpha}\rho\eta$ in material that concerns Jewish literature outside the Pastorals, and the distinctly Jewish coloring already noted in the context of 1 Tim. 1:4 support this tentative conclusion.²⁶

The $\gamma\epsilon\nu\epsilon\alpha\lambda\omicron\chi\iota\alpha\iota$ of Titus 3:9 reflect perhaps the same or similar phenomena, for here too they have a Jewish overtone

²⁵R. Herford, Christianity in Talmud and Midrash (Clifton: Reference Book Publishers, 1966), pp. 24-25.

²⁶Lampe records three additional occurrences of the noun in the Patristic material. Basilus (fourth century) uses it in his homily on Psalm 33 as an "inquiry" concerning the final judgment. Didymus (also in the fourth century) uses it in the same sense when treating Ps. 9:4, and Athangelus (in the fifth century) uses it once in the sense of "search." A Patristic Greek Lexicon, edited by G. W. Lampe (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1961), p. 427. These occurrences might seem to weaken the position taken in the foregoing discussion. However, the fact that they occur several centuries removed from the evidence already employed diminishes their influence on the argument.

(μάχας νομικάς), and are designated as "foolish researches." The allusion to "dissent" (ἔρις) may, therefore, also be interpreted from a Judaic perspective as debates on issues which (according to the writer) merely detract from the performance of good works (vs. 8). Thus, the often-emphasized "faith as practice" returns in this context, but its sharp antithesis (ethical impurity) is absent. Substituted instead are the peripheral, distracting, and foolish speculations that centered in genealogical questions quite alien to the spirit of the Gospel.

Summary of the Internal Evidence

For all the negative qualification that surround the μῦθοι and γενεαλογίαι, none enable a positive identification to be made on the basis of the internal evidence alone. The characteristics implied in the Epistles cover a seemingly variegated pattern of influences, a summary of which can only include these factors: (1) The μῦθοι and γενεαλογίαι were Judaic in orientation and perhaps bore a distinct similarity to Midrashic exposition. (2) They were part of the alien content of a message proclaimed or utilized by a faction within the community itself. (3) They may have been characteristic of speculations employed by those who tended toward a dualistic approach to reality, who showed either ascetic or libertine traits. (4) They were perhaps linked to the claims of a special γνῶσις possessed by a few in opposition to the received (i.e. Apostolic) teaching.

CHAPTER IV

PREVAILING TRENDS OF INTERPRETATION

Gnostic Myths

The earliest application of the polemic of the Pastorals was made by Irenaeus in his Contra Haereses I. Of the extant Greek portions of that work (here according to the recension of his pupil, Epiphanius), the opening paragraph begins: Ἐπί τὴν ἀλήθειαν παραπεμπόμενοί τινες, ἐπεισάγουσι λόγους ψευδεῖς καὶ γεεαλογίας μάταις, αἵτινες ζητήσεις μᾶλλον παρέχουσι, καθὼς ὁ Ἀπόστολός φησιν, ἢ οἰκοδομὴν Θεοῦ τὴν ἐν πίστει.¹

Irenaeus continues with an expansion of the Valentian Gnostic systems, describing their schema of descending aeons (which he perhaps has in mind when he uses the term, γεεαλογία).² His presentation of the doctrines of the Ophites in the thirtieth chapter also relates genealogical speculation to the original descendancy of the race. Such speculation had come to function (within that sect) in a description of the light-darkness dualism and the origin of wickedness to which men are bound.³

¹Irenaeus, Contra Haereses I, i, cited according to Patrologiae: Patrum Graecorum, edited by J. P. Migne (Paris: n.p., 1857), VIII, 437. Hereafter Migne's edition may be referred to as MPG.

²MPG, VIII, 435-436. The material cited is a schematic illustration of the Valentinian system prepared by the editor of Patrologiae.

³Irenaeus, Contra Haereses I, xxx, 9.

Tertullian uses the phrase *μύθοις καὶ γενεαλογίαις ἀπεράντοις* (of 1 Tim. 1:4), translating it as fabulae et genealogiae interminabiles, and Tertullian indicates that this censure of "endless myths and genealogies" is meant to be a rebuttal of "Greek philosophy."⁴ What was implied by this more general designation is made clear by the fact that Tertullian's De Praescriptionibus was directed against Montanism. Nevertheless, his conclusions also entail a sweeping rejection of what he saw as a heretical use of Greek thought within the church: "Quid ergo Athenis et Hierosolymis? quid Academiae et ecclesiae? quid haereticis et Christianis?"⁵

Neither of these applications can be properly called an interpretation of the *μῦθοι* and *γενεαλογίαι*. They were not attempts to answer the question, "What did these terms reflect in the Pastorals?" Both Irenaeus and Tertullian are simply applying what they believed to be an Apostolic injunction to the more developed heretical tendencies of their own day. Their applications, however, have provided the point of departure for some of the later interpretations of the *μῦθοι* and *γενεαλογίαι* in the Pastorals.

Stählin lists the following nineteenth century attempts to identify the *μῦθοι* of the Pastorals with precise Gnostic

⁴Tertullian, De Praescriptionibus Adversus Haereticos vii, 33.

⁵Praesc. vii, 17.

heresies: A. Neander chose Cerinthus; J. Lightfoot cited the Naassenes; O. Pflleiderer chose the Valentinian Gnostics or an early form of Syrian Gnosticism. Correlated somewhat with these suggestions was the position taken by W. Mangold in 1856 and A. Klöpper in 1902 that the γενεαλογίαι (as in Irenaeus' polemic) implied a reference to the series of personified aeons in Gnosticism.⁶

Of more recent interpreters, Easton comes nearest to maintaining their position; however, he makes clear that what he means is a Gnosticism in ". . . its protean forms."⁷ Easton maintains that this cannot be labelled a "system," but that such Gnosticism was nonetheless a coherent and powerful heresy which had as an underlying principle a dualism that pronounced creation to be an evil thing.⁸

Jewish Fables

Patristic citations provide examples of the second manner in which the μῦθοι and γενεαλογίαι of the Pastorals have been understood. Ambrosiaster refers the γενεαλογίαι to the Jewish speculations that were fostered by their pride

⁶G. Stählin, "μῦθος," Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, edited by G. W. Bromily (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1964), IV, 783.

⁷B. S. Easton, The Pastoral Epistles (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1947), p. 4.

⁸Ibid., pp. 3, 5.

of ancestry and their interest in tracing this ancestry back to the Patriarchs.⁹ Stählin indicates that Ambrosiaster's identification of these terms with the Haggadah was similar to the application made by Theodore of Mopsuestia, Augustine (who applied the terms to the δευτέρωσις, the Mishnah), and Jerome.¹⁰

Although most commentators who identify the μῦθοι and γενεαλογίαί as "Jewish" couch this designation in rather guarded and qualified phraseology (and would, therefore, fall closer to those who see here a "Gnosticizing Judaism"), several of these positions can be cited as choosing phenomena strictly Jewish in nature. In 1894 F. Hort suggested that a speculative Judaism that dealt in barren and misleading trivialities¹¹ stood behind these words. Hort had an aversion to the suggestion that the μῦθοι and γενεαλογίαί might reflect Gnostic influences, as his words make clear: ". . . a total want of evidence for anything pointing to even rudimentary Gnosticism or Essenism."¹² Philo's designation of the early portions of the Pentateuch (as genealogical) is, for Hort, a fortiori evidence that at least the γενεαλογίαί refer to

⁹W. Lock, The Pastoral Epistles (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1924), p. 157.

¹⁰Stählin, p. 783.

¹¹F. J. Hort, Judaistic Christianity (London: MacMillan & Co., 1904), p. 135.

¹²Ibid., p. 135.

legendary accretions that had become part of the Patristic narratives. He points to the Book of Jubilees as an example of this fanciful expansion.¹³ He concludes his argument with several assertions that are crucial to his position that the *μῦθοι* and *γενεαλογίαι* reflect phenomena within the narrow limits of Judaism. For Hort, the *γῶσις* "falsely so-called" in 1 Tim. 6:20 is a polemic against the Jewish *ἡγεμονία* school, the Scribes, and especially against the material being gathered in the formulation of the Talmud.¹⁴ Secondly, Hort applies any dualistic traits that are combatted with the contexts that contain mention of the *μῦθοι* and *γενεαλογίαι* to future (though unnamed) heresies. The largest concession he makes is that the asceticism also prevalent in these contexts reflects the attitude of diaspora Judaism that had come under "foreign influences."¹⁵

Knoke¹⁶ and Ellicott,¹⁷ both writing at the close of the last century, chose to identify the *μῦθοι* and *γενεαλογίαι*

¹³ Ibid., p. 136.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 143.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 146.

¹⁶ K. Knoke, Praktisch-theologisches Kommentar zu den Pastoralbriefen des Apostels Paulus (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1887), p. 45.

¹⁷ C. Ellicott, The Pastoral Epistles of St. Paul (Fifth edition; London: Longmans, Green, and Company, 1883), p. 5.

with Rabbinic literature. Ellicott holds that either its historical or didactic material could be implied and adds that the ἔγτολαῖς ἀνθρώπων of Titus 1:14 underscore the Jewish ("ceremonial") commands that stood behind the μύθοις.¹⁸ Knoke is willing to advocate even more precise referents for the terms, specifically the bi-partite nature of the material in the Mishnah itself: "Haggadische und halachische Schriftauslegung bedeuten also μῦθοι καὶ γενεαλογίαι ἀπέραντοι, wie sie die ἑτεροδιδάσκαλοι betreiben."¹⁹

Of the recent commentators Simpson suggests no additional qualification to the position adopted earlier by Hort, Knoke, and Ellicott.²⁰ After a rather cursory treatment of the earlier suggestions that the μῦθοι and γενεαλογίαι and other traits of the Epistles reflect a Gnostic problem, Simpson concludes instead that the heresy merely implies ". . . a semi-Rabbinical school."²¹ Guthrie has chosen the same position.²²

¹⁸Ibid., pp. 5, 190.

¹⁹Knoke, p. 45. Earlier, in his study of the 1 Tim. 1:14, he comments: "Dann sind weder 'gnostische Mythologien' zu verstehen, noch 'apokryphische Erzählungen über das Leben Jesu,' noch 'falsche Vorstellungen über die Natur der Gottheit,' sondern es sind jene phantastischen Erzählungen, welche die jüdische Theologen neben und über den gesicherten Berichten der heiligen Schrift hinaus zu deren Erklärung mit grosserem oder geringeren Geschick frei erfanden oder aus dem bereits vorhandenen Schatze schriftgelehrter Tradition entnahmen und weiter ausführten," p. 43.

²⁰E. Simpson, The Pastoral Epistles (London: The Tyndale Press, 1954), p. 12.

²¹Ibid., p. 12.

²²D. Guthrie, The Pastoral Epistles (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1957), p. 33.

Gnosticizing Judaism

Three years after the essay by Hort, M. J. Cramer supported the views that Hort had put forth, but only with several modifications. He made a distinction between second century Gnosticism (which the Pastorals, he claimed, did not reflect) and a type of Essene Judaism that bore similarities to the problem to which the writer of the Epistles addresses himself. The Epistle to Titus with its more direct references to Judaic schisms strengthened his position, he claimed. Cramer concluded, therefore, that this evidence reflected the fact that already in the second century there existed one stream of Judaism that was fast becoming wedded to the oriental mysteries, a Gnosticizing Judaism that was not an offshoot of Christianity, (as Lightfoot had also maintained) but existed independent of Christianity.²³

This position with modifications and varying degrees of particularization (concerning the precise parallels suggested for the μῦθοι and γενεαλογίαι) is representative of the majority of the recent views. They are characterized by seeing in the μῦθοι and γενεαλογίαι a greater affinity to Judaism than to Gnosticism (narrowly defined). But the Judaism that is meant is one that shared with the Hellenistic thought of

²³M. J. Cramer, "Peculiarities of the Pastoral Epistles," Journal of Biblical Literature, v 7 (December, 1887), 23-25.

that day certain dualistic tendencies. Thus, Gerhard Kittel (to whom many of the commentators are indebted) characterized the situation as follows: "Wir haben nicht ein judaisierende Gnosis, sondern im besten Fall einen gnostisierenden Judaismus vor uns."²⁴ Kittel suggests three possible Judaic phenomena which might have posed such "genealogical speculations" while at the same time reflecting the dualism against which the larger polemic of the Pastorals is structured. Like Hort, he mentions the books of Chronicles and Jubilees. But to these he adds specific passages from the Talmud that he claims reveal not only genealogical speculation but indicate also that an anti-Christian polemic was the purpose for such speculation.²⁵

Spicq,²⁶ Jeremias,²⁷ and Conzelmann (in his revision of Dibelius' earlier commentary)²⁸ submit what are basically reworkings of Kittel's conclusions. Conzelmann, in fact, makes his dependence on and his agreement with Kittel

²⁴G. Kittel, "Die γενεαλογίαι der Pastoralbriefe," ZNW, 20 (1921), 50.

²⁵Ibid., pp. 51-65. Kittel's use of the evidence and the Talmudic citations that he submits are evaluated in the following chapter, infra, pp.

²⁶C. Spicq, Les Épîtres Pastorales (Paris: Gabalda, 1947), pp. lviii-lxii.

²⁷J. Jeremias, Die Briefe an Timotheus und Titus (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1947), p. 9.

²⁸M. Dibelius, Die Pastoralbriefe (4th edition revised by Hans Conzelmann; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1966), pp. 14-15.

explicit.²⁹ Of these three men, Jeremias is probably the most cautious in his giving the $\mu\tilde{\upsilon}\theta\omicron\iota$ and $\gamma\epsilon\nu\epsilon\alpha\lambda\omicron\gamma\acute{\iota}\alpha\iota$ the specific label: Gnosticizing Judaism.³⁰ In this respect Jeremias is typical of the remaining number of commentators consulted.³¹ These, while allowing the term "Gnosticizing Judaism," prefer to state the evidence in such a manner that will also allow both Gnosticism and Judaism to be viewed as separate entities rather than as a single, syncretistic heresy.

²⁹Ibid., p. 14.

³⁰Jeremias, p. 9.

³¹Cf. Lock, p. xvii; C. K. Barrett, The Pastoral Epistles (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963), p. 13; J. N. D. Kelly, The Pastoral Epistles (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1963), p. 11.

CHAPTER V

TOWARD AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE PROBLEMS RAISED

Gnosticism--The Semantic Problem

The difficulty of adequately identifying any phenomenon by what is said against it rather than what is said about it is nearly insurmountable. This fact is underscored by both of the foregoing chapters. Even if particular phenomena are described in great detail by a polemicist, a gulf may still separate description from fact. The description of Gnosticism in the church fathers demonstrates this when compared with the recent Nag Hammadi discoveries.¹ When the phenomenon in question is general rather than specific and is attacked by the writer but never defined, then uncertainty looms even larger.

In the case of the $\mu\hat{\upsilon}\theta\omicron\iota$ and $\gamma\epsilon\nu\epsilon\alpha\lambda\omicron\gamma\iota\alpha\iota$ in the Pastorals, both situations apply: they seem to be rather general, and they are not defined. In the face of this uncertainty (or perhaps because of it) the term "Gnostic" has been used by commentators as a label for certain aspects of the heresy as well as the $\mu\hat{\upsilon}\theta\omicron\iota$ and $\gamma\epsilon\nu\epsilon\alpha\lambda\omicron\gamma\iota\alpha\iota$ themselves. Imprecision is not thereby overcome, it is rather increased. For as

¹J. Doresse, The Secret Books of the Egyptian Gnostics (New York: The Viking Press, 1960), p. 4ff.

Laeuchli points out, "Gnosticism" is one of those chameleon-like terms that is so often a favorite of historical scholarship.² It can mean what the writer chooses it to mean. Its historical bounds can be expanded or contracted. "Gnosticism" is used to describe various religious beliefs on a spectrum ranging from a complete system of personified aeons and a fully-developed theory of heavenly $\gamma\upsilon\omega\delta\iota\varsigma$ to the designation of pre-Christian dualistic tendencies in apocalyptic Judaism. Since "Gnosticism" has been used by the commentators in relation to the verses of the Pastorals under consideration, it merits attention as a semantic designation.

However, to embark on a full-scale study of Gnosticism as a phenomenon in the first and second centuries is at this point neither possible nor necessary. Full discussions are given by R. Grant,³ R. Wilson,⁴ and most recently by G. van Groningen.⁵

²S. Laeuchli, The Language of Faith (New York: Abingdon Press, 1962), pp. 16-17.

³R. Grant, Gnosticism and Early Christianity (New York: The Columbia University Press, 1959), pp. 6-7, 151-181.

⁴R. Wilson, The Gnostic Problem (London: A. R. Mowbray, 1958), pp. 256-265.

⁵G. van Groningen, First Century Gnosticism, Its Origin and Motifs (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1967). This study came to the attention of the writer of this paper too late to be used.

As van Unnik points out, Gnosticism (even if narrowly defined as a Christian heresy) was not a closed system of rigidly defined dogmas.⁶ The term "syncretism" would probably be less confusing, since it circumvents the problem that the term "Gnosticism" implies--namely, that the phenomenon so designated is usually a heretical departure from Christianity. The use of the term "syncretism" carries the same implications as the wider definition of "Gnosticism" given by Hans Jonas (who sees pre-Christian Judaism, Hellenistic paganism, and even the Mandaean doctrines as contributing and essential factors of "Gnosticism").⁷ Jonas, therefore, regards Gnosticism as a catch phrase for a manifold number of sectarian doctrines that surrounded Christianity in the first two centuries.⁸

If the term "Gnosticism" (meaning the heretical positions so designated by the Christian apologists) is to be used at all, albeit in this narrower sense, a problem remains. Even this designation is too wide to convey a clear sense.⁹

⁶W. van Unnik, Newly Discovered Gnostic Writings (London: SCM Press, 1960), p. 35.

⁷H. Jonas, The Gnostic Religion (Boston: Beacon Hill, 1958), pp. 32-33.

⁸Ibid., p. 32.

⁹S. Laeuchli, The Language of Faith (New York: Abingdon Press, 1962), p. 17. His analysis includes a brief summary of the present semantic confusion.

However, if in answer to this problem the spectrum is further narrowed by the distinctions "Gnosticism" and "incipient Gnosticism," one is still left with the problem of deciding which aspects and motifs, origins and influences are to be placed in either category. Nothing seems to solve the semantic dilemma save the recognition that it is not of central importance at all. The issue is really the recognition of the fusion of influences (pagan mysteries, Greek philosophy, apocalyptic and Hellenistic Judaism, and Christianity) and the variety of manifestations (dualistic themes, redemption through the heavenly $\gamma\upsilon\omega\sigma\iota\varsigma$, and the disparagement of the material) that is here being underscored.

This complexity could be multiplied and demonstrated. It is sufficient to repeat that the term "Gnosticism" is only considered because it has been brought into the discussion.¹⁰ For this writer the term "syncretism" is preferred as the widest designation; "Gnosticism" is reserved as a designation of the specifically Christian heresy. Uses of the terminology that do not conform to this distinction are dictated by the position adopted by the various commentators.

¹⁰Cf. R. Bultmann, Theology of the New Testament (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1951), I, 168-171. F. Burkitt, Church and Gnosis (Cambridge: The University Press, 1932), p. 4. For a discussion of the Bultmann school in the light of the recent discoveries and contemporary criticism, as well as a thorough-going summary of the present position of scholarship regarding the use of the Gnostic terminology, see: T. Eisold, "Contemporary Views of Gnosticism," (Unpublished Master's Thesis, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, 1967), passim.

Gnosticizing Judaism--A Viable Concept?

A second concept employed in the discussion is "Gnosticizing Judaism."¹¹ Perhaps what is meant by "Gnosticizing Judaism" (by the majority of those who use the concept) is that phase of Judaism which was affected to some degree by Hellenistic philosophy, the oriental mysteries, and Christianity. The existence of the first of these influences hardly needs demonstrating. There had been an influx of Hellenistic thought into Judaism since Antiochus Epiphanes.¹² Hellenistic thought had influenced Philo especially, as has already been noted.

Scholars generally accept the idea of Hellenistic Judaism as a distinctive variation of religious expression in Judaism. Some scholars, however, reject the concept of a "Gnosticizing Judaism" (and perhaps rightly so, if "Gnosticizing" is, by definition, limited to a Christian heretical tendency). Schoeps, for example, maintains that there was no such thing as Jewish Gnosticism, saying, "Gnosis ist nie etwas anderes als pagane Gnosis."¹³ Sandmel holds that any Judaism

¹¹Supra, p. 38.

¹²V. Tcherikover, Hellenistic Civilization and the Jews (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1959), p. 118.

¹³H. Schoeps, Urgemeinde-Judenchristentum-Gnosis (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1956), p. 39.

influenced by "speculative" tendencies constituted a departure from orthodox (i.e. Rabbinic) Judaism, and became apostate Judaism; therefore, it can not properly be designated Jewish.¹⁴

Sandmel's position indicates that the discussion in this area is moving toward a semantic debate. Perhaps the term "syncretistic Judaism" would be more adequate and beg the question less.

This more general designation indicates that a discussion of the origins of Gnosticism (even narrowly defined) must include Judaism in its consideration. R. Grant, in fact, maintains that Gnosticism is largely dependent on Jewish apocalyptic as it was modified after the fall of Jerusalem in A. D. 70.¹⁵ Van Groningen sees Philo (as a focus of both Hellenistic thought and Judaic theology) together with Jewish apocalyptic as contributing factors to first century Gnosticism.¹⁶ Kretschmar has even maintained, ". . . dass praktisch alle bisher bekannten Formen der Gnosis letzten Endes auf das Judentum, meist ein synkretistisches Judentum zurückweisen. . . . Das gilt für die östliche wie für die

¹⁴S. Sandmel, "Myths, Genealogies, and Jewish Myths and the Writing of Gospels," Hebrew Union College Annual, 27 (1956), 205.

¹⁵Grant, Gnosticism and Early Christianity, pp. 25-40.

¹⁶van Groningen, p. 43.

westliche Gnosis."¹⁷ Kretschmar quotes F. C. Bauer's work, Die Christliche Gnosis oder die christliche Religions-Philosophie in ihren geschichtlichen Entwicklung, for parallel support for his argument. Bauer had maintained

Die ersten Elemente der Gnosis konnten . . . nur da sich bilden, wo die jüdische Religion mit der heidnischen Religion und Philosophie in gegenseitige Berührung gekommen waren.¹⁸

Nor was Judaism a monolithic "orthodox" structure. The "three sects," as Josephus called the Pharisees, Sadducees, and Essenes, operated with varying approaches to the Torah and interpreted their response to its demands in differing ways. Driver indicates, for instance, that the theology of the Qumran sect was ". . . informed by a clearly marked predestinationism and dualism, ultimately of Iranian origin . . ." and that the community's asceticism (although unnatural to mainstream Judaism) may have been influenced by Epicurean thought as well.¹⁹ Evidence from the writings of the sect itself would seem to support the former contention at least. Thus, the dualistic themes of light versus dark, the rule of the Prince of Light in opposition to the Angel of Darkness,

¹⁷G. Kretschmar, "Zur religionsgeschichtlichen Einordnung der Gnosis," Evangelische Theologie, 13 (1953), 360.

¹⁸As cited in Kretschmar, p. 361.

¹⁹G. Driver, The Judaean Scrolls--The Problem and a Solution (Oxford: Blackwell, 1965), pp. 110-124.

and especially the idea of the "two spirits" in man (also employed by Philo) may be seen as evidence of such syncretism.²⁰ The material from Qumran, furthermore, allows this syncretistic process to be dated (within at least one stream of Judaism) prior to the rise of any phenomena requiring the narrower designation, "Gnostic." Driver concludes, and probably correctly, that Judaism was simply sharing in the common religious temperament of its day.²¹

The issue, then (if one dare treat the semantic problem and the question of spheres of influence in such a superficial manner) is simply whether or not any meaningful referent can stand behind the expression "Gnosticizing (or as this writer prefers, syncretistic) Judaism." In view of the role that Judaism played in the thought world of the first centuries B. C. and A. D., the answer would seem to be affirmative. Although the term syncretistic Judaism might be wide enough to encompass the heretical tendencies combatted in the Pastorals, it does not give a precise identification of the $\mu\tilde{\upsilon}\theta\omicron\iota$ and $\gamma\epsilon\nu\epsilon\alpha\lambda\omicron\gamma\iota\alpha\iota$ in these writings.

²⁰"IQS III-IV," translated by G. Vermes, The Dead Sea Scrolls in English (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1965), pp. 75-77.

²¹Driver, p. 562.

Evaluation of the Referents Suggested
for the μῦθοι and γενεαλογίαι

The evaluations that follow highlight only the major strengths and weaknesses of some of the suggestions made by those who have attempted to identify the μῦθοι and γενεαλογίαι in the Pastorals. The criteria employed are two-fold: Does the suggested referent allow the internal evidence of the epistles (as detailed in Chapter II) to be seen without distortion? Has the suggested referent itself been correctly interpreted?²²

Nineteenth century scholarship identified the μῦθοι and γενεαλογίαι of the Pastoral Epistles with specific Gnostic speculations. Can such a theory stand up under historical investigation? Several factors seem to question such a position. The problem of dating is one such factor. Irenaeus' elaborate accounts of the tenets of the Gnostic sect post-date even the latest estimates of the dating of the Pastorals. Secondly, material cited by Irenaeus as part of the Valentinian

²²This last criterion demands a thorough knowledge of the documents treated. Because of the limitations of this study, only three referents are, therefore, explored. To the suggestions of Valentinian Gnosticism, the Book of Jubilees, and the Rabbinic citations suggested by Kittel should probably be added a thorough study of the Hermetic Corpus as well as the apocryphal and pseudepigraphic material of the New Testament era. The deletion of this literature (and the possible perspective that it could add to this phase of the study) causes the following section to be highly tentative, if not almost totally speculative.

Gnostic myth should probably be used with caution since, as Groebel points out, we now know that Irenaeus was actually three steps removed from Valentinus himself.²³

On the other hand, if the Gospel of Truth is by Valentinus' own hand, then we can (since the 1946 discovery of the Coptic manuscript) at least move closer to the writings of the Pastorals by a few years.²⁴ The Gospel of Truth then embodies the kind of speculative doctrines reflected in the words μῦθοι and γενεαλογίαι. The Gospel of Truth contains mention of the Aeons as personified celestial beings (23:15; 27:5),²⁵ perhaps even contains mention of hermaphroditic Aeons as generative forces (although the reading at 24:5 is disputed),²⁶ and also refers to personal "beings" as coming

²³K. Groebel, The Gospel of Truth (New York: Abingdon, 1960), p. 14.

²⁴Ibid., p. 26. Groebel and van Unnik both hold that the Gospel of Truth was written by Valentinus.

²⁵Ibid., pp. 84, 108.

²⁶Ibid., p. 90. The text (from 24:3) reads: "Yet he supports the Totality (of creatures), he chooses them, he takes on, moreover, the face form of the Totality, purifying them, causing them to return within the Father, within the Mother." Groebel questions the last word of the passage in his commentary since there is no further mention of the Mother in the meditation. Cf., however, Laeuchli, pp. 33-34, who comments on this same verse by saying that we have a constant infiltration of the mother principle into the meaning of God's fatherhood. It is evidence, he claims, for the fact that the Father concept is no longer understood theologically but biologically.

forth from the father like children (27:11-12).²⁷ These passages reflect theologoumena which might have been designated γενεαλογίαι.

However, a similar idea of "generation" is not basis enough to establish Valentinus' Gospel of Truth as the background for the μῦθοι and γενεαλογίαι of the Pastorals. No where in the Gospel of Truth is the motif of generation prolonged to any sort of genealogical speculation. Moreover, although the Coptic Gospel is several years closer to the Pastorals than Irenaeus' polemic, the problem of the time differential is hardly solved. Finally, there is nothing in the contexts of those passages which mention the μῦθοι and γενεαλογίαι in the Pastorals that implies such cosmological speculation. The cosmic terminology that appears in Ephesians and Colossians is conspicuously absent in the Pastorals. Had the μῦθοι and γενεαλογίαι represented some such speculation regarding celestial generation, more explicit language would have been used, especially since such language was current in early Christian communities.

Although the internal evidence does not completely rule out cosmic speculation as a possible referent for the μῦθοι and γενεαλογίαι, the material in the Epistles themselves gives greater support to the suggested parallel of legendary

²⁷Groebel, p. 110. An enigmatic Coptic word (according to Groebel) is here given the conjectured equivalent: "beings."

Jewish material. Specifically cited has been the pseudepigraphic Book of Jubilees. This extended midrash on portions of Genesis and Exodus could (hypothetically) account for many of the factors subsumed under the $\mu\bar{\upsilon}\theta\omicron\iota$ and $\gamma\epsilon\nu\epsilon\alpha\lambda\omicron\chi\acute{\iota}\alpha\iota$ in Timothy and Titus. Though apocalyptic in nature, Jubilees stresses the Mosaic law (using the accounts of the patriarchs as the occasion for a legal didactic)²⁸ and expands the genealogical data of Genesis. The work is sufficiently early to allow for it or similar ideas to disseminate in Jewish-Christian circles by the time of the writing of the Pastorals.²⁹ However the question of the popularity of such a work cannot be answered with certainty. Thus, while it is probable that material of the sort recorded in the Book of Jubilees could have been referred to as $\mu\bar{\upsilon}\theta\omicron\iota$ and $\gamma\epsilon\nu\epsilon\alpha\lambda\omicron\chi\acute{\iota}\alpha\iota$, the Book of Jubilees itself is noted only insofar as it may have been typical of such undesirable material.

G. Kittel attempts to vindicate the earlier arguments that the $\mu\bar{\upsilon}\theta\omicron\iota$ and $\gamma\epsilon\nu\epsilon\alpha\lambda\omicron\chi\acute{\iota}\alpha\iota$ referred to the Halakah and Haggadah into which Rabbinic exegesis had already separated by this time. Kittel says that, "Ein Blick in den Talmud genügt, zu erkennen, dass auch für die rabbinische Judentum

²⁸Book of Jubilees 33:1-20, cited according to The Apocrypha and Pseudepigraph of the Old Testament, edited by R. H. Charles (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1913), II.

²⁹Charles, p. 6.

die Genealogien und die genealogischen Fragen erhebliche Bedeutung haben."³⁰ From the Babylonian Talmud (Pesachim 62b) he illustrates the importance and seriousness of genealogical interpretation for the Rabbis. The Book of Chronicles had become known as the ספר שושלת ("Book of Genealogies").³¹

Kittel maintains that genealogical speculation can be shown to have played a role in the debates between the Rabbis and the נצרות.³² The crucial passage for Kittel's argument again comes from the Babylonian Talmud (Baba Bathra 91a). Here a genealogical section discusses the matriarchal descent of Abraham, Haman, David, and Samson. The rhetorical question concerning the good of such knowledge is answered with the phrase, "To an answer to the נצרות."³³ One passage from the Mishnah is cited by Kittel which, according to the version given in Babylonian Talmud, Yebamoth 49b, records the words of Simeon ben Azzai who discovered a ". . . Rolle der

³⁰G. Kittel, "Die γενεαλογία der Pastoralbriefe," ZNW, 20 (1921), 51.

³¹Ibid., p. 51.

³²Cf. R. Herford, Christianity in Talmud and Midrash (Clifton: Reference Book Publishers, 1966), pp. 97-342, hereafter referred to as Christianity. Herford, Judaism in the New Testament Period (London: The Lindsey Press, 1928), pp. 242ff. H. Schoeps, The Jewish-Christian Argument (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1963), pp. 11-19. These provide a synopsis and (in the case of the first work by Herford) a listing of the Talmudic references to the נצרות. Schoeps concludes that the Talmud has no specific name for Christians. נצרות is only applied to Jewish heretics, among whom Jewish Christians were counted (p. 14).

³³Baba Bathra 91a, cited in Herford, Christianity, p. 326.

Genealogien (מגלת יוחסין)" in Jerusalem.³⁴ The scroll is said to have the record of one born of "spurious birth" (חזף). Kittel maintains (as does Herford) that the Baba Bathra passage is an explicit polemic against the Christians and that the latter (Yebamoth 49b) is a veiled polemic against the Christian claims concerning the virgin birth of Christ.³⁵

However, whether or not this material is applicable to the situation addressed in the Pastorals is dependent on one's approach to the Rabbinic material. Precise dating is nearly impossible for passages taken from the Gemara. In this case it may be significant that the Mishnah contains only one of the passages cited by Kittel from the Babylonian Talmud (Mishnah, Yebamoth 4:13 is the equivalent of Yebamoth 49b in the Babylonian Talmud). The Mishnah presupposes a different sense of that passage. Both the Babylonian Talmud and the Mishnah version of the Yebamoth citation concern the subject of bastard progeny. However, the Mishnah specifies one who is ". . . a bastard through (a transgression of the law of) thy neighbor's wife."³⁶ The mention of the illicit union is absent in the Babylonian Talmud (Yebamoth 49b). Although the

³⁴Kittel, 52.

³⁵Cf. Herford, Christianity, pp. 43, 327. Kittel, p. 53.

³⁶Yebamoth 4:13, cited from The Mishnah, edited by Herbert Danby (London: Oxford University Press, 1933), p. 225.

context of a passage has little significance in the Rabbinic literature,³⁷ the fact that both versions of the statement are attributed to Rabbi Simeon ben Azzai as confirming the words of Rabbi Joshua may indicate that one of the citations is merely a variant of the other. If this is true, then Yebamoth 49b (which mentions only the spurious birth) cannot be interpreted as an argument against the Christian assertions regarding the birth of Jesus. If, on the other hand, the discrepancy between the passages reflects an intentional change, then the incestuous overtones of Yebamoth 4:13 were dropped in favor of a later anti-Christian polemic. Therefore, Kittel's dating of Yebamoth 49b (as circa A. D. 100) is best disregarded, since Rabbi Simeon ben Azzai (to whom the date is assigned) is mentioned in both readings.

The Baba Bathra passage cannot be dated with certainty and, therefore, may have little bearing on the γενεαλογίαι of the Pastorals. Thus, neither passage provides particularly compelling evidence toward the conclusion that the Pastorals reflect actual issues of genealogical debate between the synagogue and the Christian community. That such debates existed is not questioned at this point. That they existed before the early second century has not been demonstrated.

³⁷Schoeps, The Jewish-Christian Argument, p. 10.

CHAPTER VI

A FINAL APPRAISAL AND CONCLUSIONS

Myths and Genealogies in the Christian Gospels

The Problem Reconsidered by Rabbi Sandmel

As already noted, Sandmel has suggested the only departure from the three prevailing views.¹ His position is briefly summarized as follows: Sandmel holds that the writer of the Pastorals was not addressing a speculative Judaism with the phrase "myths and genealogies" simply because such a group did not exist. Gnosticism and Judaism are mutually exclusive terms; the fact that Billerbeck can find no Rabbinic parallels to this phrase is, for Sandmel, highly significant.

Thus the problem behind the Pastorals, as Sandmel understands it, is the struggle within second century Christianity over the question, "How shall an acceptable Gospel be written?" This struggle entailed disagreement on the question of the historical data and the genealogical support for the Messianic claims made about Jesus. A mutually-acceptable conclusion of the problem was never

¹S. Sandmel, "Myths, Genealogies, and Jewish Myths and the Writing of Gospels," Hebrew Union College Annual, 27 (1956), passim.

reached, as the contradictions in the early verses of each of the canonical Gospels indicate. The variety of prevailing positions within the early church can be seen in the disagreement between the Matthean and Lukan genealogies, in the Fourth Gospel where a treatise of the λόγος has replaced a genealogy for the sake of communicating a more significant truth, and in the Letter to the Hebrews (actually a "fifth Gospel") which is ". . . devoid of genealogies and free of that kind of narrated incident which a captious critic might have called a myth."

The Reappraisal

Sandmel seems to pose an "ideal" Judaism--one that conforms to Rabbinic standards. He will admit no designation of Judaism that allows speculative or syncretistic aspects. The distinction that he uses to support this view (that all extraneous influences yielded apostate Judaism) is merely a semantic differentiation that allows him to beg the question. The present study has indicated that the simple distinction Sandmel poses is incongruent with the evidence.

Secondly, Sandmel views the Ἰουδαϊκοῖς (in Ἰουδαϊκοῖς μύθοις) of Titus 1:14 as an insertion intended for two purposes: (1) to give the letters a Pauline cast and (2) to present an intensively personal argument against what was an intra-ecclesiastical faction that used μῦθοι and γενεαλογίαι to buttress the faith. Thus, it was an attempt to "damn by

epithets."² Sandmel's first argument for the insertion of Ἰουδαϊκοῖς finds little support. Barrett indicates that there would have been little reason to use the phrase, Ἰουδαϊκοῖς μύθοις to give a Pauline coloring, since nothing in the genuine Pauline Epistles would suggest an attack on "Jewish myths."³ (The fact that Barrett does not argue, thereby, for the authenticity of the Pastorals makes his an especially strong position against that stated by Sandmel.)

The second of Sandmel's comments on the Ἰουδαϊκοῖς is contingent upon his interpretation of the phrase, μάλιστα οἱ ἐκ τῆς περιτομῆς (Titus 1:11). The expression specifies those who, according to Sandmel, have come over from the "circumcision" and are now Christians. Though he cites version support for his position (Moffatt's translation and the Revised Standard Version),⁴ he does not cite any grammatically parallel constructions from the Greek or explain the substantive uses of ἐκ (and the genitive case) which do possess the very sense that he denies.

Sandmel sees 2 Cor. 5:16 (that Paul once regarded Christ κατὰ σάρκα but does so no longer) as a parallel to the exclusion of historical incidents and genealogical speculation about

² Ibid., p. 210.

³ C. K. Barrett, The Pastoral Epistles (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963), pp. 12-13.

⁴ Sandmel, p. 205.

Jesus. Sandmel, thereby, follows Reizenstein's interpretation of that passage⁵ and passes by the suggestion that the *κατὰ σάρκα* goes instead with the *οἶδαμεν*.⁶ The wider Pauline argument of 2 Corinthians may sustain Sandmel's interpretation of the *κατὰ σάρκα*. However, that phrase cannot be removed from its polemical context in 2 Corinthians and be viewed as a general Pauline dogma. Paul can and did argue a nearly opposite position (i.e. in 1 Corinthians) against a heresy that consisted of disparaging the historical content and the physical implications of the Gospel. Sandmel's position that Paul himself would have called the historical data from the life of Jesus "myth" (in the sense of that word's use in the Pastorals) is an unwarranted generalization.

Finally, in order to see the *μῦθοι* and *γενεαλογίαι* as struggles within the church on the issue of the writing of Gospels, Sandmel is almost forced to ignore entirely those portions of the context that refer to such debates (and to those who engage in the same) in ethically pejorative language. How could such "myths" be designated as *βεβήλος*? Sandmel simply omits the ethically pejorative adjectives ascribed to the *μῦθοι* and, thus, does not answer that question. Although no suggested identity of the *μῦθοι* and *γενεαλογίαι* has fully

⁵W. D. Davies, Paul and Rabbinic Judaism (2nd edition with notes; London: SPCK, 1955), p. 194.

⁶Sandmel, p. 207.

accounted for the libertine overtones of the heresy, Sandmel's suggestions actually seem to contradict that phase of the internal evidence.

Tentative Conclusions

The problem of the uncertain identity of the $\mu\hat{\upsilon}\theta\omicron\iota$ and $\gamma\epsilon\nu\epsilon\alpha\lambda\omicron\gamma\acute{\iota}\alpha\iota$ in the Pastoral Epistles has hardly been solved by this reappraisal. At best, only lines delineating the areas of uncertainty have been drawn. At the present time the tentative conclusions of this study (pending additional research into and discoveries in the literary material of the first and second century world) only sketch probabilities.

The $\mu\hat{\upsilon}\theta\omicron\iota$ and $\gamma\epsilon\nu\epsilon\alpha\lambda\omicron\gamma\acute{\iota}\alpha\iota$ in the Pastorals represented some form of (primarily) Jewish speculation. This particular manifestation of Jewish characteristics may well have been a type of syncretistic Judaism that expressed its concerns in speculative fables; perhaps it used a dualistic approach toward the world that produced either an ascetical rigorism or an ethical libertinism. The nature of the $\mu\hat{\upsilon}\theta\omicron\iota$ and $\gamma\epsilon\nu\epsilon\alpha\lambda\omicron\gamma\acute{\iota}\alpha\iota$, while perhaps midrashic in form and probably oriented to Old Testament historical tradition, remains an enigma. The fact that they seem to reflect some kind of syncretism may call for additional study in the oriental and Hellenistic mysteries which have not been considered in this paper.

Although one can argue quite strongly that the "circumcision party" mentioned in Titus was part of the Christian

community, he can be even more certain that both in Ephesus and on Crete the μῦθοι and γενεαλογίαι were markedly Jewish in character. But that they were the material content of disputes prompted by apologetic concerns between the Jewish and Christian communities can be demonstrated neither by internal nor by contemporary external evidence. Nor will that evidence support a conclusion that suggests that the μῦθοι and γενεαλογίαι reflected an intra-ecclesiastical struggle regarding the material content of the Gospels.

After all this has been said, the descriptive label one espouses for the μῦθοι and γενεαλογίαι is almost inconsequential. Perhaps less confusing than a label that attempts to be precise is a description that merely attempts to encompass most of the evidence: the μῦθοι and γενεαλογίαι were probably speculative fables of syncretistic Judaism that drew eclectically on Old Testament history as well as thought forms popular in that day. They were primarily quasi-historical material that could be moulded in such a way as to be appealing to the gullible who enjoyed being entertained or to be stimulating to the pseudo-intellectual who enjoyed peripheral discussions that (according to the writer of the Epistles) detracted from the exercise of piety. To say more than this at the present time is to go beyond the evidence.

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